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Alexander James McDonnell

Remembering to Forget: Native American Presences and the U.S. National
Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Euro-American Fiction.

Abstract

This thesis interrogates the part played by the figure of ‘the Indian’ in the formation of the U.S. national consciousness as reflected in the nineteenth-century fictional works of James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Montgomery Bird, Lydia Maria Child, Helen Hunt Jackson and Herman Melville. I propose that new understandings can be reached concerning Indian representations and national identity in the selected texts via an approach that combines postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories, in particular as detailed by Ranjana Khanna in *Dark Continents* (2003). I explore how the national ideals articulated by Cooper, Bird, Child and Jackson are predicated on repression identifiable in historical revisionism, disavowal, ideological rhetoric, generic conventions and so forth, which reflects a melancholic nationalism more generally concerning the colonial subjugation of Native Americans. I demonstrate that where the national origins mythology of *The Last of the Mohicans* is ‘haunted’ by inassimilable historical memories associated with frontier conquest and displacement, the Indian-hating premise of Bird’s *Nick of the Woods* is yet more melancholic in being overwhelmed by the genocide it seeks to justify. In contrast, *Ramona* and *Hobomok* effectuate their own forms of epistemic violence in assimilating the Indian into the national body. However these novels also allow for the principle of an autonomous Indian perspective, which jeopardises the idea of state legitimacy that is crucial for their national ideals. In Melville’s *The Confidence-Man* a historically recuperative national vision is absent and this allows indirect recognition of the Indian ‘phantoms’ of the nation’s past. These works encompass psychological, ideological and cultural patterns of negotiation with a Native American presence that reflect different facets of the nineteenth-century American psyche and its evolution. My readings of these patterns provide a new perspective on how the nineteenth-century American national consciousness is unable to reconcile its history of imperialist, frontier expansion to its ‘ego-ideal’ as a democratic institution distinguished from its European predecessors.

Remembering to Forget: Native American
Presences and the U.S. National
Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Euro-
American Fiction.

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2016

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Statement of Copyright

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Dedication

For my family, social justice and a better future for all.

I. Introduction

This thesis sets out to explore representations of frontier expansion and Native American presence in fiction by five nineteenth-century Euro American authors: James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Montgomery Bird, Lydia Maria Child, Helen Hunt Jackson and Herman Melville. It primarily draws on the postcolonial psychoanalytic framework of Ranjana Khanna's work *Dark Continents*¹ to examine how cultural and political dynamics and anxieties influence fictional engagement with the legitimacy of national expansion and the U.S. state concerning American Indian expropriation, genocide and reform. The forms this engagement takes can be read in new and extended ways by employing the lens of politically informed models of the psychological. Postcolonial psychoanalysis has proved an invaluable tool in yielding novel insights into the psychological dimensions of colonial situations and legacies. In its simplest terms, the approach involves studying colonialism through such psychoanalytic concepts as assimilation, incorporation, melancholia, haunting and de-metaphorisation. Writers such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and Octave Mannoni drew upon psychoanalysis in exploring the interrelations between the political aspects of colonialism and the psychological conditions of the colonisers and colonised.² I aim to adapt this framework to a nineteenth-century North American context and the literary expression of the 'psyche' of a dominant national consciousness. By looking at U.S. fiction from the era 1822-1884, I seek to demonstrate how the colonial project of national expansion and

¹ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

² Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, trans. by Pamela Powesland (London: Methuen & Co. 1956).

Albert Memmi, *Dominated Man: Notes Towards a Portrait* (New York: Orion Press, 1968).

Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. by Howard Greenfield (New York: The Orion Press, 1985).

consolidation was one haunted by historical events and memories that threatened to unravel the shared account of American identity.³ My aim is to achieve a better understanding of the formation, reinforcement and undermining of an ethnocentric American identity via literature by utilising a postcolonial psychoanalytic approach that is alert to patterns readable as both colonial or imperialist and psychical. In particular, I hope to reach new insights into how the handling of ‘the Indian’ figure and presence in nineteenth-century U.S. fiction reflects as well as is constituted by the development of colonial national identity.

Postcolonial Psychoanalysis

Ranjana Khanna’s theoretical work will form the foundation of my approach. In *Dark Continents* she argues that national affiliation is characterised by various narratives, melancholic symptoms and forms of historical remembrance. In reconsidering the psychoanalytic concept of the phantom in terms of postcoloniality and nationalism more generally, she argues that ‘it involves understanding the mechanism of affiliation to a nation (or to any artificial group) as being a markedly different phenomenon creating quite specific forms of haunting, narrative, sites of memory (Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*), and psychical affect’ (Khanna, p. 256). She also highlights the colonial origins of psychoanalysis and how Freud’s turn towards the political opened up new avenues for the theory’s application in examining the psychological effects brought about by colonial situations. As will be examined in detail in a subsequent section establishing my frameworks, mourning and

³ By national psyche or American consciousness I mean the emergence of a complex, mass pattern, constituted by various discourses, forms of power, cultural production and so on that influences literary texts which in turn contribute to its development; this pattern can be read as analogous to the individual psyche in the sense that psychoanalytic terms offer tools for understanding its processes and meanings. I recognise the concept of a national psyche is contentious. For example, Frederick Hertz states that a national consciousness encompasses ‘many strands and variations, extending from a subconscious, latent state of mind to a clear-cut ideology. It greatly varies both in nations and in individuals, and the definition that nations possess it does not mean that all individuals belonging to a nation have it to a large degree, or at all’. Frederick Hertz, *Nationality In History and Politics: A Study of The Psychology and Sociology of National Sentiment and Character* (London: Butler & Tanner, 1943), p. 15. In this thesis I do not use the term in a strictly sociological sense but in a cultural one as it relates to national fiction vis a vis the interrelations between politics, history and culture that may be characterised broadly in terms of a developing national identity and as Hertz puts it, the ‘Spirit of the Time’ (Hertz, p. 412).

melancholia in relation to the colonial experience becomes a significant subject for Khanna's discussion. Sam Durrant provides highly useful critical commentary on the interrelations between the two conditions and whether they can be distinguished. For the purpose of this thesis, I argue that melancholia characterises the treatment of the Indian in nineteenth-century American fiction, given that there is a concerted effort to repress historical memories and the awareness of underlying motivations relating to his displacement through violent national expansion and imposed assimilation.

Spectrality and haunting are other important concepts discussed by Khanna, Durrant and Paul Gilroy.⁴ In her discussion of Albert Memmi's semi-autobiographical fiction, *The Pillar of Salt* (1955), Khanna contends that the phantom in literature may be regarded as a phantasmal signifier for the repression of a memory or psychical event and argues that it can be placed in a public context as opposed to an exclusively individual one:

In other words, it is precisely the inassimilable that the literary text allows for, because the affective obscure and obsolete remain in a manner that calls much more for attention to the process of loss than to the successful transcendence of failure or immanence, or indeed the accomplishment of authenticity that Memmi suggests autobiographical writing claims (Khanna, p. 199).

On the other hand, for both Khanna and Durrant ghostliness can offer the possibility of conceiving an ethically guided, alternative future. For example, Khanna argues the following:

Unlike arguments concerning melancholic affectation, described in Wolf Lepenies, Walter Benjamin, and Wendy Brown as disabling in terms of imagining a politically different future, the affect of melancholia — as theorized by Freud, and by Abraham and Torok — points the way toward a political future free of the failures of postcolonial states and misguided biopolitics.⁵

Khanna's contentions regarding melancholic critical agency follow a similar rationale. I will take up this line of argument, which has been applied to contexts more readily seen as postcolonial, and adapt it to a nineteenth-century American literary frame. I contend that in

⁴ Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).

⁵ Ranjana Khanna, 'Post-Palliative: Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', *Postcolonial Text 2:1*, (2006), n.p. <<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/385/815>> [accessed 12 March 2012]

many cases the writers under consideration inadvertently disclose forms of critical agency, which conflict with their official discourses, as manifested through moments of haunting, gothicism, spectrality and textual dissonance.⁶ In the works of writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Robert Montgomery Bird, an alternative perspective on national expansion is heavily repressed yet identifiable in the form of melancholic textual symptoms.⁷ In the case of Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824)⁸ the spectralisation of the white character Charles raises the possibility of glimpsing an alternative future, in Khanna's terms, by placing him in a position of powerlessness equivalent to that experienced by women and Indians.

Khanna's discussion of demetaphorisation will also constitute a key focus, particularly in the first two chapters. Demetaphorisation is a kind of discursive limiting whereby the colonised are deprived of their metaphorical status as citizens. The colonial situation is characterised by oppositional categories between the coloniser and colonised. Demetaphorisation can also be wielded by postcolonial states in defining a new nationality, reducing complex political developments to an autobiographical simplicity. This concept will primarily inform my reading of the works of Cooper and Bird in terms of how they conflate adversarial Indian tribes such as the Huron and Shawnees with the demonic and animalistic to validate national expansion.

⁶ It can also be argued that they reflect how the national psyche negotiates with the Indian in terms of its ego-ideal. Khanna defines Freud's theorisation of the ego-ideal as the direction of energies associated with identity creation towards the values of parents or the collective. Her following summation is useful to consider: 'the ego-ideal is an agency or personality that is a combination of narcissism (ego-cathexis – idealization of the ego) and identification with the parents, their substitutes, or their collective values' (Khanna, p. 262). What should be noted here is the idea of collective values. In my thesis I will refer to the disparity between the American psyche's values with respect to democracy, anti-colonialism and so on, crystallised in its ego-ideal, and dissonant cultural attitudes and state policies towards Native Americans. The gap between them generates a melancholic critical agency in the novels.

⁷ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

Robert Montgomery Bird, *Nick of the Woods* (New Haven: College & University Press, 1967).

⁸ Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok* (Berkeley: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

In her discussion of Jacques Lacan's reflections on national community, Khanna provides a useful analysis of otherness and how it can be conceived in the colonial imagination to project the desires of the colonisers. I will use Lacan and Khanna's analyses to explore how the Indian is appropriated by nineteenth-century American writers to define a sense of American identity. Additionally, Dominic LaCapra's discussion⁹ of the idea of the historical sublime relating to the horror of the Holocaust will prove productive in my delineation of how writers like Cooper and Bird negotiate with violent frontier expansion in terms of their respective ideals of the nation as a divinely sanctified, civilised and legitimate institution. By contrast, Herman Melville points to such elided realities in his parody of Judge Hall's account of the 'Indian-hater' Colonel Moredock in *The Confidence-Man* (1857) yet does not attempt to rationalise them through direct representation.¹⁰ His novel expresses an existential disenfranchisement with that nation and consequently he engages in a satirical mockery of it, forgoing the work of legitimating it historically and as a political institution. As will become clearer when I turn to this subject in detail later on in the thesis, Melville in not attempting to legitimate frontier expansion allows its associated historical spectres of Indian genocide and displacement to emerge indirectly.

American Literary Backgrounds

In terms of American cultural history, Anne Anlin Cheng and Michael Paul Rogin have drawn upon psychoanalytic ideas to expound on the nation's melancholic negotiation with the betrayal of its founding principles through practices such as slavery and Native American displacement.¹¹ In a way that is influential for my project, Robert Clark has employed

⁹ Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1984).

¹¹ Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

psychoanalysis in an early American literary frame regarding the colonisation of the frontier.¹² As will become clear, Roy Harvey Pearce's foundational work *Savagism and Civilisation* (1988) has also proved to be valuable in terms of historically contextualising my analysis of Indian demetaphorisation and the emergence of Indian reform as a significant political movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹³ In addition, Richard Slotkin's observations are similarly relevant on the early American settlers, regarding their attempts to create a new identity while remaining true to their origins under the psychical pressure of exility and the later appropriation of Indian myths to distinguish national selfhood.¹⁴ Richard Drinnon has criticised Slotkin's categorisation of writers by region.¹⁵ However, it is my contention that the overall thrust of Slotkin's argument is useful for making distinctions between writers such as Cooper and Bird and the respective approaches they take to the Indian.

Furthermore, Renée Bergland, James Folsom and Teresa Goddu have looked at American literary texts such as Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* (1799), John Neal's *Logan* (1822) and Samuel Woodworth's *Champions of Freedom* (1816) to explore how their gothic conventions reflect the evolution of the national psyche relating to the history of frontier conquest. Bergland in particular highlights how the Indians of *Edgar Huntly* arguably embody the historical conflict between Native Americans and the United States in terms of

Michael Paul Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

¹² Robert Clark, *History, Ideology and Myth in American Fiction, 1823-52* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984).

¹³ Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

¹⁴ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of The American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 18.

¹⁵ Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating & Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), pp. 144-146.

the novel's conflation of the national with the personal.¹⁶ She also details how the Indian becomes a figurative national father in Woodworth's novel with the transformation of the Mysterious Chief into George Washington. A similar theme of inheritance through the Indian, as a way of resolving the psychical split brought about by the revolution of the colonies against British rule, will be shown to be identifiable in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Furthermore, David Mogen, Scott Sanders and Joanne Karpinski contend that the gothic represents the displacement of inassimilable memories into a supernatural realm that represents an alternate history to the official historical narrative of the nation.¹⁷ This idea is paralleled in influential work by D.H. Lawrence and Leslie Fielder who make comparable arguments regarding the gothic frontier as a repository for the nation's repressed history of territorial expansion. James Folsom argues that the gothic wilderness signifies the moral uncertainty that underlies violent frontier conquest.

Despite this wealth of research into the role of the Indian in the psychical and political evolution of American identity, there has been little work towards a sustained comparative analysis of literary texts framed in the conceptual terms of postcolonialism and psychoanalysis. By drawing comparisons and contrasts between the different approaches of Cooper, Bird, Child, Jackson¹⁸ and Melville and relating them to the idea that Indian removal was in essence a colonial project that shaped, and was shaped by, the emerging American

¹⁶ Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny* (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2000), p. 53.

James K. Folsom, 'Gothicism in the Western Novel', in *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at The Frontier in American Literature*, ed. by David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, Joanne B. Karpinski, (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), pp. 28-42

Teresa Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ David Mogen, Scott Sanders, Joanne Karpinski (eds.), *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at The Frontier in American Literature* (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), p. 16.

¹⁸ Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2008).

‘psyche’, I aim to reveal a new and deeper understanding of the dynamics of such politico-psychical patterns and effects in a literary context.

Although Khanna’s discussions of colonial psychical dynamics might seem somewhat removed from a nineteenth-century U.S colonial context, I will demonstrate throughout this thesis that many of the issues she details share elements and insights that are relevant and applicable to a U.S. situation. While she focuses particularly on melancholia and affect in relation to the colonial subject, I will explore how these processes also surface within the American national psyche as represented by my chosen authors, in relation to the loss of the national ideal, discursive conflict, repression and haunting. I contend that these symptoms derive from the psychical damage and dissonance that emerges from the nation’s engagement in a colonial project, not dissimilar to the European colonialism that Khanna interrogates, which is at odds with its projected ego-ideal. Furthermore, the question of U.S.-Anglo relations I will go on to consider serves to further reinforce conceptual affinities with the colonial issues detailed by Khanna. As I will demonstrate in my readings of these texts, it is due to the comparable yet differentiated context of her analyses that it is possible to shed new light on fictional representations of the nineteenth-century American national psyche and its negotiation with the Native American presence.

Khanna’s work focuses on the evolution of postcolonial psychoanalysis in terms of European imperialism and the nations or peoples they held in subjugation. Additionally, Durrant, Gilroy and Avery Gordon¹⁹ provide excellent analyses of the forms of mourning and haunting that manifest themselves relating to subjects such as slavery and cultures hijacked by either foreign powers or oppressive institutions. Nonetheless, in terms of the developing U.S. national psyche where does the Native American fit into this wider field of research that

¹⁹ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and The Sociological Imagination* (Albany: New York University Press, 2004).

may readily be characterised as postcolonial psychoanalysis? My project will draw on a range of psychoanalytic approaches to colonial relations, mining several key conceptual paradigms, which will be brought to bear on the formation of American national consciousness in the nineteenth century in connection with the Indian. By exploring the literary texts under discussion via the language of psychoanalysis and postcolonialism, I hope to develop new lines within the heavily populated area of representations of the U.S. frontier and vanishing Indians. This method should provide an insight not only into the emergence of a national consciousness but into how that national consciousness operated in political terms and how this related to Indian removal, later assimilation and American sovereignty. The reflection of the development of the American psyche in the literature of this period constitutes a significant subject of inquiry given the backdrop of a revolutionary separation from older European political structures and the enactment of a form of domestic imperialism, the dynamics of which can be traced in my selected fiction.

I specifically look at nineteenth-century literature as it arises from an era in which national expansion and consolidation resulted in the emergence of the modern U.S. nation state and the treatment of the Indian according to an array of discourses: historically informed, governmental and cultural. My focus on five European American authors allows understanding of the shaping of a dominant national consciousness whilst also taking a complex view of that consciousness's aspirations, anxieties and prejudices.

Mapping the Thesis

A major theme throughout this thesis is the loss of a national ideal. With the exception of Melville, in each novel there is the articulation of a national vision relating to the place of the Indian. I will explore how these ideals are essentially melancholic, in being built upon the grounds of repression, through examining strategies such as historical revisionism, disavowal,

ideological rhetoric, generic conventions and so forth. Although I will discuss the particular value of my chosen texts for the subject of this thesis in greater depth at the end of this introduction, it is useful to note some rationales for their selection at this point. The first three novels are works of historical fiction that take various approaches to envisioning the origins of the State whilst reflecting the contexts of their production. Cooper in setting his celebrated novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) in a pre-revolutionary period is able to create a continuous sense of national history that avoids the psychical schism introduced by the War of Independence. In addition, he refigures the expropriation of Native Americans as a fated event to repress the inassimilable aspects of this historical memory for the national psyche. Bird's *Nick of the Woods* (1837) while popular in its time is now a comparatively obscure work in the American literary canon. I will look at how its Indian-hating discourse and grotesque violence lead to the loss of its national ideal. Both Cooper and Bird present masculinist portraits of frontier settlement with an emphasis on military prowess and the violent removal of hostile Indian forces.

The rhetoric of the forced displacement of Native Americans and their annihilation was not the only dominant form in the early nineteenth century. It is for this reason that I turn to Child's *Hobomok* (1824), a novel that advances a more inclusive national model through its combination of domestic romance with historical fiction. Although I will not dwell in detail on region, it is also interesting to note how the frontier line moves further west in these three novels. Cooper sets his work in the upper state New York region while the events in Child's novel take place in seventeenth-century New England. Bird moves further to the mid-West with his late eighteenth-century Kentucky setting. This can be linked not only to their choice of historical eras but also arguably reflects how the nation was yet to become fully consolidated in the early quarter of the nineteenth century. In this context, their various representations of the Indian allow us an insight into the formation of the national

consciousness as it contended with expansion and its ideal sense of the nation as a democratic institution and break from Old World tyranny.

By the time Jackson set to work on *Ramona* (1884) the frontier had been effectively colonised and it is therefore not coincidental that she should choose to set her novel in California. In a comparable manner to Child, Jackson works against masculine conceptions of violent frontier conquest whilst advocating for Indian assimilation. Nonetheless, I propose there is a dissonance at the heart of her reform agenda, which more generally reflects the nation's melancholic negotiation with its historical treatment of the Indian. In the final chapter, I detail how the theme of the confidence trick in Melville's satire, *The Confidence-Man* (1857), has a particular retrospective bearing on the pattern of the incorporation of the Indian into the national archive through various narratives, ideological discourses and forms of repression that are present in the other novels.

Literary analysis of the formation of American national identity regarding its original act of imperialism, Indian removal, has not been performed in an extensive manner through the methodological framework of postcolonial psychoanalysis until now. With this particular configuration of fictional works, which cross a range of genres and modes from frontier romance, the gothic and Indian-hating to Indian reform and satire, I hope to further already existing knowledge relating to the American psyche and the frontier. I seek to achieve this through a sustained reading of the interactions between the psychical and the political in these works emergent from different points in the nineteenth century. The patterns of erasure, repression, haunting, melancholia and assimilation in the novels relate to one of the central questions posed by the thesis: in what ways did the presence and discourse of the Indian impact upon the evolution of American identity and the national consciousness with respect to the legitimacy of the State and its history of expansion? In view of this, can similar implications and patterns be discerned concerning the psychical effects of the colonisation of

subject cultures by pluralistic or 'democratic' societies and, on a related note, can a general framework describing the taxonomy of the imperialist psyche be delineated? A further question arises as to how literary fiction reinforced and departed from national perceptions of the Indian and how this can be understood in the context of an evolving nineteenth-century American identity, which negotiates with the melancholic loss of the national ideal, effectuated through historical policies of Indian removal and assimilation. I hope to demonstrate how the encrypted 'secrets' or 'phantoms' of the selected works reflect those of a melancholic nationalism more generally with respect to the colonial treatment of the Indian.

II. Frames and Methods: Postcolonial Psychoanalytic Concepts

I will next detail the principle concepts that arise throughout the thesis before discussing Khanna's account of the history of postcolonial psychoanalysis, which will further elucidate how these concepts can be brought to bear in a meaningful sense on colonial situations. I will also discuss relevant psychoanalytic theories as they have been utilised by other critics to clarify my approach and demonstrate how it can provide new insights into nineteenth-century American literature. The primary concepts, drawn from Khanna's *Dark Continents*, namely melancholia, repression, haunting, the spectre and the effect of the Other on national ego formation, will be detailed throughout this section and will be variously further explored in subsequent chapters to extrapolate how the authors in question approached the issue of American national expansion with respect to the Indian.

In *Dark Continents* Khanna draws upon Freud's conceptions of the unconscious, repression and the development of human society in relation to his meditations on national and colonial archaeology and anthropology, to formulate the basis for using psychoanalysis in postcolonial terms. To this end, she appropriates Freud's metaphor of the 'dark continent' for female sexuality, which was also used by Henry Morton Stanley to describe Africa, as a means of critically engaging with psychoanalysis in terms of women and colonialism (Khanna, p. ix). She seeks to read psychoanalysis as a Eurocentric discipline in order to transform its politics such that it can be used to unravel colonialism's psychical effects. Therefore, she argues that 'psychoanalysis itself is a colonial discipline, and that, as such, it provides mechanisms for the critique of postcoloniality and neocolonialism' (Khanna, p. x). She details how Freud's 'psychoanalytic self' emerged in the context of nineteenth and twentieth-century colonialism concerning the interactions between European nation states and colonised countries. Furthermore, she looks at his shift in envisaging the ego as he moved from an anthropological model of repression to an economic one involving drives due

to his altered relationship to the nation state, the Habsburg Empire and Nazi occupied Vienna. She contends that his reformulation of subjectivity enabled for psychoanalytic accounts of the nation state, which she details with respect to writers such as Fanon, Memmi and Mannoni. In essence, Khanna highlights the colonialist origins of psychoanalysis, advocating for a parochialised approach to colonial situations which avoids universalisation and the replication of colonial assumptions. She also adopts Freud's terms, melancholy and melancholia, demonstrating how they can be used to critique colonialism and its effects. Khanna argues that we should contemplate national affiliation as a distinct process, entailing specific forms of haunting, narrative, sites of memory and psychical affect. The concept of melancholia is of significance in this respect.¹

There are a number of issues to take into account in attempting to distinguish between mourning and melancholia. For example, Sam Durrant discusses Jacques Derrida's idea of inconsolable mourning, which renders the distinction between mourning and melancholia obsolete.² The sense of a healthy period of mourning changes in a collective context. For the individual, the refusal to see an end to mourning works against the possibility of an alternative future. By contrast, for the collective, remembrance is a way of envisioning a new future such that history cannot repeat itself (Durrant, p. 9). Durrant argues that the endless repetition compulsion characterising mourning and melancholia creates a crisis for Freud in formulating a theory of the instincts. Melancholia appears to subvert the idea of the pleasure principle and an organism's will to survive in its fixation with painful experiences. In

¹ For Freud, melancholia is akin to mourning in its form and symptoms. However, in contrast to mourning it is persistent. In the process of mourning the lost object is digested such that one can accept that loss which is eventually assimilated into the ego. Melancholia constitutes a refusal to mourn with the incorporation of an inassimilable object. The ego is unable to recognise that which is lost and swallows it whole. This causes the ego to split, generating critical agency which leads to the critique of palliatives, alibis and gestures.

² Sam Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning: J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, and Toni Morrison* (Albany: New York University Press, 2004), p. 9.

psychoanalytic terms, mourning is distinguished from melancholia by virtue of its intent (Durrant, pp. 9-10).

For Khanna, melancholia can be characterised in an ethico-political context as a remainder which ‘insists on its own covert symptomatic presence’ (Khanna, ‘Post Palliative’ n.p.).³ In these terms, she proposes that melancholia can be interpreted to constitute a failure to assimilate the ego-ideal of a new group. For example, a postcolonial people in forming a new national consciousness would be unable to predicate it on an ego-ideal associated with the European nation state given that such an ego-ideal is historically linked to exclusivist colonial policies. The ideal of nation statehood would also be lost due to their compromised assimilation into a previous colonial social formation. According to Khanna, critical nationalism, haunting and demetaphorisation are products of critical agency or melancholic postcoloniality.

Repression, as a means of negotiating with inassimilable realities, leads to haunting in the national consciousness. Khanna contends that haunting is analogous to melancholic incorporation which involves a refusal to mourn and the conscious decision to withhold information by partitioning it into the national archive: ‘in the colonial archive both the symptom of and the cure for the erasure of the failure of representation can be read in terms of the ongoing failure of psychical assimilation of the ego-ideal in the nation state’.⁴ Her discussion on Derrida’s conception of the archive is useful to consider here. In ‘Archive

³ Ranjana Khanna, ‘Post-Palliative: Coloniality’s Affective Dissonance’, *Postcolonial Text 2:1*, (2006), n.p. <<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/385/815>> [accessed 12 March 2012]

⁴ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 265. The archive in this sense refers to the historical narrative of a group or nation which presupposes the existence of a collective memory. In the case of a colonial power it may be predicated on the repression of certain past events that it is unable to assimilate. Alternately, a challenging group may use its own archive to bring certain facts to light and reinterpret established narratives of memory. Khanna states that the primary function of the archive is to reinforce the authority of the *archon* which conveys a shared past to the people of the nation through news or research.

Fever' (1995) Derrida argues that the archive comes into existence at the point where memory ceases to function. Khanna considers this reading to demonstrate that the archive is a monument of and memorial to collective memory.

In the case of the national archive, its existence is testimony to the will of the nation or, in Renan's terms, the daily plebiscite that wills the nation into existence: remembering to forget, or assimilating psychically, the events that threaten to unsettle the official national narrative housed in the archive (Khanna, p. 271).

Particular events are therefore represented in terms of the national narrative as they cannot be assimilated into memory. Khanna concludes that the collective memory represses such events in a process of 'remembering to forget' (Khanna, p. 271). The archive constitutes a central fixture in the nation state as a site of memory, which supports the national narrative by those anonymous individuals who make up the national body. She explains that the inability to assimilate the drives of the object results in the formation of a secret or phantom identifiable in the concealment of incorporation.

Khanna claims that the inassimilable is expressed in literary texts given that the affective, obscure and obsolete linger such that they draw attention to the process of loss (Khanna, pp. 198-199). In this context melancholic nationalism constitutes a central fixture of the novels I will analyse. In *The Last of the Mohicans* Cooper creates a mythologised world which elides the realities of Indian genocide and displacement. Similarly, Bird's *Nick of the Woods* supports America's history of violent national expansion, conveying the idea that all Indians should be exterminated even though the horrific aspects of such a proposition threaten overwhelm its narrative. In *Hobomok*, Child's model of national inclusivity is ultimately homogenous and ethno-centric, although she does anticipate a space for Indian subjectivity through the radical politics of her novel. By contrast, Melville in *The Confidence-Man* adopts a critical position towards American national identity and serves to

deconstruct any sense of a national ideal in a process that I argue is more akin to mourning than melancholia.

For Khanna the phantom is definable as a trans-generationally mediated signifier of repression derived from trauma or a repressed secret that has not been introjected through assimilation, but which has instead been incorporated or swallowed whole. She contends that phantoms can be passed down through 'familial lines', such that 'one can, in a sense, be in possession of (and therefore possessed by rather than in ownership of) someone else's repression' (Khanna, p. 255). The phantom is an emergent property of this secret or repression as a symptom and signifier in the use of the word, performative acts and the writing of narratives. By treating psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic rather than a curative discipline, Khanna asserts that we can consider the phantom in a public and ideological context, which is productive in analysing postcoloniality and nationalism in general. Hence, phantoms are transmissible through constructed groups rather than through bloodlines according to this framework (Khanna, p. 256). The concept of the phantom will become a key point of discussion, principally with respect to *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Nick of the Woods* and *Hobomok*.

According to Khanna, demetaphorisation as a melancholic symptom entails the literal experience of figurative ideas. The loss of metaphor results in the division of coloniality into oppositional and non-metaphorical categories. Consequently, nouns like coloniser and colonised arise out of terms, such as the colonial situation, which only make sense adjectively (Khanna, p. 166). The fashioning of an identity through affiliation involves conscious and unconscious choices between groups in conjunction with their actions and the archives formed by them. Khanna asserts that national independence is the key towards a political cure although this leads to different psychological questions with respect to the old European nation states and 'new' nation states, which constitute the post colonies of Europe. She contends that

such outcomes generate their own configurations of disavowal given the impossibility of reverting to a political or psychical state before the colonial period (Khanna, pp. 166-167). The structures embedded in affiliation are argued by Khanna to render the idea of collective memory as an effect of demetaphorisation in a reduction of the historical to the autobiographical (Khanna, p. 256). Khanna's understanding of demetaphorisation suggests that it is principally a manipulation of language intended to control discursive parameters. Citing Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok's work on the subject, she notes that metaphorical language becomes literalised and unidimensional.⁵ This serves to support national narratives of legitimation by repressing historical complexities: 'The reason for this is an elaborate burial, or a secret encrypted in the prose of much European philosophy and literature that builds on narrative destruction or erasure' (Khanna, p. 25). By the same token, a postcolonial state in consolidating national solidarity might disseminate a national history based on binary distinctions between it and its former colonisers. National history in terms of affiliation and a sense of national self is simplified through this discursive limiting via the demetaphorisation of language. This contention arguably contributes to our understanding of the psychical processes underlying the prominence of oppositional nouns in novels such as *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the Woods* and the concepts they espouse pertaining to the general theme of savagism versus civilisation.

⁵ As regards Abraham and Torok Christopher Lane provides an insightful discussion concerning the problematic aspects of their response to Freudian theory and their concepts of the shell and the kernel and introjection and incorporation. Christopher Lane, 'The Testament of the other: Abraham and Torok's Failed Expiation of Ghosts', *Diacritics*, 27/4 (1997), 3-29. Lane notes Abraham's idea of the encrypted space, where the drives of the 'Kernel' (Abraham's reformulation of Freud's unconscious) are neatly formulated or 'enclosed' at the level of the 'Shell' (consciousness), in what might be likened to an 'Envelope'. However, the 'Envelope' can also leak that which it encloses, which Lane contends raises the problem of the Freudian unconscious as an alien domain at war with the ego, one that effectively 'haunts' Abraham and Torok's positive reconceptualisation of the unconscious as an organic system that can be wielded to achieve psychological harmony and unity (Lane, pp. 9-12). Rather than subscribing to these concepts in their totality, I aim to take the underlying metaphorical principles from them and relate them to repression, assimilation, haunting and fantasy/myth in terms of reaching a more incisive understanding of the political-psychical dimensions of the literary texts under consideration.

Self-other epistemic relations and how the colonial gaze projects an imagined ideal of the Other that represses its identity are central issues in relation to *Ramona* and *Hobomok*. A useful way of introducing these concepts is to briefly look at Khanna's overview of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) in which she states that the focus of the work concerns how the black man perceives the white man. For Fanon the white man defines his black counterpart (Khanna, p. 182).

Khanna extends this theory, positing that the mirror introduces an ambiguity in the recognition of oneself and its lack if it is considered as a medium of reflection. She writes that the Real could be interpreted to be fragments of a mirror in that it is generated through discursive networks established by actors or mirror makers in civil and political society, which functions to define the reflection of the individual's ego. The absolute Other becomes a template for the projection of subjectivity. Whilst it can be occasionally perceived with its fragmentation and alienation from the projected image, it is relegated to an invisible status. Therefore, the subject would perceive her or himself as being constituted by the reflection of the mirror and in a conflicted relationship with it. This would introduce an oscillation between the Ideal image and the invisible repressed Other upon which it is based (Khanna, pp. 182-183).

Khanna uses Jacques Lacan's metaphor of hexagonal honey pots to delineate the effects of French nationalism on identity formation and the national consciousness. She notes that Lacan's arguments pose the risk of ignoring how racially different subjects such as the Martiniquan black man are constituted within the community of French nationalism (Khanna, pp. 182-185). In reducing social antagonism to its psychological equivalent, she contends that Lacan's framework overlooks the nuances entailed in identity formation regarding the ambiguity, freedoms and oppressions that characterise relations between the subject and the Other.

Collapsing the social to the psychical lacks a fundamental distinction between ambivalence and ambiguity (often manifested as memory and history) [...] For without these distinctions, the ethical is inevitably pursued only in terms of the subject as an ethical responsibility to oneself; and a social antagonism is implicitly always caused by the psychical antagonism because it is reduced to the psychical work of fantasy formation (Khanna, p. 186).

This constitutes an important turn in her general line of emphasising particularity in the analysis of postcolonial situations. With this theoretical qualification in mind, her overview of Lacan's metaphor provides a useful template for the consideration of the Other in my selected novels. The containment of desire within political boundaries is likened to the plentiful harvest of honey in pots. These boundaries generate pleasure in establishing a sense of community in addition to setting out the criteria for acceptable pleasure, despite the fact that desire overrides these parameters. The pleasure engendered in national community is affected by a desire for and of the Other, which informs the pattern of the boundaries in question. The desire which is collected by the metaphorical honeypot of nationalism is identifiable as a fiction of community. Furthermore, that which lies outside the Symbolic can only be accounted for in the terms set out by the Symbolic, since it defines those things which exceed its limits (Khanna, p. 184). Thus, the national community is affected by a desire for and of the Other which informs the nature of its boundaries. 'It is this fiction, which Lacan will call the Symbolic, that at once binds the ego (and perhaps the nation) and sets the limits of pleasure and shapes the unconscious (which exceeds the borders set up by the Symbolic)' (Khanna, p. 184). I will adapt Khanna's use of Lacan's metaphor in her take on the influence of the Other upon the national community to discuss how the Indian Other constitutes an object that is understood through the imaginative parameters established by Jackson in *Ramona*. Khanna's conceptualisation of the perception of the Other according to a national symbolic framework will also be extended to the works of Child and Melville. Thus, in *Hobomok* an authentic otherness is recognised though not directly articulated, whereas *The Confidence-Man* satirises the process by which the passengers of the *Fidèle* envision Indians in their appropriative use of calumets and other Indian artefacts. In novels such as *Nick of the*

Woods and *The Confidence-Man*, the unrepresentable nature of historical memories pertaining to frontier colonisation is an important issue. Moreover, this theme arguably underscores the use of repression in all the texts, as they attempt to maintain a national ideal through the rationalisation of realities that threaten to jeopardise it.

Dominic LaCapra approaches the unrepresentable in relation to acting out and working through, which will become prominent considerations in my later reading of *The Confidence-Man*. LaCapra associates acting out with repetition compulsions, unworked through transference, modes of performativity, inconsolable melancholy and the sublime. He argues that the Holocaust has often been repressed as a sequence of events that cannot be represented.⁶ LaCapra writes that the Shoah was an historical event that exceeded the conceptual limits of the imagination, arguing that its traumatic dimension should not be denied or hidden by a redemptive narrative. In relation to this, Eric Santner explores the idea of narrative fetishism in 'History beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma' (1992). He contends that narrative fetishism involves the use of a narrative to repress the traces of trauma or loss which originally brought it into being. By displacing trauma and generating a façade of cohesion, the narrative prematurely reinstates the pleasure principle without going through the process of mourning.

LaCapra's reading of the historical sublime and melancholia in conjunction with his overview on Santner's work on the incorporation of trauma through narrative relates to my analysis of national discourses of legitimation, the repression of historical memories

⁶ On a related note, Paul Gilroy discusses novels such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, which he contends explores social memory in terms of historical 'terrors' that exceed the limits of language to describe them. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 208. Furthermore, he suggests that parallels may exist between Jewish servitude, the Holocaust and black slavery, arguing that if one were to contextualise *Beloved* in such a frame, it would be possible to delineate the limits and status of rational human behaviour, scientific claims and humanist ideologies, which were implicated in these histories (and by extension others such as that of Indian displacement and extermination).

regarding Indian removal and genocide, and the symptoms of haunting and acting out such repression entails. It will be seen that the American psyche in contending with aspects of its history that jeopardise its ego-ideal deploys narrative strategies to legitimate the establishment and continued growth of the nation, which results in the denial of the Indian as a figure of equal status. However, the effect of this process leads to spectrality and melancholia in the repetition of certain signifiers, conventions, and narrative turns. In relation to LaCapra's analysis of the Shoah, my use of the terms 'Other' and 'sublime' with respect to *The Confidence-Man*, *Ramona* and *Hobomok* should not be taken to mean that there is a history of the United States that cannot be retrieved or that the American Indian is an inherently unknowable figure. Rather, I wish to emphasise the limitations of the nineteenth-century American cultural imagination in contending with concrete, volatile historical realities and autonomous cultural perceptions.

The Evolution of Postcolonial Psychoanalysis

The historical development of postcolonial psychoanalysis suggests that the concepts discussed can yield fruitful insights into a range of political situations. Consequently, by detailing the emergence of such theoretical paradigms and their advantages and disadvantages, I aim to clarify how my approach allows new understandings of the formation of national identity in nineteenth-century American literature. Khanna asserts that Sartre is an influential figure in the development of postcolonial psychoanalysis.

In his model of existential psychoanalysis, Sartre rejects the idea of the unconscious given that the mental act is co-extensive with consciousness. He distinguishes between known and unknown actions but argues that they all take place within the realm of conscious thought. In his view, the colonial project entailed a conscious choice to know the unknown which had entered the consciousness of the West (Khanna, p. 106). In addition, the unknown

was to be exploited under the pretence of exploration. The censoring of information was regarded by Sartre to be a conscious act. He considered the psychoanalytical model to be beneficial in accounting for the totality of the self in each action, which demanded individual responsibility. Sartre contends that if actions and feelings are assigned to the inaccessible unconscious then no one can be held accountable for anything they do. In *Being and Nothingness* (1947) he argues that the subject should be responsible for itself such that it can be responsible for others.⁷ We choose to live in bad faith if we ignore our conscience, which reminds us that we are making a choice contrary to freedom.

Sartre's influence on the early postcolonial psychoanalytical thinkers is evident given that he wrote prefaces to texts on decolonisation such as Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (1957) and Léopold Senghor's *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache* (1948).⁸ Furthermore, his theories contributed to the wider discourse of postcolonialism. In his essay 'The Oppression of Blacks in the United States', which appeared in the appendix to the posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics* (1992), Sartre argues that slavery was institutionally condoned and thus served to relieve the oppressor's conscience through its legitimisation (Khanna, p. 129). Furthermore, the third and fourth generations of oppressors would not have any painful memory of violence with which to associate slavery as it would be normalised. This process also applied to colonialism. Consequently, the oppressor is unaware of the oppression he engages in and presumes it to be a natural state of affairs. Thus, the gaze from the black man causes him to review his languages and institutions and commits

⁷ Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by H.E. Barnes (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 552-553.

⁸ Khanna notes that there were other theorists apart from Sartre such as Aimé Césaire and René Ménénil who, in seeking to evaluate the specifics of coloniality through psychoanalysis and politics, anticipated the arguments of writers like Fanon, Memmi and Mannoni (Khanna, p. 119).

him to a new form consciousness.⁹ Sartre argues that the oppressor may be unable to recognise himself when he is judged an oppressor by the oppressed. In the context of the novels, a recurrent theme is the constant legitimisation of the American state. In this sense, we can see how the idea of legitimisation has particular relevance to the creation of a useable American past through forms of repression, such as mythologisation and ideological discourses.

Although Fanon critiqued Sartre's role in the development of Negritude, Khanna notes how there was some overlap in terms of their approaches. A significant idea that Fanon advanced was the idea of sociogeny in understanding the psyche of the Negro. This idea was similar to Sartre's situated analysis, which asserted the existence of an authentic being in contrast to one which was a masochistic projection of the white man. Sociological factors influenced man to act in certain ways and in order to be liberated he would need to act with consciousness and against 'bad faith' (Khanna, p. 139).

Fanon postulated how the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage could be employed in delineating the relationship between the black man and the white man and explored the influence of social context on the constitution of the racially differentiated subject in his use of concepts drawn from Sartre and Lacan. Khanna attributes this factor to Fanon's increasing interest in Negritude and the political power of black culture, despite the fact that he essentialises blackness in a comparable manner to the nativist trend in nationalist culture, which he describes as the second stage of decolonisation. In my readings of the selected novels, the issue of how the Indian Other is portrayed is of central relevance. The differential relations noted by Fanon between the black man and white man, regarding the white man's

⁹ Sartre's analysis of Jews, anti-Semites, the coloniser and colonised drew upon this conception of group identifications in a similar manner to Fanon's critique. In his view, the gaze of the third person allowed one to acquire consciousness pertaining to how one is seen and consequently to which group one belongs in terms of class-consciousness, racial consciousness, ethnic consciousness and so forth (Khanna, pp. 139-140).

projection of the black man, can also be applied to European American representations of the Indian.

Durrant provides further detail on these relations, which will be useful to consider regarding the effects of historical memories and epistemic violence. Fanon delineates the psychical loss attending the encounter between the white man and the black man in a chapter entitled 'The Fact of Blackness' in *Black Skin, White Masks*. His hyperreal imagery implies that the category of 'blackness' is a constructed one: 'On that day, I took myself off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be but a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood'.¹⁰ For Fanon blackness is a memorial of the self's forced dislocation from its own corporeality due to epistemic violence wrought by colonial racial categories. This is indicated by the reference to black blood that 'spatters' his body and the remembrance of this act of violence in the symbol of his 'mourning clothes' (Fanon, pp. 79-80). Blackness is therefore represented as an injury and the memory of an injury, which suggests that there can be no end to mourning. That the narrative concludes with a sense of mourning infers that even the attempts of Negritude poets to recast blackness as a positive category are ineffectual.

Durrant believes that this image highlights a schism in time in memorialising a traumatic event whilst refusing to chronologise it.

It does not retrieve an encounter with the white man's gaze that occurred at a particular place and time but rather marks an experience that is unhistoricizable both because it repeats itself infinitely, in Fanon's life and in the lives of other black men (and, in a different form, the lives of black women), and because the experience is in and of itself an experience of the breakdown of chronology, a confirmation that the black man is indeed, to paraphrase Hegel, outside history, forcibly excluded from the time of modernity (Durrant, p. 16).

Durrant claims that Fanon focuses on the invisibility and supervisibility of the racially marked body. The practice of disavowing the racial Other is an integral ideological

¹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 79.

component of European colonisation which constitutes a foreclosure on the enslaved or native presence. Conversely, the racially marked subject haunts the white psyche, which infers that the denial of the subjectivity of the racial Other causes it to return as a threatening spectral body. For Durrant, this dualism informs the materiality of spectres within postcolonial narratives. In relation to American literature, a similar pattern of haunting can be discerned as a consequence of seeking to justify the erasure of the Indian presence from American history.

According to Lewis Gordon, Fanon de-ontologised psychoanalysis by emphasising the social conditions in which symbols are generated in terms of colonialism and the expectations which require the elimination of undesirable subjects for systemic coherence.¹¹ As with Abdul Jean Mohamed in *The Death-Bound Subject* (2005) and Freud in *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930), Fanon argues that superstructural or super-egological frameworks influence human behaviour and that they need to be transformed for the purpose of a healthy human existence (Gordon, pp. 206-207). The relationship between historical/social factors, aspects of genre and narrative developments in the texts to be considered and their reciprocal imbrication in the formation of the nineteenth-century American national consciousness, exemplifies Fanon's contention that external societal factors affect human behaviour.¹²

Fanon observed that the prioritisation of ethics and its structural repression brought about an ethical derailment. Ethics are premised on a mutual recognition between humans that is lacking for some groups in the modern world. A self-other dialectic underscores ethical relations whereby the Other is recognised in terms of a continuum of relations which

¹¹ 224-235 (p. 206).

¹² This view is echoed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1985) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). For further information on Said's arguments in *Orientalism* concerning European imperial culture and its imposition on the Arab Muslim East, see Nadia Abu El Haj, 'Edward Said and the Political Present', *American Ethnologist*, 32/4 (2005), 538-555 (p. 541).

involve the self: 'In effect, the other, then, is part of the continuum of relations constitutive of the self, which affords obligation to others and also obligations to the self' (Gordon, p. 207).

In racist relations the self-other dialectic is non-existent. Fanon refers to this state of affairs as a 'zone of nonbeing' in *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon, p. 10). The anti-racist struggle in this sense becomes one dedicated to the reclamation of otherness that serves to threaten the existing ethical order. As will be seen in later chapters, this argument provides a useful background context for readings of the treatment of the Other in *Ramona* and *Hobomok*.

Fanon argued that repression was a byproduct of oppression as people developed psychological problems in adapting their psyches to socially imposed mental structures. Fanon advocated for a different form of nation building compared to that of European colonialism. Consequently, he also called for an alternative understanding of the psychical structure of man. Emulation of the European nationalist blueprint would mean adopting its exclusivist politics, its racism and its homicidal tendencies. Khanna perceives that Fanon connects the social and the individuated through psychoanalysis with respect to nation state formation. Repression worked against the idea of a homogenous society (Khanna, pp. 168-169). Colonised peoples were taught to assimilate the values of the same society that they were excluded from. This concept has a significant bearing on Khanna's treatment of colonial trauma in her overall framework of postcolonial psychoanalysis. Although Fanon detailed how repression worked in terms of subordinated peoples incorporating inassimilable, colonially imposed social structures, I will adopt the same terminology to describe how the American state represses historical memories that are inassimilable to its sense of self. Moreover, while the idea of the American state as a postcolonial nation is problematic, the fact that American authors were invested in distinguishing the nation from the British Empire arguably has some parallels with Fanon's concept of a new national blueprint. This subject will be explored in greater depth with *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Hobomok*.

Khanna states that for Memmi the nature of oppression and the means by which it evolved could only be understood through an exploration of details relating to the personal. According to Memmi, the successful development of the nation state could be achieved by a critical engagement with the past, interiority and the role of the colonial situation in the formation of the nation state framework. Consequently, he utilised autobiographical fiction to make sense of the past in addition to his own past: 'In semi-autobiographical fiction, the contradictions of belonging, alienation and disappointment, indeed of melancholia, could be thematised without being resolved and could present the aporetic affiliations without seeming to present political betrayals' (Khanna, p. 196). As a French Tunisian Jew he delineated the paradoxes entailed in being both a coloniser and colonised through his emotional and linguistic conflicts.

In his first essay of *Dominated Man* (1968), Memmi argued that the coloniser and colonised were intertwined through the pathological rationalism of the colonial situation, thus giving rise to these diametrically opposed terms in addition to contradictory positions such as the one he occupied as coloniser and colonised. He contended that the coloniser suffered from a Nero complex, taking on the role of ruler and being aware of the injustice this entailed. Furthermore, he regarded the desire for assimilation as a form of deceit in colonial rhetoric since assimilationist logic sought to erase differences while its colonialist equivalent maintained them (Khanna, p. 199). The colonial situation inevitably gave rise to a mythical portrait of oppositional beings rather than oppositional politics that inscribed absolute difference.¹³ He asserted that race relations between blacks and whites in the U.S. were indicative of this. Memmi's argument concerning oppositional terms will have an important bearing on the demetaphorised status of Indians in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the*

¹³ Albert Memmi, *Dominated Man: Notes Towards a Portrait*, trans. by Howard Greenfeld (New York: Orion Press, 1968), pp. 46-49 (p. 86).

Woods. Similarly, the paradoxical drive for assimilation and the preservation of difference within the colonial mindset foreshadows Jackson's conflicted approach to Indian reform.

In a parallel sense to Memmi, Mannoni emphasised the significance of the encounter. He attempted to overturn the conventional notion in anti-colonial politics and colonial psychology that the colonised felt inferior to the colonials in his assertion of the inverse of this relationship. He emphasised that colonial issues were attributable to extant problems within European societies and that the white man's perception of the black man was linked to latent aspects of his own psyche:

the personality of the colonial is made up, not of characteristics acquired during and through experience of the colonies, but of traits, very often in the nature of a complex, already in existence in a latent and repressed form in the European's psyche, traits which the colonial experience has simply brought to the surface and made manifest.¹⁴

This was an integral component to his concept of dependency.

Khanna asserts that Mannoni shares a great deal in common with Freud, Fanon and Memmi in his expression of psychoanalytic arguments through critical readings of literary texts. The 'Other Scene' is a crucial concept in his work. He argues that as a reading mode it allows for insight into social problems through the analysis of processes embedded in dreams, insanity and literary production (Khanna, p. 157). The Other Scene is interlinked with the Other or the Symbolic for both Lacan and Mannoni (Khanna, p. 158). Lacan regarded signifiers as arbitrary repositories of meaning which were sometimes invested with fixed meanings. Despite the fact that meaning is generated from the relations between words and displacement, certain signifiers appear to attain fixed meanings. A fearful remission comes about with the recognition of the arbitrary nature of the sign, given that meaning as determined by law is undermined. The referential and the non-referential dimensions to the

¹⁴ Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, trans. by Pamela Powesland (London: Methuen & Co. 1956), p. 97.

sign mean that literary texts, dreams and speech incorporate the double entendre, whereby they disclose their unconscious drives and the manner of their expression (Khanna, pp. 158-159). A similar process may be seen to be at work in Bird's novel, which discloses a certain unease despite its support for the outright extermination of Indians. I suggest this is evident in its protagonist's 'fallen condition' along with the repetition of certain words such as 'savage' and 'disgust' and the distinctions set up between the semi-barbaric Kentuckians and their more civilised counterparts from the inner settlements. Similarly, *Ramona* demonstrates a latent desire to erase Indianness through assimilation despite its overt condemnation of Indian Removal and its recognition of tribal sovereignty. This is analogous with double entendre. In addition, there are moments within Cooper's narrative where its version of history is disrupted by an implicit awareness of historical events that threaten its legitimation of national establishment. As will be seen, the underlying drives of such novels can be extrapolated by analysing them in a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame.

In arguing that disavowal was symptomatic of coloniality, Mannoni proposed that the haunting of the former colonial subject contributed to the analysis of colonial affect with respect to the psychological consequences of colonialism. Ghostliness grounds the Other Scene as the manner in which colonial affect or disavowal haunts and provides an auto-critique of coloniality. Furthermore, it offers new insights into melancholia, which involves inassimilable political and psychological elements in the colonial situation and disavowal, which entails the conscious rejection of something believed to be true and the negotiation of this paradox. For Khanna the tension between these factors enables us to delineate coloniality and its affect with respect to points of contact between the coloniser and colonised. Furthermore, she states that such interactions signify the impossibility of assimilation which creates a sense of melancholia for the coloniser. Instead of assimilation we are presented with colonial mimicry, parody and colonial affect (Khanna, pp. 163-164). Khanna argues that Memmi,

Fanon and Mannoni considered the singularity of affect as integral to understanding coloniality. Each writer believed that it was necessary to account for the political and economic factors that accompanied the particularity of context.

Khanna highlights the problems in reading the community of the nation as imagined without acknowledging the circumstances which inform the creation of communities and national 'ghosts'. It is necessary to analyse the particularities of the language of demetaphorisation to situate repression and haunting in locally specified contexts. Critical agency is used by Khanna to describe a critical relationship to the past and the hegemonic categories of colonialism, which allows for the envisagement of alternative futures. She therefore adapts Freud's formulation of the concept, making it applicable to questions concerning national affiliation and colonial situations (Khanna, 'Post Palliative', n.p.).

Critical agency therefore derives from the impossibility of complete assimilation of the past. Drawing on Abraham and Torok's work and Derrida's concept of 'the work of mourning' in relation to such critical agency, Khanna states that the undoing of ego places the self in a different economy of subject constitution, in which normative gestures, palliatives, and alibis will always need to be critiqued. She contends that postcolonialism is inherently melancholic in its disposition and that critical melancholia is the only way democracy can flourish: 'While the work of mourning may relegate swallowed disposable bodies to the garbage can of modern nationalism, the work of melancholia, critically attesting to the fact of the lie intrinsic to modern notions of sovereignty, is the only hope for the future' (Khanna, p. 15).

Khanna argues that melancholic sentiments are evident in the prose of Fanon's work, which is characterised by dissonance and remainders that insist upon the future and which call theorised forms of politics into question if justice cannot be served. Similarly, she notes

that Edward Said's writings on late style and stylistic affective expression define solidarity and the demand for justice, irrespective of the palliatives of identity. In his analysis of Freud's conception of Judaism and his depiction of Moses in *Freud and the Non-European* (2003), Said emphasises how archaeological knowledge should be free from a national agenda. He argues that nationalist archaeology provides a palliative which ignores flaws, losses and complexities and that Freud's late style, as with Fanon's, cannot provide such palliatives in terms of its archaeological understanding of the self. Khanna provides a useful summation of what this late style involves: 'Said, in *Freud and the Non-European*, places himself in a line of Freud and Fanon who, in their late styles, expressed a kind of despair that nonetheless allowed them to present hope for a better future out of a tarnished present with its murderous trajectory' (Khanna, Post-Palliative, n.p.). Khanna relates this to the 'deep-seated affect of melancholia' or critical agency in allowing for a conception of utopia to be envisaged (Khanna, Post-Palliative, n.p.). Thus, melancholia invites us to consider the loss of the ideal and exposes palliatives within the languages of colonialism and postcolonialism, which are often used to weave fictions that obscure realities. Inadvertent forms of melancholic nationalism are identifiable in *Nick of the Woods*, which is unable to properly assimilate the very discourse it champions, thereby leading to narrative dissonance, and in Jackson's work, which oscillates between supporting Indian assimilation whilst recognising tribal autonomy.

Khanna draws upon the work of postcolonial psychoanalysts to highlight the various methodological approaches and the limitations they incorporate relating to the psychoanalysis of postcolonial contexts. She places emphasis on the avoidance of universalisation and advocates for the parochialisation of psychoanalysis in accounting for the particularities of colonial situations, whilst being mindful of the colonialist features of the discipline. Furthermore, Khanna argues that historical, political and modern forms of trauma are

significant with respect to postcolonial contexts. On the basis of her research, my approach, in exploring national identity formation and the American psyche with respect to Indian removal in the nineteenth century, involves accounting for the particular ideological, discursive and historical factors that inform representations of the Indian in each novel. Moreover, her delineation of melancholic effects, haunting and self-other relations within postcolonial contexts constitutes a foundation that I draw upon in my own readings. For further detail on the model see her chapter on Woolf Sachs's *Black Hamlet* (1937), which serves as an illustration of how some of the elements from these arguments can be applied in relation to the psychological influence of social and political transformations (Khanna, p. 237). By having Khanna's analysis of haunting inform my approach to the novels in question, this thesis will delineate how historical memories of Indian removal surface through the use of literary conventions and narrative dissonances despite the fact that they are repressed. I argue that the Indian spectre points to inassimilable historical memories that the national psyche is unable to reconcile to its ego-ideal.

Literary Criticism on Native American Representations in American Fiction

In terms of the melancholic effect exerted by the history of territorial expansion and American-Indian relations in general, a review of the most significant scholarship on how American fiction was shaped by the circumstances of colonisation follows. This will establish the basis for the many discussions in the thesis relating to Indian removal, assimilation, historical revisionism and so forth in a postcolonial psychoanalytic context. Therefore, I will focus on critical discussions concerning national formation and the role of literature in this process.

Slotkin asserts that the wilderness, its harshness and fecundity, the absence of European cultures and the presence of natives in 'untamed' landscapes exerted physical and

psychological effects on the colonists. A sense of exility, the divergence between colonial and homeland in terms of historical experience and the emergence of new generations more habituated to the wilderness constituted other factors.

All emigrants shared the anxious sense that they had been, willingly or unwillingly, exiled from their true homes in the motherlands of Europe; all faced the problem of justifying their emigration to more stable folk at home, of trying to sell them either actual land or the idea of a colony. All felt impelled to maintain the traditions of religious order and social custom in the face of the psychological terrors of the wilderness. Later, the sons of these emigrants strove to justify their title to the land they took for their own (Slotkin, p. 18).

The authors of discovery narratives, Indian war and captivity tales and colonisation and anti-colonisation tracts often sought to explain or justify their acts or their right to possess land and convince potential European settlers of their new home's beauty. Their accounts were filled with metaphors that were initially drawn from a European context relating to classical and medieval literature, Renaissance romance and the religious and political philosophies of the Reformation. According to Slotkin, writers who aimed to create a unified vision of the American experience through myth combined these literary forms (Slotkin, p. 19).

The cultural anxieties and aspirations of the colonists were expressed in their most intense forms with the Indian war narratives. English Puritan culture was pitted against one that was its antithesis. Colonists could highlight their cultural identity, religious zealotry and superiority to their English counterparts through the conflicts they had with Indians and in their attempts to convert them. Concordantly, Robert Clark's reading of the emergence of a national mythology is useful to consider alongside Slotkin's arguments, particularly in relation to European-American relations. He claims that The Declaration of Independence was perceived to have liberated the U.S. from the degeneracy and stagnation of the Old World. The fledgling nation was a haven where the poor and oppressed would be free to pursue their destinies. Europe was typecast as feudal and despotic whilst the United States was represented as the most perfect society on earth in addition to being the endpoint of

history. This rhetoric functioned to legitimate the expansion of ‘the area of freedom’ in Andrew Jackson’s words into the lands inhabited by ‘backwards’ peoples (Clark, p. 4).

According to Slotkin, the first Euro American mythology emerged from Puritan literature in which the hero was on a quest that involved religious conversion and salvation and in which he invariably ended up as a captive or victim of demonic savages. However, with the arrival of non-Puritans into the American book printing trade, the emphasis on remaining non-American or non-Indian gave way to a desire to gain emotional ownership over the land. Whereas early American mythology showed the colonist as a captive or destroyer of Indians, later narratives emphasised his affinity with the Indian and the wilderness. A new hero was created who mediated between civilisation and savagery (Slotkin, p. 21).¹⁵

Roy Harvey Pearce notes that by 1800 the Indian captivity narrative was an established literary form that detailed the hardships of frontier existence. The villainous depiction of the Indian in these narratives emphasised the white American farmer as an integral figure in civilisation for the reader: ‘The narratives he was offered – melanges of blood, thunder, torn flesh, and sensibility, of small fact and great fiction – were frenetic attempts to hold on to the crudest image of the triumphantly brutal Indian’ (Pearce, p. 58). Captivity narratives detailed the frontiersman’s fight for survival despite his role as an agent

¹⁵ Henry Nash Smith provides some useful points in relation to American perceptions of European tyranny with respect to the prominence of agricultural doctrines during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He contends that for individuals like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, republican institutions would be emboldened by the expansion of agricultural society in the West. Unlike Europeans who lived in densely populated areas, Americans could preserve their morality for many centuries with the expanse of the West: ‘the policy of the government should obviously be to postpone this unhappy day as long as possible by fostering agriculture and removing all impediments to westward expansion’. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 128. Ironically their agrarian doctrines were informed by ideas and attitudes derived from European sources such as the arguments of the French Physiocrats that agriculture was the primary source of wealth and those of radicals like Guillaume Thomas François Raynal that the farmer ought to be a republican as opposed to a peasant content with serfdom (Smith, p. 129).

of destruction. As the nation continued to expand, the frontiersman was regarded as an unwitting agent of civilisation whose victim was the 'pathetic' Indian.

While the Indian may have been regarded as a demonic figure, there were also calls for his civilisation. Analyses of the disadvantages of savage society were based on the assumption that Indians were not farmers. Similarly, plans for their assimilation required their transformation into farmers. James Hall, Melville's subject of parody as a disingenuous peddler of the Indian-hating narrative of Colonel Moredock in his novel, articulated this perspective in 'Intercourse of the American People with the Indians' (1835). For Hall American-Indian relations were characterised by misunderstandings and mistreatment. Indians peaceably welcomed Europeans who in turn nominally recognised their tribes as sovereign nations. What followed was European encroachment that led to retaliation and the barbarism of savage warfare. An alternative approach of humane treatment and separation would have resulted in their civilisation but instead Indian virtues had been converted into vices through aggressive expansion that necessitated removal. According to Pearce, Hall poses the question of how to civilise Indians in terms of binaries such as hunting versus farming culture and the benefits of civilised systems of private land tenure. He recommended that Indians could be civilised through the introduction of personal security with the prevention of their internecine warfare and property ownership (Pearce, p. 71).

The hope that the Indian could be acculturated was offset by the rapid expansion of civilisation that no one was expected to regret. For the American psyche, the Indian represented all which was reprehensible to civilised society. While it was haunted by his annihilation, it rationalised this fact by turning him into a symbol. Pearce states that American thinking about the Indian between the Revolution and the Removal period was characterised by pity, censure and justification. The degradation and destruction of Indian

Removal was legitimated through a belief in the civilising process, the benefits of which outweighed its negative aspects (Pearce, pp. 73-74).

The colonisation of the frontier and the removal of the Indian as a significant obstacle to American power led to analysis of the Indian in scientific terms with the establishment of organisations such as the American Ethnological Society in 1842 and the Smithsonian Institute in 1846. For Pearce this was the beginning of the end for the concept of savagism. In addition, he argues that the American psyche responded to the condition of the Indian with a mixture of humanitarianism and philanthropy, given that American censure had reduced him to such a pitiable state that no other response was possible. In the 1850s Henry Schoolcraft argued for the education and Christianisation of Indians. Following the Civil War and with the plight of the Plains Indians in mind, Helen Hunt Jackson called for the protection of Indian welfare (Pearce, p. 244).

Thus, Pearce's argument details the nation's approach to the Indian question in terms of territorial conquest and comparatively more humane attempts to assimilate Indians, which also affected their cultural erasure: 'Americans thus were of two minds about the Indian whom they were destroying. They pitied his state but saw it as inevitable; they hoped to bring him to civilisation but saw that civilisation would kill him' (Pearce, p. 64). Americans believed that the civilisation of the Indian would be a relatively straightforward matter involving his introduction to farming which would lead to Christianisation. However, they learned that acculturation encompassed a system of attitudes, beliefs, conditions and behaviours and that the civilising process could therefore not be achieved in the course of a couple of generations. The American way of life served to degrade and destroy Indian societies as opposed to elevating them. For Pearce 'this was the melancholy fact which Americans understood as coming inevitably in the progress of civilisation over savagism'

(Pearce, p. 66). As part of this, he argues that their cultural and intellectual traditions limited them to seeing the Indian solely as a hunter.

While Pearce's work on nineteenth-century American perceptions of the Native is extensive, we are left with the question as to how such perceptions are informed by political-psychological factors in a sustained analysis. For example, by taking his concept of savagism versus civilisation and reframing it in terms of Khanna's discussion of demetaphorisation we can see how it reflects the deprivation of the native's metaphorical status as a citizen of an alternative societal model. We are then able to examine the processes underlying this particular method by which the national psyche incorporates historical memories concerning its treatment of Native Americans. Moreover, when we turn to Pearce's discussion on Indian reform and its problematic aspects, a postcolonial psychoanalytic approach enables us to approach related issues of epistemic violence, the loss of the national ideal and the melancholic symptoms that attend the partial assimilation or rather incorporation of the native into the national memory. Such issues will become particularly evident in my chapter on *Ramona*.

Clark contends that the historical realities of Indian displacement were dealt with through a national mythology. He asserts that terms such as 'Manifest Destiny', 'providence', 'savagery', and 'civilisation' occur at points where the contradictions between ideological perceptions and social reality are impossible to dismiss. The mythological character of literature in the U.S. prior to the Civil War may be linked to the multitude of mythological signifiers in ideological discourse, which may in turn be traced to the ethical problems in justifying geographic expansion.

The prominence of myth in American literary production during the antebellum period is attributed by Clark to the fact that social criticism was generally met with hostility.

While there were differences between the national visions of the Democrats and Whigs, there was almost universal acceptance of the superiority of the United States and its regenerative historical mission. Writers such as Cooper were met with critical condemnation when they highlighted the problematical issues of these ideals even though they mostly subscribed to them (Clark, p. 22). The writer was restricted to expressing the nation's moral superiority and articulating an ideology of land expansion that could barely resolve its own contradictions. When confronted with realities that fundamentally undermined the American project, he resorted to myth to repress his knowledge of them. Clark argues that the outcome of this situation involved the production of texts that incorporated myth whilst engaging in ideological affirmation, radical denunciations and the allegorical conveyance of heterodox perceptions. By taking Clark's reading and contextualising it in terms of Khanna's psychoanalytic interrogations of the nation state, I will argue that myth and the historical romance are utilised by writers such as Cooper and to a lesser extent Child, as ways to displace, repress and incorporate the place of the native within the American national consciousness.

Clark states that the most significant fictions of the period were those that dealt with the native relating to the American state's territorial expansion. This theme often manifested itself in man's meditations on his spiritual relationship with nature. By treating the issue of expansion as a spiritual problem, the paradox entailed in the realisation of the Republic's potential to become a society superior to all others through the expropriation of the original inhabitants was displaced (Clark, p. 3).

According to Slotkin, while the Northeast was influenced by both Western and European views, the South tended towards European literary conventions. The European novel explored characters in a social context, whereas in its American counterpart the mythic ideal was invested in individual solitude and the right to freedom of movement and

expression. 'New England literature originated from Puritan narratives which conveyed the idea that the solitary individual finds God in isolation and the "worldly wilderness"' (Slotkin, p. 471). Conversely, the Southern writer supported a social framework that combined social mobility with anti-democratic racial and class boundaries, which precluded the possibility of solitude. For Slotkin, these literary and cultural differences were reflected in the contrasts between Nathaniel Hawthorne's short tales, Western magazine fiction and the historical romances of Cooper, William Gilmore Simms and Bird.

Thus, following Slotkin's ideas, in Cooper's works, Hawkeye's perceptions and beliefs challenge societal values and easy answers are not provided. Furthermore, Cooper draws upon Indian mythological symbolism relating to kingly sacrifice and the Lakota narrative of creation and destruction to thematically substantiate the passing of Indian society and the frontiersman in the midst of advancing civilisation. However, this is not the case in Bird's *Nick of the Woods* when taken at face value, given that it concludes with the vindication of Roland Forrester's rights and identity and his return to the plantation from which he was exiled. He is unquestioningly loyal to the values of his society and his victory validates that loyalty. Moreover, he never questions his assumptions and his moral judgements are simplistic. By contrast, Bird's figure of polarised, split identity, Nathan Slaughter, is beset by divided loyalties, which reflects the problem of defining a national or sectional identity. For Slotkin, Nathan is a critical revision of the frontier hero as conceived of by Cooper. He personifies Puritan belief that the wilderness brings out demonic impulses in man. The Puritans transferred their morally questionable acts to the Indians to justify their removal and to expiate themselves from the knowledge that they were the architects of their own troubles. Nathan's experience and reaction to it echoes this idea and conveys the repressed violent drives latent in human beings (Slotkin, p. 515). According to Slotkin, where Cooper focused on the frontier hero, Bird devotes more time to the Romantic narrative of

Roland Forrester. *Bird as a Southerner* was influenced by the psychology and symbolism of racism and represented the Western character as a fusion of Indian and white racial characteristics. Although he explores the results of this blending he is limited by the literary conventions of the South and those of the Romantic novel.

Slotkin's readings of genre and literary negotiations with Euro American colonisation of the frontier can be extended when we contextualise them in postcolonial psychoanalytic terms. Therefore, I will later argue that in *Nick of the Woods* the conflation of white and Indian racial aspects is symbolic of the corrupting effects of the gothic wilderness, a narrative feature that I attribute to a pronounced melancholia produced by the novel's Indian-hater discourse. Additionally, where Slotkin discusses Cooper's debt to a New England literary history, I argue that his drawing upon Indian myth can be interpreted as a form of incorporation where the Indian becomes an extension of American identity as a means of reconciling historical memories of displacement to the national ego-ideal. If Cooper's historical revisionism can be regarded as reflecting a form of American colonialism, then the subjects covered by Khanna relating to self-other relations, haunting and repression are essential to understanding this process in terms of the links between the political, historical and psychological.

Western gothic conventions offered writers of national literature another means to contain inassimilable memories associated with Indian displacement that subverted seemingly stable aspects of American identity. Gothic elements are significant in *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Nick of the Woods* and *Hobomok* in terms of their melancholic incorporation of the history of Indian displacement, meaning it is useful to detail this additional strategy.

According to Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski in *Frontier Gothic* (1993), a culture's representation of its own history accounts for people, events and places in terms of an

integrative framework or familiar locus civilis. Recorded history provides us with a logocentric interpretation of the past as a reference that constitutes the foundation of contemporary civilisation. Disruptions in this logocentric history allow for the history of the Other to break through. This history is expressed by the gothic landscape which is no longer a locale and which is typically characterised by dark ruins and ominous presences that yield uncertain, chaotic and unknown experiences. The gothic's fantastic forms derive from an alternative history which exists in a reality that is parallel to the established history of the contemporary culture.¹⁶

In America, the frontier became a metaphor of significance for the gothic genre. Writers such as Brockden Brown, Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe wrote in the gothic tradition and combined supernatural themes with American rationalism: 'Faith in rationality and the axe only intensified curiosity about the shadows surrounding civilised clearings, which in American supernatural fiction, became psychic frontiers on the edge of territories both enticing and terrifying' (Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski, p. 14). In their view, the American gothic drama began prior to the late eighteenth and nineteenth-century conflicts between 'common sense' philosophy and Romantic sensibility. The New World presented abundant resources for the purpose of literary inventions that transgressed the over-determined European social order. American writers adopted European influences in developing a native style. However, they primarily dealt with the conflict between civilisation and nature that informed the American experience.

Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski assert that the frontier gothic belongs to the American tradition that can be traced back to the earliest reactions of European immigrants to the New World: 'The gothic wilderness is a profoundly American symbol of an ambiguous

¹⁶ David Mogen, Scott Sanders, Joanne Karpinski (eds.), *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at The Frontier in American Literature* (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), p. 16.

relationship to the land, of an alienation that was first articulated when, in the words of Peter N. Carroll, the Puritans perceived “beneath the florid plenty of the New World [...] the Devil lurking in the wilderness” (Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski, p. 20). They note Leslie Fielder’s exploration in *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968) of D.H. Lawrence’s contention that the ghosts of displaced Indian cultures haunt American culture. The concepts of metamorphosis and the immolation of the self are influenced by mythological figurations of encounters with the wilderness and the Indian (Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski, p. 22).

In this light, the frontier represented a repository for anxieties concerning uncontrollable nature, the dangers involved in the expansion of civilisation and the effects of the wilderness on the psyche of the civilised individual. A significant corollary to the frontier is the Indian spectre in the American gothic. Renée Bergland discusses the historical basis for the spectre’s development. She claims that the policy of Indian removal is often viewed to have transpired between 1820 and 1850. Contrary to this commonly held belief, the United States was involved in Indian removal and Indian war on a virtually constant basis since its inception. She states that the Pequot War in 1637 established a pattern of genocidal violence that became state policy (Bergland, p. 50). George Washington pursued an intensive campaign of warfare with western Native Americans. Furthermore, Bill Christopherson claims that five-sixths of all Federal expenses between 1790 and 1796 were allocated to Indian wars and treaties. Bergland contends that these wars were fought based on abstractions, which echoed those between the Puritans and Indians.¹⁷ U.S. citizens ventured into the Western wilderness seeking to map it, document it, write titles about it and gain possession of it.

Bergland seeks to interrogate the repressions and displacements of early nineteenth-century American literature when Indian Removal was mythologised by the American

¹⁷ Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny* (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2000), p. 50.

Romance. Within this she looks at Fielder's case that the American gothic is deeply conservative as it associates evil with the id. The threats posed by antiquated aristocratic hegemonies are substituted with the dangers inherent in the natural world: 'When Indians and panthers take the place of villainous Italian nobles and Catholic priests, the predatory hierarchies of the Old World are replaced by the natural and wild predators of the New' (Bergland, p. 52). In this account European gothic novels were effectively radical narratives concerning the conflicts between modern people against archaic regimes. Fielder contends that while the European gothic novels explored the destruction of traditional power structures, the American gothic detailed the creation of new hierarchical orders on the frontier.

Finally, James Folsom's discussion of gothic identifications has particular relevance to *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the Woods*. The question of determining good and evil, spectre or man and so on in the gothic realm of epistemological confusion reflects the nation's potential anxiety about assessing its moral credibility. This may be related to what is conceivably its original sin, the massacring and displacement of Indian tribes on the frontier. Folsom argues that the concept of an essential identity constitutes a focal point in determining how Western fiction relates to the gothic tradition in American literature. In his view, there has been a fixation in American society since its inception on discovering the essential qualities of external elements. This obsession was originally Puritan as it was crucial for the members of the New England settler community to ascertain whether they were among the elect or the damned. The literary outcome of this complex is identifiable in the suggestion that man may belong to both categories: 'the sheep will never be separated from the goats until the day of judgement, not because of our inability to tell one from the other, but because in any given human being the two are inextricably mixed'.¹⁸ For Folsom, Western gothicism

¹⁸ James K. Folsom, 'Gothicism in the Western Novel', in *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at The Frontier in American Literature*, ed. by David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, Joanne B. Karpinski, (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), pp. 28-42 (p. 36)

enables the regional writer to utilise certain aspects of American culture and history in analysing interior mental states (Folsom, p. 40). The Western landscape therefore functions to reflect individual fears: ‘The landscape of the West is as much a projection of our most deep-seated fears as it is a reflection of our ideals, a place where - to quote Walt Kelly’s Pogo - “we have met the enemy and they is us”’ (Folsom, p. 40). This matter of duality is significant in relation to Nathan’s double identity in *Nick of the Woods*. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, reframing the gothic in terms of a postcolonial psychoanalytic lens allows for new understandings of how the gothic functions in nineteenth-century American literature concerning national identity formation. I argue that the use of Western gothic conventions is informed by colonial melancholic effects that emerge in the attempts of American writers to incorporate the Indian into their respective histories of national establishment.

To conclude, we can see how nineteenth-century narratives concerning the Indian were variegated along geographic and cultural lines. Moreover, one can identify how cultural attitudes oscillated from Indian eradication to Indian assimilation, both of which were reflected in literary production with respect to novels such as *Nick of the Woods* and *Ramona*. Literature played a crucial role in resolving the conflicting approaches and historical realities that might subvert American national legitimacy, through a reliance on myth, the gothic and discourses such as pity and censure. Moreover, novelistic representations were informed by cultural legacies such as the Puritan personal narrative that predated the State, Indian myths and the imported conventions of the European novel. The use of gothic conventions in itself reflected cultural anxieties relating to Indian expropriation and a desire to banish inassimilable historical memories to a symbolic wild location outside the rational confines of the nation. Whereas writers such as Pearce and Slotkin have discussed the role of the Indian in terms of national formation, I aim to offer an alternative interpretation that incorporates postcolonial psychoanalytic theories. Although Clark has to some extent applied

psychoanalysis to Cooper's work in the context of national identity formation, my objective is to offer a sustained analysis charting the historical development of the national consciousness across a range of texts, which present differing visions of the national ideal and the function of the Indian within it.

Indian Representations, National Identity and Memory in Nineteenth-Century American Literature

In light of these critical historical perspectives on the emergence of national myth and the history of American conceptions of the Indian, it will be beneficial to outline how they can be further contextualised in a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame. Anne Anlin Cheng provides some useful reflections which serve to set up the idea of the American national consciousness as one that is characterised by melancholia. Her arguments relate specifically to my central contention that the wellspring of this melancholia derives from America's first act of imperialism which was simultaneously the basis for its very establishment and identity, namely the conquest of the frontier through Indian Removal.

In *The Melancholy of Race* Cheng asserts that the melancholic ego is reinforced through spectrality whereby the subject defines her or himself partly through the phantasmatic void left by the lost object. She argues that this has a bearing on American racial dynamics. The nation's racial psyche is characterised by the retention of a denigrated yet sustaining loss. Thus, racialisation operates through the process of generating a dominant, white national ideal based upon the simultaneous exclusion and retention of racialised others: 'The national topography of centrality and marginality legitimises itself by retroactively positing the racial other as always Other and lost at the heart of the nation. Legal exclusion naturalises the more complicated "loss" of the unassimilable racial others'.¹⁹ Freud's concept

¹⁹ Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 10.

of loss in relation to its incorporation and exclusion yields significant insights into the status of the racial Other in its role as the ‘foreigner within’ America. According to Cheng, American national idealism has struggled with incorporation and rejection since its inception: ‘While all nations have their repressed histories and traumatic atrocities, American melancholia is particularly acute because America is founded on the very ideals of freedom and liberty whose betrayals have been repeatedly covered over’ (Cheng, p. 10). Although the nation has benefitted in economic and material terms from the labour of excluded groups such as Jewish, Chinese and African Americans, its history has focused on disavowing this repudiation. For Cheng, America’s ideological dilemma and constitutional practices are defined by melancholia.

Michael Rogin also asserts in *Blackface, White Noise* (1996) that American liberty was founded upon chattel slavery, the displacement of Native Americans and Mexicans and the use of Chinese and Mexican labour (Rogin, p. 24). When confronted by instances of its betrayal of democratic principles with respect to Indian genocide, slavery, segregation and immigration discrimination, the American psyche emphatically and melancholically expresses notions of human value and fraternity. Cheng points out that Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) distances the new nation from slavery and its ethical issues whilst reconciling them in his assertion that blacks are inhumane and should be denied human rights, freedom and equality. The conflict between America’s history of exclusion, imperialism and colonisation, and its narrative of liberty and individualism raises the issue as to how the nation can move on from its transgressions (Cheng, p. 11). By situating the novels in a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame, I hope to explore this question with respect to their representations of national legitimacy and the Indian.

Cheng argues that white American identity is informed by melancholia since it is an identificatory system predicated on psychical and social consumption and denial. On the one

hand racists fashion intricate ideologies to justify their actions in terms of official American ideals whilst on the other, white liberals repress racial Others such that they can memorialise them. For Cheng vilification and its disavowal are part of the same melancholic dynamic. Melancholia is therefore a useful analytical tool in accounting for guilt and the denial of guilt in the racist psyche (Cheng, pp. 11-12).

Racial melancholia is identifiable not only in American national formation but also in the development of canonical literature. Julia Stern in her analysis of the early American novel of the Federalist period points out that the American republic since its beginning has had a complex relationship with ‘other’ raced bodies. She finds that American literature suggests that the establishment of the republic can be described as a crypt; women, Native Americans, the poor, African Americans and so on are the victims of a ‘post-Revolutionary political foreclosure’ (Cheng, p. 13). For Stern, racialisation lies at the heart of the founding of the State given that American nationality is distinguished by race as a locus of exclusion.

In the context of repression, denial, haunting and melancholia, I argue that my chosen novels provide a mirror to, and contribute to, the historical and psychological dynamics informing the formation of U.S. national consciousness. It is by looking at literary representations of the origins of American identity at a time when the nation was being fully consolidated that we can reach an understanding of the factors that inform contemporary America and its future in the shadow of an imperialist mentality.

Chapter Outlines

In Chapters One and Two I will discuss *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the Woods*, focusing on how they present revisionist accounts of U.S. history according to ideological discourses such as savagism and civilisation and Manifest Destiny. I argue that the inassimilable realities of Indian removal haunt the narratives of both novels in terms of

melancholia, demetaphorisation and spectrality despite their overt endorsement of the American nation as a divinely sanctified, civilised institution, distinguished from the hegemonies of Europe. However, in contrast to Cooper's work, which effectively revises American history through a mythological account of its genesis, Bird's novel presents us with a far more uncertain vision, in which the distinctions between the Indian and white, good and evil, and savage and civilised become increasingly blurred. I contend that this textual instability originates from a greater source of melancholia as the narrative attempts to rationalise the inhumane discourse it actively advocates, Indian genocide. The gothic depiction of the frontier in both novels will also be discussed in relation to epistemic uncertainty and the idea that it functions as a repository for the closed off, repressed aspects of American history.

In Chapter Three I will discuss how Child's *Hobomok* reimagines American history in advancing a proto-feminist vision of the nation, one which unites women and Indians as oppressed classes under the patriarchal system of Puritanism. The heroine of the novel, Mary, rebels against the social codes of Salem by marrying Hobomok and becoming an Indian squaw before returning as an accepted member of the community. Hobomok personifies the means by which she can realise her independence from the stifling environment of the Puritan settlement, which serves to advance Child's alternate version of the national ideal. As with the works of Cooper and Jackson, an uncanny process may be discerned in Hobomok's disappearance and the assimilation of his son at the end, since the Indian is sought out as a distinguishing feature of American identity whilst being disavowed once this purpose has been served. Child also recognises the perspective of the racial Other. As with *Ramona*, in *Hobomok* an absolute otherness is posited which lies beyond the confines of the white imaginary yet which is never directly articulated. Nonetheless, it exists as a possibility that threatens to unravel the legitimacy of the State. Child also explores the links between Britain

and America in terms of the latter's national development, suggesting that the oppressive strictures of Puritanism may be informed by the trauma of banishment from the former country.

The issue of American identity and how it draws upon the Indian Other to distinguish itself is an area of consideration in *The Last of the Mohicans*. However, it becomes even more significant in *Ramona* and *Hobomok*. In Chapter Four I argue that Jackson's novel articulates a discourse of Indian reform, which necessitates the preservation of a racially and culturally different inassimilable Other. The Other is alternately used in terms of Indian sovereignty to define a democratic ideal of the American state. In each case the otherness of Indian subjectivity is recognised and repressed to consolidate American identity. In a parallel with Melville's characters who conceive of Indians according to their imaginative projections, Jackson depicts Indians in terms of a white colonialist mindset, albeit one which is significantly more humanitarian compared to writers like Cooper and Bird. The epistemic violence entailed in this view is further elaborated by the emphasis placed on the impossibility of Indian autonomy even though it is entertained as a constitutive element of American identity. The romance plot of the narrative is prioritised over its reform discourse which labours under these contradictions when Ramona is reincorporated into the Moreno family, with Indian Alessandro effectively written out of the plot as another faceless victim of white violence.

In the final chapter, I will detail how Melville's novel 'works through' the historical aspects of Indian removal that were largely repressed in American national discourse in its satirical dismantlement of the Indian-hater genre. By highlighting the isolation of the backwoodsman from civilisation and the fact that no true biography can be recovered of the Indian-hater *par excellence*, Melville exposes how the American psyche compartmentalises the violent dimension of national expansion. The fact that he places the Indian-hating section

at the centre of his work reflects that he locates the 'original sin' of the nation in Indian genocide. The novel's prevailing nihilistic atmosphere is identifiable in its lack of any recuperative ideal or national narrative, something linked to its depiction of a society invested in masquerade. Consequently, I argue that the ghosts of the nation's past are allowed to indirectly emerge through Melville's satirical attack on national ideas and narratives of legitimisation. In a parallel with the Puritans of *Hobomok*, Melville illustrates how ideological discourses depend on the willingness of individuals to believe in them. In addition, he suggests that American identity is fundamentally characterised by projections which are at odds with the realities that underscore them. Melville rewrites the historical account of Judge Hall to propose that the nation is unsalvageable. Unlike the other authors looked at in this thesis, he suggests that there can be no future that is not tainted by the mistakes of the past if the existing national model is retained. It is in this sense that I argue that his novel is one that engages, at the very least, in a critical melancholia directed towards mourning or working through the nation's corruption.

Melville's highly self-conscious work displays a unique awareness of the past, present and future course of America's national development and thus it can be argued that it crystallises the proposition that emerges from this thesis: namely that a state engaged in territorial acquisition which pits it against an Other will be likely to be informed by discourses that champion the extermination of that Other and that once this phase of the national project has been completed, such discourses will be complemented by ones which advocate for the Other's assimilation. Furthermore, the final chapter on his work allows for the advancement of the idea that the American state is one informed by a melancholic negotiation with its past that has a bearing on its current imperialist position in the world. These considerations may be usefully understood in postcolonial psychoanalytic terms regarding themes and concepts such as haunting, repression and melancholia whereby the

nation grapples with the implications of such a project and reconciling them to its projected ego-ideal.

Chapter 1: The Indian and Melancholic Nationalism in *The Last of the Mohicans*

Introduction

In this chapter I will use postcolonial psychoanalysis to delineate how Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) contributes to the formation of a mythicised state identity in nineteenth-century America. The key areas of the narrative which will be considered relate to the mythologising of the past, representations of savagery and civilisation, the frequent characterisations of Indians as spectres and the distortion of historical fact. Additionally, the American gothic trope of the Indian spectre plays a significant role in Cooper's depiction of the wilderness and is symbolic of colonial haunting in relation to the expropriation of the place of its inhabitants. I will argue that Cooper articulates a conception of history that legitimates the expansion of the American state as an ethically guided enterprise, sanctioned by natural law with the decline of the inferior tribal Indian societal model. However, it is built upon the reformulation of historical memories of frontier violence in mythological terms, which points to their repression and introduces melancholic effects identifiable in terms of narrative strategies and inadvertent textual signifiers. These textual strategies will be examined with respect to how they contribute to Cooper's goal of weaving a myth of the nascent American state.

In the first section, I will discuss Cooper's motivations and the historical factors that inform his attempt to establish a sense of continuity within the national psyche with respect to the cultural, political and psychological disjunctions created by the War of Independence. In the second, I will detail Cooper's reliance on theories of progress and historical romance conventions as a means of legitimating the establishment of a future American state according to an 'evolutionary' framework. Following on from this I argue that his text engages in demetaphorisation whereby the enemy Huron are deprived of their metaphorical

status as citizens of an alternative societal model, which plays into a larger process of repressing historical memories that might call the establishment of the State into question. In addition, the ways in which gender conventions work in tandem with the novel's discourse of savagism and civilisation will be explored. I will then detail how Cooper adopts elements of Indian myth into his version of American identity to distinguish it from its colonial origins and consolidate a continuous sense of national history in which the nation inherits the American land from its native inhabitants. I will also delineate how Cooper's limited acknowledgement for white crimes against Indian tribes is a means to incorporate historical events that would otherwise compromise the validity of the American ego-ideal. Lastly I will discuss how Cooper's reliance on gothic tropes allows him to distance historical events associated with frontier conquest into a domain isolated from national boundaries and how his conclusion functions to psychologically rationalise the passing of Indian society for the national psyche.

The nature of Cooper's work, in terms of its historical repression through myth, historical revisionism and reliance on discourses of progress, makes it a good starting point to detail how the early nineteenth-century national consciousness contended with a history of Indian displacement and frontier colonisation. By looking at his novel in this first chapter, several key themes in the thesis will be introduced which are significant in relation to the other works to be studied, namely spectrality, historical melancholia, incorporation and Indian assimilation and removal. In addition, because *Mohicans* is the novel most well known and with by far the most criticism on it, this chapter also serves to deal with various critical approaches that have bearing on the thesis more broadly.

Cooper's text provides the ideal springboard with which to investigate how nineteenth-century American authors contended with the history of frontier colonisation and the figure of the Indian. For example, his dehumanisation of Indians who fail to recognise the

white characters as their racial superiors relates to Bird's absolute racial vilification of Indians in *Nick of the Woods*. Alternately, Cooper's adoption of Indian legend and his more conciliatory tone towards Indians compared to Bird has similarities with Jackson and Child. This is further evident in his use of the vanishing Indian discourse which aligns him with these two writers. Similarly, his idealisation of the past and the lapses in his ideological narrative will later be paralleled by Jackson in her complex representation of the Franciscan mission system and the admission of its abuses against Indians. Moreover, his use of historical romance and gothic generic conventions is present in the works of these other writers and influences how the Indian and frontier are depicted. As I will go on to discuss in Chapter Five, Melville satirises the means by which writers like Cooper mythologised the past. In contrast to Cooper he abandons any sense of a national ideal and, as I will argue, undoes the lattice work of repression that can be identified in the works of my other writers. By approaching elements such as genre, ideology and narrative technique in a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame, I demonstrate how Cooper uses them to repress unpalatable historical truths. In the subsequent chapters I will explore how these elements are used in similar and contrasting ways by Bird, Child, Jackson and Melville, insofar as they reveal alternative facets of the Indian's melancholic place within the American psyche and national identity.

Cooper's text utilises the conflict between British and French forces during the late 1750s as a backdrop to present a revisionist account of American history. His novel is rooted in the tradition of the historical romance and this enables him to create a mythological world, nonetheless with historical markers, for the purpose of consolidating an ideal sense of American identity. Leslie Fielder notes that the past is represented by its distance in time in the historical romance genre:

The early historical romance represents in general, the tribute that philistinism pays to the instinctive, the civilized to the "natural," the moderate to the outrageous; for the past which it

celebrates is characterized not only by its distance in time but by its presumable freedom from restraint and prudence, its absurd commitment to honor and courage.¹

Given the relegation of Indians to a distant past such that their claim to the American land is negated in addition to the presence of civilisational discourses in *The Last of the Mohicans*, it is clear why Cooper chose to write in such a mode. Fielder points out that the novel's historical setting during the French and Indian wars is depicted as a national pre-history where great and implausible deeds are made possible (Fielder, p. 198).

In relation to historical romance conventions, Juliet Shields notes that Waverley conventions, that is conventions arising from Walter Scott's Waverley novels, are used to define progress in *The Last of the Mohicans*. She argues that European Heyward appropriates Uncas's Indian skills, so becoming a more effective guardian of Alice and Cora and thereby keeping in check his own tendency towards civilised over-refinement: 'His union of feudal Scottish chivalry with savage Indian prudence and self-control signals the evolution of an American identity that will reach its telos in *The Prairie*'.² Fielder expresses a similar argument: 'Moreover, Cooper's primitives resemble more closely than the wild clansmen of Scott, the version of the Noble Savage proposed by the rudimentary anthropology of the Encyclopedists, and used by them as controls against which the corruption and effeminacy of the civilized European could be defined' (Fielder, p. 170). He goes on to state that Cooper invests his Indian characters with the same pathos as the lost cause of Scott's clansmen whilst establishing similar boundaries between civilised and wild, lawless spheres. Therefore, I will argue that Cooper appropriates tropes within the historical romance genre relating to characteristics associated with civilisational stages to promote his ideal of an agrarian

¹ Leslie Fielder, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. 154.

² Juliet Shields, 'Savage and Scott-ish Masculinity in *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Prairie*: James Fenimore Cooper and the Diasporic Origins of American Identity', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64/2 (2009), 137-162 (p. 151).

American society, one which is elevated above savage and feudal states but which is not urbane enough to be decadent.

The late eighteenth-century plot of *The Last of the Mohicans* details the dangers faced by Colonel Munro's daughters, Alice and Cora, as they journey with Major Duncan Heyward to Fort William Henry. The party are initially misled through a shortcut by the Indian Magua who will later be revealed as the principal antagonist allied with the French army. Lost in the wilderness, they encounter the white frontiersman turned semi-Indian figure Hawkeye and his Mohican friends, Uncas and Chingachgook. Hawkeye confirms Heyward's suspicions of Magua's deceptions and they agree on a plan to seize him, one which does not come to fruition as Magua correctly determines that something is afoot and escapes into the night. Later on in the novel during the massacre of Fort William Henry, Magua abducts the two daughters, an act which compels Hawkeye and Heyward to attempt a rescue of Alice from the Huron village before travelling to the Delaware village where Cora is being held. Magua demands the return of his captives from Tamenund, an elder statesman of the Lenape/Delaware who denies him Alice yet grants him Cora when Uncas is revealed to be a Mohican. Magua retreats with Cora to the mountains where he is killed by Hawkeye following the deaths of Uncas and Cora whose funerals are detailed in the last chapters. The novel concludes with a prophetic speech by Tamenund, which encapsulates a symbolic transfer of power over the American land to the whites.

The Huron are depicted as demonic beings whilst the Indian allies of the whites, namely the Lenape/Delaware, are portrayed as noble savages who must inevitably disappear with the advance of civilisation. The result of these displacements is to convince the reader that the British are fighting against the Iroquois, Huron and the French, when in actuality the Iroquois were allied with the British. Robert Clark notes that Cooper, in writing *Mohicans*, acquired his knowledge about Indian tribes from John G. Heckewelder's 1819 work *An*

Account of the History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations. Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary who had lived with the Delaware between 1762 and 1786 based his account on his conversations with them. In his novel's preface, Cooper informs us that the bloodshed between the Dutch and the Iroquois resulted in the Delaware relinquishing their arms. Cooper thus portrays them as noble allies of the American whites in contrast to the treacherous barbarism of the Iroquois. However, Heckewelder's account is an inversion of historical reality, as the Iroquois defeated the Delaware in battle during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in their consolidation of the Six Nations of the Iroquois, which constituted the most powerful of the Indian nations with its advanced military, political and agricultural systems.³

Clark draws on Roland Barthes' contention that mythology naturalises its desires such that it can masquerade as a form of authentic representation. In effect, it thereby naturalises its own version of history according to its value system: 'The world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences'.⁴ This tactic is designed to evade critical interrogation: 'This is why myth is experienced as innocent speech: not because its intentions are hidden – if they were hidden, they could not be efficacious – but because they are naturalised' (Barthes, p. 131). According to this model of myth, it is arguable that Cooper relocates the Iroquois from an historical location to a mythological domain through a process which appears natural and which is initiated in the preface. An array of appellations is used in the text for the Iroquois to obfuscate Indian history and displace the Iroquois into an alliance with the French and Huron (Clark, pp. 83-84). It is possible to further Clark's use of Barthes's Marxist interpretation of

³ Robert Clark, *History, Ideology and Myth in American Fiction, 1823-52* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), p. 80.

⁴ Roland Barthes, trans. by Annette Lavers *Mythology* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 142.

myth through Khanna's postcolonial psychoanalytic understanding of it. In 'Post-Palliative' she discusses the Makam el Shahid or the martyrs monument in Algeria, noting how it elides the tension between its celebration of Algerian independence and its commemoration of the 800,000 to 1.5 million lives lost during the war.⁵ The dead are rendered disposable through the monument's palliative of commemorating that independence. On this basis, she contends that national monuments constitute sites where the past can be mourned according to specific interpretations defined by political myths. Reframed in this way, Cooper's use of myth not only serves an ideological interest; it also reflects a version of history that the nineteenth-century American psyche would prefer to believe despite a repressed awareness of its alternative.

Cooper writes in the mythicising historical mode in delineating the history of the Indian Six Nations. He employs the conventional rhetoric of his period by implying that their disappearance is an inevitable effect of historical progress. Susan Scheckel's observations on this matter are useful to note here. She argues that mourning in the form of the vanishing Indian narrative was a popular means of expressing guilt and alleviating anxiety during the first half of the nineteenth century. She states that *The Last of the Mohicans* was one of the most popular works in this tradition, pointing out that the extinction of the Indians occurs as a sad but inevitable event firmly set in the past. By representing Indian displacement as an evolutionary event, Americans could absolve themselves for the violence it entailed.

According to this model, removal became something "natural" and inevitable; the Americans who inherited the Indians' land need not resist but only mourn the passing of the generation whose "extinction" made room for their expansion. And while past generations might make claims upon the future, their demands, once defined as part of the past, would appear only as a spectral presence haunting the history to which they had been relegated.⁶

⁵ Ranjana Khanna 'Post-Palliative: Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', *Postcolonial Text*, 2/1, (2006), n.p. <<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/385/815>> [accessed 12 March 2012]

⁶ Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 33.

As I will later argue, the themes of progress and mourning for a lost world are exemplified in Tamenund's depiction. Furthermore, Scheckel's contention will be relevant to the later discussion on Magua's Indian perspective on white encroachment. While there are key points in the novel where certain historical abuses are acknowledged in passing as in the case of Magua's grievances, I argue that this pattern is ultimately subsumed into the task of legitimating the American state. What becomes apparent is that the conflation of these themes constitutes a means of repressing the ethically dubious nature of frontier settlement. Furthermore, this repression of the past generates forms of colonial haunting and melancholia, which will be discussed in greater depth later.

Cultural and Psychological Continuity and The Revolution

Before considering Indian representations and their place in the national psyche in *The Last of the Mohicans*, it will be useful to detail how Cooper deals with the effect of the American Revolution upon national identity. This will go some way in explaining why he is invested in creating a naturalised mythological history, which glosses over the forced removal and assimilation of the Indian through national expansion. As I will go on to discuss, the War of Independence arguably introduced a schism in the national consciousness in terms of patricidal guilt and the prospect of further revolution. George B. Forgie provides an informative analysis in this regard. He argues that the 'post-heroic age' following the Revolution was characterised by anxiety regarding societal destabilisation due to the aspirations of a new generation of Americans who sought to succeed their revolutionary fathers: 'Indeed a post-heroic age not only permitted a strong but frustrated ambition to take a patricidal course; it actually encouraged it to do so'.⁷ He refers to the nineteenth-century idea

⁷ George B. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), p. 71.

that prosperity bred effeminacy and corruption: 'Prosperity was not only the forcing house of mediocrity – it could generate also greed, selfishness, corruption, self-indulgence, love of luxury, enervation, effeminacy, and boredom (Forgie, pp. 73-74). As will be seen, this idea is to some extent taken up by Cooper in the gender politics of his novel.

Forgie also discusses mid nineteenth-century conceptions of the nation in terms of youth, stating that American sentimentalists argued that the Republic was a child which required the restraint and discipline of the parental voice of the founders. National expansion and the rise of telegraph and rail networks were likewise rationalised in the metaphor of a growing youth by writers like Theophilus Fisk and Oliver Wendell Holmes (Forgie, p. 103). This rapid progress led to the emergence of a new slogan, 'Young America' which was oppositional in thought to the 'authority of tradition' (Forgie, p. 105). Nonetheless, the advocates of progress claimed that they were emulating their fathers:

Like the language of sons who obscure conflict with their fathers by displacing it onto their father's enemies, the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny fed on an explicitly derivative Anglophobia at almost every chance. The actual or possible presence of the British in Maine, Texas, California, and particularly Oregon provided the point of departure for countless declarations that the sons would, if need be, confront and defeat that chronic foe as gloriously as the fathers had (Forgie, p. 107).

Coupled with a national desire to see the American state as inherently new and future bound, the narrative of expansion and progress did not threaten the principles of the fathers but in fact reinforced them. Such reasoning contained the historical break brought about by the Revolution and its threat to social cohesion.

Scheckel argues that Forgie equates virtue and action in his contention that Americans feared a patricidal national course through the emulation of the fathers. She points out that while the Revolution was seen in a positive light, Americans sought to emulate the virtue of the fathers rather than their actions, which they saw as leading to Revolutionary violence. What is important to take from these arguments is the fact that there was a national impetus

to preserve a sense of historical continuity relating to the paradigm shift introduced by the Revolution with the liberation of the colonies from British rule. To this effect the values of the fathers were societally internalised and this allowed for their extenuation, meaning that succeeding generations could make their own mark through alternative forms of ‘revolutionary’ change, albeit ones which benefited the State. This same drive is also present in Cooper’s works and will be seen to inform the type of seamless history he seeks to establish in *Mohicans*. In each case, it is arguable that there is a psychical anxiety over the threat that inheres in the Revolution as a major historical event relating to the destabilisation of the status quo and a sense of potential guilt in terms of symbolic patricide. Cooper arguably reflects a national desire to incorporate and pacify this anxiety through the bolstering of the nation’s identity.

According to Mike Ewart, Cooper effectively denies revolution in *Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor* (1828), which elides the idea of revolution as the overthrow of the status quo. Revolutionary violence is contained within the imagery of military grandeur associated with heroic American revolutionaries.⁸ The eponymous Bachelor contends that the revolution was possessed of a character ‘far more noble than that of a rebellion’ due to the ‘moderation and dignity of the Americans’.⁹ Cadwallader extends the Bachelor’s considerations stating that ‘we have ever been reformers rather than revolutionists. Our own struggle for independence was not in its aspect a revolution’ (*Americans*, I, p. 360). In the second volume, Cadwallader disavows any notions of revolutionary change in his argument that the State is a continuation of the colonies in terms of its practices: ‘We have never been in a hurry to make unnecessary innovations. Reform

⁸ Mike Ewart, ‘Cooper and the American Revolution: The Non-Fiction’, *Journal of American Studies*, 11/1 (1977), 61-79 (p. 69).

⁹ James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans*, 2 Vols (London: Shackell and Bayliss, 1828), II, p. 290.

marches with a dignified pace - it is revolution that is violent. The states continued the practice of the colonies' (*Americans*, II, p. 41). Ewart argues that the Revolution is presented as a continuation of the political system of the colonies in putting in place a stable state. On this basis, Scheckel points out that Cooper is emphasising social and political stability in the passage concerning Cadwallader's reflections on the State as a successor to the colonies in its fusion of American and English forms of governance.¹⁰

Cooper's conception of the Revolution as reform evokes the notion of inheritance rather than patricide and therefore allays anxieties over the historical disjunction created by the revolt of the colonies. Ewart notes that in both *Notions of the Americans* and *Letters and Journals* (1830) Cooper advocates for a gentry to preside over his envisioned stable state, one which is ultimately politically disinterested due to its economic elevation above the masses. In this respect, this group are distinguished from an aristocracy as they do not constitute a politically engaged government. John McWilliams provides a further point to this argument: 'Although Cooper was later to argue that men of wealth and birth should be voted into political power, he never argued that they be voted into power solely because of wealth and birth'.¹¹ In *The American Democrat* (1838) he states that these elected representatives should avoid 'the impracticable theories of visionaries, and the narrow and selfish dogmas of those who would limit power by castes'.¹² Ewart goes on to note how there is a tension in Cooper's fiction between condemnation and celebration for revolutionary activity. Where it aligns with the interests of the gentry it is generally approved but where it is carried out by the lower

¹⁰ Susan Scheckel, "'In The Land of His Fathers": Cooper, Land Rights, and The Legitimation of American National Identity', in *James Fenimore Cooper: New Historical and Literary Contexts*, ed. by W.M. Verhoeven (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 125-150 (pp. 138-140).

¹¹ John P. Jr. McWilliams, *Political Justice in a Republic: James Fenimore Cooper's America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), p. 47

¹² James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat*, ed. by George Dekker and Larry Johnston (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969), p. 149.

classes it is denounced (Ewart, p. 14). Thus, Cooper rejects revolution where it threatens the status quo and its implications can no longer be neatly packaged into a conception of a stable polity that constitutes a reformed continuation of the pre-existing structures of the colonies. This idea of a gentrified system of governance will be another important aspect to take into consideration when discussing *Mohicans* and its theme of progress in relation to national expansion and representations of Indians and whites.

Ewart's reading of Cooper's political ideas is significant as it highlights the author's desire to establish a sense of national continuity. Taken together with Forgie's analysis of mid nineteenth-century discourses, we can see that the theme of a natural inheritance of the American land in *The Last of the Mohicans* with the disappearance of the Indian, reflects a wider context of cementing an historical continuum for the consolidation of national identity. Cooper's political philosophy and the ideological discourses noted by Forgie share the same underlying motivation: the fledging nation needs to be strengthened and built up partly in psychological terms through an emphasis on historical and cultural cohesiveness. This is all the more evident when we take into consideration the fact that he wrote the novel during a period which witnessed the passing of the Revolutionary generation into history. The processes by which Cooper effectuates this bolstering of national identity will be discussed throughout the chapter.

Theories of Civilisation and National Expansion

In light of the novel's historical revisionism, it is helpful to interrogate the various ideological concepts which inform its conventions as a work of historical fiction. George Dekker in *The American Historical Romance* (1987) details how the model of Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) had a significant influence on American writers in weaving mythologies of the national past. By further examining the *Waverley* model, it will become even more apparent

that *The Last of the Mohicans* draws heavily upon its conventions in terms of its theme of progress.

Dekker states that Scott's *Waverley* provided the template for historical romance writers to approach specific historical conflicts in universal and authentic terms.¹³ He contends that Scott developed a model that could be utilised to represent the revolutionary or imperialistic conflict engendered in the overthrow of a heroic society by a contemporary post-feudal state. As previously touched upon with regards to Fielder's argument, the heroic encompassed the primitive, as signified by Scott's *Highlanders* or Cooper's *Mohicans*, and the 'aristocratic' which was represented by the blood or spiritual survivors of an obsolete feudal order. Historical romancers often depicted these past societies as unitary whilst situating their heroes in a lonely conflict with a new and alien civilisation. The defeats suffered by these individuals possessed a broad cultural significance. Thus, the downfall of characters such as Hawkeye represented the loss of specific cultural possibilities for America (Dekker, p. 41). In Dekker's view, the western frontier enabled American historical romancers to formulate conflicts which were analogous to those found in *Waverley*. Scott broadened the scope of the novel format by introducing elements such as historical consciousness and in detailing the expanded range of natural and social factors which affected the behaviour of the characters. In addition, he elevated the novel form to the status of the epic by encompassing the destinies of entire societies. Thus, he used the novel to explore how impersonal factors such as the natural environment and technological progress influenced and linked the public actions of statesmen and societal behaviour in mutually dependent ways.

Dekker argues that the idea of progress played a critical role in influencing the lives and works of historical romance writers such as Cooper. The highland Scots in *Waverley*

¹³ George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 29.

react against the forces of progress in their conflict, as Gaelic-speaking Roman-Catholic feudalists, with the professionally trained Anglo-Saxon Protestant army committed to defending an advanced agrarian and mercantile state.

At once more primitive and more decadent than their opponents, this second group of Jacobites established a pattern for the portrayal in both historical romance and romantic history of all 'backward' peoples who had lost or were losing their homelands and cultural integrity to the imperialistic nations of Western Europe (Dekker, pp. 39-40).

Thus, in *Mohicans* Hawkeye may be compared to Scott's Highlanders as a representative frontiersman who eschews many of the conventions and social rituals of white civilisation. As previously mentioned, the Indian characters in the novel may also be considered to be akin to the *Waverley* Highlanders. The conflict between reaction and innovation becomes rationalised according to an imperialistic framework.

Scott focused on a type of conflict which manifested itself in the recent pasts of many countries. The *Waverley* model encouraged writers such as Cooper, Alexander Pushkin and Honore de Balzac to explore their respective national histories for powerful transitional events similar to those in Scottish history. These narratives satiated the nationalist hunger for epics. Moreover, Scott and his nineteenth-century successors regarded contemporary history in terms of a steady progress from savagery to civilisation. The *Waverley* model was considered appealing in revealing this pattern.

The *Waverley* model informs many of Cooper's authorial decisions in fashioning a narrative of the early American state in *The Last of the Mohicans*. He sets the events of the story in 1757 as this allows him to explore the conflicts between progress and older societal configurations. He then uses this to convey his own ideal of an agrarian American state ruled by gentry. Furthermore, in using the *Waverley* model he weaves an epic portrayal of state origins, which arguably satisfies the national demand for a more consolidated form of identity.

Dekker's discussion of the idea of progress and what is known as the stadialist model is particularly relevant to the central thematic concerns of *Mohicans*, that is savagery and civilisation and the justification for the establishment of the American state based on the displacement and genocide of the natives. Philosophical historians such as Adam Ferguson and William Robertson believed that there were four stages of societal development predicated on modes of subsistence. The first 'savage' stage was based on hunting and fishing, the second 'barbarian' stage involved herding, the third stage, considered 'civilised', consisted of agriculture, whilst the fourth stage, dedicated to commerce and manufacturing, was sometimes believed to be over-civilised (Dekker, p. 75). Each stage was considered to boast unique qualities relating to the mind or character, which were deficient in other stages. A strong constitution was considered as an example of savage virtue. The metaphorical expressiveness of American Indians was identified in other savage peoples such as the Ancient Greeks. Dekker notes how the philosophical historians used the four-stage model in their analysis of the North-American Indians to derive evidence for their savage state. This significantly influenced U.S. national identity and the treatment of Native Americans. With the exception of figures such as Daniel Boone or fictional characters such as Hawkeye, the people who depended on hunting were considered to be mostly Indians and consequently savage and inferior. The fact that most natives were both agriculturalists and hunters was ignored. The emphasis of the stadialists on the otherness of savage customs was interpreted to mean that Indians were uneducable in their attachment to their ways. Hence, mixing between whites and 'reds' was regarded to be undesirable. Roy Harvey Pearce considers these distortions of the four-stage theory as a product of the ideology of 'savagism', given that they characterised the Indian as embodying a savage past that civilised men had struggled to surpass. The red man was doomed to extinction by the sentence of History as he represented an impediment to national self-realisation.

For Pearce in *Savagism and Civilisation* (1988) the noble and ignoble aspects of the represented Indian became resolved in the conceptual framework of savagism. He argues that in the context of American society, the savage could be regarded as neither wholly superior nor inferior to the civilised man: 'It did not make sense to view his state as one either to be aspired to or to be dismissed with unfeeling contempt; rather it was to be seen as the state of one almost entirely out of contact, for good and for bad, with the life of civilised men'.¹⁴ The Indian constituted an example by which to measure the growth of white civilisation. Thus, the Indian archetype was used by fiction writers to document the extent of American progress westward. Cooper played a fundamental role in conveying the idea of savagism through the Indian figure to delineate the nature and destiny of American civilisation.

The accounts of Heckewelder and Nicholas Biddle which Cooper drew upon in writing his novels justified that progress. Pearce states that *The Leatherstocking Tales* portray American civilisation's westward advance in heroic and adventurous terms with respect to the taming of the savage frontier (Pearce, p. 200). The Indian functions as a means by which to understand a civilisation that excludes him due to his savagery. To extend Pearce's approach I will argue that aspects of frontier history and Indian qualities are noted and amalgamated into an historical sense of American identity in the novel.

As will be seen throughout this chapter, Cooper supports this theme of progress in the novel. The Indians must pass westward into the setting sun as white civilisation advances. This is an aspect of Cooper's repression of historical fact; by distancing the Indian to a remote past, he naturalises the establishment of the nation and sanctifies its legitimacy. The relegation of the Indian to a semi-mythic historical domain denies his continued presence in

¹⁴ Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 19.

American society whilst eliding the realities of violent frontier settlement. The melancholic pattern that this generates will be seen to reflect elements of Khanna's discussion of monuments and national mourning. Moreover, I will demonstrate that Cooper's use of stadalist discourses constitutes a form of incorporation of the Indian into the parameters of American identity and the national psyche itself. Those who resist their white counterparts such as the Huron, are demonised to the point where they are deprived of their status as human beings, which in turn justifies their annihilation. It is to this feature of the novel that I will now turn.

Demetaphorisation of the Indian and Ideologies of Progress

The arguments of Clark, Dekker and Pearce are useful in illuminating the various forms of rhetorical discourses and colonialist political ideology that Cooper demonstrates with respect to national expansion and the fate of Native Americans. The ideological, political and philosophical protocols that they have detailed relate to a general historical repression and the creation of a mythos in the novel. By reframing these readings in a psychoanalytic context, it is possible to gain further insight into the motivations underscoring Cooper's textual strategies. In addition, I will argue that a postcolonial psychoanalytic reading contributes to the analysis of myth formation in the generation of national identity.

Cooper absolves his white characters from responsibility for the widespread dislocation of the original Native American inhabitants on the basis that their disappearance is inevitable. For writers of fiction and nineteenth-century Americans in general, the nobility of the Indian could not survive the pressures of civilisation as it was judged to be of an inherently inferior quality compared to civilised nobility. Cooper furthered this assumption in his imaginative work. While he concedes that the Indian had been cruelly treated, he assures

his readers that this is necessary for the sake of universal moral progress, which it is the fate of Americans to realise.

As the enemies of this westward progress, the Huron are conflated with their animalistic associations through a process of demetaphorisation, such that they are presented as one-dimensional creatures who do not embody a legitimate alternative culture to that of their white adversaries. Discursive limiting is thereby achieved which reinforces the narrative of American national legitimacy via violent frontier conquest. The novel can arguably be divided into two segments, one dealing with the white world on the frontier as symbolised by the French siege on William Henry, with the second being invested in the American Indian world represented by the Huron and Delaware villages. It should be pointed out at this stage that the Huron and Indian characters more generally are limited in their characterisation in the first half whereas following the massacre of William Henry they are allowed greater dialogue and character depth. For example, the Huron who mistakes Heyward for an Indian medicine man and implores him to cure his wife does not fit into a typical villain role. Furthermore, the Indian is used at various points in the narrative to symbolise nobility and the uniqueness of the American landscape. However, I argue that where he becomes an obstacle to progress he is deprived of these significations to become a literal demon or animal, as a means of rationalising the historical reality of Indian resistance towards national expansion.

It is notable that many of Cooper's Indian figures utter only monosyllabic words such as 'Hugh', in addition to shouting or yelling.¹⁵ For example, Alice, Cora and Heyward are surrounded in a cavern by Indians who express themselves through wild screaming. In one such instance Hawkeye calls upon Uncas and Chingachgook to assist him in neutralising an

¹⁵ See, for example, James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 64, 74, 169, 184, 204, 226.

Indian foe perched in a tree. Chingachgook is relegated to guttural exclamations of ‘Hugh!’ which de-emphasises his humanity.

The depiction of the Indians as savages occupying a lower rung on the ladder of societal development is reinforced when Hawkeye refers to Magua as a mongrel Mohawk. He is also frequently compared to an imp, a creature who signifies bestial malevolence. The use of derogatory names for Magua undermines the counter hegemonic version of history he embodies with respect to Cooper’s mythology and can be argued to reflect Albert Memmi’s aforementioned concept of nouns, which function to generate absolute differences between the colonisers and colonised.

The savagery of the Indian is also highlighted when Heyward observes that the authority of an Indian chief is maintained by physical force rather than moral or intellectual superiority: ‘He well knew that the authority of an Indian chief was so little conventional, that it was oftener maintained by physical superiority, than by any moral supremacy he might possess’ (*Mohicans*, p. 92). This reinforces the idea that Indians are racially inferior compared to their white counterparts. Heyward’s thoughts on the matter are prompted by the exasperation of the Indians upon learning from Magua that Hawkeye is still alive. The agitation of the tribe members is typified by violent physical gestures and spitting (*Mohicans*, p.92).

The savage status of the Indian is emphasised when Chingachgook temporarily disappears from the party to slay a French sentinel. While he is described as taking ‘his wanted station, with the air of a man who believed he had done a deed of merit’, it is implied that his actions have elicited the disgust of his white peers (*Mohicans*, p. 138). The superior moral character of the whites is emphasised when Hawkeye states that ‘twould have been a cruel and inhuman act for a white-skin; but ‘tis the gift and natur of an Indian’ (*Mohicans*, p.

138). Thus, his savagism prevents him from realising that he has engaged in a thoughtless act of barbarity as in the text's logic he is incapable of reaching that conclusion.

The massacre of Fort William Henry constitutes a key moment in the text regarding the distinctions between the civility of the white characters and the barbarity of the Indians.¹⁶ French commander Montcalm shows Heyward and Munro an intercepted letter from General Webb. Upon learning that the hoped-for reinforcement troops will not be arriving, they agree to surrender to Montcalm, who promises that their soldiers shall retain their arms, colours, baggage and most importantly their honour. The French general is thus portrayed as a civilised military commander. Such civility is contrasted with the cruel savagery exhibited by the Indians in their slaughter of the defeated British forces.

The massacre begins when a Huron warrior snatches the baby of a woman in the procession. As an 'untutored' Indian his savage baseness has not been constrained by the ameliorative effect of the white man; his baseness is only exacerbated by the fact that he belongs to a tribe which actively defies white civilisation. He gestures as if to exchange the baby for a ransom before dashing its head against the rocks. He then proceeds to drive his tomahawk into the mother's brain. At this point, Magua raises the war whoop and two thousand Indians emerge from the forest to attack the procession. Cooper presents the event in gruesome detail to portray the Indians as demonic savages. This strategy functions to promote the Christian foundations of the American state by contrasting it with Indian pagan cruelty. They drink 'freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide' (*Mohicans*, p. 176). David Gamut exclaims 'it is the jubilee of the devils, and this is not a meet place for Christians to tarry in' (*Mohicans*, p. 177). Moreover, they attack the corpses of their victims

¹⁶ Clark argues that while Cooper meticulously researched the Battle of Fort William Henry, he was not so scrupulous in his representation of Indian history. As a result of his decision to portray the Delaware as 'good' and the Iroquois as 'bad', he implies that Montcalm was supported by both the Huron and the Iroquois at the fort. This contradicts the analyses of historians such as Cadwallader Colden or De Witt Clinton in addition to those of contemporary historians who contend that the Iroquois were either pro-British or neutral during the eighteenth century (Clark, pp. 82-83).

such is their frenzy. Cooper describes the flow of blood as a torrent. In this respect, we are provided with imagery of the Indians as savage, untamed and violent, much like the landscape they inhabit. The passage is also redolent of Chingachgook's scalping of the sentinel as the murderous activity of the Indians is shown to be unnecessarily destructive. While this massacre scene may arguably parallel Bird's grotesquely violent tale in *Nick of the Woods*, Cooper does not engage in uniformly demetaphorising Indians. As noted, a certain leeway is given to the Huron in the chapters that explore their society. However, where they directly come into conflict with the whites it is then that they are reduced to a one-dimensional status and associated with the violent, savage and demonic.

Hawkeye also occupies a lower rung of civilisation as a hunter. Dekker points out that the 'barbaric' white frontiersman was condemned by the same rationale as the Indians, despite representing a heroic transitional figure (Dekker, p. 81). He was frequently depicted as lawless or even criminal as he was simultaneously a bloody agent and a victim of American progress. Thus, he was not an ally of civilisation and lacked the refinement to advance to the next stage of society and marry one of Cooper's female characters of civilised leisure. In this scheme, he belongs to the second stage of civilisation.

In a similar manner to Dekker, Pearce contends that Hawkeye is neither a savage nor a civilised man and represents the ideal frontiersman with all the personal qualities which are advantageous for pioneering (Pearce, pp. 201-202). However, the inadequacies of his savage life compel him to retreat westwards until he dies on the prairies with the expansion of European American civilisation, which is shown to be a force for good: 'In the figure of Leatherstocking, facing his fate squarely, intuitively aware of its grand meaning, at times even a Christ-figure offering himself for sacrifice, Cooper justifies the ways of civilisation and progress to men' (Pearce, p. 207). This notion is complicated by the reservations Cooper expresses concerning the effects of unfettered progress and the erosion of his utopian ideal of

an agrarian society. Such a compromised endorsement of progress is attributable to his use of *Waverley* conventions and his vision for the nation as a political institution encapsulating the values of civilisation, which are moderated by pragmatism, masculinity and a lack of over-refinement.

The theme of savagery and civilisation, underscoring the narrative's American mythology is accompanied by a conflict between the valorisation of the masculine experiences of frontier survival and their ultimate subordination to the advance of feminine civilisation.¹⁷ Magua's denigration of the whites for their supposed femininity in comparison to the Indians contributes to this wider subtext in the novel: "Yes," muttered the Indian, in his native tongue; "the pale faces are prattling women! they have two words for each thing, while a red-skin will make the sound of his voice speak to him" (*Mohicans*, p. 91). In this sense, we can argue that Cooper is ideologically influenced by the discourses of the Yeoman Farmer and the onward march of civilisation, which involve and engender certain feminine traits of domesticity, settlement and refinement. Simultaneously, his narrative celebrates 'masculine' qualities such as pragmatism, which is evident in the decisive actions of Cora or Hawkeye. However, Alice, who displays an abundance of feminine traits, becomes Heyward's future wife instead of her more pragmatic counterpart Cora, and she is therefore a matriarch of feminine white civilisation, necessary for the establishment of the future American state. Cooper implies that a masculine pretext is required for this process to come about; such gendered dynamics will recur later in the thesis concerning frontier

¹⁷ This will be later paralleled in Bird's novel, *Nick of the Woods* (1837), which relies on a similar protocol. Moreover, in a direct contrast to writers like Lydia Maria Child and Helen Hunt Jackson, Cooper's use of gender distinctions contributes to the idea that Indians can never hope to rival or even integrate into American society due to their inherent inability to become educated and civilised. In addition, such distinctions underscore his advocacy for a specific vision of America as an agrarian state and anticipate his use of Indianness to distinguish American identity, which will be explored in the next section.

representations. The deeds of the male characters in the wilderness constitute the basis on which feminine civilisation is then founded.

Cooper depicts the wilderness as a domain of the mature male where ‘bookish knowledge’ is useless. In association with this, Lora Romero notes Cooper’s reliance on ethno-pedagogic thinking during the antebellum period regarding the conflation of precocity and education with femininity.¹⁸ According to Romero, Cooper’s novel reflects contemporary notions concerning prodigal talent and femininity relating to race. The cultural discourses of the feminine and masculine, the private and public, suburbia and the frontier, sentiment and adventure are rationalised in the figure of the prodigy. This is identifiable in the character of Gamut who is essentially a precocious scholar, ill equipped for the wilderness and Uncas who, under Cora’s influence, exceeds the intellectual capacities of his race. Romero asserts that while the book is normally associated with the father, in the antebellum period it is linked to the reign of the mother. For example, Thoreau laments the abundance of popular books in his chapter ‘Reading’ in *Walden* (1854). He expresses an anxiety over the feminine transformation of educational duties and characterises the printing press as a womb, arguing that women produce insubstantial literature and people.

Romero attributes the hysteria over the proliferation of books during the antebellum period to an anxiety connected to the violation of the subject’s psychological independence at the expense of their physical development: ‘An anxiety over the decorporealisation of power compels the advice offered time and again in educational treatises in the early nineteenth century: more emphasis should be placed upon the cultivation of the juvenile body and less upon the development of the juvenile mind’ (Romero, p. 399). This also relates to the stadialist model whereby the fourth stage of civilisation was often regarded to necessitate the

¹⁸ Romero, Lora, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 41-44.

eventual decline of civilisation through its over-refinement. Following Romero we can extrapolate that Cooper harks back to the Jeffersonian ideal of an agrarian form of civilisation. He conveys this idea through Gamut who personifies the entrance of civilisation into the wilderness (Romero, p. 42). He is associated with images of language, femininity and power. For example, his habit of bursting into song when enemy Indians are nearby prompts Hawkeye to remark that the ‘Lord never intended that the man should place all his endeavours in his throat’ and that Gamut has ‘fallen into the hands of some silly woman, when he should have been gathering his education under a blue sky, and among the beauties of the forest’ (*Mohicans*, p. 224). Cooper implies that God intended woman to favour language over physical development in contrast to his plans for man.

Consequently, he associates the feminine influence of over-education in the settlements with the proliferation of words and the rise of precipitous behaviour. This is indicated when Hawkeye advises his party to resume their efforts in locating the Munro sisters: ‘In the morning we shall be fresh, and ready to undertake our work like men, and not like babbling women or eager boys’ (*Mohicans*, p. 189). Romero contends that Hawkeye’s conflation of femininity with headstrong boys displays similarities with Rousseauvian notions of noble savagery.¹⁹

Romero argues that the Rousseauvian subtext to *The Last of the Mohicans* becomes apparent when Tamenund states that ‘Men speak not twice’ (*Mohicans*, p. 314). Thus, real men do not rely upon words as they have physical strength, in contrast to women and precocious sons who require verbal prosthetics to achieve their aims. Words constitute a

¹⁹ Rousseau in *Émile* (1762) states that Europeans are weaker and die younger in comparison to noble savages. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. by Barbara Foxley (New York: Dutton, 1969), pp. 176-177. He argues that women are responsible for the degeneration of the white race in their control over education. It is only in the equilibrium of body and mind pertaining to what we want and what we can get that nobility is achieved: ‘What is the cause of man’s weakness? It is to be found in the disproportion between his strength and his desires’ (*Émile*, p. 128). When male pupils sacrifice bodily vigour for feminine verbal practices of representation it results in them becoming prodigies.

feminine economy of power for Cooper. Therefore, Hawkeye proclaims that unlike Gamut he is not a ‘whispering boy, at the apron string of one of your old gals’ (*Mohicans*, p. 117). When Gamut asks Hawkeye to support his philosophical speculations with textual references, the scout exclaims: ‘what have such as I, who am a warrior of the wilderness [...] to do with books! I never read but in one that is the book of nature, and the words that are written there are too simple and too plain to need much schooling’ (*Mohicans*, p. 117). The ‘plainness’ of the book of nature justifies the use of paternal power through physical force. Power relations are established between the experience acquired on the trail and ‘bookish knowledge’ (*Mohicans*, p. 189). In addition to the fact that Hawkeye is a semi-barbaric character who has adopted Indian traits, the critical stance taken towards verbosity and intellectualism in the novel reflects its ambivalent absorption of Indian characteristics into its version of American identity. As we may recall, the Indians are limited in their verbal articulations and it can be posited that Cooper sees some value in what could be considered their unfeminine culture, despite the fact that he will often use this feature to highlight their savagism and to deny them full humanity. This pattern in turn reflects an underlying national melancholia relating to the conflicted place of the Indian in the national psyche, which points to the psychically fractious origins of the State.

Cooper conflates his use of civilisational theory with gender politics to posit a more robust, masculine conception of Americanness, one that will not repeat the mistakes of European powers. Consequently, the wilderness in his novel is a world sealed off from the corrupting influence of a much too refined, overly learned European civilisation. While he may have displayed some affiliation to European and Anglophone culture, this does not contradict the fact that he sought to define an autonomous national identity. Rather these seemingly conflicting patterns reflect a global process in the novel, whereby the best aspects of such cultures are utilised according to a telos of establishing a very specific vision of

American identity. Therefore, certain features of civilisational culture are lauded yet we also have recognition for the qualities of the Indian and these apparently antithetical poles are amalgamated into a latticework of Americanness. This also relates to Cooper's consolidation of a national historical continuum, one that relieves the psychological guilt of the Revolution and the displacement of Indians.

According to Romero, the gendered gentle tyranny described by Leslie Fielder undermines radical native autonomy and proportions.²⁰ This is reflected in Cooper's narrative when Cora becomes aware of Uncas's infatuation with her and proceeds to exercise the 'intuitive consciousness of her power over him' (*Mohicans*, p. 79). Following the received wisdom of ethnologists, Cooper believed that Indians were unable to experience romantic passion. Therefore, he denigrates Uncas's subtle pursuit of Cora's affections as a 'departure from the dignity of his manhood' (*Mohicans*, p. 56). Conversely, Cooper states that Uncas's love 'advances him centuries before the practices of his nation' (*Mohicans*, p. 115). In Romero's view, the novel infers that Cora's gentle tyranny precipitates Uncas's downfall through the cultivation of his intellect (Romero, p. 48). He falls under her power and is educated without his knowledge. Consequently, he becomes a racial prodigy. This is signified when Hawk-eye reproaches him for becoming 'as impatient as a man in the settlements' (*Mohicans*, p. 185). Uncas continually risks his life in pursuing Cora and is therefore transfigured from a noble savage into an eager savage.

Following this line, he becomes the last of his race due to the invisible effects of Cora's tutelage. When he leaps from a great height to prevent Magua from killing Cora, he is slain by his adversary's tomahawk. Magua dies in a similar headlong fashion on the next page and we are invited to compare the two characters. Romero contends that the antebellum

²⁰ Fielder here means the tyranny of the mundane domestic space with its constraints against independence and adventure, which men like Hawkeye would have found intolerable. He argues that Cooper protests against such a space in creating a predominantly masculine, mythical frontier (Fielder, p. 189).

figure of the prodigy provides the underlying dynamic for this section. However, I would add that this is not necessarily the primary motivation for Uncas's downfall but rather one factor in it. Rather it is arguable that Cooper seeks to bring about an ending that contains the Indian safely within the past and thereby legitimate white 'inheritance'.

In view of this impetus, the potential for miscegenation presented by Uncas and Cora's blossoming romance is censured. As noted, Uncas is advanced 'centuries before the practices' of his nation' in his adoration for Cora (*Mohicans*, p. 115). He is therefore an adequate suitor in his elevation to an exceptional status, which is reinforced due to his regal background. As David T. Haberly points out Cooper provides Cora with two choices for suitors from social castes comparable to her own: Magua the son of a chief and Uncas, whom she naturally prefers, an Indian 'nobleman'.²¹ The romance is permitted in part due to Cora's racial heritage which makes her an unsuitable marriage candidate for Heyward. However, the possibility of mixed race progeny is prevented given that both Uncas and Cora die. Their joint funeral at the end of the novel is significant as it is implied that they can only be wed in death. If only to labour the point, Hawkeye is described as shaking his head when 'Delaware girls' speak of the 'future prospects' of Uncas and Cora (*Mohicans*, p. 344). The emerging nation is heavily prefigured to belong to white European colonials and the threat of Indianisation is negated through the symbolic deaths of Uncas and Cora and the vanishing Indian theme present in the novel. The possibility of miscegenation that their doomed romance raises will become an area of differentiation when I later go on to discuss *Hobomok*.

In addition, for Chingachgook to become the last of the Mohicans and hence for the vanishing Indian discourse to have full effect, Uncas must die and what better way to achieve this than for him to pursue the affections of Cora and defend her against a possessive villain

²¹ David T. Haberly, 'The Last of the Mohicans and the Captivity Tradition', *American Quarterly*, 28/4 (1976), 431-444 (pp. 438-439).

such as Magua? While Cooper may be implying that the excitation of male tempers due to feminine influence and tutelage leads to disaster, his main goal appears to involve validating the nation's establishment with the impossibility of future Indian generations whilst foreclosing a vision of mixed race Americans. Therefore, gender protocols are indirectly associated with an overarching process of incorporating the Indian presence into a saga of American identity, but it is the narrative turns and generic devices that exert the greater influence.

Cooper's inference that Indians represent the apex of masculinity is backed up when Magua arrives at the Huron village and mentions the name of 'Reed-that-Bends' who has been executed for his 'feminine cowardice'. An awkward silence among the villagers ensues. The father of the slain man states that 'his blood was pale, and it came not from the veins of a Huron' (*Mohicans*, p. 247). The associations between civilisation, whiteness and femininity are apparent here. However, Cooper's ideal of manhood is personified by Hawkeye who successfully combines the combat skills, physical prowess and resourcefulness of the Indian with aspects of the morality and civility of the white man. What is evident is that Cooper uses the wilderness and the Indian to define his ideal of American identity, which presents us with a more masculine, agrarian vision of civilisation, although one set above the standards of men like Hawkeye. An ambivalent position is implied as he draws upon elements associated with savage Indian cultures and the values of semi-barbarians like Hawkeye as an antidote to over-refined civility, which thus complicates the binary he invokes regarding savagism versus civilisation. The Indian will be seen to constitute an integral component in defining a coherent national history in response to the epistemic violence of the War of Independence. In addition, although he is used to distinguish American identity he acts as a reminder for a history of displacement and therefore must disappear whilst being condemned for his savagery. The fluctuation between condemnation and admiration for the Indian is

melancholic in these contexts as it reflects drives to rationalise and repress historical events to maintain a stable national narrative and sense of self.

The Indian as a Facet of American Identity

As explored, the binary distinctions between the civilised and the barbaric function within the narrative to consolidate American nationalism. However, in spite of this, Cooper's approach to American identity displays a great deal more ambiguity than is necessarily apparent on a surface reading. He conjures the illusion of seemingly civilised detachment, underscored by a sense of humanitarianism, through briefly entertaining the Indian perspective on white encroachment. In this respect, his narrative voice links back to the historical romance mode. In the preface and introduction he takes pains to emphasise the novel's historical nature but at the same time we have a mythologising of that history as the language conjures a world that is temporally distant and epic in scope. For example, the preface is almost anthropological in tone in its view of Indian tribes:

The Europeans found that immense region which lies between the Penobscot and the Potomac, the Atlantic and the Mississippi, in the possession of a people who sprang from the same stock [...] The generic name of this people was the Wapanachki. They were fond, however, of calling themselves the 'Lenni Lenape,' which of itself signifies, an 'unmixed people' (*Mohicans*, pp. 1-2).

Here we have references to geographical locations and a seemingly comprehensive study of Indian tribal names. To compound the supposed historical credibility of his work, Cooper briefly cites Heckewelder as a 'fund of information'.

At the same time, he invests his historical narrative with mythical elements. Thus, the characters appear larger than life, capable of heroic deeds that belong in the pages of an epic rather than a sober historical account. For example, in Chapter Twenty-Nine Hawkeye can, without aiming, shatter an earthen vessel with a rifle such is his skill with it:

The scout laughed aloud – a noise that produced the startling effect of an unnatural sound on Heyward – then dropping the piece, heavily, into his extended left hand, it was discharged,

apparently by the shock, driving the fragments of the vessel into the air, and scattering them on every side (*Mohicans*, p. 298).

The conclusion itself is less in the manner of an historical account than it is a symbolic fashioning of the American state's origins. Uncas is depicted as a mythological hero in the following eulogy: 'Who that saw thee in battle, would believe that thou couldst die! [...] Thy feet were like the wings of eagles; thine arm heavier than falling branches from the pine; and thy voice like the Manitto, when he speaks in the cloud' (*Mohicans*, p. 344) In addition Tamenund provides a final summation of epic proportions when he laments that he has lived long enough to 'see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans!', which serves to capitalise on the theme of the Indian's inevitable demise in the face of historical progress (*Mohicans*, p. 350). This combination of narrative modes distances the historical setting of his novel, which allows for such exaggerations, national symbolism and a semi-historical, detached tone. He is able to include Indian condemnation for national expansion as that articulation occurs in a distant historical world that is unthreatening to the present one. He is in effect playing the role of an historian-anthropologist whilst simultaneously writing as a national myth-weaver.

Scheckel's discussion of Cooper's use of the Indian to define a sense of continuous national history is useful to consider in relation to Waverly conventions, civilisational progress and the presence of Indian perspectives on national expansion and Indian myth in *The Last of the Mohicans*. She argues that literary nationalists considered Indian myths and history to be a source for the fabrication of a narrative of early origins for the American state. As detailed, the Revolution threatened the repetition of revolutionary violence. The War of Independence, in signifying a new historical precedent, upset the balance of such a continuous history and therefore a writer like Cooper could be said to draw upon the Indian and a mythical history to reinforce the stability of American identity and societal cohesion according to the narrative of nationalism. In this way the epistemic violence wrought by the

revolutionary war, in relation to divisions between ‘father’ and ‘son’ and the cultural disconnect between colonial culture and a new, emerging American identity, could be deferred into the illusion of a continuous, organic version of national history (Scheckel, pp. 16-17).

In light of the historical disconnect created by the Revolution, the works of writers such as Heckewelder and Henry Schoolcraft attempted to incorporate the Indian into the legacy of the nation through recording his culture and society. In a review of Schoolcraft’s work in 1845, William Gilmore Simms tried to persuade Americans to draw upon Indian legends in writing national literature. Scheckel suggests that locating national origins in Indian heritage directed attention away from the patricidal guilt of the Revolution. Drawing upon Chief Justice Marshall’s reflections on the case of *Johnson v. McIntosh* as a reference point, Scheckel argues that Cooper explored these issues in *The Pioneers* (1823), given that he sought to legitimate American claims to the land regardless of the prior claims of the British Empire and the Indians via the theme of inheritance.²² Furthermore, he used race to fabricate a symbolic kinship between the English and Indians, as prior owners of the American land who willingly bestowed their property on their American heirs. As will be seen, many of her arguments have a relation to the incidences of fleeting recognition for the realities of frontier violence and the adoption of the Indian as a defining element in national identity in *Mohicans*.

Richard Slotkin’s arguments on the subtle conflation of European frontier experiences with Indian myth in *The Leatherstocking Tales* are also useful to consider. For Slotkin,

²² *Johnson v. McIntosh* involved competing claims between a defendant whose grant was approved by the U.S. government and the plaintiffs who had received their grant from the Illinois and Piankeshaw Indians prior to the American Revolution. The case raised issues concerning Anglo-American relations and the ideals of the Revolution. Significantly, Marshall concluded that the American state had inherited the rights to the land from Britain, which served to complicate American national identity as being distinct from its British counterpart. Furthermore, the Court was in a position where it was upholding British colonial policies as precedents which were originally denounced by the Revolutionary generation (Scheckel, pp. 26-29).

Hawkeye reflects the frontiersman as an archetypal American: 'To accept wholeheartedly the wilderness marriage and Eucharist is to lose one's white soul; to hold back is to fail in America as an American'.²³ Hawkeye's myth provides the civilised man with a set of values drawn from a long sojourn in the wilderness according to Slotkin, the most important of which is reverence for all life (Slotkin, p. 506). The hero in this myth is able to identify moral truth when he forgets his ties and preconceived notions relating to race, gender, body, soul, man and god. As a result, he learns of truths about the world and himself and his discriminations are vindicated and seem less the products of habit. In this respect, Cooper draws upon literary antecedents such as the Puritan narrative of spiritual transcendence in isolation in nature. Hawkeye's experiences are meant to give an insight into certain characteristics that Cooper thinks ought to be fundamental to American identity.

To extend Slotkin's argument, Cooper is able to reinforce the credibility of the strict ideological line he sets up regarding the validity of national expansion and racial divisions by partially deviating from it. This does not contradict the binary he establishes between savage and civilised but rather colours it with flexibility. In the novel's terms, miscegenation is wrong yet the adoption of Indian traits is permissible under the proviso that a character like Hawkeye preserves his essential whiteness, Christianity and recognition for his social superiors. I contend that aspects like this in Cooper's narrative allow it to incorporate the ethical problems of frontier conquest with a greater effectivity compared to Bird's text. While Bird's Jibbenainosay appears to be a similar character to Hawkeye, the tone of his narrative is one that actively works against any notion of the redemptive effects of the wilderness whilst establishing rigid yet unstable distinctions between Native Americans and whites. The result

²³ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of The American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 505.

in Bird's novel is a more persistent form of haunting in relation to its extremist Indian-hating discourse.

By contrast, Hawkeye and the role he plays as outlined by Slotkin can be reconceptualised in a psychoanalytic sense, such that we can see him performing an incorporative process in absorbing the Indian as a component of American identity. In this sense, Hawkeye does not wholly embody Cooper's idea of Americanness but instead represents a facet of it. He is a transitory figure who clears the way for civilisation and encapsulates basic qualities that derive from his Indian alliances and his time spent in the wilderness that will become elements of American identity. Cooper co-opts his imagined version of the Indian into national identity but is nonetheless resolute that one society should prevail over the other. Thus, the binary in its essence is not contravened regarding its prohibition against racial mixing, its distinctions between savage and civilised in an absolute sense and its discourse of Indian disappearance. However, it is qualified on a more general level, which allows for an incorporation of an Americanised version of the Indian so as to more effectively gloss over and expatiate guilt regarding a history of violent frontier conquest, whilst enabling for the formulation of a distinct national identity, rooted in that history.

Hawkeye's attempts to console Chingachgook at the end represent an event in the novel where the distinction between savage and civilised is temporarily weakened only to be reinforced. Hawkeye states that Chingachgook is not alone as he also shares his grief for the death of Uncas.

The gifts of our colours may be different, but God has so placed us as to journey in the same path [...] He was your son, and a red skin by nature, and it may be that your blood was nearer, but if ever I forget the lad, who has so often fou't at my side, in war, and slept at my side in peace, may He who made us all, whatever may be our colour or our gifts, forget me (*Mohicans*, p. 349).

This may be taken to reflect Memmi's contention that the assimilatory tendencies of the colonisers results in a paradox, in that while they attempt to deny the cultural differences of the native in order to incorporate them into the logic of the colonial state, they simultaneously assert the importance of absolute racial differences.²⁴ Hawkeye's words of consolation to Chingachgook display elements of this thought process. He draws distinctions based on race between himself and his Indian friend. However, he simultaneously states that he will never forget Uncas's deeds and invokes the idea that Indians and whites share a common lineage as creations of a monotheistic deity. There is here an implicit attempt to symbolically assimilate aspects of Indian culture into the memory of the State.

Cooper tries to create a sense of historical continuity whilst distinguishing America from its colonial past and, at the same time, promoting his version of what that America should be, essentially a racially homogenous, conservative and hierarchical society, influenced though not defined by older virtues such as valour and so on. Rather than creating a paradox between the idea of national autonomy and national indebtedness to the values of England and the Old World, these elements work in tandem to consolidate a stable interpretation of national history. This interpretation represses the psychological trauma of the Revolutionary War brought about by a patricidal, historical break with England and works to incorporate the history of violent frontier conquest and the Indian as a central fixture to differentiate American identity. This seemingly dichotomous dynamic counter-intuitively strengthens the national psyche's sense of itself through the coherency that inheres in the mirage of historical continuity and self-possession found in cultural uniqueness.

As will be later seen with Jackson, Cooper uses the figure of the Indian according to his own imaginative projections, as part of his overall goal to articulate an ideal of America

²⁴ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. by Howard Greenfeld (New York: The Orion Press, 1985), pp. 141-142.

as a pragmatic, agrarian based society, yet to be corrupted by over-refinement. Hawkeye's speech, when placed alongside the constant reminders of an ethnocentric vision of future American civilisation, indicates that it reflects a form of melancholic incorporation, in that Cooper rationalises though never fully expunges the ethical and humanitarian problems posed by Indian displacement. Although the Indian may be used to distinguish certain aspects of American identity, a dissonant reminder of his inassimilable nature and the history he points to is engendered by the fact that he must be banished from view with the coming of the civilisation that succeeds his own.

In addition, there are a number of moments in the text where characters such as Magua and Tamenund express opinions that would appear to destabilise the novel's project of bolstering state legitimacy. However, the overarching impetus is to incorporate the historical memory of Indian resistance and the crimes associated with frontier settlement into a sweeping narrative through the use of mythological conventions and the invocation of the discourses already discussed regarding savagism, civilisational stages, Manifest Destiny and so on. A limited acknowledgement of such disruptive memories coupled with the purging of their political-cultural agency allows for a more coherent sense of national identity and a more stable representation of the national consciousness. This will later become further apparent in relation to *Nick of the Woods* in which a rather binary view of Indian-white relations is presented that, I suggest, inversely undermines the novel's intended ideological message.

We find an interesting allusion to the displacement of Native Americans in Hawkeye's statement to Heyward concerning the Delaware: 'You have driven their tribes from the sea-shore, and would now believe what their enemies say, that you may sleep at night upon an easy pillow' (*Mohicans*, p. 50). This signifies a momentary lapse in the ideological protocols of the narrative, whereby the real events of history breach the forms of

historical revisionism and repression, which provide us with an idealised account of the nation. The fact that Hawkeye refers to an act of appropriation that occurs prior to the existence of the American state, in a semi-mythological world, exculpates the nineteenth-century Americans from responsibility. The memory of Indian displacement is distanced although it is acknowledged in passing which allows it to be reconciled more effectively to the ego-ideal of the national psyche. In effect, what could be described as a controlled ‘venting’ of an inassimilable event takes place before being repressed again. Cooper goes beyond the cultural conventions of his time to incorporate Indian myth and characteristics through the figure of Hawkeye and, to an extent, the Indian view of national expansion to differentiate American identity in terms of a unique history. Thus, the preceding events of national establishment involved certain practices inimical to the standards of civilisation. However, the violence of frontier settlement is excused as an inevitable though regrettable phase. This limited recognition can also be said to distinguish the American state as a morally superior institution compared to its colonising European forbears.

Furthermore, Magua’s personification of an alternative historical vision is rationalised via his role as a villain for the most part. The legitimacy of the history he espouses is largely discredited in this characterisation. However, there are layers of hidden depth to Magua’s persona which complicate this annulment of the history he conveys, despite his one-dimensionality. Magua first articulates his counter hegemonic version of past events to Heyward when he explains the grievances of his people, which functions to contradict Cooper’s pious characterisation of the white settlers and colonial officers. Magua asserts that he is ‘too brave to remember the hurts received in war, or the hands that gave them!’ and rhetorically asks whether it was the whites who instigated war upon the Indians: ‘Was it war, when the tired Indian rested at the sugar tree, to taste his corn! who filled the bushes with creeping enemies! who drew the knife! Whose tongue was peace, while his heart was

coloured with blood' (*Mohicans*, p. 90). Cooper incorporates the inassimilable accusations of Magua directed against the white man concerning colonial forms of genocide by portraying him as a 'prince of darkness' (*Mohicans*, p. 284).

It is arguable that Cooper once again considers warfare between Indian and white cultures to be an inevitable though unfortunate outcome. Jane Tompkins reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that life for Cooper consisted in a 'harmony of warfare' through the preservation of distinctions relating to race, gender, national affiliation and so on.²⁵ However, I would add that this support for the impossibility of cultural heterogeneity and the necessitated supplanting of one civilisation by another implies exculpation for the violence of national expansion. This can be considered as another means by which to incorporate the historical memories relating to the crimes of Indian displacement. Conversely, the very airing of such crimes through the retorts of characters like Magua points to their haunting presence in the American psyche, given that they discredit, on an individual level, the ideal of the nation as a civilised institution. In addition, we can identify in Magua's remarks the same pattern, whereby the ethics of national expansion are safely contained by distancing the project to a past world which precedes the founding of the American state, a past world populated by Englishmen, Frenchmen and semi-civilised frontiersmen. The fact that what follows is the emergence of a 'great' civilisation further softens the memory of Indian displacement.²⁶

In another instance where the Indian perspective is entertained, Magua confronts Cora with the choice of either accepting her place in his wigwam or dying by his hand. It is

²⁵ Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 117.

²⁶ Scheckel's argument that the vanishing Indian narrative served to consign Indian grievances over displacement to the past is useful to recall. Magua belongs to a tribal society from an obsolete age in Cooper's contemporary period. Thus, regardless of whether his demands have some merit in them or not, they no longer exert any effect on the American present, as imagined by Cooper.

noteworthy that he gives her a choice in the first place. When she states 'I am thine! Do with me as thou seest best!' Magua repeats his demand for her to choose (*Mohicans*, p. 337). When she ignores him he attempts to kill her but hesitates and decides against the action. Thus, his role as a villain is temporarily offset. He displays at least some personal depth and empathy which complicates his characterisation as a one-dimensional antagonist to an extent. In another section of the narrative, he is described as looking upon Cora with an expression that evades definition and which contrasts with the contempt he normally displays towards white characters such as Heyward. The counter-historical narrative he represents is to some extent implicitly and retroactively given value. He is not necessarily the personification of pure evil and so the history of violent resistance he embodies cannot be completely disregarded as the product of a demonic mentality. This contributes to the brief moments of partial acknowledgement of white colonial crimes against the Indians throughout the novel. Nonetheless, his death as the sovereign head of the Huron serves to banish whatever agency he represents to historical oblivion. Thus, while Cooper venerates white civilisation, he also builds his mythology upon a repressed history, which is incorporated through partial acknowledgement in conjunction with the re-inscription of various notions of savagery and the fall of Indian civilisation according to an evolutionary cycle.

Clark notes an interlude in the novel in which historical truth manages to disrupt the process of denial in the text. Munro, Hawkeye, Uncas, Chingachgook and Heyward survey the corpse-strewn ruins of Fort William Henry. A lone Indian fires at Chingachgook. Uncas kills the assailant and returns with his scalp. He is revealed to be an Oneida, one of the Iroquois Six Nations. Heyward recognises the Oneidas as friendly Indians which prompts Hawkeye to feel the need to state his loyalty to the crown due to his divergent personal animosity. His normal impartiality is undermined by this admission. He proceeds to state that Indian relations have been confused due to white cunning and that only a few Delaware are

fighting with the Mingoes and British while the rest have migrated to Canada where they are allied with the French and Huron. The Indian alliances which have thus far structured the novel are partially contradicted by this revelation which indicates that Cooper has a more accurate knowledge of white-Indian relations than he has been prepared to disclose. Clark asserts that this repressed knowledge has resurfaced amidst the confusion and obscurity which informs Cooper's version of Indian history. The historical removal of the Oneida from their homelands is a reminder of the fate which awaited those Indian nations loyal to the American forces (Clark, pp. 87-91).

However, the pattern of partial acknowledgement for Indian displacement and the pacification of historical memories associated with it is fairly consistent throughout the text. Cooper alludes to colonial violence when he mentions that William Penn was named Miquon by the Delaware as he exceptionally never resorted to violence in his dealings with them. He also makes another reference to the bloody origins of the State when he contends that 'the Pennsylvanian and Jerseyman have more reason to value themselves in their ancestors than the natives of any other state, since no wrong was done to the original owners of the soil' (*Mohicans*, p. 304). In addition, finally, we have a rationalisation of national expansion in its characterisation as a cyclical, evolutionary process. Thus, Tamenund expresses the idea that the American state is a historically contingent construct: 'They entered the land at the rising, and may yet go off at the setting sun!' (*Mohicans*, p. 305). Again, memories of massacre, displacement and brutality that attended frontier colonisation are contained through this cyclical model whereby Indian displacement is sanctified by natural law.

As noted, Cooper absorbs the Indian perspective, transforming it to fit within the parameters of dominant American identity to cap this process of acknowledgement and rationalisation. To reiterate, this alteration anticipates a similar process at work in *Ramona* whereby Jackson projects a sympathetic yet paternalistic imagined conception of the Indian

to convey her vision of the national ideal. Near the end of his text Cooper temporarily departs from his celebration of the forthcoming American state when he mentions that Tamemund is believed by the Indians to hold communion with the Great Spirit which ‘transmitted his name, with some slight alteration, to the white usurpers of his ancient territory, as the imaginary, tutelary saint’ (*Mohicans*, p. 293). The use of the word ‘usurpers’ indicates an awareness of how Indian lands were often taken either by force or by deceptive treaties. However, Cooper adds a footnote to this passage, explaining that the Americans ‘sometimes call their tutelary saint Tamenay, a corruption of the name of the renowned chief’ (*Mohicans*, p. 293). This is yet another instance of incorporation whereby a respected figure from Indian history is ‘swallowed whole’ by the national discourse of the State for its own legitimation. Although there is a brief recognition for the violence entailed in frontier colonisation, it is rationalised through this scene of a metaphorical handing over of the land by its chief patriarch, who becomes a symbolic figurehead within later American culture. Therefore, the Indian perspective and the history of Indian expropriation, is processed and incorporated into American identity or consciousness through these manoeuvres such that it cannot represent a threat to that identity.

Furthermore, the conflicted dimension to this incorporation of the Indian is also identifiable in the later *The Pioneers*. Scheckel notes this in the scene in which Hawkeye points out that Chingachgook’s name is misspelled on his gravestone, stating that this is a serious matter as ‘an Indian’s name has always some meaning in it’.²⁷ Scheckel argues that this ‘mutilation’ of Chingachgook’s name parallels his earlier physical mutilation from the exploding gunpowder placed between his legs (Scheckel, pp. 32, 38). The symbolism here is evident in that the Indian must disappear through emasculation with the ascent of the American state. What unites the two scenes is the fact that in both cases the incorporation of

²⁷ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (New York: Walden and Company, 1859), p. 500.

the Indian into the narrative of American history involves violation. This recognition of violation as a necessary factor for the American state introduces a form of melancholy in that it alludes to the artificial nature of the myth that one civilisation has been naturally supplanted by another. Similarly, elements of melancholic incorporation are identifiable in *Mohicans* in the form of aforementioned narrative signifiers for the history of frontier violence. Ultimately, I argue that although Cooper manages to negotiate with these historical elements, the outcome of his work remains dependent on repressing them, which generates melancholic effects, such as the demetaphorised distinction between savage and civilised and the representation of Indians as spectres to which I now turn.

The Spectre and The Historical Memory of Frontier Conquest

The spectre is a significant gothic and postcolonial element, which is used as a generic device by Cooper given that he seeks to portray the wilderness as inimical to the rational, predictable and secure environs of civilisation. However, it may also be considered as an unconscious sign of repression. Following the line that the unresolved psychological conflicts of the national consciousness are both sidelined and expressed within the gothic wilderness, the Indian spectre is an obvious textual vehicle pointing to the haunting effect that Indian removal has on the nation's self-conception. The national consciousness tries to relocate the inassimilable realities of this policy beyond its conceptual/spatial boundaries. In Cooper's work, the Indian spectre is a symptom of incorporation relating to the injustices involved in Indian displacement.

For example, Heyward approaches a Huron village and sees twenty to thirty forms rising from the grass in front of a lodge before sinking again. He calls them 'spectres' and 'unearthly beings' (*Mohicans*, p. 231). Here we can identify how the mythical element of Cooper's historical romance comes into play. Moreover, the whole village is depicted as an

otherworldly realm. In one instance, Heyward and Gamut find themselves in the midst of Indian children who are described as then magically vanishing. The adult warriors of the village are primarily characterised as dark, moving forms. As a symbol for the history of Indian resistance against white expansion in the nineteenth-century imagination, the Huron tribe are cast as ghosts, magical and shadowy forms without material substance. The characteristics of this depiction arguably underscore the fact that they constitute something similar to a ghost in its recurrent yet immaterial nature, namely a memory. Furthermore, this memory is banished to a gothic wilderness, separate from civilisation, which reflects the repressed psychic elements of the white characters and which in turn becomes figurative of the national unconscious. This association is reinforced when we take into account the fact that immediately prior to the terrible massacre at William Henry, the Huron appear as if by ‘magic, where a dozen only had been seen, a minute before’ (*Mohicans*, p. 175). The inassimilable as it pertains to the psychological consequences of massacre and warfare between Indians and whites is contained by distancing language that conjures mythical and supernatural meanings.²⁸

In exploring the Huron village, Heyward and Gamut find themselves in a gothic wilderness setting that symbolises the nation’s primordial past and its memories of frontier colonisation. Cooper displaces the idea that the Indian enjoys a superior claim to the land or even one of parity with that of the colonists. Furthermore, the natives’ characterisation as spectres is symptomatic of the disappearing Indian narrative. Along with the fabrication of a distant past, the Indian spectre is used by Cooper to distance Native Americans from the

²⁸ By way of comparison, it is also significant that Cooper displaces revolutionary violence within the confines of the wilderness. For example, the crumbling blockhouse which Hawkeye encounters is noted to be one of many such similar structures that are a ‘memorial’ to the ‘passage and struggles of man’ and ‘intimately associated with the recollections of colonial history [...] which are in appropriate keeping with the gloomy character of the surrounding scenery’ (*Mohicans*, p. 125). This is immediately followed with a footnote describing abandoned ladders that the revolutionaries had intended to use to take the British held Fort Oswego. As discussed, the psychical schism introduced by the War of Independence as an outcome of colonial history is not only associated with a melancholia which characterises the wilderness; it is contained there along with the memory of Indian resistance.

temporal and spatial parameters of the State. The very presence of the Indian conflicts with unimpeded national expansion and this in turn points to the violence engendered in Indian removal, which cannot be assimilated into the narrative's ideal of an American state. Again, we have a naturalisation of American inheritance of the land. Cooper's incorporation of the memory of Indian resistance creates textual signifiers that haunt the narrative in a manner that recalls how attempts to build up a continuous history in the shadow of the Revolution reflected a general national anxiety about the potential cultural, historical and psychical schism it had introduced. In each case, the origin for such melancholia is also the source of its denial through repression via historical revisionism, narrative technique and reassertion of dominant ideology.

The oppositional forces embodied by the Huron/Iroquois with respect to the formation of the American state are re-articulated when Heyward, Uncas, Hawkeye and Gamut pursue Magua into a cave system, which is described as an 'infernal region' populated by unhappy ghosts and savage demons (*Mohicans*, p. 335). The shrieks of the women and children that immediately precede entry into this region evoke a haunting quality. The Huron are implied to be buried in the cavernous recesses of the past and their association with 'savage demons' and 'unhappy ghosts', in essence beings that cannot be destroyed, points to the lingering historical memory of the genocide of those Indians who resisted frontier settlement.

This implication of guilt is also raised by Scheckel in her analysis of *The Pioneers*. She contends that a transition between past and future and a vaguely defined guilt can be identified in the minds of the townspeople in relation to Hawkeye's hut and later the cave: 'It comes to represent for the townspeople "a secret receptacle of guilt" where they locate all "that was wicked and dangerous to the peace of society"' (Scheckel, p. 34). According to Scheckel, Cooper explores the injustices of the State towards Indians and the betrayal of loyalty to England through the misunderstandings that surround Judge Temple. This is

compounded by the revelation that Chingachgook's corpse and the dying Major Effingham are housed in the cave as the dispossessed and discarded elements of a past, the authority and property of which has been appropriated by the Americans. However, at this point Cooper restores the idea of a national vision in which authority is based on inheritance when it is revealed that Judge Temple has been in fact the caretaker for the inheritance of Effingham's son, Oliver. It is significant that in both novels Cooper uses a subterranean region to locate historical memories which threaten the stability of the American ego-ideal. In the case of *The Pioneers* this threat manifests itself as the potential destabilisation of the existing social order. In my reading, in *The Last of the Mohicans* it refers to historical memories of brutality and violence that discredit the idea of the American state as a legitimate, civilised nation. Thus, the women and children associated with the 'infernal region' of the cave may be read either as savage archetypes or as a possible indirect allusion to the violence of Indian displacement.

Tamenund's final ceremonial relinquishing of authority is anticipated in an earlier scene involving the rescue of Alice, which also relates to the novel's themes of spectrality and the symbolic burial of historical memories. The trope of Indian disguise is employed when Hawkeye urges Heyward to conceal Alice in Indian cloths in order to hide her white identity. Shirley Samuels contends that the pathos intrinsic to the hierarchical racial discourse in the novel is explored through disguise and the transformation of racial and biological identities.²⁹ For example, Heyward presents Alice to the Indians outside of the cave and informs them that she is the Indian woman whom he is meant to treat. Heyward expresses reservations about being a 'pretended leech' but his doubts are lifted upon seeing that the Indian woman is unconscious (*Mohicans*, p. 253). They proceed to escort Alice out of the cave and leave the Indian woman to her fate. In disguising Alice in Indian cloths, they assign

²⁹ Shirley Samuels, 'Generation through Violence: Cooper and the Making of Americans', in *New Essays on The Last of the Mohicans*, ed. by H. Daniel Peck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 87-114 (p. 99).

a new temporary identity to her. Samuels asserts that her rescue is predicated on the death of the Indian woman. Furthermore, she argues that the future of the national culture is conveyed through the concealment of Alice's body and in the actions of Heyward and Hawkeye in adopting the outward appearance of Indians to secure the interests of their own people.

The rescue of the white woman is made possible by, and even seems to be paid for by, the death of the Indian woman they leave behind in the cave. The novel might be said to locate the future of national culture in the wrapping of Alice's body and in the activities of Duncan Heyward and Natty Bumppo who wear the skins of another race but act in that guise to valorise and rescue their own race (Samuels, p. 99).

According to Samuels, these acts of disguise subvert the integrity of human and racial identities in the novel. In addition, there is a transfer of generative power from the Indian woman to Alice. Samuels states that history and generative power are symbolised in the bodies of women as sites for the transmission of identity. This sequence of events also constitutes a symbolic act of partitioning the Indian into the subterranean recesses of the national psyche, if we are to appropriate Samuel's arguments within the framework propounded by Khanna. Alice as a surviving white character therefore conveys the idea that the future of America belongs to the settlers.

As noted, the theme of a transition of power from the Indians to the European Americans is conveyed through characters such as Tamenund and the funeral ceremony. Tamenund is described as wearing the finest animal skins that feature hieroglyphic depictions of various deeds in arms from former ages. He is the living embodiment of native history, a walking monument to the past. His advanced age signifies that the time of the Indians is coming to an end. Tamenund's role as a living historical monument of a repressed past within the American national psyche is also elucidated when Cooper describes him as looking out 'upon the multitude, with that sort of dull, unmeaning expression, which might be supposed to belong to the countenance of a spectre' (*Mohicans*, p. 307). He is depicted as a phantom

from a remote time. The allusion to the spectre infers that the era of the Indians is dead with the arrival of the whites.

In addition, his characterisation as a monumental figure can be understood in the context of Khanna's arguments regarding the palliatives provided by monuments in modernity. To recap, monuments symbolise causes for which individuals sacrificed their lives in the service of the national project. Thus, they become the centres through which mourning, loss and victory are channelled. The palliative of the monument represses injustices embedded within the architecture of the city ('Post Palliative', n.p.). It also serves as a commemoration of independence. A simulation of the past is generated by the work of mourning which it carries out in the service of political myths that prop up the State. It therefore provides a palliative in which disposability can be located and buried.

It is evident that the implied monumental status of Tamenund and the other Indians reflects some of the arguments outlined by Khanna. They are monuments to the disposability of their race yet there is a simultaneous commemoration of Indian society because of this dual purpose. In a sense as inferior beings, they have sacrificed themselves to the seemingly grand project of American expansion. Hence, Cooper can justify the fall of the Indian whilst absolving his readers of guilt for their part in this by venerating their savage nobility. This rationale concurrently reinforces an overall process of repression, which results in the frequent comparison of Indians to spectres that belong to a past world. Thus, Tamenund in mourning the end of Indian power over the land during the symbolically significant setting of a funeral conveys the futility of resistance to civilisational expansion. It is beyond his power to stop it and therefore his resignation serves to naturalise it.

Uncas's body is posed as if he was seated in life with 'grave and decent composure [...] arrayed in the most gorgeous ornaments that the wealth of the tribe could furnish'

(*Mohicans*, p. 340). Like Tamenund he is portrayed as a physical monument to the past. Chingachgook is now without a son and is the last surviving member of his tribe, which infers that the Indian stewardship over the land of America is ending. Only historical relics are left as represented by the corpse of Uncas or the ancient and nearly dead Tamenund. Cooper therefore consolidates his vision by implying that the foundation and development of the American state coincides with the changes brought about through interactions between the savage culture of the Indians and the higher culture of the whites. While Uncas is dead, he assumes the appearance of life in his posture and in being compared to the mournful countenance of the crowd.

The finality which looms over the depictions of Indian society is evident when it is stated that the Lenape men form a grave and motionless circle around Uncas. The use of the words 'grave' and 'motionless' gives them the same monumental quality. They too are characterised as standing artefacts of a bygone era. That David concludes his Christian song in the midst of the gathered mourners who stand with a 'grave and solemn stillness', merely highlights the funereal symbolism attached to the end of the Indian age with its supersession by white civilisation (*Mohicans*, p. 347). Although his narrative may go beyond the conceptual limitations that beset some of his contemporaries, Cooper ultimately imposes an ethnocentric vision of the United States, one that forbids the Indian presence and racial mixing. By entertaining a sympathetic view of the Indian, or rather some of them, he more successfully underscores the supposed rationality and legitimacy of the coming-into-being of the State.

Chingachgook laments his condition as the last surviving member of his tribe. This is redolent of an earlier point in the novel when Magua is appointed chief of the Huron. It is noted that the former chief has no progeny. Magua similarly has no descendants, suggesting that the Huron are obsolete in the new order of the white hegemony. Furthermore, Magua is

associated with spectrality earlier in the novel when he repeats the story of his mistreatment at the hands of Munro to Montcalm. He shows him the injuries he has sustained from the English (*Mohicans*, p. 170). It is arguable that he personifies Khanna's concept of the spectre in that he has a corporeal form which acts as a symbolic map for a repressed awareness of white colonial crimes even though his stealth frequently earns him comparisons to the spectral. These depictions infer that one cycle has ended with the beginning of another. This is symbolised by the fact that Alice and Heyward are to be married while in contrast Magua plummets to his death in attempting to capture Cora.

Tamenund announces the reign of the white man with his concluding words: 'The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again' (*Mohicans*, p. 350). The white dominant order is re-established despite the presence of counter hegemonic elements, which arise from the various narrative protocols of the novel. The threat presented by Magua and the Huron to the legitimacy of Cooper's historical vision is neutralised. Indian society belongs to the past and is to be studied by the whites. This is conveyed by the characterisation of Uncas, the mourners and Tamenund as statuesque relics. Tamenund is cast as the ultimate patriarch of the Indians and his pronouncement at the end of the novel symbolises a transfer of power to the whites over the land, which serves to further validate Cooper's mythology of the nascent beginnings of the American state.

Conclusion

To summarise the arguments of this chapter, Cooper's novel is influenced by stadialist theory and the *Waverley* model. He appropriates concepts from the works of the philosophical historians to naturalise U.S. expansion according to a 'scientific' basis. By situating the novel in the eighteenth century when the frontier remained as an unsettled expanse and when the State was yet to be born, he is able to invest his world with the mythical grandeur associated

with the epic form. Concordantly, Cooper mythologises Indian-white relations, which allows him to demonise those Indians who oppose the ascendancy of the American state. The structure of his tale leads to a conclusion in which the transfer of power from the Indian to the European Americans is naturalised, thereby legitimating the project of further national expansion. Cooper draws upon aspects of Indian culture, to distinguish American history and identity as unique in the pantheon of nations. This strategy also relates to his goal of consolidating a continuous historical legacy in light of the destabilising effects of the Revolution. However, this use of the Indian is ultimately subordinate to a racially homogenous view of American identity. Moreover, although the crimes of the frontier are alluded to, they are ultimately excused according to the theme of progress. These tensions point to the fact that the history of colonisation is repressed and transformed, which gives rise to melancholic symptoms such as the characterisation of the Huron in demetaphorised terms and lapses in the Indian alliances that are set up.

Furthermore, the use of spectres is indicative of colonial haunting and the displacement of inassimilable realities into a supernatural domain that lies beyond the tangible order of the State. Cooper's spectral descriptions of his Indian characters are connotative of inassimilable reminders for the ethical problems of state expansion. Their characterisation as mythological beings distances these historical elements from the immediate history of the State. *Mohicans* also alleviates white guilt over crimes against the Indians by articulating a mixture of admiration and sympathy for the 'noble savage'. It is through these narrative strategies that Cooper presents a conception of national origins and identity that displaces inassimilable historical realities.

As will be seen in Chapter Two, Bird takes a more rigid approach to justifying the establishment of the State, one which depends on the characterisation of all Indians as demonic savages deserving to be wiped out. The effect of this is a narrative marred by a

melancholic and dissonant national vision. However, both writers were faced with a central problem, the fact that Indians continued to exist, and exist as testament to their displacement and by implication the illegitimate origins of the nation. One could say that, along with the history of frontier settlement, this persistence underscores the melancholic effects produced by the construction of mythological histories. Scheckel notes this in her reading of *The Pioneers* and makes a useful reference to Benedict Anderson's quotation of Ernest Renan regarding national memory: 'What every Frenchman "is obliged to have forgotten" is the violence that, in the moment of national imagining, is rewritten as family history – the (now fraternal) conflicts by which the nation was forged and defined' (Scheckel, p. 39). Certainly, the act of forgetting here, which she identifies as conversely keeping alive the memory of the past, may also be attributed to *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the Woods*. The historical mythologies of both novels are predicated on repressing a history that they wish to forget and by this very act, that history recurs again and again in what could be described as a haunting or melancholic effect, an effect which partially troubles their respective national ideals.

Chapter 2: The War between Savage and Civilised, Melancholic Dissonance and the 'Fallen' Condition of the American State in *Nick of the Woods*

Introduction

In this chapter I argue that Robert Montgomery Bird's novel *Nick of the Woods* (1837) presents a conflicted approach to the issues of national identity, territorial expansion and Indian removal. The fragmented vision of the narrative will be discussed in relation to Christian themes and its ideological discourse of savagery and civilisation. Its treatment of this discourse will also be explored in terms of gendered conceptions of the settlements and the frontier. In addition, the complexities of Nathan Slaughter's psychological state will be delineated according to the narrative's compromised legitimisation of Indian removal and frontier expansion. Gothic genre protocols will also be considered in terms of how they relate to these elements. As I will argue, Bird uniformly demetaphorises Indians to legitimate their extermination. However, the language of the text is haunted by the violence of this project, which is evident in the use of negative adjectives to describe the actions of Nathan and the Kentucky settlers in defeating their Indian adversaries, Nathan's conflicted identity and the novel's ultimately compromised ending in which the wilderness remains uncolonised. I will explore how Bird represses the palpable realities of violent frontier conquest underlying his narrative and how this history exerts a melancholic effect, which reflects upon the development of national identity and the national consciousness of America during the early nineteenth century. When read against Cooper's slightly earlier text, we gain a further insight into how American identity developed in the shadow cast by the brutal realities of national expansion. The demetaphorisation of the Indian that partially occurs in Cooper's novel is taken much further in Bird's text in support of its politically extreme discourse of outright Indian genocide, which results in more pronounced variations of textual dissonance regarding

some of the melancholic signifiers looked at in the first chapter relating to haunting, spectrality and disruptive articulations.

Bird's novel, although critically neglected in the twentieth century, enjoyed popularity upon its release, which was sustained with two nineteenth-century editions published in London and further editions in English, German, Dutch and Polish.¹ Set in the late eighteenth century, it attempts to justify state expansion by propounding an Indian-hater discourse, framed by gothic conventions. Protagonist Nathan is a Quaker whose family has been slaughtered by the Shawnee chief Wenonga. While he appears as a harmless pacifist to the Kentucky settlers, he is known to the Shawnees as the Jibbenainosay, a demonic figure that slays the members of their tribe, apparently having supernatural powers. Roland and Edith Forrester are dispossessed, genteel members of Virginian society who are travelling West with a procession of settlers. They fall behind the emigrants when Roland's horse is stolen by the horse thief Ralph Stackpole at a station in Kentucky. The commander of the station, Colonel Bruce receives news of an impending Indian attack and Roland agrees to enlist the men from the procession as part of the defence. He ventures with his sister into the wilderness where they encounter and are joined by Nathan. They are besieged by the Shawnees in the forest and Edith and Roland are later captured by the Shawnees and Piankeshaw. Nathan frees Roland and assists him in rescuing his sister whose abduction it turns out has been orchestrated by Braxley, a corrupt lawyer who seeks to deny Roland of his inheritance through the concealment of his uncle's will and forcing Edith to marry himself. The novel concludes with the decimation of the Shawnee village by the Kentucky army.

Whereas *The Leatherstocking Tales* provide us with a clearer message that justifies Indian removal according to a grand mythology, with idealised portraits of white and some

¹ Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 152.

Indian characters, *Nick of the Woods* conveys more uncertain attitudes. I propose that this is attributable to the narrative's inability to assimilate the historical dimension of its own Indian-hater ideology. Consequently, the apparent celebration of Indian genocide as the pretext for the State's establishment is coloured by melancholia.

In the first section of this chapter I will discuss the interrelations between the novel's Indian-hater and gothic elements and how these reflect upon its latent unease with the Indian extermination agenda it promotes. As will be seen, Bird's characters inhabit a fallen world. The evil that is signified by the harsh vagaries of the frontier exerts a negative moral influence upon the savage and the civilised, which arguably accounts for why gothic protocols are utilised in terms of the depiction of the wilderness. Moreover, if we recall Cooper's use of the wilderness to contain historical elements that would otherwise conflict with his national vision, then we may assume that Bird's more pronounced choice of the gothic is a step in achieving a similar outcome, particularly as his advocacy for genocide conflicts with the idea of the nation as a civilised state and undermines distinctions between savage and civilised, good and evil and so on. In view of my previous discussion of the American gothic in the theoretical frameworks section, here gothic generic elements bear the trace of such ambivalences and repressed elements.

Drawing upon the readings of Joan Joffe Hall and Nicholas Bryant, in the second section of this chapter I will detail how Bird draws on demetaphorisation to a greater extent compared with Cooper, in his depiction of the Shawnees. The Indians in *Nick of the Woods* are far removed from Cooper's idealised and monumental representations and are vilified to the extent that they become virtually indistinguishable from their metaphorical representations as demons. This serves to justify the national project of state expansion with the settlement of the wilderness. Their role as demonic beings may be taken to reflect Abraham and Torok's concept of de-metaphorisation in terms of the literal representation of

what was meant in a figurative context. As with the Huron of Cooper's text, rather than being merely comparable to demonic, animalistic creatures, they are transformed into them in their opposition to white civilisation, a pattern which can be attributed to the narrative objective of legitimating their extermination. However, this transformation is much more absolute, for where the Huron were given some level of complexity in the 'Indian chapters' of Cooper's text despite their relatively consistent antagonist status, the Shawnees are afforded no such privilege. Such an approach illustrates how the American state is defined throughout Bird's novel by its opposite, namely Indian society.

The third section will use Romero's analysis of how civility in nineteenth-century America was characterised in gendered terms as a starting point to explore how the novel deals with the conquest of the frontier according to a masculinist, militaristic doctrine. I will argue that Bird has parallels with Cooper in representing frontier settlement as a 'manly' activity requiring the eschewal of civilised or feminine customs and education. I will also discuss how Nathan metamorphoses from a passive Quaker, ridiculed by the settlers for his womanly meekness into a hyper-masculine leader of the Kentucky army. In addition, while the binary between savagism and civilisation and the hierarchical gradations of civilisation are reinforced by the use of historically contingent gendered conceptions, I conclude that they are also destabilised.

In the following section I focus on a pattern of repressed revulsion concerning the massacring of Indians which, reading against the grain, is expressed through the narrator's linguistic slips, particularly regarding the graphically depicted actions of the chief Indian-hater, Nathan. Khanna's argument concerning the manifestations of melancholia and repressed realities in language that arise from the failure to properly introject certain historical events is significant in relation to the narrative's anomalous or contra language. In addition, Nathan's Pyrrhic victory over Wenonga and the variable rationales which

underscore his vengeance quest play into the novel's compromised vision of a new American Eden, built upon the displacement of the Indians from the frontier. The analysis of the novel's religious dimension by Hall and Bryant is of particular relevance here concerning how its conflicted ending evokes a kind of historical melancholia over the matter of Indian genocide. Effectively the wilderness remains an unsettled region with the white characters eventually returning to their various settlements or fortified stations.

The chapter's final section will deal with Nathan's double life and the acts of excessive violence he commits upon his Indian adversaries. I will extend upon the readings of Bryant and Hall to argue that his fallen condition constitutes a phantasmal signifier for the original sin of the nation, which precedes and informs its establishment and consolidation respectively. The sum of these elements relating to Nathan's behaviour, his alter egos, the linguistic unease concerning acts of savagery committed by the whites and the gothic aspect, reflects Khanna's assertion that the loss of an ideal engenders the emergence of dissonance relating to compromise in the political domain. Using Said's discussion of the 'late style' of Henrik Ibsen, in which he remarks that it is characterised by a 'going against', Khanna argues that this element appears to be an undoing of a convenient worldview. Extending this to the domain of colonialism, she contends that it implies a future in which the formal and stylistic dimension to colonial and postcolonial forms of language becomes the focus, which in turn directs attention to the relations between the aesthetic, the formal and the political.² I argue that this loss of a consistent worldview is an idea that can also be applied to a writer like Bird, despite the fact that he is not a postcolonial writer but rather quite the opposite. In *Nick of the Woods*, Bird advocates for territorial expansion and Indian extermination yet the horrific realities of these twin processes results in an ambiguous and uncertain vision. His text represents a significant extension on some of the themes looked at in the Cooper chapter

² Ranjana Khanna, 'Post-Palliative: Coloniality's Affective Dissonance', *Postcolonial Text* 2/1, (2006), n.p. <<http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/385/815>> [accessed 12 March 2012]

relating to violent national expansion. His advocacy for frontier conquest is much more extreme than Cooper's and so it will be useful to examine how his text is affected differently by the melancholia this engenders as a way of gauging the dynamics of historical repression. The haunting, melancholic spectres that point to the underlying injustice and horror of this project exert a greater influence relative to the narrative's attempts to legitimise it and incorporate it into an overarching ideal of the American state as civilised, moral and non-tyrannical. Bird's work also provides a useful backdrop for the later analysis of the Indian-hating section in Melville's work and starkly contrasts with the national visions of women writers such as Helen Hunt Jackson and Lydia Maria Child.

Hybrid Genres and Unstable Boundaries

I will next discuss the gothic and Indian-hater conventions that inform *Nick of the Woods* and how these relate to the melancholia of its main discourse, which advocates for the genocide of Indians. The novel engages with the feud between the white settlers and the Indians in terms of the overarching theme of a conflict between savagism and civilisation and the problems this presents for the individual who tries to be a conscientious Christian.

Bird's work is arguably informed by Southern ideological values. For example, Tina L. Helton notes that the displacement of Indians was accomplished in the southeast of America through the implementation of the Old South social system, which involved farming based on slave labour: 'Because this system had absolutely no use for Native Americans and because landowners had a voracious appetite for more land, Native Americans were threatened by economic deprivation and military force'.³ She goes on to note that under Andrew Jackson's presidency Indians were systematically removed from their lands.

³ Tina Helton, 'Indian' in *The Companion to Southern Literature*, ed. by Joseph M. Flora & Lucinda H. Mackethan (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), pp. 369-371 (p. 370).

Therefore, we can relate these economic and political factors to Bird's advocacy for Indian extermination. By way of contrast, Helen Hunt Jackson wrote in a time when the general national mood arguably softened towards the Indian with the completion of national expansion and the emergence of a reform discourse. My focus in this chapter will be to explore how Bird's particular approach to the Indian question reflects more generally upon a national anxiety regarding frontier expansion, including ideas of masculinity and Christian conscience, sensational violence and symbolic geographies. To this end, I will primarily discuss the novel's adoption of Indian-hater and gothic conventions.

Leslie Fielder provides a useful working definition of Indian-hating, stating that in general the Indian-hater figure embarks on his vocation in retaliation for the murder of his mother whom his father was too weak to defend. In the course of his quest for vengeance, he becomes addicted to violence and believes that while Indians exist, white women and mothers generally will forever remain in peril.⁴ Richard Drinnon provides some complementary examples in this regard noting that in James Kirke Paulding's *The Dutchman's Fireside* (1831), Indian commissioner Sir William Johnson relates to Westbrook the story of Timothy Weasel who loses his whole family and neighbours to an attack waged by Canadian Indians. Consequently, he devotes the rest of his life to killing Indians. As Johnson explains in the novel:

It is inconceivable with what avidity he will hunt an Indian; and the keenest sportsman does not feel a hundredth part of the delight in bringing down his game, that Timothy does in witnessing the mortal pangs of one of these 'critters [...] If ever man had motive for revenge, it is Timothy.⁵

In notable parallels with the apparent impartiality of the Judge in Melville's *The Confidence-Man* and the linguistic unease in Bird's novel, Johnson is quick to disapprove of Weasel's monomania remarking that it is a 'horrible propensity' (*Fireside*, pp. 90-91). Thus, there is

⁴ Leslie Fielder, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 125.

⁵ James Kirke Paulding, *The Dutchman's Fireside*, 2 Vols (New York: J.& J. Harper, 1831), p. 90.

arguably a pattern where the Indian-hater's actions are both lauded and disavowed at a safe remove in such literature, as his violent actions are incompatible with the idea of a civilised American state.

Roy Harvey Pearce's analysis of Indian-hating fiction also identifies recurrent themes. He discusses Judge Hall's 'The Pioneer' published in *Tales of the Border* (1835) in which Indians murder the titular hero's father, kidnap his mother and abduct his sister. He becomes obsessed with revenge and trains himself into a life of privation that rivals the Indian in his attempt to 'out-savage the savage'.⁶ The Pioneer becomes progressively less civilised and subject to a misanthropic nature. However, upon a chance meeting with his sister who has become Indianised he relents from killing her, which reaffirms his ultimate civility in contrast to the Indians he has obsessively slain. Consequently, he reintegrates into society as a circuit-riding preacher. Pearce notes however, that Hall provides his character with a more positive outcome than that shaped by other writers in the genre who leave their creations suspended in a no-man's land between the worlds of savagery and civilisation. In James McHenry's *Spectre of the Forest* (1823) the Indian-hater Hugh Bradley loses his mind and is forbidden to return to civilised society while in N.W. Hentz's *Tadeuskund* (1825) civilised men are compelled to drive the Indian-hater away from them. As will be seen, Nathan is likewise unable to return to civilisation due to the savagery he incorporates into his psyche in his role as an Indian-hater. I will argue that this represents a form of national disavowal where the Indian-hater reflects a drive for national expansion with even a certain pleasure taken in the removal of its obstacles. Nonetheless, the national psyche is prompted to distance itself from this aspect of itself, which the Indian-hater embodies through the public renunciation of his role or his banishment.

⁶ Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 228

Indian-hating fiction arguably had its origins in a mid-eighteenth-century genre that Peter Silver terms the ‘anti-Indian sublime’, which was designed to overwhelm its audience with emotion in its depictions of suffering. He states that the prominent theme in this mode of writing involved families torn apart by Indian attacks with a particular emphasis on ‘gory vividness’, decomposing unburied bodies and the victimhood of mothers and children.⁷ Silver provides several examples including gore laden poems concerning Indian attacks by Francis Hopkinson and Rev. Samuel Davies. Of Hopkinson’s work, ‘The Treaty, A Poem’, Silver writes that the author was fixated with the slaughter of families by Indians: “My swelling heart,” as he interjected, “beats quick within my breast” – at the spectre of a couple cut down, children beaten into captivity, the torture of prisoners, and an orphaned farm daughter who had to watch her lover’s “life bubbling from [a] recent wound!”” (Silver, p. 88). Although Silver limits his study to the history of the mid Atlantic colonies and Pennsylvania in particular, we can see how the slaughter of the Ashburn clan and Nathan’s family in Bird’s novel owes some creative debt to this form. In addition, the anti-Indian sublime might also be seen to influence the depiction of the massacre scene at Fort William Henry in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The following quote from Bird’s text reinforces this generic legacy: “Ay, Captain,” said Bruce, “thar’s the thing that sticks most in the heart of them that live in the wilderness and have wives and daughters; - to think of *their* falling into the hands of the brutes, who murder and scalp a woman just as readily as a man”⁸. Furthermore, Silver notes how the imagery of dead bodies in such literature, rhetoric and engravings signified the idea of a damaged body politic, which was being dismembered by its enemies, namely Indians and later on the British: ‘Literary anti-Indianism was an electrifying set of images, purpose-built for the interpretation of suffering in terms of injury by outside attackers. By the time of the

⁷ Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbours: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), p. 84.

⁸ Robert Montgomery Bird, *Nick of the Woods* (New Haven: College & University Press, 1967), p. 57.

Revolution, it was ready to be applied to the British and their allies' (Silver, p. 94). Such images could be used to incite passions and channel them into political agendas. Bird uses a similar anti-Indian rhetoric with the imagery of slaughtered families to define the nation in terms of its opposite as represented by the Shawnees and to justify violent national expansion.

I argue that the Indian-hater conventions of the novel yield inassimilable elements that contravene the ideal of America as a civilised state, which is partly reflected in the use of gothic tropes. The arguments made by Renée Bergland, David Mogen, Scott Sanders and Joanne Karpinski and James Folsom about the gothic reflecting the repressed aspects of the national psyche are necessary to recall here as they too are of relevance to this text. Bird portrays the Kentucky wilderness as a dominion of confusion and chaos ruled by an inexplicable and capricious fate. The gothic depiction of the wilderness encompasses the idea of it being a location for the repressed elements of the American psyche as well as a means to explain the actions of the characters.

The frontier is shown to present an array of hidden dangers, from 'lurking Indians' to treacherous natural features. Folsom's consideration of the gothic Western landscape may therefore be argued to illuminate this narrative aspect. While his argument primarily pertains to open terrain, his contention about its hidden dangers is relevant to the forest setting of *Nick of the Woods*. Indians lurk in the woods as concealed threats and a similar textual operation may thus be discerned in both settings. Additionally, Folsom emphasises that it is the gothic's underlying motivations as opposed to its specific literary devices which define it in generic terms.

When we follow Western Gothicism from the tangled forests of the Mississippi Valley to the open vistas of the Great Plains we discover that relatively little has changed in its underlying

preoccupations, though its metaphorical expressions have, when fictional necessity requires, been transmuted to reflect the geographical novelty of the new environment.⁹

Its conventions convey fundamental preoccupations that remain relatively consistent relating to the delineation of the repressed aspects of state history and the national psyche. To recap on my discussion in the theoretical frameworks section of my introduction pertaining to the relation between the gothic and the inassimilable, I argue that the gothic landscape and the psychological pressures experienced by the characters within that landscape are simply different manifestations of the same pattern, namely the repression of historical realities. We have a hostile, virtually 'possessed' environment that is distanced from civilisation, with white characters resorting to acts of savagery and struggling with the good and evil aspects of their psyches in part because of its effects. As will become increasingly apparent as the chapter progresses, both are interlinked and suggest that which the nation coded as civilisation cannot reconcile to its self-image, namely its participation in genocide. Drawing on the analyses of Folsom, Hall and Bryant, I will argue that the gothic trope of the beguiling wilderness not only reflects a national anxiety over its moral credibility concerning its 'original sin' of ruthless expansion, but also signifies a melancholic manifestation of the repression of that anxiety. This gothic marker of repressed anxiety may then be thematically linked to the interior psychological conflicts experienced by individual white characters (Folsom, p. 36). Hence, the site of Indian genocide, the wild frontier, becomes a dark, foreboding domain characterised by confusion and disorder in which morally questionable acts are performed in the name of civilisation despite contravening its laws. The frontier in its gothic depiction as an ominous realm steeped in blood, points to the ethical realities underscoring displacement, which are inassimilable for the national ideal. Similarly, this is

⁹ James K. Folsom, 'Gothicism in the Western Novel', in *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at The Frontier in American Literature*, ed. by David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, Joanne B. Karpinski, (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), pp. 28-42 (p. 33).

also reflected in the influence the wilderness exerts over the psychological states of the characters, particularly in relation to Nathan.

Folsom claims that the seemingly innocuous terrain of the wilderness may conceal perils often symbolised by its inhabitants. This image reflects arguments during the nineteenth century as to whether nature was defined by the Enlightenment ideal of a benign 'simple plan' or whether it was characterised by the malevolently animal (Folsom, p. 29). In *Nick of the Woods* the forest is populated by the Shawnees who suddenly reveal themselves when Stackpole manages to 'conjure' them up. Nathan, as a threat to the Indians, eludes detection when he spies upon Wenonga and uses the natural features of the woods to disguise himself. In addition, he frequently reminds Roland of the folly of his plans due to his failure to recognise undetected dangers. The depiction of a perennially threatening wilderness is also identifiable in *The Last of the Mohicans*. In each novel, it would appear that the trope of an ever-dangerous frontier with its lurid imagery of mutilated corpses is a signifier for violent national expansion and the anxieties generated by its associated historical memories regarding the threat of Indian attack and the brutality of warfare experienced by Indians and whites alike.

An abundance of gothic imagery characterises the woodland setting in *Nick of the Woods*. When Roland, Edith and their guide enter the forest, it is described as having a 'grand and gloomy character' which is attributed to the absence of the 'axe' or human settlement (*Nick*, p. 95). Their encounter with a victim of the Jibbenainosay also contributes to the gothic portrayal of the wilderness whilst reflecting the narrative fixation with blood and the concept of a fallen world, which are arguably symptomatic of the horrors of frontier warfare: 'they beheld with horror the body of a savage, of vast and noble proportions, lying on its face across the roots of the tree, and glued, it might almost be said, to the earth by a mass of

coagulated blood' (*Nick*, p. 123).¹⁰ This haunted description of frontier violence arguably speaks to the idea of Manifest Destiny when Roland beholds the mark of the Jibbenainosay's cross incised into the victim's flesh. The association of the cross with this gruesome spectacle betrays the notion of Indian genocide as sanctioned by God.

The forest location also features labyrinthine characteristics: 'But a half-hour passed by and the travellers, all anxious and doubting, and filled with gloom, were yet stumbling in the forest, winding amid labyrinths of bog and brake, hill and hollow, that every moment became wider and more perplexing' (*Nick*, p. 120). The difficulty experienced by Roland's party in navigating the woods engenders the theme of the 'American pilgrim' who becomes hopelessly lost on the frontier. For Folsom, this theme is closely aligned with Western gothicism: 'The dark wood of error, to pun seriously on Dante's term, which surrounds the poor wayfaring stranger becomes a symbol of an interior state of mind which may or may not recognisably equate with a definable external landscape' (Folsom, p. 31). Consequently, their misfortunes relate to the discourse of a transformative wilderness landscape that affects the mind. This in turn reflects Folsom's assertion that Western Gothicism entertains existential dualities in its exploration of logically inconsistent principles (Folsom, pp. 30-31).

In line with this reasoning, Hall argues that Bird presents us with two versions of the wilderness. On the one hand, it is a pre-lapsarian Eden. The Quaker can respond to this with his pacifist Christianity and in his belief in the universal benevolence of man. On the other hand, it is a promised land populated by heathen Indians who must be expelled by the chosen people as is their rightful due. The warlike settlers favour this conception. Nathan initially supports the former version before choosing the latter. Significantly, Hall points out that

¹⁰ Although Silver's points about the display of white corpses may seem to contradict my argument about the repression of the dark dimension of national expansion, I focus on how the inhumanity of this process is stylised and repressed to fit it into the narrative of a legitimate American state. Nonetheless, this image of a dead Indian murdered by the 'devil' or Nick of the Woods, can be regarded as a muted signifier for such ethical issues, if Nick himself is to be seen as the white devil or the embodiment of the evil of white imperialism.

nowhere in the novel are we presented with an image of civilisation being wrested from the forest. Moreover, hunting is not replaced by agriculture in an expected progression within the text's scope.¹¹ While the Forresters represent genteel civilisation, in the end they return to Virginia and leave Kentucky in the hands of the Bruces who are soldiers as opposed to farmers. The supposed removal of evil from the frontier does not render it a safe environment for the members of refined civilisation.¹² Additionally, as we will see the wiping out of the Shawnees and the retreat of the characters back to their respective settlements signifies a form of historical erasure. By the end, the Shawnees have been annihilated and the wilderness is left as an area uninhabited by human civilisation. In a sense, there is no site of memorialisation that attests to their massacre, which may again be considered to reflect the narrative's 'self-sabotaging' approach to the forging of national identity, predicated on the displacement of Indians. Later I argue that the barbaric and implicitly evil measures of the settlers have been in vain, which points to a repressed awareness that a civilised state cannot be founded upon cataclysmic bloodshed. In contrast, Cooper provides us with a message of greater clarity in the *Leatherstocking Tales*. For example, in *Mohicans* he eulogizes the Indian race in the funeral scene. As historical artefacts Tamenund, Uncas and the Lenape/Delaware perform the function of memorialisation as highlighted by Khanna. In *Nick of the Woods* the victory that is won against the forces of evil is compromised. The gothic protocols of the narrative are intrinsic to its discordant celebration of the American nation.

Meanwhile Hall suggests that *Nick* conveys a certain pathos that it is unable to dramatise:

¹¹ As I will later discuss, the Shawnees are described as practicing forms of agriculture. However, the binary established between them and the whites in terms of savagism and civilisation still plays into the idea that the latter group will bring a purely agricultural system to the frontier, whereas the Shawnees may be presumed to rely on hunting.

¹² Joan Joffe Hall, 'Nick of the Woods: An Interpretation of the American Wilderness', *American Literature*, 35/2 (1963), 173-182 (p. 181).

The extermination of evil, and the purification of the promised land, does not appear to make the land safe for gentility. Moreover, Bird offers no reason why it should not [...] About Nick one must conclude that this minor skirmish is won by the forces of good, but that the meaning of the settler's victory is obscured [...] Had he presented the Eden-like vision and the vision of the battle for the promised land as exclusively the motives of his characters, he could have had the stuff of tragedy in, say, Nathan's final awareness that his acceptance of these visions in sequence was his tragic flaw (Hall, pp. 181-182)

Nathan is linked to this sense of pathos, which is evident in that while he is eventually exorcised of his inhumanity, he is denied the possibility of rebirth. However, Bird does not question the religious and historical assumptions of his narrative. The wilderness is prefigured as demanding contradictory responses from pacifist Christianity and Indian warfare which invite inhumane outcomes. For Hall, Bird seems unaware that his ending cheats these responses of their desired outcomes. I contend that the failure to reach such a thematically conclusive ending reflects a melancholic dynamic intrinsic to Bird's narrative of frontier conquest through genocide. Thus, if pacifism leads to violence and bloodshed, which in turn is used as a justification for the extermination of the Shawnees, that latter project is haunted by the historical realities it reflects which becomes manifest in Nathan's fallen condition. Nathan as the Indian-hater who clears out the wilderness and as a military figurehead at the end embodies historical memories which call into question the 'Christian' and civilised aspects of American national identity.

Hall's assertion that civilisation is not wrested from the forest at the end of the novel (Hall, p. 181) is complicated by the fact that there are brief references made to future colonisation. For example, Nathan and Roland are described as passing by the location of the future Cincinnati: 'he plunged with his companion into a maze of brake and forest; neither of them then dreaming that upon the very spot where they toiled through the tangled labyrinths, a few years should behold the magic spectacle of a fair city, the Queen of West' (*Nick*, p. 245). Furthermore, in the epilogue Roland is noted to display an interest in his former associates many years after the events of the novel when the 'District and Wilderness of

Kentucky existed no more, but were both merged in a State too great and powerful to be longer exposed to the inroads of savages' (*Nick*, p. 347). Nonetheless, the overall impression conveyed is that the dark wood remains untamed. With the defeat of the Shawnees, we have no direct focus on colonisation, which may again be tied to a sense of repression regarding the settlement as a site that attests to unpalatable historical memories at least in the context of this narrative.

According to Bryant, the gothic convention of the beguiling wilderness is especially evident when the white characters are unable to distinguish between appearance and reality.¹³ Although Bird employs a gothic characterisation of the wilderness to in some way excuse the actions of the white characters, which verge towards the barbaric, it may also be argued that such a depiction in the novel is linked to the lingering presence of Indian displacement that haunts its narrative. Furthermore, if Bird is merely seeking to deal with the moral doubts of the characters, this authorial choice in itself arguably points towards a latent expression of conflict with the inhumanity of national expansion predicated on mass genocide. The forest in being the anathema to the civilisational order, symbolises a locale for territorial expansion that must be purged of its native inhabitants. This leads to a sense of paranoia regarding the constant threat of Indian attack. Thus, in one instance, Ralph Stackpole's fire is mistaken by Nathan for an Indian encampment. Roland also attacks Stackpole thinking that he is an Indian warrior and a 'dweller from another world' (*Nick*, p. 174). Similarly, the Jibbenainosay is assumed to be the devil whilst Telie misleads the party as their guide through the forest.

The gothic aspect of this narrative pattern of misidentification is foregrounded when Stackpole comes to the aid of Tom Bruce during the battle with the Shawnees, given that he inadvertently frightens the Colonel's son who believes that he has returned from the dead:

¹³ James C. Bryant, 'The Fallen World in *Nick of the Woods*', *American Literature*, 38/3 (1966), 352-364 (p. 358).

His astonishment and horror may therefore be conceived, when turning in some perturbation at the well known voice, he beheld that identical body, the corpse of the executed horse-thief, crawling after him in the grass, winking and blinking, and squinting, as he was used afterwards to say, as if the devil had him by the pastern (*Nick*, p. 199).

His appearance prompts Bruce to flee in panic towards the Indians, which ultimately leads him to being fatally wounded. His men are similarly astonished and retreat in terror. The mixture of misperception and the otherworldly is also discernible when Telie Doe draws the attention of the party to a 'supernatural spectacle'. They witness an indistinct figure walking in the distance who is compared to the 'airy demon of the Brockden' and the 'colossal spectres' of the Peruvian Andes. Roland rides out to meet the apparition, commanding him to halt. The mysterious form is revealed to be Nathan while his animal 'familiar', which Roland mistook for a bear, is in fact his dog, Peter: 'The black bear dwindled into a little dog [...] while the human spectre, the supposed fiend of the woods [...] suddenly presented to Roland's eyes the person of Peter's master, the humble, peaceful, harmless Nathan Slaughter' (*Nick*, p. 126). Confusion is inferred to be a natural property of the wilderness, which contributes to its representation as a chaotic domain inimical to civilisation. Its gothic connotations underscore this characterisation, which plays into the narrative objective of justifying the expansion of the State based on what it is not, namely the disorder embodied by the frontier and its inhabitants. Yet these elements may also be considered symptomatic of the uncertainty permeating the morality of the novel's Indian-hater discourse and its promotion of state expansion. This is reinforced by the fact that the nation's history is symbolised by the ruins of settlements in the wilderness, which infers colonisation of this space is a task doomed to failure. The frontier thus becomes an arena in which the novel's conflicted attitudes are explored through generic conventions and metaphors in relation to the national project of expansion and Indian removal.

In particular, the Ashburn ruins deep in the forest become monuments to the sacrifices of white settlers in attempting to conquer the frontier, when Nathan recounts how the

Ashburn family were massacred by a band of Indian intruders. Roland is noted to feel unsettled in relation to the 'butchery and sorrow' which characterise the history of the ruined house and is concerned about its effect on the mind of his cousin, Edith, with its 'gloomy and bloodstained associations' (*Nick*, p. 145). However, it is significant that the sacrifice of the Ashburn family is in vain, as the wilderness remains impervious to settlement. This relates to the ending in which there is no discernible victory over the frontier and the darkness it represents, which may in turn be considered to play into the novel's compromised approach to its ideological discourses.

Bryant explains that Nathan personifies the blurred boundaries between appearance and reality in the novel. Beneath his meek facade, his temperament is closer to 'the rancorous ferocity of a wolf than the enmity of a human being' (*Nick*, p. 323). Despite this, his pacifism remains necessary so that he can conceal the identity of the Jibbenainosay. Folsom expresses a similar argument, linking Nathan to the gothic aspect of the novel (Folsom, pp. 32-33).¹⁴ He finds that Bird utilises a comparable textual strategy to *The Last of the Mohicans* in combining disparate symbolic images, which inadvertently create a tension within the overarching discourse of the narrative relating to the extermination of Indians (Folsom, pp. 32-33). Hence, Nathan appears to the white settlers as a harmless Quaker whilst being known to the Indians as the Jibbenainosay. Yet the whites view his alter ego with a latent apprehension that parallels how the Indians perceive him. This is indicated when the settlers refer to him as the devil, nominating him as 'Nick' or 'Old Nick'. According to Folsom, the novel explores the question of whether Nathan is fully human or an inhumane monster. His

¹⁴ According to Shirley Samuels, there is an intermixture of identities due to the various roles adopted by the characters in *The Last of the Mohicans*. I contend that this arguably parallels the same theme of dual identity in *Nick of the Woods* pertaining to Nathan. To take one example, Hawkeye, who pronounces the purity of his blood to David Gamut as being untainted 'by the cross of a bear, or an Indian' appears at the end of the novel in a bearskin belonging to an Indian sorcerer. It is noted that his ability to successfully portray the animal is attributable to his incorporation of its essence into his self. Thus, there is a conflation of bear and man into one hybrid identity. Shirley Samuels, 'Generation through Violence: Cooper and the Making of Americans', in *New Essays on The Last of the Mohicans*, ed. by H. Daniel Peck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 87-114 (pp. 96-97).

name too engenders this dilemma as his first Christian name, Nathan, places him in the role of a wise Christian prophet, whilst his surname, Slaughter, implies that he is an ‘implacable murderer’. As will be seen in Chapter Five, Melville explores these distinctions in terms of the diluted Indian-hater and the Indian-hater *par excellence* who lacks any discernible human characteristics. The latter figure can be considered as a symbol for the inhumanity of state sanctioned violence.

At the end of the narrative, we are shown that Nathan’s murderous desire for revenge is an extension of the evil plaguing his own mind. It also derives from his mournful, bitter resentment towards Wenonga’s actions against himself and his family and therefore serves as a condemnation of Indian savagery. The gothic trope connecting the dark aspects of the wilderness to the internal mental states of the white characters is discernible in Nathan’s dual nature:

[...] the implacable savagery which Nathan would like to apply to the Indians turns out to be as much a projection of the evil in his own nature as a statement of the depravity of others. The inimical forces of the world are finally seen, in Bird’s masterly parable of evil, as projections of ourselves (Folsom, p. 33).

As an extension of Folsom’s argument, I will frame his points on the duality of Nathan’s character in terms of how it reflects the nation’s conflicted approach to its involvement in Indian displacement.

Nathan’s double identity and the frequent incidents of confusion which occur in the forest setting of the novel are unifiable as facets of the gothic’s pre-occupation with duality. The presence of this convention is arguably a manifestation of the psychically haunting effect of the novel’s subject matter and ideology. Nathan confronts his desire for revenge that is irreconcilable with his faith. This allows Bird to create drama but, on another level, is emblematic of the novel’s inability to assimilate the fundamentalist aspects of its own Indian-hater discourse. Therefore, its gothic conventions are closely intertwined with its melancholic

treatment of national expansion. They may be said to derive from the powerful drives of repression which generate the novel's haunted textual patterns and which offset the moral certitude of its Indian-hater conventions.

The Conflict between Savagery and Civilisation

Through my postcolonial psychoanalytic lens, the textual architecture of *Nick of the Woods* is informed by its inability to introject the grotesque realities underscoring its ideological positions. The collapse of its assimilatory process emerges through a spectrum of narrative protocols from linguistic aberrations and Nathan's character conflicts to discourses involving gender and gothicism. If we recall the idea of signifiers for repression in terms of words, actions and forms of narrative production in postcolonial psychoanalysis, we may regard these as melancholic symptoms in the same light. In addition, in view of the arguments of Paul Gilroy and Dominic LaCapra on the sublime, we might also presuppose that the horror of what the narrative advocates, reflected as it is in historical experience, exceeds its capacity for rationalisation, thereby introducing these melancholic effects. This polarised aspect of the novel differentiates it from a work such as *The Last of the Mohicans*. With the exception of the Huron, Cooper's Indians generally are not represented as the enemies of white civilisation who must be violently wiped out as in Bird's text, and they can therefore be more successfully incorporated into a narrative that legitimates American expansionism without jeopardizing the pretence of its exceptionalism. While Cooper expresses reservations about unfettered 'frontier' progress and characterises the expansion of civilisation with pathos, he provides us with a clearer conception of the nation state compared to Bird whose treatment of national identity is uneven and fundamentally melancholic in Khanna's terms.

In Abraham Torok's concept of preservative repression, a phantom is born in the form of incorporation from the inability to assimilate the drives associated with an object: 'The

secret emerges in language. It is the refusal to mourn. It is a demetaphorization of introjection that causes the drives to be read literally, encrypted, we could say, as the literalness of the patronymic'.¹⁵ The strategies used to generate a unified national consciousness may be regarded as phantom-like symptoms of repression in concealing a spectral presence. While Khanna primarily focuses on postcolonial nations in relation to haunting, her arguments can also be applied to Bird's attempts to fashion a national consciousness through the incorporation of national ideals, rooted in Indian extermination and the settlement of a second Elysium. This contrasts with Cooper's novel, which utilises repression more uniformly in narrating an epic tale that reinterprets American history through the revision of alliances among Native American tribes and the portrayal of the establishment of the State as a pre-ordained event. Cooper manages to successfully balance and integrate these strategies such that his narrative is less marred by melancholic dissonance. As this chapter explores, the repression in Bird's text is channelled in a more acute way regarding the inassimilable, contradictory elements produced by his championing of Indian extermination. The inhumanity of his Indian-hater discourse directly undermines his posing of the American state as a civilised institution. Consequently, the national ideal he espouses is more readily broken down when compared to Cooper's vision.

For example, the division of the settlers and Indians into demetaphorised categories of good and evil and the subversion of these categories due to the metaphysical evil of the wilderness is a product of the novel's melancholic treatment of national expansion. The absolutist distinctions, which are constantly emphasised throughout the text between the Indians and the whites, can also be interpreted to constitute a pathological rationalisation of territorial expansion or a form of domestic colonialism. These differentiations are analogous

¹⁵ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 257-258.

to Albert Memmi's argument that the coloniser and colonised are implicated in a pathological relationship of difference in the colonial situation. Furthermore, the use of nouns, which cast the Indian in a demonic light, can be said to play into a process of internalisation in the formation of state identity. Memmi's argument that mythologies are embeddable in nouns is again relevant in this reading.

Bryant proposes that Bird adopted the conventions of Indian-hater literature in his portrait of the frontier to convey his perception of the 'truth' concerning Native Americans. The noble savage archetype of Cooper's novels is entirely absent in Bird's representation of Indians as cunning savages prone to bouts of alcoholic hedonism and excessive violence. He identifies that, significantly, the white characters also display a lack of noble traits and it is therefore inferred that humanity is constituted by the 'fallen' descendants of Adam. Bryant argues that the reference to *Paradise Lost* at the beginning of the novel consolidates the religious implications of the search of the American exiles for a 'second Elysium' in the frontier lands (Bryant, p. 352).

Hall maintains that the annihilation of the Indian is portrayed as a religious duty in Bird's text (Hall, p. 174). The Indian is characterised as the heathen who acts as an obstacle to the chosen people that wish to settle the Promised Land. Like the Huron, the Shawnees represent the epitome of evil as the primary antagonist tribe. They are responsible for murdering Nathan's family and are also allied with Braxley and Doe who are the villains of the Forrester plot. Indians are consistently referred to as demonic beings. This is indicated by the use of terms such as 'red devil', 'fiends and monsters', 'evil creatures', 'half-imp', 'rue children of Sattan', 'witch-like' and 'unchained demons' (*Nick*, pp. 50, 57, 79, 255, 265, 283, 303). Bird invests Wenonga's village with supernatural connotations, which parallels Cooper's ethereal depiction of the Iroquois settlement in *The Last of the Mohicans*. For example, it is compared to Milton's council chamber of Evil Spirits with its description as 'an

outer burgh of Pandemonium itself' (*Nick*, p. 265). According to Bryant, Bird characterises the conflict between the Indians and the whites as a war between the forces of civilisation and darkness: 'The enemies of the children of light are agents of the seemingly cosmic powers of darkness whose destinies can be decided only in the "mortal feud" by civilisation or by annihilation' (Bryant, p. 357). This demonisation is not only limited to the warriors of the tribe. When Colonel Bruce recounts the defeat of Colonel Crawford at Sandusky, he points out to Roland that Crawford was roasted alive while his men were beaten to death by the squaws and children. Cooper's Indians by contrast are shown to be nobler than the 'Injun renegade'. Writing with awareness of his fellow novelist, Bird provides a rebuttal of Cooper's noble savage archetypes, Uncas and Chingachgook.¹⁶

In addition, he characterises the American state as a Christian nation. In this vision the religious task of eliminating the 'red devils' of the frontier is also a political civic one. At the end of the novel, Tom Bruce asks his father if he has done his service to Roland and Edith, his family and Kentucky. That he dies during the final battle in the service of the Kentucky army invites the reader to equate civic duty with the extermination of the Indians who threaten the State on physical, psychological and existential levels. This is reinforced when he asks if they have 'licked the injuns' before exclaiming 'Hurrah for Kentucky' in response to his father's pronouncement that they will continue to fight the Shawnees until 'they've had enough of it' (*Nick*, p. 334). I will extend the analyses of Bryant and Hall of Nathan's character in relation to savagery and civilisation and the religious dimension of the text, to explore its compromised vision of national history and identity in postcolonial psychoanalytic terms. Consequently, I hope to achieve a deeper understanding of the intertwining psychical

¹⁶ In his preface to the 1853 edition of *Nick*, Bird claims that Cooper's Indians embody a beau-ideal with respect to positive traits such as gentleness, honour, and chivalry. He contends that these characteristics do not apply to any barbaric tribe in reality. He argues that in light of this, his own Indians constitute a more historically accurate representation (*Nick*, p. 32).

and political factors that underscore the text, which will in turn advance upon the themes raised in the first chapter.

Unlike in *Mohicans*, social status and respectability are linked to the slaughter of Indians throughout *Nick of the Woods*. For example, Ralph Stackpole denounces Nathan for his unwillingness to fight and draws a distinction between those who avoid conflict with the Indians and those who seek to eliminate them: 'I go for the doctrine that every able-bodied man should sarve his country and his neighbours, and fight their foes; and them that does is men and gentlemen, and them that don't is cowards and rascals, that's my idear' (*Nick*, p. 78). Bird constantly reiterates the abject barbarism of the Indians and thereby establishes a binary opposition between them and the white characters despite the fact that it is temporarily transgressed at certain points in the narrative. The savagery of the Shawnee warriors is foregrounded in their first battle with the Kentucky army. When they suffer a heavy loss they are described as gathering around the corpses of their fallen comrades and 'striking the senseless clay repeatedly with their knives and hatchets, each seeking to surpass his fellow in the savage work of mutilation' (*Nick*, p. 201). The qualities of honour, justice and generosity are stated by the narrator to be very occasionally identifiable in the individual actions of Indians. However, these qualities are argued to be sole preserve of the collective mass in civilised and not Indian societies.

Furthermore, Bird's Indians communicate primarily through gestures, shouts and grunts and are therefore again comparable to the presentation of the Huron in *Mohicans*. In being spoken for by a white narrator, they are subject to a colonialist conception which relegates them to the status of inarticulate sub-humans. For example, following the battle, the chief signals to his deputy to deliver Roland into the hands of the elder Piankeshaw who immediately yells with joy at his new prize. His peers are described as echoing the Piankeshaw's 'savage cry' and 'uttering yells expressive of their different feelings' (*Nick*, p.

206). They are also infantilised in terms of their intellectual capabilities when they are compared to children: 'It is only among children (we mean, of course, bad ones) and savages, who are but grown children, after all, that we find malice and mirth go hand in hand' (*Nick*, p. 209). Additionally, the elder Piankeshaw's 'prattling' consolidates this conception.

Savage impropriety and excessiveness are emphasised throughout the novel. This contributes to the idea that Indian social organisation is chaotic in nature. Thus, the elder Piankeshaw fails to live up to the authority of his station within the Piankeshaw tribe when he becomes inebriated while in charge of a prisoner, which invites remonstrations from the other tribesmen. Moreover, he boasts that his deceased son has taken the scalps of men, women and children in battle, which reinforces the characterisation of Indians as irredeemable, bloodthirsty barbarians. Nathan also informs Roland that bad luck, drunkenness and 'other follies' are 'natural to an Injun' which plays into the essential idea that natives are intemperate. When Nathan infiltrates Wenonga's village, the inhabitants are described as indulging in alcoholic excess to compensate for the 'nakedness of their own inferiority' (*Nick*, p. 264). The warriors who are meant to patrol the village are noted to wallow in 'inglorious ease and sloth' (*Nick*, p. 269). Such grotesque characterisations of Indians would be later parodied by Herman Melville in a burlesque manner in *The Confidence-Man*, as I will go on to discuss in Chapter Five.

In the same manner that they are compared to children, the Indians are also portrayed as animalistic. This is evident when Roland states that he will leave the corpses of the Piankeshaw warriors to 'the bears and the wolves, which the villains in their natures so strongly resembled' (*Nick*, p. 238). In addition, they are portrayed as game for hunting when Roland informs Colonel Bruce that he has come to Kentucky as an 'adventurer and fortune hunter' where he can 'fell trees', 'raise corn' and 'shoot bisons and Indians' (*Nick*, p. 58). The conception of Indians as animals to be hunted is reinforced when the Colonel states that

the Jibbenainosay has ‘widened his range’ in ‘striking game’ north of Kentucky (*Nick*, p. 66). There is an interesting conflation of the savage and the animalistic with the supernatural when Roland, Nathan and Stackpole are captured by the Shawnee villagers. As the reverie increases, they are compared to ‘unchained demons’ and ‘men abandoned to all the horrible impulses of lycanthropy’ (*Nick*, p. 303). This description echoes Cooper’s depiction of the Huron warrior that howls in the manner of a wolf at Uncas’s impending execution.

As a result of this apparently firmly entrenched distinction between the savage and the civilised, characters such as Abel Doe and Braxley are subjected to severe criticism given that they cross the line in being allied with the Indians and, in Doe’s case, living among them. For example, when Nathan eavesdrops on a conversation between the two men the text labels them as traitors to their race and civilisation. Doe compounds this critique when he laments that he is a white Indian and that there is ‘nothing more despicable’ (*Nick*, p. 274). It is also notable that he is almost beaten to death by Colonel Bruce’s men who denounce him as an ‘accursed tory’ and a ‘renegade villain’ (*Nick*, p. 337). The transgression of racial parameters is shown to be a heinous crime deserving of the most serious opprobrium. Despite this upsetting treachery, the Colonel directs his troops to focus their battle frenzy upon the Shawnees not Doe. Racial lines are maintained even in this instance, although Doe’s treachery is strongly condemned. Furthermore, when Pardon Dodge realises that he has killed and scalped Braxley as opposed to an Indian he is suddenly dismayed. Edith and Roland recoil in horror. Thus, while scalping might be permissible concerning Indians it remains a taboo practice in relation to white men.

In his reading of *Nick*, Hall returns to Roy Harvey Pearce’s argument that the advance of civilisation at the expense of the Indian was justified by the idea that farming was inherently superior to hunting culture. Bird articulates this belief in one of his letters when he states that ‘the earth is the dwelling of man, not the brute, and its fair fields are intended for

those who will cultivate them and multiply, not for those who harvest it for wild beasts' (Hall, p. 175). Along these lines, the appropriation of Indian lands is sanctioned by God and the deity of progress. From the outset, Bird anticipates an agrarian future that is to be wrested from the frontier:

The tall and robust frames of the men, wrapped in blanket coats and hunting-frocks [...] the gleam of their weapons, and the tramp of their horse, gave a warlike air to the whole, typical it might be supposed, of the sanguinary struggle by which alone the desert was to be wrung from the wandering barbarian; while the appearance of their families, with their domestic beasts and implements of husbandry, was in harmony with what might be supposed the future destinies of the land, when peaceful labor should succeed to the strife of conquest (*Nick*, p. 42).

Already we can identify a dichotomy between frontier conquest characterised as masculine and the succeeding implementation of 'domestic' or feminine civilisation, informed by passivity and agrarian industry. I will go into detail on this dynamic in the text later on but it is useful to note here. It is therefore evident that the novel promotes the same ideals of land accumulation and progress that are identifiable in Cooper's *Mohicans*. However, Shawnee agriculture is briefly referenced which momentarily offsets this conception of frontier settlement by an inherently superior civilisation: 'beyond the river, on the side towards the travellers, the vale was broader; and it was there the Indians had chiefly planted their corn-fields – fields enriched by the labor, perhaps also by the tears, of their oppressed and degraded women' (*Nick*, p. 264). Although there is an immediate turn back towards Indian savagism with the reference to 'oppressed and degraded women', it is notable that Indians are mentioned to practice forms of agriculture, as it unsettles the linear narrative of frontier conquest followed by cultivation by white settlers.

State Expansion and the Repression of Ethical Concerns

How melancholia informs the textual operations of Bird's work and its theme of savagism versus civilisation needs further interrogation. As we will see, both the division of the settlers and Indians into demetaphorised categories of good and evil, and the subversion of these

categories due to the metaphysical evil of the wilderness, are a product of the novel's haunted engagement with national expansion. Moments where categories break down speak to the dynamics of repression.

For example, Nathan is spared another addition to his 'backslidings' as a man of civility and peace when Stackpole instead carries out the task of scalping. The fact that his violent actions towards the Indians are described as 'backslidings' is indicative of a repressed horror within the novel relating to the carnage involved in the war against the Shawnees. The ethical realities of Indian removal permeate the text through these moments of revulsion despite the overarching discourse celebrating their genocide. Furthermore, when Nathan temporarily eschews his Quaker principles to rescue Telie Doe and Edith he later pleads with Roland to 'let the world know of his doings' as an 'evil doer and backslider' (*Nick*, p. 166). Frontier adversities are implied to have a corrupting influence on the moral fibre of the white characters, irrespective of their religious devotion. A certain sense of regression is also suggested by the image of backsliding itself. The savagery of the Indians purportedly forces the hand of a character like Nathan to adopt savage traits for survival. The hypocrisy entailed in the idea that civilisational expansion requires the annihilation of the Indians is elicited in the implication that Nathan's murderous actions constitute a form of savagery. The distinction between the savage and the civilised is temporarily blurred and it is notable that this occurs in the gothic setting of the wilderness, which here acts as a repository for the unravelling of the repressed aspects of the white psyche pertaining to the ethical issues involved in state expansion and Indian removal.¹⁷ Regardless, once he has started Nathan continues to fight against the Shawnees and is described as exhibiting 'the most exemplary

¹⁷ In terms of the wilderness being a realm of repressed historical memories, it is useful to note D.H. Lawrence's understanding of the gothic frontier in his discussion of Cooper's wish fulfilment in *The Leatherstocking Tales*: Noting that Cooper romanticises America, Lawrence contends that 'America hurts' because 'It is full of grinning, unappeased aboriginal demons'. He goes on to state that the 'demons of America must be placated, the ghosts must be appeased, the Spirit of the Place atoned for' as 'there is too much menace in the landscape'. D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 56.

courage and good conduct' (*Nick*, p. 166). These shifts in tone in the narrative are expressive of an ambiguous relationship to the subject of Indian removal. If the civilised aspect to Nathan's personality represents the ideal that is to be aspired to with respect to the nation's self-conception, his secret role as the Jibbenainosay symbolises the dark realities underscoring it. Therefore, his conflicted, fluctuating emotional state is symptomatic of a divided attitude towards the ethics of territorial expansion.

The haunted language of the text bears comparison to Khanna's discussion of Cathy Caruth's analysis concerning Lacan's reading of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), which deals with a father who is traumatised by the death of his child whom he dreams about in a fire. Caruth argues that inassimilable and belated traumatic experiences can be identified in the constant use of certain words. Khanna poses that in this light, the repetition of inassimilable words is intrinsic to the notion of trauma and that the materiality of this linguistic process is constitutive of a form of ethical remembrance:

Caruth comments on the words that awaken the father, and how they are repeated by Freud numerous times, and then by Lacan (and, we could add, now by Caruth) [...] The language of the child that is repeated through generations conveys the chiasmic displacement inherent within a trauma of witnessing: one carries another's trauma in language (whether this be the projected suffering of the child dying, or the belated sense of trauma at an event that did not appear to be traumatic at the time of its occurrence) (Khanna, p. 234).

In the same vein, we can say that *Nick of the Woods* is affected by the trauma of colonial violence, which gives rise to the use of negative adjectives to describe the supposedly positive activities of the whites. When viewed under Khanna's psychoanalytic framework, the novel is shaped by melancholia and morbidity in its espousal of an affiliation to the ideal of a nation state predicated upon hatred of the Indian. This leads to uncertainty and paradoxical conflict in the form of simultaneous triumphalism and aversion in the narrator's descriptions of Indian massacre.

For example, Nathan displays an absence of 'distaste' for the 'murderous work' involved in dispatching the Shawnee warriors who are holding Stackpole captive (*Nick*, p. 251). In a comparable scene, Roland declares 'eternal war' upon the 'accursed race' of the Shawnees after hearing Nathan's story concerning the massacre of his family by Wenonga (*Nick*, p. 236). This pronouncement of hatred is complicated by the fact that Nathan is described as a 'raging maniac' as his recollections drive him to cumulative agitation (*Nick*, p. 235). He also grins with 'hideous approval' when Roland vows to wipe out their Indian adversaries (*Nick*, p. 236). The use of the word 'hideous' is again used to characterise his emotional responses when he encounters the prostrate form of Wenonga: 'The spy looked upon the face of the Indian; but there was none at hand to gaze upon his own, to mark the hideous frown of hate, and the more hideous grin of delight, that mingled on, and distorted his visage, as he gloated, snake-like, over that of the chief' (*Nick*, p. 281). The intensity of his need for violent retribution therefore has sinister connotations, which highlight the latent ethical problems in the narrative concerning Indian removal often enacted as revenge. As noted, the inexpressible dimension of the violence advocated, when imagined in realistic and palpable terms, surfaces indirectly through such language.

The pattern of latent unease in the narrative over the violence for which it advocates continues when Nathan is unable to kill a squaw who keeps watch over Edith in the village of Wenonga as his 'humane' feelings prevail. These sentiments are implicitly attributed to his ethnicity and Christian faith, which serves to reiterate the contrasts between the whites and Indians: 'the feelings of the white-man prevailed; he hesitated, faltered and dropping the mat in its place, retreated silently from the door' (*Nick*, p. 284). He returns to where Stackpole lies sleeping and wakes him to ask for a halter so that he can bind rather than kill the squaw, stating that he wishes not to stain his hands 'with the blood of woman' (*Nick*, p. 285). Despite the demonisation of Indians in the text, a certain element of human recognition for them is

present in this particular scene. As a result of Nathan's reluctance to kill the squaw abhorrence for violence is structured along racial lines. Nathan as a white man is capable of experiencing such emotions although this is not the case with the Shawnees, characterised as they are as one-dimensional, demonical antagonists. While the white characters may have issues regarding the actions they undertake, the Indians are generally shown to be less morally scrupulous. Hence, Bird invites his American readers to consider themselves as morally superior members of Christian civilisation compared to the Indian heathens that must be wiped out. Moral quandaries surrounding Indian killing are displaced on a racial basis. However, the distinction between the Shawnees and the whites in terms of morality sabotages the narrative's very championing of Indian extermination, as such a policy is incompatible with the idea that the whites have inherently superior moral faculties. This leads back into demetaphorisation with the Indians becoming literal demons to erase the contradiction, which simultaneously re-initialises the cycle of melancholia informing the text.

The highly polarised opposition established between the Indians and the whites is sometimes overridden, which can be traced back to melancholic factors. As noted, Bird's condemnation of the Indians as morally corrupt beings is also extended to the white characters in one conceptualisation. In an important passage, Braxley states that all men are villains and that 'in the breast of the worst and noblest, Nature set, at birth, an angel and a devil' (*Nick*, p. 291). Bryant writes that the struggle between white Christians and Indian savages in the novel is symbolic of a Manichean conflict between good and evil. Yet Nathan in his secret role as the Jibbenainosay commits the sin of pride in making himself a judge and executioner of men. Furthermore, it is inferred that Christian civilisation offers no means of salvation as evil exists in the psyches of the enlightened as well as the unenlightened. This is indicated by Braxley's self-interest and Roland's hubris. Nathan uses his quest for redress to self-righteously justify his violent deeds, the brutality of which indicates that they are

performed for personal gratification. Nonetheless, he expresses remorse in line with his Quaker beliefs. As I will later discuss, these shifting positions reflect upon the narrative's melancholic treatment of Indian genocide, which it never fully reconciles to its ideal of American civilisation. This is indicated for example, by the fact that while the Indians have been defeated by the end of the narrative, a battle between good and evil persists in the minds of the settlers:

At the conclusion of the novel the Philistines have been overcome in the land of promise; but the narrative as a whole dramatises an even more subtle conflict, for the strife between good and evil within the human psyche denies even to Christian civilisation the assurance of a sanctified Eden (Bryant, p. 364).

Using Bryant's analysis here of the religious and moral dynamics of the novel and how they are offset by the ending, I argue that the inner struggles experienced by the whites constitute a latent expression of the ethical dilemmas and contradictions presented by the savagery of Indian genocide. This also extends to the narrator's condemnatory tone concerning the excessiveness of white retribution. The idea that the Christian faith offers no defence against characters' inner demons may be taken to signify the idea that Indian massacre cannot be rationalised, even with appeals to religious concepts such as the settling of a New Eden or the divinely sanctioned right of white civilisation to wrest the frontier from heathenish natives.

Given that Christian and civilised values prove inadequate in terms of addressing the violent realities of the wilderness, there is some overlap in behaviour between the white settlers and the Shawnees, which is attributed to the harsh conditions of their surroundings and the stakes involved in the war between them. For example, the narrator points out that only frontiersmen and Indians can thrive in the hostile frontier environment. Occult connotations are attributed to their shared knowledge of the woods which reflects the gothic conventions of the narrative: 'The varying shape and robustness of boughs are thought to offer a better means of finding the points of the compass; but none but Indians and hunters

grown gray in the woods, can profit by their *occult* lessons' (*Nick*, p. 120). Roland and his party discover that Stackpole has been left to die in the forest by Tom Bruce and his men as punishment for the crime of horse theft. The barbaric dimension to their code of 'lynch justice' is highlighted when, without irony, the narrator comments on the situation: 'Such was the mode of settling such offences against the peace and dignity of the settlements' (*Nick*, p. 107). Stackpole is later referred to as a 'demi-barbarian' when Roland allows him to leave of his own accord. In addition, Roland's disgust is noted when Stackpole recalls how he and Bruce scalped the corpses of the Shawnee warriors following a battle: "'Their scalps? I scalp them!'" cried Roland, with a soldier's disgust' (*Nick*, p. 238). However, Nathan and Stackpole as 'demi-barbarians' display no such revulsion towards the custom: 'such forbearance, opposed to all border ideas of manly spirit and propriety, found no advocate in the captain of the horse-thieves, and we are sorry to say, even in the conscientious Nathan' (*Nick*, p. 256). Ralph thus sets to work in scalping the recently slain Shawnees, which is justified on the basis that the frontier is a barbarian world necessitating certain uncivilised actions by the semi-savage settlers.

Such is the practice of the border, and such it has been ever since the mortal feud, never destined to be really ended but with the annihilation, or civilisation of the American race, first began between the savage and the white intruder [...] Brutality ever begets brutality and magnanimity of arms can be only exercised in the case of a magnanimous foe (*Nick*, p. 257).

It is revealing yet wholly in keeping with the conventions of the Indian-hater genre that Bird argues for the white settler to have to turn 'Indian' in rivalling and eventually surpassing the savagery of his opponent.¹⁸ *Nick* shatters its own assertion that the American state is

¹⁸ This is further emphasised by the fact that Nathan becomes virtually indistinguishable from his sworn enemies when he dons an Indian disguise in order to infiltrate the Shawnee village. He is described as 'a highly respectable-looking savage, as grim and awe-inspiring as these barbaric ornaments and his attire, added to his lofty stature, could make him' (*Nick*, p. 263). As the most vicious personification of the backwoodsman, clearing the way for civilisation, Nathan's metamorphosis arguably represents an attempt to incorporate the violence of frontier expansion through the iconography of the Indian as a form of national disavowal. In addition, Nathan as a counterfeit Indian is on a continuum with Braxley and Abel Doe who are exiles of civilisation and cast as antagonists. This would suggest that civilisation's malcontents, its unwanted elements and memories of frontier conquest, as embodied by Nathan, are aligned with the Indian and wilderness.

inherently more civilised, by posing that the Indian race can only be exterminated through such tactics. Melancholy is produced with the loss of this ideal and the narrative's persistent attempts to recapture it. The ethical dilemmas presented by the savagery of Indian genocide surface in the notion that whites are affected by the virtuous and malicious facets of their psyches, their angels and demons. This also extends to the narrator's condemnatory tone regarding the excessiveness of white retribution which will be later discussed. The idea that the Christian faith offers no defence against their inner demons signifies that Indian massacre cannot be rationalised, even with respect to appeals to the divine and the necessity of survival. Furthermore, it is notable that Bird expresses an awareness of the cyclical nature of such violence in the sense that 'brutality *ever* begets brutality'. As will be seen, Melville suggests something comparable to this in the Indian-hating section of *The Confidence-Man*, when he characterises the Indian-hater narrative as a means to act out the historical memories of frontier conquest. This is indicated when he states that the Indian-hater will forever haunt the imagination of the American consciousness so long as Indians exist.¹⁹ In effect the later writer Melville highlights the idea that despite the best efforts of writers like Cooper and Bird to contain the Indian in the past through discourses such as the vanishing Indian or Indian extermination narratives, the Indian in his continued existence points to a history that undermines the U.S. ego-ideal, which in turn justifies the continued presence of the Indian-hater.

As human extensions of the chaos of the wilderness, it seems the Shawnees are responsible for compelling their white adversaries to undertake ignoble actions. Here too it is arguable that Bird is describing a cycle of retributive violence. The anxiety informing the scenes of Indian massacre may be linked back to this awareness of cyclical violence. However, the fact that the white settlers are differentiated from the Indians as civilised beings

¹⁹ 'And Indian-hating still exists; and, no doubt, will continue to exist, so long as Indians do'. Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1984), p. 142.

capable of self-reflection establishes a double standard, whereby their conduct is justified on the basis that they must perform uncivilised acts to secure the place of civilisation on the frontier. Their reliance on savage traits as members of civilisation signifies the novel's use of the gothic mode in conjunction with incorporative strategies, which permeate its array of discourses and narrative developments. When we look at Melville we will see that he effectively satirises this form of logical duplicity, indicating that such rationalisations of historical violence constitute a type of inauthenticity or confidence game, which ultimately points to the unsalvageable dimension of American identity, predicated as it is on an 'original sin' encompassing displacement, massacre and support for forms of colonialism that the nation officially rejected with its establishment.

In an episode where this differentiation, anxiety and reliance on savage traits are apparent, the civilised Roland pleads with Nathan to spare the life of one of Stackpole's captors at the Shawnee encampment. In a response that here aligns him with violent masculinity, the Quaker ardently exclaims death 'to the last men of his tribe!' (*Nick*, p. 254). In a similar manner, Pardon Dodge expresses his reservations when he witnesses Colonel Bruce's men attacking Indian women stating that he has no 'disposition' to 'kill them'. Even at the height of the carnage in the final battle scene of the novel, which constitutes the apogee of its Indian-hater discourse, there is an implicit revulsion pertaining to the indiscriminate violence of the massacre carried out by the Kentucky army. When the soldiers proceed to raze the village and its surrounding plantations, their actions are initially described as constituting a 'work of cruel vengeance' before being immediately justified on pragmatic terms as a matter of policy. The retreat of the Shawnee villagers is portrayed in horrific terms: 'the screams of terror-struck women and children gave a double horror to the din' (*Nick*, p. 335). Whilst there is an overarching celebration in the novel for the annihilation of the Shawnees, its Indian-hater discourse is complicated by the use of words such as 'horror' in

conjunction with the imagery of 'terror-struck women and children'. Furthermore, although their vengeance is truncated by their defeat at the Battle of Blue Licks, it seems as if the spirit of Nathan's frenzied, inexpressible, perhaps sublime hatred of Indians has permeated the actions of the soldiers. If so, this would be another case where the destruction of the village and the slaughter of its inhabitants is haunted, in this case by an inadvertent association with the Jibbenainosay devil.

Ambiguity is expressed at a narrative level in relation to the ideal that Nathan represents as a Christian warrior, committed to the eradication of Indians. This is indicated when it is noted that he shouts with 'savage exultation' as he sets fire to the wigwams of the village (*Nick*, p. 343). When the 'demon that has taken possession of his spirit' releases its hold, he responds with 'uneasiness, embarrassment and dismay' towards the settlers who praise his 'lately acquired courage' and 'heroic actions' (*Nick*, p. 343). Nathan's 'unease' is attributable to his Christian faith, which in turn is figured as being intrinsic to civilisation. While he may adopt the savage methods of the Indians, he is ultimately distinguished from them due to his ability to reflect on his actions because of his adherence to Christian doctrine, although this reflection is partially suspended at the end in accordance with the triumphant massacring of the Shawnees. Nonetheless, the fact that he is unwilling to rejoin civilisation indicates a continued underlying guilt for his actions and alienation. The other white characters such as Roland and Stackpole may also be argued to be Christians in principle. In one aspect of Bird's scheme, through his religious devotion Nathan symbolises the better characteristics of the nation as it extends its boundaries through the frontier settlements. Returning to Romero's argument, this process may in turn be interpreted according to the idea of the progressive feminisation of the frontier in relation to the development of institutions associated with Christianity and civilisation. However, Nathan's murderous pragmatism also encapsulates the necessity for Indian removal and the violent realities this

entails at the level of the State. Here the frontier therefore demands masculine responses from its inhabitants in order to eradicate the Indian threat, such that the groundwork can be laid for the cultivation of 'feminine' civilisation.

As discussed, the white characters are also shown to be inherently superior on the basis of race. Thus, the savagery which is involved in state expansion is expiated on the premise that the Shawnees are racially inferior heathens who are incapable of self-reflection unlike the white settlers. Their depiction illustrates how the American state is defined throughout Bird's novel by its opposite, namely Indian society. The constant re-inscription of racial distinctions coupled with the demonisation of the Indians contributes to this purpose. The operation of demetaphorisation is evident in that the Shawnees embody their metaphorical associations in a literal context. As with the Huron of Cooper's text, rather than being comparable to demonic, animalistic creatures, they are transformed into them in their opposition to white civilisation, which can be attributed to the narrative objective of legitimating their extermination. Despite all of this, a lingering sense of horror for the barbaric actions of both races persists. Therefore, the instrumental savagery of the whites is implied to be undesirable although it is argued to be necessary. Consequently, the shifts between the idealisation of genocide for the purpose of state expansion and the horror which is conveyed in relation to this persist until the very end of the novel. This pattern of oscillation reflects Khanna's argument on the loss of the ideal of the nation and the emergence of melancholia, which manifests itself in textuality and in the affect embedded in language. It is evident that the haunting which informs the novel's ambiguous portrait of the conflict between polarised savagism and civilisation also extends to its narrative at a linguistic level.

Gendering the Frontier

The conflict between savagism and civilisation in *Nick of the Woods* may be integrated with a gendered framework of interpretation. As noted, Bird emphasises the masculine dimension of the Kentuckian settlers in their dealings with the Indians and in their general behaviour and appearance. In the context of the prevailing antebellum cultural attitudes concerning civilisation and savagery, it will be beneficial to return to Lora Romero's discussion of the role of domesticity in nineteenth-century literary production. She contends that early nineteenth-century writers equated national virtue with womanhood. Thus, in some cases they portrayed men as inherently aggressive and godless whilst arguing that civilisation would collapse without the civilising influence of women. Romero cites Reverend J.F. Stearn's declaration to his female parishioners in his 1837 sermon 'Female Influence' as a case in point: 'Yours it is to decide [...] whether we shall be a nation of refined and high minded Christians, or whether [...] we shall become a fierce race of semi-barbarians'.²⁰ Romero advances the argument that domesticity possessed a significant influence over American literature during the nineteenth century: 'far from undermining domesticity, male narratives of rebellion against women's rule reiterate domesticity's associations of men with "semi barbarism" and women with "high minded" Christianity' (Romero, p. 18). The archetype of the domestic woman in the early nineteenth century was implicated in the modern reconstruction of female identity and selfhood in general.

The national crisis that culminated in the Civil War also led to Anglo-American reconceptions of the civilising mission associated with women. In a series of articles for the *New York Tribune* during the 1850s, novelist Elizabeth Oakes Smith encouraged women to participate in public and political affairs. She emphasised the superior physical and mental

²⁰ Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 15.

faculties of men whilst asserting that women possessed great intuition, beauty and physical delicacy which placed them nearer to angels: ‘Working from the same assumptions about gender difference as more conservative women writers, Smith (like them) believed that women could “produce the new heavens and the new earth of the moral world”’ (Romero, p. 30). Such arguments also related to the increasing involvement of women in state colonial policy during the latter half of the nineteenth century, which as will be explored later led Hunt Jackson to write *Ramona*.

Conversely, writers such as Cooper, Hawthorne and Melville demonstrated hostile attitudes towards what they saw as the increasing feminisation of society. They articulated their reactions in narratives concerning the retreat of male characters into the wilderness or out to sea. For example, Hawthorne considered the Puritan era to be defined by masculine characteristics such as the physical vigour and moral callousness of the Puritan elders. In his view this had given way to the ‘feminine’ aspects of his own historical epoch. Moreover, he regarded the Puritans to be already less masculine than their ancestors. This is evident with respect to Hester Prynne’s public humiliation in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) when it is noted that the Old English ancestors of the female attendees possessed a ‘coarser fibre’ in terms of their morals and constitutions.²¹ Romero states that male novelists reconceptualised the interpretation of masculine lawlessness by investing it with positive connotations relating to individualism, vigour and political subversion (Romero, p. 18). Concordantly, feminine virtue was treated in terms of dependence, enervation and capitulation in such representations (Romero, p. 18).

Nick of the Woods incorporates this cultural legacy of gendered notions of Christianity and its role in the State in its treatment of savagism and civilisation and its vision of the

²¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, ed. by Ross C. Mufrin (New York: Bedford Books, 1991), p. 55

nation. The one-dimensional characterisation of Edith Forrester exemplifies the idea of feminine virtue being linked with dependency. Additionally, the settlers rely on gung-ho individuals like Stackpole in their war against the Shawnees. His lawlessness also serves as a foil for the novel's conflicted endorsement for a civilised Christian nation state, to be returned to later.

However, *Nick's* treatment of gender in terms of definitions of civilisation is much more dynamic than a simple equation of civilisation with the feminine and savagery with the masculine. Bird fuses the two in his interpretation of civilisation, its establishment and continuation. Furthermore, at the end of this section the distinctions will be seen to be overridden due to the novel's melancholic treatment of frontier conquest. Romero's analysis, while useful, is complicated by Bird's narrative when framed in terms of a postcolonial, psychoanalytic reading of its inability to introject the idea of genocide into its discourse of civilisation and its ideal American state.

The novel proposes that the establishment of civilisation depends upon a hyper-masculine military culture. In this respect it bears similarities to *Mohicans*. Bird relies upon comparable distinctions between civilisational stages, echoing Cooper's use of stadialist theory. Moreover, the text simultaneously promotes the ideal of a feminine Christian culture whilst critiquing its over-refinement in its attendant endorsement of militarism. Again, we may say that Bird parallels Cooper in advocating for the advance of civilisation under the banner of a masculinist vision. As with the character of Hawkeye, the semi-barbaric characteristics associated with a masculine Kentucky frontier culture run contrary to the values embodied by the ideal of an advanced civilisation, even though they constitute a prerequisite for the colonisation of the wilderness. The unstable nature of the narrative's gender politics is, among other things, another signifier for the repression of the inassimilable elements connected to its ideology of Indian extermination.

From the outset of the novel, Roland and Edith are portrayed as unique due to their genteel lineage. For example, they contrast with the rest of the emigrant procession based on their refined manners and physical appearance. Additionally, Edith is associated with ‘the gentle, the refined, and the luxurious’ (*Nick*, p. 44). The narrator notes that she has been exposed to the ‘discomfort, hardship and suffering of the frontier’ and that her travelling companions are ‘unpolished in their habits, conversation and feelings’ to the extent that they are too unsuitable to be her associates (*Nick*, p. 44). Furthermore, the Kentucky settlers are described as ‘noisy barbarians’ when they ride out to greet them. Bird therefore establishes parallels between the frontier adversity, conceptions of masculinity and femininity and stadialist distinctions between civilisational stages. Concordantly, the settlers are labelled as ‘outcasts of our borders’ and ‘savage-but one degree elevated above the Indians’ (*Nick*, p. 45).

The inhabitants of the Kentucky outpost and the Shawnees are also differentiated from the Virginians in appearance. Thus, Colonel Bruce’s ‘colossal stature’ may be attributed to the more primitive ‘masculine’ conditions of his upbringing (*Nick*, p. 46). This is reinforced by the fact that Bruce is a ‘plain yeoman’ whose intellectual abilities are limited by his station in life. Roland is noted to have a more diminutive frame when the Colonel rides up to him. The gendered distinctions between the respective gradations of civilisation are highlighted in their encounter: ‘As he spoke, the individual thus alluded to, separating himself from the throng, galloped up to the speaker, and displayed a person which excited the envy even of the manly-looking Forrester’ (*Nick*, p. 46). Stackpole is meanwhile characterised by a ‘villainous look’ which is offset by his ‘swaggering joyous’ demeanour while his ‘old round fur hat’ endows him with a ‘ridiculous and uncouth’ air (*Nick*, pp. 67-68). However, despite his ludicrous appearance he possesses a martial aspect with his rifle, knife and tomahawk. Moreover, he is described by Colonel Bruce as being ‘all fight from top to bottom’ (*Nick*, p. 67). The Indians are also portrayed as towering barbarians of superior

physical strength. At one point, Roland's party are waylaid by a group of Shawnees described as 'brawny barbarians', which supports the idea that masculine physical features derive from the harshness of the frontier (*Nick*, p. 188). In this context Roland and Edith reflect Hawthorne's notion of a decline in coarser attributes due to their privileged backgrounds, which is all the more apparent when we consider that their home of Virginia was the first British colony in America. They belong to the inner boroughs of civilisation that contrast with the younger outposts such as Kentucky, which depend on those aforementioned 'coarser attributes' for their survival.

The gentility of Roland and Edith renders them as somewhat inadequate subjects for the challenges presented by the frontier, especially Edith who lacks the determination of her cousin and the physical endurance of station women such as Telie Doe and Mrs Bruce. Their guide through the forest suppresses his impatience when his 'delicate followers' slacken their pace 'at a bog or gully' which he has 'dashed through with a manly contempt for mud and mire' (*Nick*, p. 96). His vulgar behaviour prompts Roland to direct a pithy query at his expense: "My friend," said he, "will you have the goodness to inform me whether you have ever lived in a land where courtesy to strangers and kindness and respect to women are ranked among the virtues of manhood?" (*Nick*, p. 97). Roland's loaded question elicits the idea that civility is derived from a code that demands women to be shielded whilst encouraging a certain level of decorum, which is arguably associated with the role of the feminine and domestic in more civilised quarters and which is evidently lacking among the socially backwards inhabitants of Kentucky. This instance complicates Romero's contention about the distinction that emerged regarding male barbarity and female civility. Essentially while white men like Stackpole or Nathan are shown to be more capable of taking 'necessary' measures that might be equated with savagery, they are also defenders of civilisation. Like his Cooper counterpart Heyward, Roland has all the habits, values and cluelessness of the

civilised man on the frontier, and cannot simply be said to be more aligned with the savage in comparison to a female character like Edith.²²

Roland's abhorrence of Stackpole's boast of scalping Shawnee warriors is incorporated into the novel's gendered treatment of civilisation: 'The violation of the dead bodies was a mode of crowning their victory which Roland would have gladly dispensed with, but such forbearance, opposed to all border ideas of manly spirit and propriety, found no advocate in the captain of the horse thieves' (*Nick*, p. 256). As noted, the Virginian soldier's revulsion is attributed to his civilised condition. He therefore struggles to comprehend the brutal customs of the frontier, as they do not cohere with his cultural heritage, which in this scheme is informed by a morally ameliorating feminine influence.

Despite certain negative connotations that are suggested by the conflation of hyper-masculinity with savagery, Bird implies throughout that the expansion of genteel civilisation is predicated first on a masculine, martial campaign of frontier settlement and warfare against the Indians. For example, in the preface to the first edition of *Nick of the Woods* he distinguishes the frontier settlers from men of 'education and refinement' and asserts that they are the 'true fathers of the state' (*Nick*, p. 28).

It is not to be denied that men of education and refinement were to be found among the earlier settlers of Kentucky: but the most prominent and distinguished military forces, - those who are, and must continue to be, recollected as the true fathers of the State, were such persons as we have described, ignorant but ardent, unpolished and unpretending, yet brave, sagacious, and energetic, - the very men, in fact, for the time and the occasion (*Nick*, p. 28).

Bird advocates that the masculine traits of the first settlers enabled them to wrest the frontier from the Indians. This further demonstrates how he participates in the literary trend followed

²² However, it should be noted at this point that though Roland embodies a different version of manhood, this is offset somewhat by his refusal to intervene in the hanging of Stackpole, going so far as to praise the stern justice of Judge Lynch when he comments that Kentucky law is 'a very good law' in relation to horse thieves (*Nick*, p. 109). Romero's argument is still borne out in this instance given that Edith prevents the execution arguing that the law is 'murderous' and that its architects are 'barbarians' (*Nick*, p. 109).

by writers like Hawthorne who expressed nostalgia for a more masculine age linked to the genesis of the State. In the case of Cooper, *Mohicans* is also set in the wilderness during the eighteenth century and displays similar valorisations of the manly actions of characters like Hawkeye and Heyward, committed as they are to the protection of defenceless maidens such as Alice and Cora. The choice of the frontier setting in an era prior to the nation's consolidation and expansion arguably constitutes a form of escape from the societal restrictions on male individualism in the form of advancing domestic and civilised values. Moreover, by placing Romero's reading of gender relating to savagism and civilisation alongside a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame, it can also be seen that Bird's seeking out of a masculine age achieves a distancing effect by isolating Indian dispossession and genocide from the contemporary nineteenth-century American imagination. He thus achieves a means to explore these historical events within a retrospective narrative that in part uses gender to reconcile them to the national ego-ideal.

Bird uses the decaying trunks of a forest clearing as symbols for the historical development of the American state: 'The poet and the moralising philosopher may find food for contemplation in such a scene and such a catastrophe. He may see, in the lofty and decaying trunks, the hoary relics and representatives of a generation of better and greater spirits' (*Nick*, p. 147). While these 'hoary relics' are distinguished from monuments, they nevertheless take on a monumental quality when their 'majestic serenity [...] and immovableness' are contrasted with the 'turmoil of greener growth' (*Nick*, p. 147). In addition, the gusts of wind are likened to the 'storms of party, rising among the sons' which 'hurtle so indecently among the gray fathers of the republic' (*Nick*, p. 147). We are invited to regard the collapse of these decayed trunks in terms of the decline of the national patriarchs:

[...] he may behold in the trunks, as they yield at last to decay, and sink one by one to the earth, the fall of each aged parent of his country,—a fall, indeed, as of an oak of a thousand generations,

shocking the earth around, and producing for a moment, wonder, awe, grief, and then a long forgetfulness (*Nick*, p. 147).

It is significant that this passage occurs when the party crosses the site of the Ashburn massacre; it is implied through association that the origins of the nation lie in Indian-hating. Moreover, it also recalls George B. Forgie's discussion regarding anxieties during the nineteenth century over the mediocrity of the current generation compared to the heroism of the Revolutionaries.²³ This is further evident when Bird emphasises that their example should be followed in the present, which also reflects the novel's pro-masculine discourse whereby militarism and male qualities are conflated in enabling the successful establishment of the nation. The fact that the current generation are compared in negative terms to their predecessors hints at a parallel with Hawthorne's conception of a cumulatively declining scale of masculine attributes, which is reinforced when Bird's comments in the preface to the first edition are taken into account concerning the Kentucky settlers. Thus, Bird utilises the natural features of the wilderness to assign a monumental quality to the forefathers of the American nation such that he can create a sense of national reverence. The gender politics discussed by Romero become infused in the novel with the objective of crafting a national historical continuum and origins story. In contrast to Bird's somewhat dogmatic approach, Cooper invokes a theme of inheritance through a cultural appropriation of the Indian and a selective framing of Anglo-American relations whereby the U.S. is presented as a natural successor of the British colonies.²⁴

²³ George B. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), pp. 73-74.

²⁴ Nonetheless, the theme of reconciliation between warring parties on both sides of the war is conveyed through the twists of Bird's plot. At the beginning of the novel, Roland recounts how he and Edith were adopted by their loyalist uncle following the deaths of their fathers who fought in the cause of the Revolution. Roland states that he rebelled against his uncle after provoking his 'ire' as his father had done, joining one of the companies of the first regiment of horsemen sent to Congress by Virginia (*Nick*, p. 60). Significantly, near the end of the novel, he learns that his uncle bears him no ill-favour in his will: 'it contained no expressions indicative either of ill-will to his nephew or disapprobation of the part the young man had chosen to play in the great drama of revolution' (*Nick*, p. 311). The feud between the brothers, as a reflection of the schism between Britain and American in

Extending these ideas it is arguable that male sacrifice in the defence of feminine virtue is symbolic of the expansion of civilisation through military conquest. Edith in her role as a virtuous, innocent Christian captive is a symbol for the Christian nation state, the salvation of which depends on the elimination of the 'red devil'. Thus, Stackpole vows to defend Edith against the Shawnees, stating that he would like to 'have another whack at the villains, just for madam's satisfaction' (*Nick*, p. 180). Additionally, he proclaims that he is 'the gentleman to see her out of a fight' and promises to 'wallop' the Indians on her behalf (*Nick*, p. 178). The association between the divine and the female, which has been detailed in terms of Christian femininity, is also evoked in his comic references to her as an 'angelliferous madam' (*Nick*, pp. 110, 256). If Romero's argument on the conflation of the feminine with civilisation during the antebellum period is taken into account, then it is arguable that Stackpole's newfound devotion to Edith signifies the idea that the achievement of authentic masculinity is predicated on the defence of women and feminine purity. The defence of the female or civilisation is also a national ideological convention linked with male social status, which is in turn associated with the waging of war upon the denizens of the savage frontier. A similar pattern is evident in *The Last of the Mohicans* when Heyward and Gamut infiltrate the Huron village to rescue Alice. What is further apparent is that if Edith is a symbolic figurehead of civilisation, she is not necessarily what that civilisation is in practice, which appears to lie more so within the domain of the masculine. Hence, *Nick*, may again be seen to complicate the exclusive equation of civilisation with the feminine in that its

psychical terms, is neutralised with this reconciliation between generations, which may be argued to parallel Cooper's treatment of Anglo-U.S. relations.

However, it must be qualified that Bird still takes a more binary approach. For example, Jon Atkinson, aka Abel Doe, the white turned Indian renegade is noted to have 'Tory principles and practices' and has been driven to the frontier for 'crimes and outrages' (*Nick*, p. 230). In Abel it could be argued that there is a conflation of the Indian and the British as enemies of the American state. The term 'tory' may also be taken to refer to British support for Indian tribes against the American army during the War of Independence. Therefore, while Bird draws on a comparable approach to Cooper at certain points in the narrative, his conception of American nationalism appears to be more uncompromising.

protection, establishment and governance are left up to male characters like Stackpole and Roland.

Tellingly, Tom Bruce orders his troops to ‘show fight, for the honor of Kentuck and the love of woman’ when they appear near the Shawnee camp to rescue Edith and Telie Doe (*Nick*, p. 194). The reference to Kentucky and women in the same line implies that femininity, patriotism and civilisation are interlinked. Again, the female becomes a national as well as statist symbol, which is all the more apparent if we regard Edith as essentially a national figurehead who has very little character depth.²⁵ The fortuitous arrival of the Kentucky army in the narrative’s finale also underscores the salvation of civilisation, as personified at that point by Roland and Edith, from a fate worse than death at the hands of the Indian savages. As evident from this analysis, the defence of the outer settlements of civilisation and the conquest of the frontier from the savage enemy requires a more aggressive, almost Spartan response, which eschews the refinements introduced by domesticity. Survival is predicated not only on defeating the Shawnees but also on the adoption of this masculine, militaristic code that favours pragmatism, decisiveness and violence as a way of negotiating with a mercilessly hostile wilderness.

Nathan Slaughter’s transformations are also connected to the narrative’s promotion of militarism in terms of its associations with masculinity and the settling of the frontier. As a peace-loving Quaker he invites the disdain of the settlers. The narrator also states that his unwillingness to participate in the campaign against the Indians generally provokes negative reactions as the values he espouses are the same as those earlier met with scorn in the Eastern region in another conflict on a national scale: ‘his conscientious aversion to bloodshed, no

²⁵ In contrast to Edith, Mary in *Hobomok* actively crafts her own national identity rather than simply being representative of it. Bird makes the process of defining the nation a male activity with the defence of female talismans at the bow of the good ship ‘America’ being a form of symbolic duty. We may further relate this to the fact that events in the novel are told through the narrator and Roland’s perspective, whereas in *Hobomok* the Puritan narrator gives way to focalisation of Mary’s point of view.

more excused him from contempt and persecution in the wilderness than it did others of his persuasion in the Eastern republics during the war of the revolution' (*Nick*, p. 79). The concept that a warlike masculine ethos precedes the settlement of the frontier with the concomitant establishment of the State is therefore reiterated. His pacifism, which is tied to the 'feminine' facets of his Christian belief system, constitutes an affront to their masculine principles. However, when Nathan decides to put his outward principles aside to exact his revenge upon the Shawnees he is praised for his 'manliness'. In one instance he is described as having a 'bold and manly look' which subsides into an 'air of embarrassment and almost timidity' after he has killed three Shawnee warriors (*Nick*, p. 238). Although he has acted in a manner favoured by the settlers all along as the Jibbenainosay, what is significant is the fact that he brings this aggressive militarism into the public light, no longer maintaining the pretence of holding to his Quaker beliefs. Furthermore, his new role inspires his peers rather than instilling unease, as had been the case with the Jibbenainosay, which was effectively a private role he inhabited to act out his pathological hatred of Indians and hideous revenge fantasies.

However, there is a subversion of the seemingly immutable gendered distinctions between the savagery of the Indians and the comparable civility of the whites. For example, Nathan's actions as the Jibbenainosay transgress the values of civilised behaviour. As an effective Indian-hater he becomes more like the Indians he fights against. As I will discuss later on, this culminates in him not being able to re-join civilisation at the end of the novel. Furthermore, this blurring of boundaries is not exclusive to him but can also be identified in the final battle scene in Wenonga's village.

Upon this vacant space was now assembled the whole population of the village, old and young, the strong and the feeble, all agitated alike by those passions, which when let loose in a mob, whether civilised or savage, almost enforce the conviction that there is something essentially demoniac in the human character and composition (*Nick*, p. 327).

While Bird distinguishes between ‘savage’ and ‘civilised’ variants of mobs, he states that they are no different in terms of group behaviour, which again may be traced to the constant patterns of incorporation and repression that lead to lapses in the novel’s ideological premises. In addition, this description of the mob echoes the ‘mob justice’ encapsulated in the threatened lynching of Ralph Stackpole. Whites and Indians alike are united in the evil that exists in their compositions and which is given expression by the ontological evil of the wilderness environment. This ontological evil renders it as a spiritually hostile environment for the whites, as I have noted in terms of the gothic and in the actions they take to survive it and its inhabitants. A partial attempt is made to excuse the barbarity of the Kentuckians in securing the frontier in the context of mob activity and its links to metaphysical evil, which relates to the pattern of instability in the narrative’s discursive elements. Racial distinctions are temporarily lifted yet simultaneously reinforced to justify the savagery of Indian dispossession and genocide. The concept of the restraining influence of feminine civilisation is rendered irrelevant in this context. The overlap between the whites and the Indians in terms of savage behaviour contributes to the subversion of the narrative’s gender protocols. Hence, the discourses of savagism and civilisation vis a vis masculinity and femininity are substantiated and discredited, an apparent contradiction, which can be better viewed as an oscillation attributable to the ‘phantom’ of inhuman violence entailed by the expropriation of Indians.

Nathan Slaughter’s Role and Ideological Instability

Nathan is unable to introject the haunting remainders borne from his actions as a Quaker and Indian-hater respectively. Consequently, his character arc embodies the novel’s overall melancholic haunting at an individual level. Bryant and Hall offer two contrasting interpretations of his motivations for vengeance. Whereas Bryant emphasises the metaphysical evil of the wilderness that affects Nathan’s soul, Hall focuses on his personal

guilt and the conflict between his values as a Quaker and his role as the Jibbenainosay. However, both perspectives can be unified if Nathan's personal torment is considered as a manifestation of the novel's negotiation with the ethical dilemma of Indian extermination. This underscores Nathan's guilt given that his Quaker principles earlier prevented him from taking the action necessary to defend the Ashburn family. Conversely, his activities as the Jibbenainosay push him outside the boundaries of civilised society. The evil acts that he commits which contravene his Quaker faith render him as an 'evil doer' and 'backslider'. This relates back to the text's latent articulations of horror regarding the decimation of the Shawnees. However, at the same time the externalised evil of the wilderness seemingly absolves Nathan of his actions, as it is the causal factor in his transformation into 'Nick of the Woods'. I will advance upon the arguments of Hall and Bryant on the subject of Nathan's inner dilemma to determine how it connects to the novel's melancholic treatment of national identity based upon Indian displacement.

In adhering to the Quaker doctrine, Nathan is a pacifist and believes in the essential goodness of all humans. He is thus inadequate to the task of ensuring his survival and the survival of others in a wilderness plagued by an evil he dismisses. The Indians are indifferent to his Quaker ideals and while they may be usefully practiced in Pennsylvania they have no place in Kentucky. Hall remarks that the irony and pathos of the Quaker belief system is evident when Nathan tells Forrester that he once informed the settlement of an Indian uprising. When he announced that he would not partake in the fighting, the settlers confiscated his rifle and refused to believe his story. Consequently, he witnessed the slaughter of the Ashburn family whose dying child he returned to the settlement. A chain of guilt is established in this tale, as the Indians, the settlers and Nathan himself are all in some way responsible for the death of this child. Nathan's beliefs are also partly responsible for the slaughter of his own family. Pacifism is implied to lead to the bloodshed it resists.

According to Hall, Bird complicates the humanism of the Quaker position and depicts Nathan as being uneasy with the pacifist role that he performs (Hall, p. 178). He invites us to feel sympathy for Nathan as an object of ridicule. However, he also shows us that his pacifism is affected in terms of how it aligns with a sense of public duty. Nathan's guilt and desire for revenge are prompted by the massacre of his family. While he may be regarded as a public benefactor, as evidenced by the remarks of Colonel Bruce who states that the settlers 'owe many thanks to him, whether he be a devil or not', he transgresses the normal bounds of public service in his bloodlust (*Nick*, p. 65). Thus, Bird presents us with a dehumanised vision of the Indian-fighter. If the pacifist is indirectly responsible for the bloodshed he opposes, the Indian-fighter progressively loses his humanity the deeper he becomes involved in his quest for vengeance. Therefore, neither position is fully endorsed, which reflects the inability of the narrative to provide a clear conception of its ideological discourses.

This again anticipates Melville's depiction of Indian-hating. Nathan is a diluted Indian-hater but as the Jibbenainosay he is a myth, an Indian-hater *par excellence* without a biography and ultimately a monster, though a useful one to the settlers. Melville provides a satirical analysis of frontier conquest and how the nation relies on such monsters even though they are incompatible with its official ideological values. I contend that the concepts of Christian gentility and masculine militarism are related to Nathan's internal dichotomy, which constitutes a case of gothic doubling that again reflects a latent moral uncertainty or anxiety in the novel regarding its Indian-hating discourse of genocide. His predicament reflects the more general pattern of conflict in the novel's politics. While inhumane violence is condemned as uncivilised, such violence is also encouraged in securing the future of the American state. However, a resolution is provided for the dilemma faced by the Indian-hater where he must lose either his humanity or his life. For Hall this comes in the form of a symbolic exorcising of both kinds of inhumanity in Nathan's character.

His exorcism is partly brought about when he abandons his pacifism in aiding the Forresters. By giving up purely private revenge, he can no longer be accused of indifference to suffering. In assisting the Forresters he is able to track down his foe Wenonga who is the accomplice to their arch enemy Braxley. He is revealed to the characters as the Jibbenainosay when he returns with the scalps of Wenonga along with those of his long lost family. Hall asserts that the events in the narrative rehearse his early history and thereby relieve him of the burden of that history. He no longer needs to rely on an inhuman alter ego with the achievement of his revenge and the expiating of his guilt. (Hall, pp. 179-180).

As Hall has stated, Nathan develops a third identity as a public hero by the end of the novel. His newly acquired role as 'Tiger Nathan' encompasses the unification of his Quaker and Jibbenainosay personas. This fusion of identifications is again symptomatic of the gothic discourse of the novel and parallels the same process which occurs in *Mohicans*, which I have noted in relation to Hawkeye's transformation into a 'bear'. Nathan's personal quest for vengeance against Wenonga aligns with Roland's mission to rescue Edith and the settler's war against the Shawnees. He becomes a champion of the whites as opposed to a benign yet terrifying devil by entering the public domain as an Indian slayer. His new identity contrasts significantly with his Quaker alter ego given that he is described as walking with a 'fierce, active, firm and electric' manner and is likened to a 'warrior leaping through the measures of the war-dance' (*Nick*, p. 342). His utterances also comprise of the rhetoric of 'battle and bloodshed' and he demonstrates his competence as a military leader when he maintains a position at the head of the army. Furthermore, his exploits in battle leave the soldiers in 'admiration and amazement' (*Nick*, p. 343). Hence, Nathan becomes a hyper-masculine figure due to his experiences in the wilderness. Where he was once mocked by the semi-barbaric settlers for his feminine characteristics, he is now held in awe by them. The gothic and gender protocols of the novel are combined in this metamorphosis. The dark underside of

frontier conquest symbolised in his private exacting of revenge is reformulated in a public context. The official narrative of the State concerning a triumphant battle supplants an earlier gothic one, evocative of a history that would be incompatible with the national ideal. In this respect, we can see a reaffirmation of the Indian-hating discourse.

Following these events he disappears into the forest: ‘Nathan vanishes into a natural setting, into a forest which has been purged of its evil Indian and its avenging Jibbenainosay’ (Hall, p. 180). Hall notes that Nathan’s sense of loss prevents him from returning to the settlements. This contrasts with Cooper’s portrayal of Hawkeye’s resolution to remain in the wilderness due to the idea that the forest constitutes a superior habitat to that of civilisation. In contrast to Hawkeye who displays an affinity with nature, Nathan will never attain belonging or happiness. This is indicated when he says there is ‘none to welcome me from the field and the forest with the voice of love - no, truly, truly, - there is not one, - not one’ (*Nick*, p. 345). Hall argues that Nathan’s personal rebirth is implied to be a cancellation in the novel. Despite having liberated himself from the burden of his personal history, he cannot return to civilisation. His descent into violence and his adoption of barbarian traits compromise his humanity. The novel implicitly acknowledges the ethical degeneracy entailed in the historical policy of Indian removal as Nathan is the personification of that policy and becomes comparable to the very Indian who haunted the imaginations of nineteenth-century Americans.

According to Bryant and in line with my own argument, Nathan is troubled by his actions as the Jibbenainosay or ‘the devil’ in light of the fact that he transgresses the tenets of his faith in acting as the merciless judge and executioner of other humans (Bryant, p. 362). Prior to his metamorphosis into a frontier warrior he concedes that he is divided in himself with respect to his internal struggle between the good and evil aspects of his psyche: ‘But as for me, let the old Adam of the flesh stir me as it may, I have no one to fight for’ (*Nick*, p.

136). While Nathan is liberated from his 'demonic possession' at the end of the novel, he cannot liberate himself from his guilty conscience. Thus, he is unable to seek further redemption through violence as this would conflict with his faith. In contrast to Bryant, I contend that to simply ascribe his murderous activity to an epilepsy inducing head injury and the spiritual evil of a gothic wilderness overlooks the psychological effect of witnessing his entire family slaughtered by Indians. Furthermore, if we recall Silver's points about the anti-Indian sublime we may more properly ascribe Nathan's vengeance to a personal yet representative cause and not exclusively to physical and ontological factors though they do play a part.

While Bryant partially diverges from Hall's argument concerning the causal factors for Nathan's condition, I argue that Bird is drawing upon a myriad of narrative strategies to justify his protagonist's excessive violence and the massacring of the Indian village. He is driven to redeem himself for his pacifist approach in dealing with the Indians, who are shown by their actions to be undeserving of mercy as barbaric sub-humans. This allows *Nick* to portray the destruction of the Indian village in heroic terms.

Extending these readings, I contend that Nathan's existential condition is another facet of the compromised, latently melancholic treatment of Indian extermination in the novel. In the context of the spiritual evil of the wilderness, the Jibbenainosay is emblematic of the genocidal dimension to U.S. territorial expansion. For example, Nathan as 'Old Nick' is associated with the disruption of Indian generational lines due to U.S. colonial policies when Wenonga exclaims that the Jibbenainosay has murdered his sons and grandsons, leaving him childless. This is redolent of Chingachgook's fate as the last of his race in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The devilish Jibbenainosay represents the more grotesque undercurrent to the discourse of the downfall of Indian society with the advent of white civilisation, which runs contrary to the official narrative of a glorious triumph of a Christian nation against its

demonic enemies. Nathan's alter ego may be read through Khanna's concepts of disavowal and repression. His spectral quality symbolises the repressed aspects of white brutality in the service of the State against the Indians. There is also a displacement of the historical realities surrounding colonial violence with their investment in a ghostly figure, who protects the settlements from the hostile Shawnees by 'haunting' the woods. In light of the arguments put forth by Bryant and Hall, Nathan's psychological fluctuations constitute an individuated instance of the narrative's textual shifts. His torment in relation to his internalised guilt and his gothic corruption by the wilderness encapsulates the 'fallen' condition of an American state founded upon the expropriation of the place of the Indians. However, his inner turmoil also serves to justify the extermination of Indians. The novel is unable to resolve its paradoxes as it attempts to validate the nation state whilst being unable to assimilate the realities which characterise its origins.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Nick of the Woods* presents a vision of the nation informed by duality. Bird espouses an ideology of state expansion through a number of narrative strategies. In *Nick* the wilderness is portrayed in Gothicised terms and is inferred to harbour a metaphysical evil which is also present in the minds of the white characters. It is implied that the expansion of the Christian state is a necessary objective in casting out the 'darkness' of the frontier. Conversely, this existential evil is an extension of the text's compromised vision regarding the bloodshed attending the conquest of the wilderness. The frontier is portrayed as a realm of perpetual violence, degradation and horror, which propels the white characters to acts of savagery. In accordance with the Indian-hater and gothic dimensions of the narrative, they become similar to the Indians they must fight. However, this also complicates the idea that Indian genocide is a moral activity in light of its implied savagery. The novel's use of the gothic points to its repression of a history of frontier violence that it attempts to rationalise

according to its national vision. In addition, there is a sublimated anxiety towards the annihilation of the Indians, which is conveyed through the use of negative adjectives such as 'hideous' and 'savage' to describe actions of frontiersmen in battle and in the reservations articulated by the characters when the violence of the novel reaches its extreme.

There is a latent sense of revulsion for the carnage involved in exterminating the Shawnees, although it is overtly legitimated according to the protocols of the narrative. Bird's text is therefore haunted to a greater degree by the spectre of Indian genocide. Cooper, on the other hand, provides a mythic national narrative of greater clarity. He alleviates white guilt over crimes against the Indians by articulating a mixture of admiration and sympathy for the 'noble savage'. He also establishes a set of mythological alliances to demonise those Indians who oppose the ascendancy of the American state. The structure of his tale leads to a conclusion in which the transfer of power from the Indian to the whites is naturalised, thereby legitimating the project of further national expansion. A clear victory for the American state is won unlike in *Nick of the Woods* where the wilderness remains unsettled. Moreover, Hawkeye is a more convincing hero in comparison to Nathan whose humanity is compromised due to his descent into violence and his adoption of barbarian traits. Unlike Hawkeye who displays an affinity with nature, Nathan will never attain happiness in his forest isolation. Nonetheless, as we have seen, the artifice of Cooper's mythological world too involves the sublimation of inassimilable historical realities.

The wilderness in *Nick* is also portrayed as being inimical to the feminine refinement of civilisation and must therefore be wrested from the forces of darkness for settlement. The border settlement of Kentucky can be incorporated into this framework of gender distinctions as an outpost of civilisation that relies on masculine traits for its survival against the hardships and ravages of the frontier. Furthermore, Nathan embodies the contradictory aspects of the novel relating to the absence of a civilised presence in the wilderness. In the

same way that he adopts barbarian traits to clear the way for civilisation, he is compelled to go against the pacifist doctrine of Quakerism such that he can successfully defeat the Indian demons. In personifying the inassimilable historical realities, which characterise the establishment of the U.S. state, he signifies the loss of its idealisation. His psychological duality also elucidates the critical role of the gothic in the undermining of the text's own headline conception of an American state founded upon Indian genocide. Additionally, the subdued ending reflects the idea that the gothic can be used to justify the nation's ideological discourses, in addition to expressing their contradictions and the disavowed objects. *Nick of the Woods* dramatises the impossibility of America as a new Eden despite the fact that it promotes the idea of the expansion of Christian civilisation with the concomitant acquisition of land from devilish heathen tribes.

A pattern emerges in the works of Cooper and Bird as they rely on similar narrative strategies (though they contrast in certain particulars) to incorporate a history of massacre and displacement. Both writers attempt to legitimate the nation's origins through historical revision yet signifiers for repression disrupt their official narratives. The use of spectres is indicative of colonial haunting and the displacement of inassimilable realities into an ethereal domain that lies beyond the tangible order of the State. Cooper's spectral descriptions of his Indian characters are connotative of inassimilable reminders for the ethical problems of national expansion. Their characterisation as mythological beings also distances these historical elements from the immediate history of the State. In Bird's text Nathan is a haunted figure who embodies the violence of Indian removal that the novel seeks to legitimate. However, the text is unable to assimilate the brutality engendered by this policy and so Nathan must remain in the wilderness. Such narrative features in both novels may be tied to their historical context. The threat of the Indian in the historical memory of early nineteenth-century America and his continued presence on the margins of society as a reminder of that

history encouraged the production of such texts justifying race warfare and suggesting the inevitability of Indian demise, such that national identity could be legitimated. However, as we will see by the latter half of the nineteenth century a discourse of reform became more popular, as encapsulated in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1888). Yet, in attempting to rationalise the legitimacy of the State, it too was marred by melancholic incorporation of the Indian. Significantly, the respective national visions of Cooper and Bird were by no means entirely predominant. Lydia Maria Child articulates a fundamentally different approach to national identity, one that is at once vastly less conservative, more forward thinking and yet despite all this, subject to the same melancholic effects identified in the other narratives. It is to this text that I will now turn.

Chapter 3: American Identity and Anglo-American Relations in *Hobomok*

Introduction

In *Hobomok* (1824), Lydia Maria Child reinterprets the historical origins of the American state in the seventeenth century to put forth a conception of national identity framed by proto-feminist values in response to the patriarchal standards of her own time. Her critique links the oppressive strictures of the New World to the persecution of Puritanism's adherents in England. In this chapter I will explore how the epistemic violence suffered by the Puritan consciousness is therefore replicated in its fundamentalism in America. The heroine of the novel, Mary, liberates herself from the cycle by marrying the Indian Hobomok. Consequently, she can be seen to establish the basis for the emergence of national identity by ending this pattern of trauma within the context of the plot, even though this very same trauma affects the narrative regarding its conception of England and its racial politics. Furthermore, the cross-cultural marriage symbolises a fusion of the native with the European that arguably represents a unique American identity. In this context, their son Charles Hobomok, may be considered as the first 'American'. This is reinforced by the fact that he is assimilated into white culture at the end of the novel such that he loses all traces of his Indianness. However as this chapter will examine, the novel is affected by haunting remainders which plague its female centred vision of American identity. While Child promotes a message of equality, her racial politics work in opposition to this aim. Hobomok is written out of the text as he chooses to venture west so that Mary's former lover, the European Charles, can be reunited with her. Although he may be the figurative father of the nation, Hobomok sacrifices himself to legitimate its establishment. In addition, Mary's idolisation by Hobomok signifies the idea of white, feminine power. However, I will make the case that he is merely the means by which Mary can actualise her autonomy and his depiction infers that he does not share an equivalent status with her.

Theoretical Models of Collective Memory and Trauma

To some extent the general omission of Child's novel from the literary canon and hence from the national memory may be attributed to its counter hegemonic politics. Therefore, my postcolonial psychoanalytic reading of the text will be combined with theoretical consideration of the construction of a useable past, collective memory and historical trauma. It will then be possible to determine how Child's national vision provides an insight into the ways in which America's establishment as a postcolonial state and its policy of Indian displacement exert a melancholic effect upon the national psyche.

The idea of a useable past was coined by Van Wyck Brooks in an article for *The Dial* entitled 'Creating a Useable Past' (1918). In it, he claimed that the American arts contrasted with those of Europe in light of their contradictions, which was attributable to the absence of a unifying tradition in addition to the mixing of immigrant cultures. He asserted that American culture could only transcend its internal incoherence by determining a set of historical referents, which would inform contemporary artistic production. Thus, a 'useable past' is a retrospective reconstruction of history, which satisfies the cultural requirements of the present.¹

Jeffrey Olick expands on Brooks's concept by exploring the theoretical approaches to collective memory and trauma and the application of psychoanalysis to memories that are socially transmitted across generations.² However, in contrast to Brooks's contention that the past can be reformulated according to contemporary interests, Olick notes that collective memory is resistant towards attempts at redefining it. Furthermore, a presentist approach

¹ Van Wyck Brooks, 'On Creating a Usable Past', *The Dial* (1918), 337-341 (pp. 338-341) <<http://www.archive.org/stream/dialjournallitcrit64chicrich#page/340/mode/1up>> [accessed 19 February 2014]

² The concept of 'collective memory' and the means by which to understand it from the present perspective were formulated in 1925 by the Durkheimian sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs parallels Brooks in arguing that collective memory is constantly reshaped by present interests.

ignores the origins of contemporary interests. The second approach to past-present relationships that he identifies aims to address the use-value of the past in influencing identities and purposes.³ In contrast to the presentist approach, this method draws upon a more functionalist vocabulary. It posits that history, a sense of the past, tradition and collective memory generate identities and give them moral functions.⁴ In this frame, the past underscores identity and is not merely employed as an instrument of power. The third approach holds that the relationship between the past and present lies outside of our control and is non-functional. Influenced by the culture of nineteenth-century Romanticism and the catastrophic effects of industrial warfare, this method explores what the past does to us. Olick contends that the psychoanalytic concept of trauma is significant in this regard. In Freudian theory, repression prevents dangerous knowledge from being consciously known. It often holds negative connotations as it is associated with the sublimation of instinctual drives or the pathological rationalisation of past events which prevent us from 'working through' them. In the absence of working through the past we are inexorably bound to re-enact its repetitions and inherit its fragmented identities (Olick, p. 21).

According to Richard Bernstein, as cited by Olick, the cross-generational mediation of trauma necessitates preconscious, unconscious and conscious factors. That which is communicated across generations is both explicitly and unconsciously stated (Olick, p. 25). Repressed elements in the collective memory are not sealed off from the conscious experiences of a people given that they persist in the unconscious as memory traces. This

³ Jeffrey K. Olick, 'From Useable Pasts to the Return of the Repressed', *The Hedgehog Review*, 9/2 (2007), 19-31 (p. 20).

⁴ In *Habits of the Heart* (1985), Robert Bellah and his colleagues argue that communities are defined by their history and hence possess collective memories. The collective sense of the past is also moral as opposed to instrumental. Bellah states that traditions are comprised of stories that convey conceptions of character and the qualities that define characters as virtuous or evil.

state of affairs underscores the 'return of the repressed' within the individual or collective history.⁵

In terms of Khanna's argument about the transmission of phantoms through collective affiliations, Jan Assman makes a useful point that latency and the return of the repressed are essential to understanding cultural memory.⁶ He identifies four types of social memory, namely mimetic memory, which entails the transmission of habits and routines, material memory, which refers to traces of the past within objects, communicative memory, which deals with the living memories exchanged between the inhabitants of similar life-worlds, and cultural memory which involves objectification, generalisation and a trans-situational and trans-historical duration, comparable to Derrida's 'archive' (Olick p. 26).⁷ Assman argues that latency and the return of the repressed need to be reformatted in cultural terms as opposed to psychological ones.

Olick states that sociological approaches to collective memory contextualise the unconscious in terms of culture and memory. However, he points out that societies can

⁵ Nicholas Abraham provides a useful conception of the function of memory traces in terms of repression within an individual context. His use of the terms Kernel and Envelope can be considered as analogous to Freud's distinctions between the ego and id, with the caveat that the Kernel constitutes a metaphorical crypt within the Unconscious whilst the Envelope equates to a container within the ego for the messages sent to it by the Kernel. He asserts that memory traces have the same mediating function as representations, affects and fantasies. He also argues that the repressed memory trace constitutes the signal transmitted by the unconscious 'Kernel' to the relays between the Preconscious-Conscious systems. Nicholas Abraham, and Nicholas Rand, 'The Shell and the Kernel', *Diacritics*, 9/1 (1979), 15-28 (p. 24). This explains why it can be simultaneously generated by censorship and the attraction of the Unconscious. Once it is sent back to the Kernel it can be resent to the Envelope in the form of representations or affects, which can potentially pass conscious Censorship. If censored the trace continues to act in relation to the Kernel by virtue of its repression. It follows the Kernel's protocols to attract traces that concern it and to manifest in the Consciousness as the 'return of the repressed'.

⁶ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 155-156.

⁷ Derrida contends that Freud differentiated 'acquired characters' from 'memory traces of external events' (Olick, p. 24). He claimed that Freud's argument posited our receptivity to the analogy between two forms of transgenerational memory, namely explicit doctrine and repressed traumatic memory. Derrida identifies in Freud's arguments the idea of cultural preservation and transmission or the 'archival'. He contends that such traces could be conveyed through ciphered linguistic and cultural networks of 'transgenerational and transindividual relays' which would comprise an archive. Derrida reconceptualises tradition as an archive that is a physical repository. In the absence of such an archive it would no longer be possible for an ancestor to speak through their descendant nor for the descendant to speak to the ghost of his/her ancestor. Moreover, an essential history of culture would be lacking, something which resonates in the context of poscoloniality.

repress the past without creating the conditions that cause its return in individuals, noting that commemorative trajectories do not always conform to the traumatic pattern Freud associated with Jewish history. He argues that it is beneficial to view cultural, communicative and psychic factors as being intertwined: 'Sometimes we use the past, and sometimes, for better (functional) or worse (traumatic) it uses us, but there is always a combination of all these going on in every case, historical or psychiatric' (Olick, p. 31). In his view, the psychic and the historical are intertwined given that cultural history is preconsciously incorporated in the individual.

In *Hobomok*, it is suggested that the qualities of independence and individualism valued by the Puritans may be tied to their exile to a frontier environment with their assertion of a religious belief system and societal framework that runs contrary to the demands of the English state. These qualities are in turn taken to their logical conclusion with respect to a rejection of patriarchy and their investment in a contemporary conception of national identity. Therefore, I will argue that Child traces the most significant aspects of American identity to a system of patriarchal oppression whilst reformulating the ideological conditions that allow this system to flourish, in order to renounce the patriarchal codes of her own era. Her denunciation of Puritanism is nuanced as she praises the church leaders' positive attributes whilst arguing against their oppressive social codes. In supporting their drive towards autonomy from the English state, she demonstrates that along with her protagonist she has inherited culturally transmitted values of freedom and independence, which are implicated in the nation's self-conception and which she presents as being rooted in the condition of exile of the first settlers. Moreover, she demonstrates a somewhat ambivalent stance towards England. On the one hand, she valorises it as an ideal refuge from the anti-intellectual and anti-aesthetic environs of Salem. On the other, she associates these characteristics with its history of patriarchal oppression. In terms of postcolonial psychoanalysis, Child's text carries

the trace of implicit memories or phantoms passed down through discourses that structure national affiliation and which simultaneously posit England as a cultural forefather and patriarchal oppressor. This chapter will pay more attention to Anglo-American relations than my previous two as this dynamic of inheritance is explored.

Khanna provides a useful insight into the formation of postcolonial states in this regard. She argues that postcolonial nations attempt to reformulate the concept of nation statehood that was defined by their previous colonial circumstances. Thus, she poses that in Sachs's *Black Hamlet*, melancholia results in a critical relationship towards lost objects and ideals that one attempts to psychically assimilate (Khanna, p. 257). These include the tribe and the ideal of nation statehood respectively. Although Khanna focuses on non-European nation states that have emerged from colonial rule in the twentieth century, it is possible to apply her arguments to the development of American identity under the spectre of English colonialism. In *Hobomok*, the Puritans display a mixture of contempt and kinship for their homeland, which may be linked to the nascent development of what will become a national consciousness under colonial rule. In this sense, the social ties they have been forced to abandon may be compared to the loss of ideals such as the tribe and representation through hegemony in the colonial states that Khanna describes, when contextualised in terms of psychical damage generated by respective forms of oppression, whether they be colonial or patriarchal-colonial. If postcolonial states define their identity in contradistinction to their former European masters according to demetaphorised narratives deriving from critical or melancholic nationalism, then it can also be argued that a similar process is at work in the emergence of American national identity. In Child's novel, the banishment of the Puritans from England results in a partial loss of the ideal of affiliation to the English state, which establishes the basis for the construction of an alternative national identity.

Child's use of the domestic historical romance genre in her narrative device of the Puritan manuscript, to which I will return, involves a reflexive communication with the past. In a postcolonial psychoanalytic framework, Child's novel is influenced by historically transmitted cultural dispositions, which derive from former colonial relations between America and England and discourses that were invoked to legitimate the founding of the State. She also explores the notion of trans-historically mediated trauma to further undermine the patriarchal systems within her own literary period and so seeks to reinterpret the past.

The narrative of *Hobomok* is set in 1620 and concerns the story of Mary Conant, who lives in the Puritan settlement of Naumkeak/Salem. She looks after her ailing mother and is in love with Charles Brown, an Episcopalian who invites the disapproval of her Puritan father, Mr Conant due to his religious convictions. At the beginning of the novel Mary performs a magic ritual to determine her future husband. Hobomok, an Indian ally of the settlement, steps into the circle that establishes the theme of their predestined marriage. Charles is eventually exiled from Naumkeak/Salem as a result of his beliefs. Mrs Conant subsequently dies and Mary is informed that Charles has been lost at sea. Unable to cope with these twin calamities and the stern autocratic rule of her father, she is driven to marry the Indian Hobomok, thereby fulfilling the prophecy. They elope and Mary adopts the role of an Indian squaw. Charles later reappears and reveals to Hobomok that he has been shipwrecked and imprisoned in Africa. Hobomok voluntarily decides to annul his marriage with Mary and ventures westward. The novel concludes with Mary's marriage to Charles and a new set of conditions within the settlement that promote religious tolerance.

The preface, introduced by an unnamed friend of the main 'author' Frederick, establishes Child's intention to reconceive the past. She foregrounds the interpretation of seventeenth-century history from a nineteenth-century perspective, using the frame narrative to revise the history of the nation and by implication, its present. To this end, she

characterises her fictional tale as an actual historical narrative, detailing its construction based upon research into Puritan manuscripts.⁸ Child also uses the preface to highlight that the story has been written by a man and that it has been approved of by his male friend, perhaps to make her audience more receptive to its central message of female empowerment. Carolyn Karcher points out that Child uses the two principal male narrators, namely the author and his Puritan ancestor, to avoid sanctions against female authorship.⁹ Child herself noted that Hannah Adams in writing a *Short History of the Jews* (1812) had been used as an example of how a woman ‘unsexed herself’ by displaying her knowledge in print: ‘The book’s main formal device for example, the pretence of relying on an “old, worn-out manuscript,” allows Child to appropriate the narrative authority of the Puritan chroniclers while rewriting the hagiography they had bequeathed to posterity’ (Karcher, p. xx). In this light, her narrative strategy is comparable to Helen Hunt Jackson’s utilisation of the romance plot in *Ramona* to promote her reform agenda. Both writers ‘sugar the pill’ for the articulation of their respective platforms. Conversely, we can identify how the purported author is an alibi for Child’s own authorial voice when he admits his shortcomings as a novice writer, given that this admission can be regarded as a way for Child to express her own misgivings about her work as a first-time novelist: ‘It has indeed fallen far short of the standard which I had raised in my own mind. You well know that state of feeling, when the soul fixes her keen vision on distant brightness, but in vain stretches her feeble and spell-bound wing for a flight so

⁸ In creating a fictional Puritan manuscript, Child relied on several historical sources concerning American colonial history, namely Puritan chronicles such as John Winthrop’s *Journal and The History of New England, 1630-1649* (1825), William Hubbard’s *General History of New England* (1815), and Nathaniel Morton’s *New England’s Memorial* (1669).

⁹ Carolyn L. Karcher, ‘Introduction’, *Hobomok*. Lydia Maria Child (Berkeley: Rutgers University Press, 2011), p. xx.

lofty'.¹⁰ The author introduced in the frame narrative will later become a vessel through which Child articulates her views on the nation.

Mary's forest ritual at the end of Chapter One is significant as from this point on the narrative is chiefly focalised through her. Although she is witnessed from the point of view of the chronicler, he is ultimately relegated to the role of a passive bystander. His passivity is emphasised when he almost echoes Mary's shriek following Hobomok's appearance in the circle. His voice becomes an extension of Mary's, which further suggests the centrality of her narrative influence: 'She looked around anxiously as she completed the ceremony; and I almost echoed her involuntary shriek of terror, when I saw a young Indian spring forward into the centre' (*Hobomok*, p. 13). The ritual marks the point where the distancing effect of the frame narrative is diminished. The chronicler becomes a peripheral figure as the frame author/Child takes control of his narrative on the pretext that the manuscript is illegible: 'These brief and scattered hints have now become almost illegible from their age and uncouth spelling, and it was with difficulty I extracted from them materials for the following story' (*Hobomok*, p. 16). The authorial voice at this point declares that the archaic and virtually indecipherable prose of the manuscript does not warrant repetition since the readers are all too familiar with it, having been brought up on John Winthrop's *Journal*, William Hubbard's *General History of New England* and Nathaniel Morton's *New England's Memorial*.

Significantly, within this frame Child's revision of Puritan history focuses on its darker elements and marginalised figures. For example, the historical models for her principal male characters such as Roger Conant and John Oldham had marginal or deviant roles in the Puritan community. In the chronicles Oldham was banished from the Plymouth colony for instigating dissension. In *Hobomok* Oldham is characterised as a 'jocular' gadfly who

¹⁰ Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok* (Berkeley: Rutgers University Press, 2011), p. 4.

engages in blasphemy with respect to the ‘mysteries of godliness’ and laughs at ‘his own disgraces with the most shameless effrontery’ (*Hobomok*, pp. 11-12). Child also transforms Hubbard’s account of Conant as a determined individual by forcing him to acquiesce to his daughter’s marriages to men who are unacceptable to his religion. Similarly, according to Morton, the Episcopalians Samuel and John Brown never returned to Naumkeak, following their exile by Endicott for speeches and practices that encouraged mutiny and partisan division. In Child’s text these figures are combined in the figure of Charles Brown who succeeds in marrying the heroine and securing a vaunted position in the colony that previously ostracised him. Concordantly, Morton and Winslow note Hobamak as a native friend of the English who successfully defended himself against an attempt on his life by Corbitant who resented the English presence. Child however takes this historical figure and places him in the role of title character, marrying him to her Puritan heroine and eventually integrating their son into white society (Karcher, pp. xxi-xxii). As a result, we can identify how Child modifies her historical sources to construct an alternate history of Puritanism.

The rewriting of the manuscript is also evident when the author/Child interrupts the account of a dispute between Mr Conant and Mr Oldham concerning the latter’s remarks on ‘the mysteries of godliness’: ‘I willingly omit the altercation which followed, which is given at full length in the manuscript; and I likewise pass over the detailed business of the day, such as the unlading of vessels, the delivery of letters, &c. &c., and lastly the theological discussions of the evening’ (*Hobomok*, p. 12). By omitting ‘theological discussions’ and the ensuing altercation, Child signals her dismissal of the religious fundamentalism of the Puritans which she associates with white male supremacy. Additionally, Mary’s experiences provide the locus around which the narrative is structured in terms of its proto-feminist discourse. The novel concentrates on her seventeenth-century narrative world whilst

positioning it in the nineteenth-century frame of the preface. The effect of this is to critique patriarchy in both time periods as a historically mediated legacy.

Although the novel displays a counter-hegemonic thread in terms of gender, its ideological positions and formal qualities are nonetheless influenced by its historical fiction conventions. The rhetoric of Indian assimilation employed at the end of the text in conjunction with some of its racial presuppositions may be linked to the historical romance genre, which interprets the past to fit with a narrative of American exceptionalism. The transformation of the son Charles Hobomok into a white individual and citizen, Hobomok's characterisation as a noble savage and his subsequent 'vanishing' demonstrate how Child draws upon conventions of this generic mode to legitimate American expansion. However, the artificiality of these conventions makes them referents to a historically contingent process. Therefore, the history of Indian removal constitutes an inherited substratum to Child's conceptualisation of American subjectivity and the future establishment of the State. Additionally, in this light her text elucidates the interrelations between culture, history and genre in the reproduction of historical phantoms. Her view of the State and Indians is both attributable to historical notions of race and American destiny and genre conventions. In a Khannian framework, her national ideal and the rhetorical devices of her narrative contain inherited ideological assumptions and the phantasmal derivations of colonial trauma. Child's narrative thus allows an insight into a colonial context, which informs the establishment of the American state, and how this relates to Indian displacement within the national psyche.

Renée Bergland states that Child's novel is modelled on Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and Cooper's revolutionary and post-revolutionary historical novels, namely *The Spy* (1821), *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Pilot* (1823).¹¹ In the preface, the purported author/Child mentions

¹¹ Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny* (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2000), p. 66.

these works in addition to John Gorham Palfrey's influence and states that the 'American ground is occupied' by Cooper's novels while 'Scott wanders over every land with the same proud, elastic tread' (*Hobomok*, p. 3). Child's reference to 'occupied ground' is significant given that frontier romance is centrally concerned with this theme. Moreover, her novel emphasises the ambivalent dimension to ownership and occupation of the American frontier. *Hobomok* was directly influenced by John Gorham Palfrey's review of *Yamoyden* (1820), a poem that detailed King Philip's War. In view of Child's use of generic conventions, Karcher states that both *Yamoyden* and *Hobomok* present their Indian title characters as noble savages and their heroines as women who defy paternal prohibitions against interracial relations. Nonetheless, she asserts that the plot of *Hobomok* differs from that of *Yamoyden* at its core. These differences demonstrate the divide that separated even progressive male writers from their female peers with respect to patriarchy and white male supremacy. Like Cooper, Eastburn and Sands concentrated on race war and concluded with a reassertion of patriarchal authority.

The tradition of the historical romance and the cultural environment of the early nineteenth century have a significant bearing on Child's novel, which challenges and reproduces historically informed assumptions pertaining to race, gender and territorial expansion. These contexts are also useful in framing Child's vision of national identity within literary and historical terms and how it relates to a text such as *The Last of the Mohicans*, which can be considered as a response to it, and the later *Ramona*, which follows a comparable narrative trajectory. Consequently, it will be beneficial to further detail the place of *Hobomok* in nineteenth-century fiction and its omission from the dominant literary canon in the twentieth century. By combining this consideration with a postcolonial psychoanalytic reading, it will be possible to gain a new perspective on the origins of national identity and how they relate to Indian displacement and white male supremacy within the national psyche.

The Place of *Hobomok* within the Canon of Nineteenth-Century American Literature

As noted, Child's critique of patriarchy is a response to the dominant cultural attitudes of her time. She therefore spends much of her narrative addressing its ideological tenets through Mary's experiences of Salem's oppressive social environment and her fractious relationship with her father. It is only in the novel's last segment that she marries Hobomok and the details of their marital life are condensed, allowing the narrative to focus on Mary's eventual return to the Puritan community. In contrast to Jackson whose novel contends directly with the influence of the Indian upon American identity in terms of reform and tribal sovereignty, Child's narrative, for the most part, concentrates on invalidating patriarchy before focusing on the construction of an alternative, which is invested in defining what it means to be an American. In this light, it is useful to review the context of *Hobomok*'s production to assess how its conception of American identity differs from the national ideals advanced by writers like Cooper and Bird. In addition, it is possible to relate this historical context to the ideological and psychological dynamics that inform its treatment of patriarchy, national identity, gender and race.

Excluded from the full benefits of American democracy, middle and upper class white women often identified themselves with oppressed racial groups. Karcher argues that women writers in the 1820s imagined alternatives to race war, genocide and white male supremacy as solutions to the contradictions that beset their society. Ezra F. Tawil offers a similar contention, highlighting the fact that the works of authors such as Child and Catherine Maria Sedgwick focus on how courtships develop in the context of Anglo-Indian relations. They are therefore classifiable as narratives that incorporate the generic conventions of domestic fiction and frontier romance. He notes that white women developed radical narratives that were more provocative in their depictions of miscegenation and more sympathetic towards

Indians and the principle of cultural diversity. Tawil also argues that the frontier romances of male and female authors shared a similar ideology that they helped to perpetuate.¹²

Karcher proposes that Child alters the 'errand into the wilderness' narrative of her Puritan ancestors by centralising the peripheral and vice versa. Thus, she assigns leading roles to the wives and daughters of the patriarchs, women who are virtually omitted from the Puritan chronicles. She also highlights the courageous qualities of characters like Mrs Conant and Lady Arabella who are destined to die due to New England's harsh conditions, and emphasises the patience and resilience of Mrs Oldham, who withstands her combative husband (Karcher, p. xxiii). Tawil contends that race categories became a precondition for a woman's role as heroine in American fiction during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The imbrication of race with gender is evident in the works of writers such as Mary Jemison, Child and Sedgwick given that they detail the fates of English women who cross over into Indian culture whilst preserving their white identity. For Tawil nineteenth-century domestic frontier romance attributed a racial identity to the heroine that did not exist in eighteenth-century domestic fiction (Tawil, pp. 100, 103).

Tawil claims that while such novels were influenced by English domestic fiction, they were written for an American readership who shared that sense of racial identity as the basis for national community. In establishing race as a fundamental property of group identity and in attributing the reproduction of American culture to the proper channelling of the white woman's desire, domestic frontier fiction contributed to Anglo-Saxonist nationalism and the articulation of race and nation (Tawil, p. 119). It is arguable that Child replicates these values in writing within the mode of the domestic historical romance. However, I will argue against

¹² Ezra F. Tawil, 'Domestic Frontier Romance, or, How the Sentimental Heroine Became White', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 32/1 (1998), 99-124 (pp. 99-100).

Tawil's assertion that the plot of *Hobomok* purely replicates racist categories through its reinforcement of white subjectivity, given that Child, like Jackson, expands the definition of nationality to include non-white others, under the proviso that they can be fully assimilated.¹³

As Karcher points out, the plot of *Hobomok* symbolically realises Child's desire to inhabit the perspective of religious and racial Others distinct from Western civilisation. Additionally, Child works within the conventions of the nineteenth century in putting forth her conception of national identity. Child's ability to represent the perspective of the Other is also identifiable in her short stories, *The Lone Indian* (1828) and *She Waits in the Spirit Land* (1846), which are useful to look at here if we are to fully understand the conception of the Indian Other in *Hobomok*. *The Lone Indian* details the life of an Indian chief named Powontonomo. The events of the narrative relate to his experience of the decline of his society and culture due to incursions by English settlers. Both Powontonomo and the other Indian characters speak their own language as opposed to broken English. Therefore, they are not infantilised in being forced to articulate themselves in a foreign language and are instead allowed to respond on equal terms with their oppressors. For example, Powontonomo provides a critical interpretation of the settlement that has been built upon his ancestral land: 'The Englishman's road wound like a serpent around the banks of the Mohawk; and iron hoofs had so beaten down the war-path, that a hawk's eye could not discover an Indian track'

¹³ Similarly, Roy Harvey Pearce argues that Child espoused concepts associated with savagism referring to a significant passage in *Letter from New-York* where she draws upon phrenology to describe fifteen Indians she saw at the American museum. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 120. This reading overlooks the fact that Child was working within the conceptual limitations of her time. Citing facial measurements of different races she states that though the Caucasian race has developed superior 'moral and intellectual faculties', this is attributable to contingent conditions such as 'climate' and an extensive history of refinement (*Hobomok*, pp. 184-185). Furthermore, she contrasts Indian physiology with the 'feeble forms and pallid faces' of Americans and highlights that her society, which has robbed Indian lands, is 'very fond of proving their inferiority' (*Hobomok*, p. 184). The long list of justifications she employs to explain her 'progressive' yet racist position on Indians points to two factors: one, she is articulating a conception of racial relations beyond the dominant assumptions of her time that would later culminate in a move away from savagism in the twentieth century and two, despite this she is ultimately constrained by the cultural influences of her historical context which result in such argumentation.

(*Hobomok*, pp. 159-160). In giving voice to an Indian viewpoint, Child calls into question the presumed benefits of civilisation by scrutinising them within an alternate cultural sphere.

Similarly, *She Waits in the Spirit Land* opens with an epigraph that conveys Child's intention to explore 'a brother's creed, though not like mine' (*Hobomok*, p. 192). In this story, she uses the romance between Wah-bu-nung-o and O-ge-bu-no-qua along with a romantic notion of Indian primitivism to criticise Victorian social codes, which echoes some of the narrative strategies in *Hobomok* used to critique nineteenth-century patriarchy. For example, she states that 'there was no Mrs. Smith to remark how they looked at each other, and no Mrs. Brown to question the propriety of their rambles in the woods' (*Hobomok*, p. 194). In addition, civilised society comes under attack when it is contrasted with the natural surroundings in which their courtship takes place: 'Civilized man is little to be trusted under such circumstances; but nature, subjected to no false restraints, manifests her innate modesty, and even in her child-like abandonment to impulse, rebukes by her innocence the unclean self-consciousness of artificial society' (*Hobomok*, p. 194). We may identify here a parallel with *Ramona* in which the titular character and Alessandro initially enjoy an idyllic romance among natural environs. This also relates to Cooper's use of the frontier to convey a romanticised depiction of nature in contrast to the mundane aspect of civilisation. What can also be posited is that Child, in employing such imagery, presents us with her imagined conception of Indianness. Though she seeks to inhabit the Other she nonetheless does so in terms partially informed by the cultural presumptions of her era.

Bergland points out that while later frontier romances adopted the themes of *Hobomok* relating to miscegenation and spectralisation, they did so in order to transform its message through the repression of its provocative possibilities. While both Child and Cooper depict interracial marriage as entailing a ghostly exile from the white community, Child emphasises this exile as reversible and figurative given that Mary is able to return to Salem.

In *The Last of the Mohicans* the possibility of miscegenation results in the literal burial of Uncas and Cora. According to Bergland, Cooper's work inverts the conventions in *Hobomok* in order to reassert white male supremacy and relocate white women in the repressed recesses of irrational passion and ghostliness that Child challenged. Nonetheless, she claims that Child and Cooper share similarities as American nationalists who consider the disappearance of the Indian as inevitable (Bergland, p. 66). In distinction to Bergland, I will later argue that Child cannot be solely regarded as a nationalist, given that she entertains an Indian perspective on national expansion and apprehends a counter hegemonic space that threatens national legitimacy. Child also uses the Indian figure to convey the idea that women can freely choose their romantic partners regardless of social prohibitions.

Mary's marriage to Hobomok functions symbolically to convey the political rights of women and female embodiment. The Native American context of their marriage also serves to conflate the romantic autonomy of women with American values of liberty and independence. Conversely, Cooper creates a world characterised by American masculinity and treats Indians and white women alike as powerless objects, subject to European male desire. In *Mohicans* only the Indians are depicted in spectral terms. Magua, like Hobomok, is introduced as a ghostly figure in the novel when Alice Munro witnesses him and exclaims 'are such spectres frequent in the woods?'¹⁴ However, unlike Hobomok he is denied a voice for much of Cooper's narrative. While the Indian is treated as a human in *Hobomok*, his humanity is more doubtful in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Female characters are also represented differently in both novels. Child highlights Mary's lack of corporeality, describing her as a 'blooming fairy' with a 'little aerial foot' and a 'sylph-like figure' (*Hobomok*, pp. 8, 9, 16). By contrast, Cooper provides detailed physical descriptions of Alice and Cora. He notes that Alice has a 'dazzling complexion, fair golden

¹⁴ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 25

hair, and bright blue eyes' (*Mohicans*, p. 488). Cora is described as having 'tresses' that are 'shining and black, like the plumage of raven' and teeth 'that would have shamed the purest ivory' (*Mohicans*, pp. 488-489). Cooper's text begins by detailing the bodies of its heroines and concludes by erasing them. Cora dies at the end and becomes the ghostly bride of Uncas. She is 'transplanted [...] to a place where she would find congenial spirits, and be forever happy'. Alice is rendered invisible in being borne away within a litter 'whence low and stifled sobs alone announced [her] presence' (*Mohicans*, p. 392). Bergland claims that in *Hobomok* Mary discards her angelic purity by marrying Hobomok and having a son with him. She later divorces him and retains the child and her own wealth. In this reading, her own possession of her body is reinforced when she decides to marry again (Bergland, p. 65).

Karcher argues that novels such as *Hobomok* and Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) had very little influence on the American historical novel and the shape of the main American literary canon. Although both works were immensely popular for their time, they are now forgotten. In Karcher's view Cooper would have the last word on the sexual and military dimensions to Indian-white relations in his response to Child's conception of national identity (Karcher, p. xxxvi). Cooper's approach to race and gender relations was valued over Sedgwick's and Child's by America's ruling elites and subsequent cultural commentators as it cohered with their national vision and satisfied their need for a mythology which justified their white supremacist policies. Karcher states that Sedgwick and Child drifted into obscurity due to their feminist conception of national identity in part because they challenged the cultural orthodoxy imposed by these elites. In addition, she asserts that this writing out of dissenting voices produced an extremely limited conception of the early nineteenth-century American novel, which restricted it to themes of white supremacy, patriarchy and perpetual race war.

As a result, it is arguable that *Hobomok* was in part excluded from the national memory due to the challenge it presented to inherited cultural codes, which were valued by elites in defining their vision of American identity. Conversely, we can also identify how it is influenced by historically mediated racial attitudes pertaining to Manifest Destiny, American expansion and the distinctions between whites and Indians. Although Child's novel reconceives the past, it is as much influenced by it as a product of its time. This can be discerned in the final writing out of Hobomok and his son's assimilation into white culture, which constitute forms of colonial repression. Furthermore, her work engenders both an antipathy to and affinity with English culture, which may also be linked to the melancholic historical memories of the nation as a postcolonial state.

Patriarchy, the Traumatized Puritan Psyche and Proto-Feminism in *Hobomok*

Child provides a sustained critique of Puritanism that is complicated in that it is partly informed by the cultural dispositions of her era, something that is indicated when she notes some of the Puritans' positive characteristics that she then relates to a sense of American identity. Her intention is not so much to question the legitimacy of the State but to challenge the repressive aspects of Puritanism and the patriarchal values of her society. For example, she characterises the Puritan culture of Salem/Naumkeak as a stagnant, dreary environment: 'Everyone acquainted with our early history remembers the wretched state in which they found the scanty remnant of their brethren at that place. I shall, therefore, pass over the young man's dreary account of sickness and distress' (*Hobomok*, p. 7). Likewise the settlement is described as consisting of 'six miserable hovels' (*Hobomok*, p. 8). The social violence of white male supremacy under the Puritan system is also highlighted. This is evident in Mr Conant, an oft 'tyrannical man' who personifies Puritan fundamentalism at its most extreme (*Hobomok*, p. 76). When he arrives home in 'no pleasant humor' he has a brief argument with Charles before banishing him from the house, upsetting his wife and Mary: 'The tears of his

sickly wife had allayed the first gust of passion, and perhaps even the heart of that rigid man reproached him for its violence' (*Hobomok*, p. 77). Furthermore, Mary's forthright friend, Sally, remarks upon the constraints placed upon female liberty in Naumkeak/Salem: 'In my poor judgement it is bad enough that we've come over into this wilderness to find elbow room for our consciences, without being told how long a time we may have to stop and breathe in' (*Hobomok*, p. 19). These aspects of social and cultural rigidity, demetaphorised perceptions of the external world and epistemic violence upon female subjectivity will be explored further in this section as they relate to Child's critique of patriarchy and her proposition that the State's genesis is defined by the rejection of patriarchy and its associations with the Old World.

Child evokes the traumatic historical circumstances surrounding the development of Puritanism when she states that its 'pure flame [...] was everywhere quenched in blood' (*Hobomok*, p. 6). As discussed, Khanna argues that a postcolonial state in forming a national consciousness is unable to accept the ego-ideal of European statehood since this ego-ideal is predicated on the exclusion of the colony's inhabitants and their differentiation from the colonisers: 'What was lost would thus be both prior formations that would have to be discarded (like tribe) for the sake of identification (or affiliation) with the new group, and, because of uneasy assimilation to the new group, the ideal of nation-statehood itself' (Khanna, p. 263). Khanna states that the critical agency in this process generates melancholic nationalism, haunting and demetaphorisation. In an analogous manner, Child links the fundamentalist characteristics of the Puritan ideology to its inability to accept the ego-ideal of England and psychological haunting with respect to relocation and its associated social and familial schisms. By implication, this can be linked to the emergence of a melancholic nationalism. Such epistemic violence could then be argued to be passed down in a societal context with respect to the social prohibitions imposed by Naumkeak's Puritan elders. Thus,

the psychical damage imprinted upon their collective memory becomes manifest in their discursive rhetoric. Child articulates this idea in the following lines:

They were struck off from a learned, opulent, and powerful nation, under circumstances which goaded them and lacerated them to ferocity; - and it is no wonder that men who fled from oppression in their own country, to all the hardships of a remote and dreary province, should have exhibited a deep mixture of exclusive, bitter, and morose passions (*Hobomok*, p. 6).

In Child's text the Puritan psyche reinforces its identity by fantasising its perception of external events, reducing them to a narrative fixated on the distinction between the divine and the diabolical.¹⁵ Through this, it re-enacts the memory trace of exile. The mythology of the Puritans can be attributed to the interactions between their conscious perceptions of the external world and the conscious and unconscious or implicit domains of their collective psyche. The trauma of exile is inscribed in the unconscious which is rationalised by the consciousness as an injustice. Thus, Puritan patriarchy in part functions as a means to repress the element of victimisation and the sense of powerlessness in the unconscious. This repression is then coded in terms of the narrative of a conflict between good and evil that functions as a justification for its patriarchal values.

By extrapolating this line of reasoning in the novel in a broader context, the memory trace of Puritan trauma is passed down through generations as an aspect of American identity. If England as the colonial father is cast as an oppressor with respect to notions of independence and freedom, then the original trauma of the Puritans arguably contributes to the idea that England is an aggressor that must be defeated. Additionally, the patriarchal

¹⁵ Nicholas Abraham argues that the origins of fantasy relate to the metapsychological interactions between the Kernel and the Envelope. He states that drives function to translate organic demands into the language of the Unconscious, which in turn utilises fantasy in order to transfer these demands into the Consciousness. According to Abraham, a myth equates to a collective imaginary objectivation of various nucleo-peripheral relations insofar as these inform the organisation of specific social groups. Myth enables us to articulate how situations come about and how they are maintained with respect to the Kernel and the Envelope. This is evident in that they express via their manifest content the repression of their latent content. The myth thus signifies a gap in introjection pertaining to communication with the Unconscious: 'If it offers understanding, it does so much less by what it says than by what it does not say, by its blanks, its intonations, its disguises'. Nicholas Abraham, and Nicholas Rand, 'The Shell and the Kernel', *Diacritics*, 9/1 (1979), 15-28 (p. 26). The myth is an instrument of repression and functions as a symbolic vessel for the emergence of repressed elements.

attitudes of the first settlements embedded in this trauma also consolidate a subsequent fundamental nationalism, which can be identified in the works of Cooper and Bird. Child's novel suggests that American identity is melancholic at an inherent level more generally when viewed in relation to the other selected texts discussed in this thesis. This is indicated when we consider the pretext for the American nation's establishment in terms of exility in relation to Slotkin's contentions, the aftermath of the War of Independence, which arguably represented a form of symbolic patricide, and the removal of Indians, which contradicted the founding tenants of the Revolution. The melancholic symptoms produced by these defining events in the nation's history can then be argued to surface at various points in the works of Cooper, Bird, Child, Jackson and Melville.

Hobomok seeks to undo the negative dimension of these legacies by undermining the rigidity of the Puritan system through its exploration of the psychological damage inflicted by patriarchy. By transforming the historical record of the State, Child creates a new template upon which to base her domestic, proto-feminist conception of national identity. Whereas Cooper employs race war and the narrative discourse of Indian extinction to create a tabula rasa for the founding of the nation, Child looks to its beginnings in the seventeenth century and reinterprets the ideological and psychical strands that have since influenced the development of American identity. Consequently, while she highlights the bigotry of the Puritan settlers she also praises them for their 'excellencies, which peculiarly fitted them for a van-guard in the proud and rapid march of freedom' (*Hobomok*, p. 6). Hence, following a postcolonial psychoanalytic line the ideal of freedom that is associated with American identity is located in the psychic trauma of religious oppression in England. By tracing aspects of the contemporary national psyche to its Puritan past, *Hobomok* explores how trauma is conveyed across generations and how American national identity is in part informed by historical trauma. Additionally, the very aspects of Puritan identity that Child

values in conjunction with her general denunciation of patriarchy signify how her own text contains the phantoms of epistemic violence under English rule, which she has adopted from her culture.

The traumatised condition of the Puritan psyche is explored through Mr Conant's early life in England. 'Frustrated in his plans' and 'thwarted by his rivals', Mr Conant is driven to renounce the religion of his fathers in converting to the Puritan faith (*Hobomok*, p. 8). By falling in love with a noble lady he invites the displeasure of her father. This prompts the couple to elope to America where they endure a life of poverty and struggle. The relocation, also necessitated by being at odds with the royal authority, leads to his two sons dying from illness and starvation. A link is established between the trauma he experiences in defying the father of his lover and his subsequent actions as a tyrannical paternal figure who forbids Mary to marry the Episcopalian Charles.¹⁶ Additionally, Charles is associated English rule and culture, which makes him an intolerable figure for Mr Conant and the New England Puritan community. For example, a series of charges are brought against Charles when he holds an Episcopalian ceremony in a vacant building where the 'English ritual' is read and the sacrament is administered by Mr Blackstone in his 'full, canonical robes, according to the ceremonies prescribed by James and his Bishops at the council of Hampton House' (*Hobomok*, p. 69). During the proceedings, Charles declares his allegiance to the Episcopalian church and by inference to King James. Additionally, he threatens his accusers when he states that the 'king's sceptre' can yet reach them in the colonies (*Hobomok*, p. 73). Charles, more than any other character in the text, personifies English cultural heritage and authority which perhaps goes some way to explaining Mary's infatuation with him as an alternative to the culture of her father.

¹⁶ Karcher points to the Freudian implications of this reading and that Conant's case is emblematic of how patriarchal tyranny perpetuates itself by moulding psychologically wounded sons into 'obdurate' fathers (Karcher, p. xxiii).

Mr Conant is compelled to prevent his daughter from marrying an individual that he cannot help but associate with experiences that have left bitter imprints upon his psyche. In doing so, he passes down his trauma to Mary, which exemplifies the idea of transgenerationally mediated repression. Mr Conant's marriage was forbidden by his wife's father and thus he forbids his daughter to associate with her Episcopalian suitor. However, by repressing the relationship he only strengthens her resolve to pursue it, just as he was determined to elope with his future wife. It is significant that patriarchal repression centres on the idea of the daughter as an object that it is the power of the father to give away. It thus gives rise to haunting in each case due to its failure to erase the inassimilable object, namely personal or feminine liberty. In this light, Mr Conant's household parallels the patriarchal version of the Señora's matriarchal domestic environment in *Ramona*. Both spaces are oppressive to the extent that they cause their heroines to elope with Indians in acts of transgression. However, by the end of the novel Mary it seems has brought about a radical alteration of the social codes that structure the settlement. Within the world of the plot, her assertion of independence constitutes an end to patriarchal tyranny, which attempts to banish female autonomy and in doing so renders such autonomy as a spectral presence that threatens to invade its ideological parameters.

In rejecting the values of English society, Mr Conant is subjected to epistemic violence and thus has adopted a demetaphorised view of the world rooted in religion. For example, he reproaches his daughter when her utterances serve to soften the 'rude tones' of the sailors in attendance at the breakfast table. He compares her to the Israelites who questioned the wisdom of Moses following their Exodus from Egypt and also associates her with French libertinage and Catholicism, stating that she would abandon the 'little heritage of Naumkeak' so as to 'vamp up' her 'frail carcass in French frippery' (*Hobomok*, p. 9). He has developed his own variant of patriarchy, which allows him to rationalise the injustices he has

suffered whilst enabling him to exercise power as a means of repressing the memory of his humiliating victimisation. This is all the more apparent when Charles remarks that Mr Conant uses his religion to this end: ‘but I more than half suspect that he cares more about having his own way, than he does for all the prayers and churches in Christendom’ (*Hobomok*, p. 49). Furthermore, when he experiences conflicted feelings over reports of Charles’s death he convinces himself that his experiences in England have nothing to do with his hatred of Episcopacy. However, he reflects upon whether he has mistaken his own selfish motives for religious zeal. His personal musings infer that Puritanism and the exercise of male power are interlinked.

The renaming of the settlement of Naumkeak attests to the psychological scars its inhabitants have suffered under English rule. This is evident in Mr Conant’s following words to the chronicler who is about to set sail for England: ‘And since Naumkeak has become old enough to receive a christian name, say ye to them that “in Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion”’ (*Hobomok*, p. 16). He once again inadvertently discloses his inability to reconcile himself to the psychological trauma of exile given that he rationalises it by sending a message to Europe concerning the spiritual superiority of the Puritan colony. Puritan identity is consolidated in that its adherents are cast as refugees from persecution in heretical England. By extension, a trace of this complex survives in the American psyche and its conception of England. Child highlights the antagonistic, oppressive dimension of patriarchal rule, noting the renaming of the settlement to associate it with an inherent American subjectivity. According to her national ideal, true American subjectivity would extend the non-conformism of the Puritans to the rejection of patriarchy.

The novel suggests that patriarchal trauma can also be overcome through a woman-centric approach to social disputes. Child’s reaction to patriarchy reflects how she is influenced by the collective memory with which she reflexively engages. In this sense, her

narrative exemplifies the interaction between texts and culture in the creation of narratives that interpret and disseminate historical recollections. Whereas Cooper concentrates on the masculine conquest of the wilderness, Child advocates for a less patriarchal and more tolerant version of the American ideal through the psychical conflict within the Conant family and wider Puritan community. For example, Mary's heroism is emphasised when she rejects the religious, racial and sexual values of her father and asserts her right to follow her emotional intuition. Neither she nor her mother believes in his religious ideology yet they are forced to leave their home in England due to his convictions. Consequently, they must endure the hardships of a bleak Puritan settlement that he considers as a 'second Canaan'. However, in challenging his beliefs they demonstrate how patriarchal tyranny can be undermined.

As an ideal Puritan wife, Mrs Conant is compelled to disguise her inner sentiments from her husband. For example, she highlights her lack of agency when she refuses to challenge him over Mary's choice of suitor: "“You will know my heart my dear Mary” replied her mother, “but I ought not to do wrong because your father is absent”” (*Hobomok*, p. 45). She therefore foregrounds the denial of the female voice under the Puritan system. However, there are moments in which she outwardly discloses a perspective that does not strictly cohere with the Puritan world-view. For example, as she is dying she states that 'there are many things I would have spoken [...] but I fear I have no strength wherewith to alter them' (*Hobomok*, p. 108). Moreover, she asks her husband to 'deal kindly with Mary' in the event of Brown's return and refers to their own 'thwarted love' in order to persuade him to take this course of action. Mr Conant agrees to her request and thus feminine sentimental influence is validated in the context of the novel's critique of Puritanism. The narrative's proto-feminist discourse is also evident when the 'matrons and maidens' pay a 'passing tribute of grief' to Mary upon news of Charles Brown's apparent demise. However, their

‘rigid listeners’ command them to ‘hold’ their ‘blasphemous tongues’ (*Hobomok*, p. 117).

The female voice is again denied by male Puritan autocracy.

The idea that Puritans such as Mr Conant reproduce patriarchal codes that erase female autonomy is epitomised in the death of Mrs Conant. Her social death in England was effectuated by her father’s will and her literal death may be linked to Puritanism, as it was her husband’s religious beliefs that ultimately brought her to the fatally harsh surroundings of New England. Mary’s subsequent exile demonstrates how Puritanism eliminates an autonomous female perspective to preserve the patriarchal fantasies it projects onto the woman as object. Within the Puritan mindset the ideal woman is voiceless, obedient and an object of male desire and control. For example, when Mr Conant discovers that she has disappeared he admits to himself that he never truly knew his own daughter: ‘He felt that he had, in reality, known very little of Mary, except through the medium of her mother’ (*Hobomok*, p. 126). As is evident, Mary is unknown to her own father under this system of patriarchy in which women are silent and faceless. It is significant that while Child criticises an imagined feminine ideal within the Puritan psyche she is seemingly unaware in terms of what she projects regarding Indian culture. This points to the still powerful effect the cultural codes of her era had upon her writing.

Child links the idea of religious toleration to her prioritisation of the feminine and natural as more effective ways of reading divine truth compared to patriarchal distortions of it. For example, Mrs Conant privately disagrees with her husband’s creed and proposes a religion of the heart elevated above the theological conflicts between the Puritans and the Episcopalians. She disparages the doctrines, forms and ceremonies of religion as superficial ornaments and instead advocates for religious inspiration in nature: ‘Ah Mr Brown, the Bible is an inspired book; but I sometimes think the Almighty suffers it to be a flaming cherubim, turning every way, and guarding the tree of life from the touch of man. But in creation, one

may read their fill. It is God's library – the first Bible he ever wrote' (*Hobomok*, p. 76). The dichotomy between nature and societal codes functions as a corollary to the conflict between the individual and the group ideal to which he/she must conform. In the novel nature is symbolic of the authentic self that should be embraced rather than repressed. This is reinforced through its association with the divine. Nature is also framed in occult terms at certain points in the narrative as exemplified by a forest ritual Mary performs. However, this does not undermine the idea that it is presented as God's 'first bible'. Rather these links with the occult may be regarded as emblematic of female self-assertion.

Child not only uses nature as a symbol for female autonomy but also conflates it with the wilderness in order to link it to an American subjectivity distinguished from the 'Old World'. Her reformulation of American identity and its associations with the distinctive topography of the frontier and native elements in terms of feminist values engenders, to a certain extent, historically mediated notions of American exceptionalism designed to consolidate the nation. For example, Mary and her father accompany Hobomok and Sagamore John's men on a hunting trip during the night. In this narrative segment Child implicitly conveys her ideal of American identity by providing a romanticised depiction of the scene: 'Mr Conant and his ten associates formed a line and fell into the rear, while the Indians who carried the poles did the same, and placed themselves forward. It was indeed a strange romantic scene' (*Hobomok*, p. 88). American identity is realised through the symbolic exploration of the wilderness as a signifier for the unconscious desires of white subjectivity. This is indicated by the fact that Child presents the wilderness as a place where the logic of civilisation holds no sway. As a result, she parallels writers like Charles Brockden Brown or Cooper who use the wilderness in the same way. Thus, the Conants venture into a nocturnal and mythical realm where they can learn about the hunting techniques of the Indians: 'It seemed as if the sylphs and faeries, with which imagination of old, peopled the mountain and

the stream, had all assembled to lay their diamond offerings on the great altar of nature' (*Hobomok*, p. 88). The Indian and the wilderness are co-opted into the American ego-ideal to distinguish it from the colonial Other, namely England. At the same time, the American psyche can be said to define itself in opposition to the racial Other. Therefore, distinctions are made between Mary and Hobomok: 'There, in that little group, standing in the loneliness and solitude of nature, was the contrast of heathen and Christian, social and savage, elegance and strength, fierceness and timidity' (*Hobomok*, p. 89). Nonetheless, they are described as being almost mutually dependent on each other through the use of these contrasting adjectives.

Mary evokes the advantages and disadvantages of civilisational refinement in this passage. She enacts a process that can be described as 'colonial' in the respect that she later utilises her Indian husband and the community to which he belongs to assert her own independence. She effectively 'plays' the role of an Indian squaw as a rebellion against Puritan culture rather than assimilating into the culture of her host society. Child therefore uses Indian identity as a projection of the values that can in her vision be used to distinguish American identity. In this context, Mary symbolises the American psyche, which uses the Indian to define itself through incorporation and expulsion. This process may also be identified in the nineteenth-century practice of 'playing Indian', as epitomised by societies such as Tammany Hall where certain aspects of Indian culture were appropriated to differentiate American identity from its European antecedents. By drawing upon the tropes of the Indian and the wilderness in this way, Child discredits Puritan patriarchy as a national ideal as well as the patriarchal legacy of England.

As previously mentioned, *Hobomok* entertains an ambivalent conception of England. Although it is presented as a safe haven from the strife of Naumkeak, the spectre of English oppression is suggested through the frequent references to the Puritan exodus and Mr Conant's embittering experiences. Therefore, if America is to free itself from the influence of

English rule it must adopt policies rooted in tolerance rather than ones which replicate oppression.¹⁷ Child implicitly conveys this idea with the assimilation of Charles Hobomok Conant at the very end of the novel. Mary informs Charles Brown that she cannot return to England as her child would bring disgrace upon her. Thus, America offers an alternative to the inequality and intolerance traced to England. Child suggests that the Indian can be absorbed into the national ego through non-violent means. To do otherwise would only perpetuate colonial traumas upon the national psyche.

On the other hand, *Hobomok* constantly distinguishes England from the Puritan community to characterise the latter as stagnant in its religious rigidity. For Mary, England is a place associated with intellectualism and cultural creativity where she can act in ‘good faith’ to herself. Hence, in her mind it is a ‘fairy place’ where she can become ‘covetous of mental riches’ (*Hobomok*, p. 78). In this sense England perhaps represents an imagined ideal for Child herself who was forbidden to read books by her father.¹⁸ The Puritan system certainly is shown to stifle growth due to the limits it imposes on its subjects. It is therefore significant that Mary is described as ‘a lilly weighed down by the pitless pelting of the storm’ and as ‘a violet shedding its soft, rich perfume on bleakness and desolation’ (*Hobomok*, p. 79).

Nonetheless, while the Puritans denounce England with respect to its king, culture and social institutions on religious grounds, they are not inherently hostile to the English. There is a sense of an enduring familial relationship that is explored in terms of Mary’s memories of England, Mrs Conant’s desire to win back her estranged father’s favour and Mr Conant’s recollections.

¹⁷ This ambivalence is also present in Child’s *The Lone Indian*. While Child may view English culture favourably, *The Lone Indian* reveals her condemnation of Anglo-male violence, which leads to the destruction of Powontonamo’s way of life and the deaths of his wife and child.

¹⁸ Karcher notes that Child was sent by her father, Convers Francis, to the frontier town of Norridgewock, Maine, in an attempt to discourage her from reading. It would be here that her newly married sister would tutor her in domestic activities. Karcher also argues that the death of her mother and the lack of her brother’s intellectual companionship would lead her to articulate resentment towards her father in *Hobomok* (Karcher, pp. ix-x).

Hence, Puritan-English relations in the novel embody the ambivalent affinity between nineteenth-century America and its former colonial master. This is indicated when news spreads of two approaching vessels: ‘The suspicion at once arose that they were Dunkirkers, and of course, enemies to the English. The alarm was given, and every man seized his loaded gun, and prepared to give them a hostile reception’ (*Hobomok*, p. 92). Similarly, during a conversation with Mr Oldham, Mr Collier remarks that he sometimes considers ‘the gulf atween us and Old England’ small enough to ‘leap over with a lope-staff’ (*Hobomok*, pp. 23-24). In the narrative England occupies the role of a paternal state and the seeds of future revolution are sown in religious tensions. However, it imprints aspects of its paternalism or colonialism upon the fledgling nation. If the Puritans can be considered to revolt against England by relocating to America, then Mary’s rebellion against New England Puritanism engenders the unrealised desires of that first revolution with respect to self-determination and personal liberty. Her narrative arc therefore symbolises the genesis of American identity and the establishment of national autonomy.

While Child details the connections between white supremacy and male dominance and revises the patriarchal script, her novel fails to resolve the issues of coloniality that beset the American historical novel and American literary history itself. These issues involve a paradox, namely that white Americans must secure their political freedoms with the annihilation of Native Americans and the enslavement of Africans, and that they achieve their cultural independence by depriving non-Americans of an independent identity through their multiform displacement.¹⁹ An attempt is made to resolve America’s racial and sexual

¹⁹ Child goes on to address the question of Indian Removal following the publication of *Hobomok*. She began a campaign against Indian dispossession in her 1829 book *The First Settlers of New England*. This would culminate forty years later in her *Appeal for the Indians* (1868), which was intended as a response to a report made by the Peace Commission, an organisation established by the U.S. government to deal with the warring Sioux. Karcher notes that Child continued to utilise assimilationist rhetoric (Karcher, p. xxxiv). In *A Romance of the Republic* (1867) she argues that America’s racial Others are obligated to integrate into a predominantly white culture.

paradoxes through interracial marriage, which symbolises a sense of solidarity between white women and non-whites. However, these paradoxes persist within the narrative in its treatment of Indians as racial inferiors.

Although Child criticises the social restrictions of patriarchy, she supports the American state as a political institution. It is significant that ‘the author’ refers to New England as his own ‘native land’ as it obfuscates the reality of Indian displacement through colonial settlement: ‘*I NEVER VIEW* the thriving villages of New England, which speak so forcibly to the heart, of happiness and prosperity, without feeling a glow of national pride, as I say, “this is my own, my native land”’ (*Hobomok*, p. 5). Child invokes the metaphor of the nation as a second Elysium in the following description, which further validates the presence of the American state: ‘God was here in his holy temple, and the whole earth kept silence before him. But the voice of prayer was soon to be heard in the desert’ (*Hobomok*, p. 5). In addition, she presents a romanticised portrait of the American wilderness when the Puritan chronicler states the scene of his arrival ‘owed nothing of its unadorned beauty to the power of man’ (*Hobomok*, p. 7). Regardless, its colonisation or ‘worlding’ is necessary as is indicated when he asserts that he is in a ‘new world, whose almost unlimited extent lay in the darkness of ignorance and desolation’ (*Hobomok*, p. 7). As a result, Child reproduces America’s central contradiction, revealing that it is simultaneously a divinely sanctioned nation and one that has established itself through colonial dispossession.

It should be noted that while this paradox functions within her novel, Child herself was not unaware of the issues that beset American exceptionalism. In *Appeal for the Indians* (1868) she states: ‘We Americans came upon the stage when the world had advanced so far in civilisation that our record ought to be much cleaner than it is’ (*Hobomok*, p. 221).

Although she espouses a conventional line, arguing that the Indians lack the civilisational sophistication of the whites, she nonetheless poses the question as to whether the American

state is truly civilised in light of the countless atrocities committed under its name: ‘But are we civilised? When I reflect upon what we *have* done, and *are* doing toward our red brethren, I cannot in conscience answer yes’ (*Hobomok*, p. 224). Moreover, she contends that Indians are not ‘the worst savages’ and that it is the duty of Americans ‘to arouse the nation to a sense of its guilt concerning the red men’ (*Hobomok*, pp. 224, 225). In this respect she mirrors Jackson in attacking an Anglo-American culture of violence, supported by the U.S. government.

Despite her progressive arguments, Child falls back upon an assimilationist discourse in the last section of her appeal. Karcher notes that while Child criticised the methods of the so-called Peace Commission she ultimately supported its objectives (*Hobomok*, p. 215). She was unable to embrace cultural pluralism given that she regarded blacks and Indians as ‘younger members of the same great human family, who need to be protected, instructed and encouraged, till they are capable of appreciating and sharing all our advantages’ (*Hobomok*, p. 215). Anticipating the later rhetoric of Jackson, she argues that the moral character of white civilisation can be improved through peaceable transactions with cultural and racial Others. For example, she notes that the Indians are ‘decidedly superior’ in some respects and supports her contention with reference to General Houston’s assertion that he never knew an Indian to break a promise or violate a treaty (*Hobomok*, p. 227). In addition she suggests that had the Indians been taught English, the racial antipathy between them and their white counterparts would no longer matter in the environs of higher civilisation: ‘Nothing would then have been left but the antipathy of race; and that, too, is always softened in the beams of higher civilisation’ (*Hobomok*, p. 219). Child again parallels Jackson in her association of peaceful assimilation with the moral amelioration of the nation. In light of this reading of her political views, it can be more readily understood as to why she ‘betrays’ her discourse of tolerance in the ending of *Hobomok*.

Child's anti-colonial, anti-patriarchal politics are compromised due to her recognition of the State as sacrosanct. For example, she portrays the rise of the nation in glorified terms by framing its progress in relation to its inauspicious beginnings in her description of Mr Johnson's decision to settle at Naumkeak/Salem:

Could his prophetic eye have foreseen that the wild and desolate peninsula where he first purchased, would become the proud and populous emporium of six flourishing states; could he have realised that the transfer of government from London to Massachusetts, was but the embryo of political powers, which were soon to be developed before the gaze of anxious and astonished Europe; how great would have been the reward of the high-minded Englishman (*Hobomok*, p. 100).

Thus, Child seeks to consolidate American identity by picturing the rapid ascent of the American nation. Furthermore, she anticipates its transformation into a world power and commercial hub through the use of hyperbole in this passage, which can be read as a commentary not only on American history but also on its future as seen from a nineteenth-century perspective. Child invites her reader to imagine the continued progress of the American state. This is suggested by the following: 'Who would have believed that in two hundred years from that dismal period, the matured, majestic and unrivalled beauty of England, would be nearly equalled by a daughter, blushing into life with all the impetuosity of youthful vigor' (*Hobomok*, p. 100). She once again highlights the familial conception of Anglo-U.S. relations whilst accurately predicting the global dominance of the American state in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is suggested by her analogy in which she compares the nation to a youthful daughter who has yet to reach her prime but who has nearly matched her mother in terms of 'majestic and unrivalled beauty'. In Child's description of American ascendancy, the nation adopts the best parts of English civilisation whilst introducing its own unique characteristics as an exceptional state that constitutes a break with legacies of oppression.

However, it is notable that Child elides the nation's previous policy of Indian Removal, instead focusing on its development and fight for independence. Moreover, she

stirs up a patriotic sentiment in asserting that the ‘poverty and gloom’ of the Puritan settlement masked the beginnings of an ‘American empire’. This would suggest that in order to establish itself as an autonomous region and conceal the epistemic damage it has suffered as a victim of colonialism, the American state must pursue imperialist policies at a domestic level. Conversely, if Child conflates patriarchy with oppression then it is arguable that she would also be critical of imperial power and its links to tyranny. This extends to her later condemnation of Indian dispossession in *The First Settlers of New-England* (1829). The use of the word empire may be argued to bear a melancholic trace of Indian removal. The paradox between these readings can be resolved if we place her treatment of national identity within its historical and literary contexts; although Child may express counter hegemonic sentiments with regards to race and gender relations vis a vis national identity, her conception of the nation bears the influence of inherited cultural dispositions and relies upon some of the tropes of the historical romance.²⁰ Like Jackson, she is against the idea of national expansion guided by a white male supremacist order but this does not preclude her from supporting or imagining the process under a different telos.

Spectres and Epistemic Violence

The use of spectres in *Hobomok* establishes a continuum between the Puritan and later American psyches. Child depicts the Puritan mindset as fundamentally haunted by the inassimilable elements it seeks to banish in her critique of the oppressive strictures of

²⁰ This dichotomy in the novel may also be read as an extension of the nation’s uncanny self-perception. For example, in Lacanian theory identity is generated through representation and reflection and the misrecognition of that representation as the self. Misrecognition of the mirror image or imago results in the creation of subjectivity which functions as a fiction that is artificial rather than natural. The artifice of this subjectivity is repressed by the individual. In Freudian terms the uncanny refers to the fusion between opposing elements and a form of perception that reveals the fragility of a distinction between two subjects. The uncanny therefore threatens the coherence of selfhood that depends on the misperception of its own continuity. The awareness of misrecognition is so threatening to the fiction of the self that it is repressed out of necessity. In this context Child can be argued to sustain a fiction of American democracy that relies upon the misrecognition of its own illegitimacy with respect to the inassimilable ethical ambiguities of frontier expansion. This arguably accounts for the elision of major discursive paradoxes within her work.

patriarchy. The very ghosts that plague it are analogous to the ones that haunt the social consciousness of her era with respect to race and gender. Child therefore employs spectrality as a conscious rhetorical strategy in her deconstruction of patriarchy. In writing from the perspective of those marginalised under Puritanism, she uses spectrality to challenge cultural orthodoxies. This strategy can be connected to the subversion that the plot presents with respect to national legitimacy, as conceived from a fully autonomous, epistemological domain associated with the Other that is unaffected by attempts to subordinate it to white understanding. Child parallels her use of the generic motif of the noble savage by drawing upon the trope of the Indian spectre that was employed by her predecessors, namely Philip Morin Freneau, Sarah Wentworth Morton, Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, Samuel Woodworth and Eastburn and Sands. However, her approach to spectralisation is distinguished by the fact that her characters are able to emerge from their phantasmal states. This is attributable to her anti-patriarchal discourse that compels her to focus on the perspective of the Other. However, as with certain aspects of her racial discourse, her erasure of Hobomok is determined by inherited generic and historical motivations, which constitute a second kind of spectral presence in her novel's progressive agenda. Furthermore, her decision to use spectral representations is a reaction to historical legacies of oppression. In this sense, spectrality in *Hobomok* is also melancholic as it represents Child's critical agency towards patriarchy in conjunction with race and gender relations.

Bergland argues that the struggle against ghostliness is central to *Hobomok* given that Mary, Hobomok and Charles are all mistaken for ghosts and are challenged to assert their corporeal identities. Moreover, Child explores the aligned cultural spectralisation of white women and Indian men by bringing them together in marriage (Bergland, p. 69). White women who are denied access to the American polity based on their gender are linked with those who are excluded due to their ethnicity, which is epitomised in Mary's marriage to

Hobomok. Although Bergland highlights certain moments in the text where Mary's corporeality is in doubt, I will argue that she is not so much characterised as a ghostly figure as she is associated with the fantastical in embodying an alternative to patriarchy.

Furthermore, if we are to take Bergland's line that she is transformed into a ghost of the community, this is complicated by the fact that her death is in fact part of an empowering symbolic rebirth. Her 'triumph' over Salem's patriarchal order occurs at the moment of her exile rather than with her return as it constitutes a significant actualisation of her independent will. Therefore, I will advance upon Bergland's argument by positing that Child draws a distinction between the spectral and other supernatural states.

In Bergland's view Mary is presented with a choice between death and a fate worse than death for the nineteenth-century reader in marrying Hobomok. According to Bergland, the literature of Child's historical era often explored this theme of a 'fate worse than death', that is union with an Indian, in gendered terms. Thus, while women were vulnerable to it within patriarchy men were not. It was also racialised in that only white women were its subjects. In *Hobomok* this theme goes beyond a euphemism for the rape of a white woman by a non-white other in that it is a signifier for interracial marriage. Although white men considered such marriages a shame worse than death this was not necessarily the case for white women. Bergland contends that marrying Hobomok spectralises Mary and that this is substantiated by the fact that her journey to his wigwam is associated with the underworld (Bergland, p. 76). However, such a depiction does not automatically lead to the idea that Mary has become a ghost. Rather, the grim atmosphere of the journey may be considered to appeal to the racial sensibilities of nineteenth-century readers. Thus, the marriage is presented as an unfortunate outcome of excessive patriarchal restrictions on female desire. While Mary exerts a haunting effect upon the mind of her father and the settlement with her disappearance, her spectralisation is at the same time for Child's readers linked to her rebirth. The death of

her former self, influenced by patriarchal legacies, simultaneously enables her to construct a new American identity. Consequently, she cannot merely be described as a character that enters and emerges from a state of spectrality. Instead, her self-determination is emphasised through her association with the otherworldly and mythological as opposed to a condition of non-corporeality. Hence, she is described as a witch, a figure that embodies feminine power. The pagan and feminine are conflated in this representation and elucidate Puritan anxieties over the link between women and witchcraft and the threat this presents to male authority. This is reinforced by the fact that her magic ritual represents the first stage of her revolution against patriarchal authority. She is presented as embodying an alternative way of being in relation to the patriarchal society of Salem.

As noted, following the preface the opening chapter of *Hobomok* is narrated from the perspective of a Puritan chronicler who is simultaneously attracted to and terrified by Mary. He enters the forest to pray due to a spiritual crisis over her physical attractiveness, which he describes as her ‘childish witchery’ (*Hobomok*, p. 12). Witchcraft and witchery are invested with sexual rather than spiritual connotations in this context and are used throughout the novel to describe her attractiveness for Charles and Hobomok. Bergland claims that the narrator is initially plunged into a state of terror when he perceives her as a ghost, stating that he has ‘heard of visitants from other worlds’, though his fear is soon allayed when ‘the rays of the full moon rest on her face’ (*Hobomok*, p. 13). However, there is a greater emphasis on Mary’s will in physical and psychological terms given that her representation at this point focuses on her otherworldliness as opposed to her ghostliness.

In this context of the feminine as ethereal, it is significant that Mary’s occult ritual occurs in the forest. The association of the wilderness with the unconscious desires and unresolved issues of the nation infers that her ritual is symbolic of the surfacing of libidinal impulses that have been repressed by Puritanism. In this sense the forest location as a natural

realm and the ritual itself are linked to convey Mary's inner desires. It is only in this wilderness setting that she can freely rebel against the social prohibitions of her community which function to repress her authentic self.²¹ The intensity of this repression is indicated by the fact that Mary defies not just Puritanism but Christianity itself in performing a pagan rite. The appearance of Hobomok personifies the liberation of these desires from Puritan society. This element of danger in her initial fantasy of rebellion terrifies her as she is confronted with its realisation in Hobomok who is non-white, non-Christian and thus not bound by the laws of Western civilisation. His presence in the circle demonstrates the success of the ritual and therefore Mary is confronted with the possibility of actualising the dream of her defiance. The ritual signifies her willingness to believe in the anti-patriarchal 'fates' of lore and legend and her abandonment of the fatalistic elements of her father's Puritanism which have affected those she loves. Instead of subjecting herself to the same fate as her mother or burying herself in the psychological prison of her father's house Mary later decides to marry Hobomok.

Child's novel represents good wives as ghostly creatures whose self-denial leads to their deaths. As a witch-like figure, Mary is distinguished from her mother who plays the role of a good wife. Mrs Conant personifies Puritan femininity and functions to make literal the metaphor of spectralisation. This is indicated when Mary tells Charles that 'the sicker she is, the more she seemeth like an angel' (*Hobomok*, p. 48). Her mother's smile is also associated with holiness. She is noted to have 'one of those smiles in which the glowing light of the

²¹ When read in the context of Alison Tracy's discussion of Salem's witchcraft epidemic, Mary's rebellion takes on a new meaning. Her transformation of the community at the end of the novel is initiated by the ritual and echoes the historical crisis for Puritan identity during the trials. When applied to the trials, Freud's notion of the uncanny as 'a return of the repressed' points to the instability of categories which inform the meaning and existence of Puritanism. The crisis threatened to expose the participation of the Puritans in sustaining their fabricated reality in which they were one side of an absolute dichotomy between good and evil. In psychological terms their misrecognition of their own involvement in this imagined world was fundamental for their identity: 'By calling into question the repressed factiousness of the basis of Puritan identity – the Puritans' complicity in the fictional coherence of their faith-based universe – these trials permanently undermined the coherence of the Puritan way of life'. Alison Tracy, 'Spectral Evidence and the Puritan Crisis of Subjectivity', in *Uncanny Afflictions*, ed. by Jeffrey Weinstock (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp. 18- 40 (p. 32). Consequently, it is not coincidental that Mary's quest to fashion a new identity and redefine her community should begin with witchcraft.

ethereal inhabitant seemed gleaming through its pale and broken tenement' (*Hobomok*, p. 75). However, there is a commonality between Mary's embodiment of a world beyond the strictures of Puritanism and her mother's ghostliness as both are produced through patriarchal oppression and the denial of female autonomy. Where Mary's association with the supernatural is linked to her defiance of Salem's patriarchal order, her mother's ghostly state signifies its injustices as manifested in physical deterioration.

Mrs Conant shares her 'apotheosis' with her friend Arabella Johnson who is similarly self-sacrificing. The deaths of both women constitute the fate that awaits dutiful Puritan wives: 'There, in that miserable room, lay the descendants of two noble houses. Both alike victims to what has always been the source of women's greatest misery – love – deep and unwearied love' (*Hobomok*, p. 111). The decline of these women indicates the function of feminine spectrality as a signifier for the return of the repressed within the Puritan psyche. The deterioration of Mrs Conant brings her ever closer to a ghostly state, which is attributable to New England's harsh climate and social regulations. As noted, within marriage she denies her own desires and aspirations and therefore engages in self-effacement. However, this generates critical agency within the novel as she becomes a haunting figure that serves as a critique of Puritan patriarchy. The demands required by the patriarchal codes of the Puritan ideology cannot be assimilated by the individual and by implication the Puritan consciousness. By extension, *Hobomok* resurrects the spectres of the past within the American consciousness. England symbolises the source of Puritan trauma that survives as a memory trace within the national psyche in the value it places on independence. Hence, Child's association of oppression with this historical trauma, concerning gender relations in the context of a pre-American environment, serves to rewrite the script of American identity whilst retaining some of its historically mediated aspects. Patriarchal oppression, whether in the seventeenth or nineteenth centuries, is shown to be both undesirable and unsustainable.

Hobomok is compared to a spectre when only the tone of his voice convinces Mary that he is 'real flesh and blood' (*Hobomok*, p. 14). Similarly, in recounting his appearance in the forest circle to Sally Oldham, Mary states that she 'thought at first, it must be his ghost' (*Hobomok*, p. 20). Charles Brown subsequently appears and offers to escort Mary home. His presence in the wilderness is also depicted in mysterious and apparitional terms. Bergland argues that he is spectralised and that his horror and frustration in trying to emerge from his ghostliness, as someone presumed dead, constitutes one of the unique subplots of the novel. Bergland contends that Mary, Charles and Hobomok have a precarious understanding of their own corporeality and identities and thus are mistaken for ghosts. However, at the end of the novel Mary brings about a new set of conditions in which her body and will are paramount. Bergland concludes: 'Her European husband will resign himself to living at her American hearthside, though he muses that his "existence [is] [...] as sad as those dull clouds"'. Her Indian husband, Hobomok, will leave their American son behind him, and vanish irrevocably' (Bergland, p. 72). Bergland's acknowledgement of Mary's reassertion of her physical presence as opposed to spiritual witchery can be extended to demonstrate that her portrayal is invested more so in the fantastic than in the strictly ghostly. As discussed, Mary's association with the otherworldly is directed towards the realisation of feminine autonomy. By contrast Charles is deprived of his male authority in becoming a ghostly figure whilst Hobomok's ultimate spectralisation serves to elide him from the picture and nation. The presence of these characters in the wilderness during the ritual scene is significant in that they all constitute elements that the Puritan psyche seeks to banish. Charles embodies a religious ideology which is unacceptable to the Puritan leaders, Hobomok is a racial Other and Mary is a woman who wishes to assert herself. The fact that this entire scene is witnessed from the perspective of the Puritan ancestor suggests the idea that it is a symbolic delineation of the Puritan unconscious, with its array of fears and repressed elements.

In Bergland's view, the text inflicts all of its spectral fates upon Charles (Bergland, p. 80). Moreover, he is marginalised in the narrative in being exiled, shipwrecked, enslaved and presumed dead. Even upon his return he is initially treated as a phantom by Hobomok: 'he hastily retreated into the thicket, casting back a fearful glance on what he supposed to be the ghost of his rival' (*Hobomok*, p. 138).²² Their encounter involves a prolonged exploration of ghostliness. While Cooper and Jackson characterise Indians as spectral figures, Child decides to have a white man, Charles appear to Hobomok as a spectre and figment of his imagination, in other words as an internalised Other. Furthermore, Hobomok later struggles to resolve himself to his self-imposed exile with the return of Charles: 'It recks not now what was the mighty struggle in the mind of that dark man' (*Hobomok*, p. 139). This narrative move can again be linked to Child's desire to inhabit perspectives outside the discourse of white male supremacy in accordance with her logic of tolerance. By providing a mirror image of the psychological processes involved in spectralisation, she confronts the nineteenth-century white male psyche with its tendency to render non-whites as ethereal Others. This rhetorical strategy is foregrounded when Charles is described as an 'intruder' (*Hobomok*, p. 138). Additionally, the unarticulated outcome of this manoeuvre is to call into question the nature of U.S. expansion and the validity of a state founded upon the dispossession of racial Others.

In a comparable fashion to Mary's symbolic death, Charles's absence from the text signifies his demise and his return as a phantom in conjunction with his re-materialisation indicates that he has been purged of patriarchal legacies. In this sense, his calamitous colonial misadventure is a reproof of his aspiration to exploit overseas territories for his own benefit and that of Mary. It is only by being chastened and emerging from the shadow of spectrality that he can partake in the formation of an American destiny with Mary.

²² The idea of inhabiting the perspective of the Other is exemplified in this encounter. Rather than Hobomok being characterised as a spectre it is a white Englishman, Charles, who is perceived as a ghost by the Indian.

Framed in these terms, the meeting between Hobomok and Charles in the wilderness symbolically re-enacts the encounter between the savage and civilised in the context of the expanding state. When Hobomok is informed by Charles that he is not a ghost, he experiences a sense of profound dread: ‘After repeated assurances, the Indian timidly approached – and the certainty that Brown was indeed alive, was more dreadful to him than all the ghosts that could have been summoned from another world’ (*Hobomok*, p. 138). He realises that with the reappearance of Charles he must relinquish his position as husband and disappear into the wilderness. The narrative here implies that Charles, as a white man, has a rightful claim to Mary. Hobomok’s purpose has been served in helping Mary to create a new, distinctly American identity. Moreover, he has provided her the means to liberate herself from the psychological trauma that plagues the Puritan mindset. Thus, he must be written out of the text and the landscape for the nation’s establishment and ‘future’ to take place.

Child critically engages with the dominant cultural discourses of her era. This is evident in the power that is assigned to Mary and her symbolic associations with the ethereal in terms of witchery, mythical sylph-like figures and faeries. Child uses the otherworldly in this case to elucidate an alternative non-patriarchal vision of society. Similarly, Hobomok’s perception of Charles as a ghost provides us with a symbolic though fleeting interpretation of America as seen from an Indian perspective. However, although she subverts the idea of national legitimacy, she never explicitly questions it, as doing so would fundamentally undermine her conception of American identity. *Hobomok*’s repression of this possibility points to its uncanny dimension. In addition, spectrality is employed in a conscious manner to challenge patriarchal conceptions. However, inherited dispositions pertaining to race and national expansion remain embedded in its usage. This is indicated by Hobomok’s virtual spectralisation through retreat at the end of the text. Although Child’s narrative wants to identify with the Indian it nonetheless erases his presence to assert the hegemony of the State,

just as Charles asserts his authority at the end of the novel. Furthermore, the author's use of spectralisation plays into the vanishing Indian trope that is so readily apparent in Cooper's work. Essentially, in this she rehearses the same repressive strategy as a way of validating the culture and society of which she is a part.

Representations of Indians and the Collective Memory

A conflation between the replication of traditional viewpoints and radical anti-patriarchal politics is most clearly identifiable in Child's representation of Hobomok and Indians figures more broadly. She uses them to espouse an alternative cultural sphere to patriarchy in which she can detail the genesis of a new American identity. However, she also depicts them as savages and closes down the idea of Indian resistance. As noted, while Child articulates the notion of state legitimacy, the dynamics of her plot yield an undefined space beyond its colonial logic. It will be useful next to highlight where her portrait of Indian characters is comparable and dissimilar to the approaches of Jackson and Cooper, as this will provide a further insight into the ways in which Child reinforces and departs from the historically mediated values of her time in her construction of national identity. In addition, by comparing these texts the significance of genre can be discerned as a mediatory form for historical dispositions, with respect to the development of national identity via the collective memory.

Mary's marriage to Hobomok enables Child to symbolically act out her contentions with patriarchy whilst challenging the conception of a white culture defined by the subordinate status of non-white, non-Christian people. In this context, the nature of the marriage is related to her critique of patriarchy. Child establishes a link between Indians and women as oppressed classes under white male supremacy. This is evident with respect to Hobomok's behaviour which differs according to whether he is in the presence of Mr Conant or his wife and daughter: 'Hobomok seldom spoke in Mr Conant's presence, save in reply to

his questions [...] with Mary and her mother, he felt no such restraint and there he was all eloquence' (*Hobomok*, p. 85). Hobomok is also contrasted with Mr Graves in terms of courtship. Mr Graves is described as 'obtrusively officious' towards Sally Oldham whereas Hobomok is noted to gaze upon Mary with an 'expression of reverence' (*Hobomok*, p. 17).²³ He is consequently implied to embody an alternative set of gender relations to those prescribed by patriarchal men such as Mr Graves.

Like Alessandro in Jackson's novel, to be looked at in my next chapter, Hobomok personifies an autonomous tribal existence that Mary utilises to create a new sense of American identity. The Indian constitutes a symbolic native element in the American landscape in representing a society that is primarily distinct from European cultural legacies. This is indicated in the following description of Hobomok: 'Hobomok, whose language was brief, figurative, and poetic, and whose nature was unwarped by the artifices of civilised life, was far preferable to them' (*Hobomok*, p. 129). Therefore, it is fitting that by marrying him, Mary eventually closes the divide between Mr Conant and Charles, transforms her Puritan community and lives in the settlement as a dissident. Hobomok has a unifying function in the novel related to his role in representing the autonomous space of Indian culture, which provides the catalyst to end the socio-cultural influence of patriarchal trauma originating from England. This is indicated when Mr Conant temporarily departs from his Puritanical line to express his fondness for Hobomok's 'heathenish stories': "'It's little I mind his heathenish stories'" rejoined her husband; "but I have sat by the hour together, and gazed on his well fared face, till the tears have come into mine eyes, that the Lord should have raised us up so

²³ Child's conception of Indian culture as offering contrasting gender relations to those of patriarchy is paralleled in her appeal. In it she states that the 'Indian character [...] contrasts favourably with the frequent practices of white nations' pertaining to the treatment of women (*Hobomok*, p. 229). She further elaborates that 'they never, not even in their wildest moments of revenge, offend the modesty of female captives' and contrasts this with the 'disgusting details of towns and cities sacked by Christian nations' and the 'brutal treatment' of Indian women by the 'United States soldiers, agents, gold-diggers, fur-traders, and other lawless adventurers' (*Hobomok*, p. 229).

good a friend among the savages” (*Hobomok*, p. 98). Additionally, Child inverts imagery of light and darkness and its association with savage and civilised categories to present Hobomok as a vessel for a uniquely American destiny. This is evident in the contrasts drawn between him and Mr Conant during the hunting trip:

Hobomok stood among his brethren, gracefully leaning on his bow, and his figure might well have been mistaken for the fabled deity of the chase. The wild, fitful light shone full upon the unmoved countenance of the savage, and streamed back unbroken upon the rigid features of the Calvinist, rendered even more dark in their expression by the beaver cap which deeply shaded his care-worn brow (*Hobomok*, pp. 88-89).

Here it is the civilised Puritan whose patriarchal attitudes and religious fundamentalism encapsulate the darkness, while Hobomok signifies the light of the American future that will emerge from the shadows cast by the Old World. In this respect, the Indian figure is associated with the spectre of coloniality given that he constitutes a means by which to banish it. Even in its symbolic figuration of national identity regarding a marriage between Indian and white cultures, Child’s narrative may be said to contain memory traces of English colonialism that influence American national affiliation. This is exemplified in Mr Conant, who, in embodying the negative legacies of the Old World, drives Mary to pursue an alternative national vision.

Like Jackson, Child holds up the noble Indian as a ‘natural’ moral compass for Americans. For example, Charles states that ‘I have a story to tell of that savage, which might make the best of us blush at our inferiority, Christians as we are, but I cannot tell it now’ (*Hobomok*, p. 145). In both *Hobomok* and *Ramona* Indian nobility, feminine influence and tolerance improve the moral standing of Americans and are inherent aspects of national identity. However, as we will see Jackson uses these qualities to advance a colonial reform discourse, whereas Child’s attentions are invested in producing a proto-feminist conception of American subjectivity that undermines the patriarchal hegemony of her era.

Child reflects the narrow racial views of her time regarding the possibility of Indian resistance in the midst of a white future. She utilises the imagery of light and darkness to contrast resistant Indians such as Corbitant with the protagonists in terms of the dichotomy between the savage and civilised. Unfriendly, non-idealised Indians are sketched in threatening, primitive terms: ‘This speech was fiercely answered by a dark, lowering looking savage, who stood among the crowd’ (*Hobomok*, p. 17). As will become clearer in Chapter Four, Child parallels Jackson in casting a negative view on the subject of Indian resistance. For example, Corbitant’s speech in the wigwam of Sagamore John has a powerful effect on his audience. The sons of the elderly chieftain gaze upon him ‘till the fire flashed from their young eyes, and their knives were half drawn from the belt’ (*Hobomok*, p. 31). Hobomok admires his rival’s eloquence and melancholically pauses as if to validate his perspective on the injustices of the English before re-asserting his allegiance to them. There is also a reference to Sagamore John’s wife shaking her head mournfully. We are therefore invited to reject Corbitant’s message of resistance.

Additionally, Corbitant is described as a ‘stubborn enemy to the Europeans’, who, possessed of a ‘mind more penetrating and a temper more implacable than most of his brethren’, is able to foresee the ‘destruction of his countrymen’ (*Hobomok*, p. 30). He denounces Hobomok for his assistance to the English and his love for Mary. Nonetheless, Child emphasises Corbitant’s intuitive faculties in predicting his people’s decline and thus displays a comprehension, albeit limited, of the hostile Indian perspective.²⁴ Spectrality and its associations with an autonomous tribal locale in the gothic wilderness tie in with this theme of prophesised doom, in that both point to a distancing of the Indian within the temporal and spatial parameters of the American psyche. If there is to be an active form of

²⁴ In addition he is also placed on a continuum of Indian characters who prophesise the downfall of their race or emphasise the inevitability of American expansion, namely Chingachgook, Magua and Tamenund in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Wenonga in *Nick of the Woods* and as will be later seen, Alessandro in *Ramona* and Mocmohoc in *The Confidence-Man*.

Indian resistance, it is safely located away from the immediate place and history of civilisation. The Indian's self-proclaimed demise points to the humanitarian disaster of frontier colonisation and therefore needs to be invoked in the same way that spectrality exerts a continuously haunting effect, which signifies that which it is designed to obscure in these novels, namely the dispossession and massacring of Indians. Corbitant exerts a momentary haunting effect on the novel as he represents the inassimilable spectre of this resistance which challenges the State's legitimacy, despite the fact that this is contained through the motif of prophecy. For example, Mr Hopkins states that 'there will be no peace in the land while Corbitant is therein' and that the 'sachem is a hot-headed fellow, and implacable withal' (*Hobomok*, p. 52). However, Corbitant's discourse is repressed as he is a background character whose main function is to antagonise Hobomok. Ultimately, Indians such as Hobomok are depicted as sympathetic characters because of their passivity in the face of civilisational expansion.

Child utilises the same rhetorical strategy employed by Jackson in 'whitening' Hobomok to make him a more engaging character for her white audience. His exceptional status among the Indians is foregrounded through Corbitant's denunciations. In this respect, he is comparable to Alessandro in *Ramona* who is alienated from his tribe due to his European education and affiliations with the Californios. Hobomok is also differentiated from his tribe when Mrs Johnson refers to him as a 'clever Indian [...] that has been of great use to our Plymouth brethren' (*Hobomok*, p. 98). Similarly, he is compared to an Englishman by Sally. He may also be considered to parallel Uncas who occupies a similar racial status in *The Last of the Mohicans*. For example, Hawkeye states that Uncas is 'as impatient as a man in the settlements'.²⁵ By comparing their Indian protagonists to white people Child, Jackson and Cooper explore the topic of interracial marriage from a less threatening vantage point.

²⁵ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 210.

Therefore, the issue of miscegenation is presented in terms that are more acceptable for their audiences, as the heroines of their novels fall in love with Indians that are depicted as superior members of their race who display qualities which associate them with the white community. The use of this device by Child and Jackson is attributable to the incorporative process at work in their novels. If their female characters personify Anglo-America, they can then be said to draw upon Indian culture through marriage to distinguish American identity. The Other as a component of American identity is rendered acceptable within the boundaries of the national psyche as it is filtered through this conceit of marriage in which the Indian husband is almost elevated to the status of a white man. Additionally, the appropriation of the Other in these terms signifies another instance of projection whereby it is rationalised as an extension of American identity, even though its foreign status functions to differentiate the nation from its European predecessors.

As will be seen with Alessandro, the threat of racial reversion looms over Hobomok's noble savage status. In this respect, he may also be likened to Uncas and Chingachgook. For instance, while his noble savagery is emphasised when he contemplates the serenity of the forest, he is nonetheless forced into 'savage warfare' by Corbitant who has apprehended him. Hobomok emerges as the victor in the fight and is about to slay his opponent when he is interrupted by the sound of voices. Despite his higher qualities he remains a barbarian, a fact which is reinforced when he is described as pursuing his way homeward, 'as fleetly as some wild animal of the forest' (*Hobomok*, p. 33). Similarly, when he encounters Charles in the forest towards the end of the novel he entertains the idea of murdering Mary's original intended: 'The Indian gazed upon his rival, as he stood leaning his aching head against a tree; and once and again he indulged in the design of taking his life' (*Hobomok*, p. 139). Hobomok is noted to fix 'his eyes upon him with such a strange mixture of sorrow and fierceness, that Brown laid his hand upon his rifle, half fearful his intentions were evil' (*Hobomok*, pp. 138-

139). The reference to his sorrow and fierceness also hints at the injustice of Indian removal from the point of view of the non-white Other. This exemplifies Khanna's argument concerning the embedding of phantasmal secrets in language. Consequently, even though its racial discourse is influenced by societal assumptions, we can again identify how *Hobomok* conceives of a perspective outside the colonial rhetoric of the literary period by intermittently seeking to inhabit the role of the Other.

Nonetheless, Child's text contends that the savage condition of the Indian can be improved through his acculturation in white society. It describes how the 'poor unlettered Indians' are left in awe by the ability of the Puritans to make the buffalo move at their command. Like Jackson Child advocates for the peaceful expansion of the American state: 'That the various tribes did not rise in their savage majesty, and crush the daring few who had intruded upon their possessions, is indeed a wonderful exemplification of the superiority of intellect over mere brutal force' (*Hobomok*, p. 29). Child establishes the basis for her assimilationist ending in rationalising the implied epistemic violence of this process through the suggestion that Indians will be 'raised up' with their acculturation. Thus, she elides the paradox between her discourse of non-violence and the psychological violations that are intrinsic to assimilation, which relates to the repression of the crisis of identity that is yielded by the acknowledgement of state illegitimacy in the context of Indian expropriation. This is reinforced when Hobomok's 'natural fierceness' is tempered by his sojourn among the residents of Plymouth: 'His long residence with the white inhabitants of Plymouth had changed his natural fierceness of manner into haughtier, dignified reserve; and even that seemed softened as his dark, expressive eye rested on Conant's daughter' (*Hobomok*, p. 36). The narrative alludes to Mary's pacifying, feminine influence over Hobomok. In addition, he is noted to emulate the 'kind attentions of the white man' due to his affection for her (*Hobomok*, p. 84). Mary's effect on Hobomok is therefore comparable to Uncas's tutelage

under Cora and Alessandro's decision to abandon tribal affiliations for Ramona. The domestic influence of the woman is associated with the civilising effort in all three cases.

Child utilises Indian culture to rhetorically substantiate her non-androcentric vision of national identity and her condemnation of patriarchy. *Hobomok* offers a different future and the means by which to create a distinctly American national character. Yet Child continues to replicate the racialist viewpoints of her historical context and employ historical romance generic tropes that emphasise Indian inferiority. This dichotomy, which characterises *Hobomok*'s Indian representations, underscores the narrative's resolution in the re-establishment of racial boundaries and the final conception of the nation, whereby *Hobomok* is written out once his function has been performed as its progenitor. However, in attempting to construct an alternate epistemological domain to that of patriarchy, Child views the State from a non-white perspective. If the author uses Puritan values of individuality and self-determination to reject intolerance, then it is possible to take her own logic of tolerance, as it pertains to oppression, to its ultimate conclusion as a rejection of the legitimacy of the State itself along with its racial basis. Although she cannot and does not articulate this idea, her text nonetheless gestures towards it as an implicit possibility. In this way, *Hobomok* anticipates though never directly explores what Melville will later accomplish in *The Confidence-Man*, a deafeningly absolute exposure of the duplicity informing the repressions and rationalisations of the American psyche. This may be argued to partially underscore the omission of Child's novel from the literary canon on the basis that it did not cohere with the cultural mythology that was favoured by the nation's nineteenth-century elites and expressed by writers like Cooper. *Hobomok*, in unravelling the conceits of Puritanism, threatens to confront the American psyche with the paradoxes of its own identity. Child speaks back to the State from the position of the racial Other through her dichotomous use of spectrality and the alignment between women and Indians. In this sense, her novel can also be regarded to embody the

phantoms of colonial dispossession of natives in conjunction with those of inherited ideologies and traumatic English colonialism.

Interracial Marriage, Assimilation and The Creation of a New American Identity

This section of the chapter will examine how Child resurrects hegemonic racial perspectives in the novel's conclusion and how this compromises her message of tolerance, which in turn exerts a melancholic effect. In this regard, Child's text mirrors the psychological dynamics of the Puritan mythology when considered through Abraham's psychoanalytical interpretation of fantasisation and myth, as her novel demonstrates a desire to become the Other whilst censoring this. Furthermore, this can be read as a reference point for a schism within its identity politics that leads to uncanniness. The marriage between Hobomok and Mary is significant for this discussion and is crucial to Child's formulation of American selfhood. As will be seen, it is possible to unify the contrasting postcolonial psychoanalytic insights about the racial, spectral and socio-religious narrative strands in the context of interracial marriage and the subsequent restoration of racial boundaries. Although there is a clash between the conservative and progressive aspects of Child's narrative, I contend that it is ultimately the spectre of the Other's perspective which triumphs and which is in part confirmed in the omission of her narrative from the national literary corpus.

For Bergland, Mary's interracial marriage and a subsequent marriage to Charles fundamentally undermine the patriarchal and racially hierarchical societies of seventeenth and nineteenth-century America (Bergland, p. 75). Child associates marriage with death when a bereft Mary proposes to Hobomok while standing on her mother's grave. Finding her there with 'her head on the cold sod' he states that 'it's a cold night for Mary to be on the graves' (*Hobomok*, p. 121). She replies that 'I shall soon be in my own grave' before declaring that she will be his wife if he will promise to love her (*Hobomok*, p. 121). In this context, the

marriage represents a renunciation of her life within white civilisation. She experiences social death in that by joining the natives she is distanced from her own people. Bergland contends that her exile isolates her from her community in a more profound way than death. However, by experiencing social death and marrying Hobomok Mary can be reborn as an ‘American’, which liberates her from Salem’s patriarchal structure and eventually enables her to transform it (Bergland, pp. 75, 82). Therefore, Hobomok’s function is to enable Mary to realise her autonomy. By incorporating aspects of Indian culture as distinguishing elements, Mary’s path constitutes the symbolic precursor to the nation’s independent identity.

Tawil’s contention that their marriage is realised by the redirection of Mary’s natural desire complements Bergland’s argument. Taken together we can see how Child articulates her vision of national identity while she eventually restores racial and religious parameters. Tawil considers Mary’s belief in destiny to constitute a denial of female will, given that she is compelled by ‘the stupifying influence of an ill directed belief in the decrees of heaven’ (*Hobomok*, p. 122) to act in accordance with the outcome predicted by the magic ritual (Tawil, pp. 110-111). Her decision to become Hobomok’s wife is hence attributable to her superstition and her father’s actions, which lead to the exile and supposed death of Charles. However, the theme of destiny can be more accurately described as a narrative ploy on Child’s part to ensure her heroine to be a sympathetic character for nineteenth-century audiences opposed to the idea of her choosing to marry an Indian. The figurative language of the text also reflects the narrative necessity to give external rationales for Mary’s transgression. For example, at this time she is described in terms of her ‘thwarted inclinations’ and the diminution of her natural ‘disposition’ (*Hobomok*, pp. 46-47). On one hand then the narrative implies that she could never truly wish for such a union as only a significant obstacle could divert her natural desire and lead her to fall in love with an Indian. Marriage to Hobomok represents for Mary the direct outcome of her lack of agency within the patriarchal

society of Salem. This contributes to our understanding of her fantasy of the union as one determined by fate. Nonetheless, this does not infer that Mary lacks agency within herself as demonstrated when she asserts her will by abandoning Salem.

Hobomok himself arguably constitutes the endpoint in a chain of negative events that compel Mary to re-invent herself as an American such that she can escape the suffocating, social environs of Salem. Consequently, her perception of Hobomok and the entire marriage proceedings are characterised by melancholia owing to these circumstances. In this light, Child draws upon the trope of the Indian as a psychic repository for the dilemmas facing the white community, which is reinforced when Hobomok offers Mary Charles's pipe at the wedding, thereby reviving the memory of the circumstances of her exile: 'After they had all gone, Hobomok went out and buried Brown's beautiful present in the earth' (*Hobomok*, p. 125). The path of her desire is altered towards the greater purpose of creating her own American identity through the adoption of Indian elements and the retention of white subjectivity. For example, when Hobomok buries the pipe he figuratively buries Mary's former life so that she can begin anew.

Significantly, there is an absence of reciprocal affection on her part for her new husband. Her relationship to Hobomok is based on the realisation of female choice as opposed to love. The memory of Charles haunts her decision to marry Hobomok and it is for her former suitor that she feels any romantic attachment. While Hobomok wears 'an expression of gladness' Mary is 'pale and motionless' (*Hobomok*, p. 123). Her appearance is compared to that of a 'being from another world' though it is offset by her 'wild, frenzied look' which reveals too much of 'human wretchedness' (*Hobomok*, p. 123). Despite its radical possibilities, *Hobomok* ultimately reaffirms racially homogenous couplings by elucidating the cultural work entailed in suppressing a white woman's desire for a white man.

This is evident given that the narrative marks the apparent loss of Mary's will and desire when she offers to marry Hobomok. She is overwhelmed by a 'bewilderment of despair that almost amounted to insanity' and suffers a 'partial derangement of her faculties' in which 'she could not even think, and scarcely [knew] what she did' (*Hobomok*, pp. 120, 119). Child appears to occupy a close position to Cooper concerning interracial marriage as she initially characterises it in negative terms. For example, like Cooper's male characters reacting to Magua, Charles is horrified by the idea that Mary is wedded to Hobomok: 'Disappointed love, a sense of degradation, perhaps something of resentment, were all mingled in a dreadful chaos of agony, within the mind of the unfortunate young man' (*Hobomok*, p. 139). Mr Conant is also appalled upon learning that Mary has married Hobomok: 'but to have her lie in the bosom of a savage, and mingle her prayers with a heathen, who knoweth not God, is hard for a father's heart to endure' (*Hobomok*, p. 133). Mary's act is chiefly offensive to the patriarchal mindset. However, Mr Conant's values are overridden at the end of the narrative given that he comes to love Charles Hobomok as his own grandson. Nonetheless, Mary's marriage to Hobomok is annulled on the return of Charles senior, thereby inadvertently validating his racial perspectives.

Additionally, the narrative notes that Mr Conant views Charles Hobomok as a 'peculiar favourite' partly due to a sense of his own 'blame' mixed with sentiments of compassion and affection (*Hobomok*, pp. 149-150). The reference to blame invokes anxieties pertaining to miscegenation. Consequently, the guilt underscoring Mr Conant's affection is informed by a racist subtext. Child describes how Mary herself feels a lingering sense of shame about the marriage: 'Beside this, she knew that her own nation looked upon her as lost and degraded; and what was far worse, her own heart echoed back the charge' (*Hobomok*, p. 135). While Charles Hobomok is not written out of the text, unlike Ruth Heathcote's child in Cooper's *The Wept of Wish-ton Wish* (1829), he is transformed into a white American. Child

contains the provocative aspects of her narrative with the restoration of traditional boundaries. However, in a similar way to *Ramona*, the possibility of an undefined, autonomous space outside the logic of American colonialism, produced by her discourse of tolerance and affinity, can be said to exist as an element that haunts the conclusion. This is discernible in the oblique reference to Indian displacement, Mary's utilisation of Hobomok's tribal existence to create a new independent American identity and Hobomok's haunting effect upon the narrative as the spiritual father of the U.S. As will be evident in Jackson's text, Child through the Native American preserves the idea of a competing cultural framework as an abstraction that can be utilised to distinguish national identity.

While Mary develops an affectionate attachment to Hobomok, who proves a solicitous husband and father, there is no true romantic interest as she is driven to convince herself that she has grown in love with him: 'I speak truly when I say that every day I live with that kind, noble-hearted creature, the better I love him' (*Hobomok*, p. 137). Rather she experiences pleasure from his idolisation of her that compels him to suffer insults and social isolation for her sake, which is further reinforced when the narrator notes that 'she remembered the idolatry he had always paid her' (*Hobomok*, p. 121). This differs from the more authentic love portrayed by Jackson between Ramona and Alessandro. Mary primarily uses Hobomok to purge patriarchal legacies and she is able to forget about him once she marries Charles. She inverts her objectification in the Puritan community into a form of power over Hobomok, who is depicted as a dutiful yet racially subordinate husband. In a comparable manner to Ramona's escape from the Señora's household, she is able to live out the fantasies that have been repressed within her Puritan environment. This is first suggested when Child notes that 'a woman's heart loves the flattery of devoted attention, let it come from what source it may' (*Hobomok*, p. 84). Additionally, the narrator comments that 'female penetration knew the plant, though thriving in so wild a soil; and female vanity sinfully

indulged its growth' (*Hobomok*, p. 85). The quasi-religious and erotic are conflated in this idolatry that elevates Mary to the status of a goddess. This is substantiated by the fact that Hobomok displays a 'tender reverence' towards her whilst responding to her changing expressions 'till her very looks were a law' (*Hobomok*, p. 135).

Here we see Child inadvertently replicate the power structures of the patriarchal society she criticises through her racial values. Furthermore, she also reproduces the hierarchical distinctions between races that inhere in colonialism in the idealisation of a white woman by the colonised. Thus, her treatment of Mary and Hobomok's relationship is influenced by a nineteenth-century cultural environment in which racial perceptions are intermixed with the politics of colonialism. This in turn creates a dissonance within her anti-patriarchal message, which advocates for gender equality and its racial variant, which is substantiated with the association it draws between white women and Indians as oppressed groups. Therefore, by defining American identity through a selective focus on principles such as freedom and beginning anew, Child re-enacts the paradox within the narrative of American exceptionalism, whereby the nation defines itself in contradistinction to oppressive regimes in Europe despite its implementation of colonial policies at a domestic level.

Mary's love for Hobomok is ultimately surface deep and this is apparent when Hobomok contemplates killing Charles and decides against it: 'Mary loves him better than she does me; for even now she prays for him in her sleep. The sacrifice must be made to her' (*Hobomok*, p. 139). The last line is significant as he chooses to sacrifice himself to Mary who embodies the future American state, which depends upon the disappearance of the Indian for its legitimisation. Charles attempts to persuade his rival to remain with Mary but he is ultimately unsuccessful as Hobomok is resolved to be 'buried among strangers' (*Hobomok*, p. 140). It is important that Child depicts Hobomok's decision to vanish as a choice. However, it is not an easy one. While Cooper's Indians accept their own disappearance as a natural

process, Hobomok experiences a personal conflict over his decision. Charles's reappearance is 'more dreadful to him than all the ghosts that could have been summoned from another world' (*Hobomok*, p. 138). He also has difficulty gathering the mental resolve to follow through on his decision: 'For a long time, however it seemed doubtful whether he could collect sufficient fortitude to fulfil his resolution' (*Hobomok*, p. 139). Child anticipates Jackson's later focus on the contrived aspects of the narrative of Indian disappearance and thus suggests an independent non-white perspective on the expansion of the State. Significantly, Hobomok's exile is not represented in a positive light as he hopes that he will be struck down by Corbitant's arrow. When this does not transpire he is resigned 'for a fate that had more of wretchedness' (*Hobomok*, p. 140).

Child subtly alludes to the historical reality of Indian displacement although she does not explore it, instead choosing to focus on Mary's return to Salem. Charles's reappearance reinforces the theme of imposed exile. As a white man he occupies an implicitly patriarchal position in relation to Hobomok and his resumed presence as Mary's suitor therefore necessitates Hobomok's withdrawal. This symbolically infers an ethno-centric version of the future American state. Child's articulation of nineteenth-century racial attitudes drives her narrative to convey a colonial discourse, which shares an underlying pattern with the patriarchal politics it opposes and which can be identified in its resurgent hierarchical conception of race relations. With the influence of these historical traces, Child's text demonstrates a melancholic sense of its own critical agency directed at patriarchy and established racial divisions.

However, Charles does not go out of this way to banish Hobomok and marry Mary. He states 'I will return from whence I came, and bear my sorrows as I may, Let Mary never know that I am alive. Love her, and be happy' (*Hobomok*, p. 140). Moreover, he pursues Hobomok through the forest as he wishes to 'restore the happiness he had so nobly

sacrificed'. The narrative thus absolves itself of responsibility for its implication in the rhetoric of Indian removal. By playing out these events in such a way in the distant past, Child attempts to legitimate the founding of the State. Furthermore, Hobomok is allowed to determine the conditions of Charles's existence and those informing his own destiny. His choices and imaginative vision are shown to bring about the novel's outcome and its ideal of America. The power relations in this section indirectly allude to the space independent of American/Puritan power, which constitutes the latent content in Child's conception of American identity. The text concludes by implying that Hobomok is a founder and 'progenitor' of the American nation: His faithful services to the 'Yengees' are still remembered with gratitude and the tender slip which he protected has since become 'a mighty tree, and the nations of the earth seek refuge beneath its branches' (*Hobomok*, p. 150). He is likened to a guardian of Child's national vision as indicated by the fact that he protects the 'tender slip' or nation. The words 'tender slip' also cast the nation in feminine terms and imply an association between it and Mary who in this context is suggested as its maternal figure. This feminine representation of America is reinforced by its characterisation as a maternal state, which is highlighted by the reference to nations that 'seek refuge under its branches'. Child reigns in the potential of her narrative to challenge American supremacy with this conclusion, where Hobomok is incorporated into national identity through having a validating and distinguishing function. In addition, he brings the nation into being by sacrificing himself to spectrality. This theme is reinforced when Charles refers to his disappearance as a 'sacrifice' (*Hobomok*, p. 148). He allows Charles to escape his own ghostly condition by deciding to 'forever pass away from New England' (*Hobomok*, p. 150). In this respect, he mirrors Cooper's Indians who sacrifice themselves for the project of national expansion.

Although she does not portray Hobomok's disappearance as a harmonious event, Child ultimately resorts to the vanishing Indian narrative. Karcher contends that the ending constitutes a betrayal of the alliance that has been constructed throughout *Hobomok* between women and natives as a response to patriarchal authoritarianism. In her view, Child's conception of assimilation equates to cultural genocide as she implies that Indians must relinquish their identities and heritage if they wish to have a place in a society that actively seeks to dispossess them (Karcher, p. xxxii). The disappearing Indian narrative is also invoked prior to the conclusion when the narrator notes that Hobomok dwells upon the 'destruction of his race' and imagines 'clouds [...] lowering over the fate of his nation' (*Hobomok*, p. 33). Although Karcher correctly points out the conservative dimension to the novel's conclusion, in a postcolonial, psychoanalytic context Child, rather than consciously betraying her ending, merely acts out historically informed assumptions pertaining to race. The conclusion does not fundamentally compromise the potential impact of the radicalism of her novel, which, combined with her status as a woman writer, shapes its place outside the literary canon.

While Hobomok is written out, he is nonetheless memorialised through the image of the tree, which is used as a symbol for the American nation. The possibility of a non-American, uncolonised space is left open to preserve the distinguishing function of the Indian. In this sense the novel is haunted by the Indian savage it draws upon and erases in fashioning a uniquely American subjectivity. Concordantly, Charles's attempts to locate Hobomok in the wilderness reflect upon the novel's incorporative process. He disavows the fact that he would rather have the Indian disappear but in doing so, he justifies himself as a moral actor and his own claim to Mary. The American psyche seeks out the Indian to differentiate itself from its European forebears, yet it simultaneously represses his existence to legitimate its territorial claims. This action can be described as uncanny as it involves misrecognition, thereby

leading to the fiction of a coherent identity. Nonetheless, the repressive drives underpinning this identity result in haunting through spectrality and memorialisation. Across the works of Cooper, Bird, Jackson and Child the Indian is variously used to define a unique national history whilst ultimately being removed from that history. Where the Puritans denied their investment as creators of a fictional world in which they established absolute categories between good and evil, the nineteenth-century American polity could be said to misrecognise its own involvement in fashioning a revised history and cultural conception of national identity, which represses events that threaten the legitimacy of American civilisation.

Child's reformulation of the patriarchal narrative subverts its authority. The novel's heroine achieves happiness by challenging the religious, racial and sexual values of Puritanism. As previously noted, her return to the Puritan community occasions its transformation. The Puritan elders who have exiled Mary and Charles as heretics now sanction their marriage and permit them to join the community as religious dissidents. Tawil points out that this alteration in the social order of Salem is effectuated through Mary's interracial marriage, which changes the meaning of group affiliation (Tawil, p. 112). She leaves a community in which the differences between Christian belief systems are of paramount importance yet when she returns the Episcopalians and Puritans are joined together by the intrinsic property of race. While this may be true at one level, it can also be argued that her marriage to Hobomok not only allows Child to formulate a woman-centric vision of American identity but also functions to bring about a narrative outcome whereby the principle of an inclusive societal model is heralded. The community and most importantly Mr Conant accept Mary's return out of a sense of loss regarding her disappearance, which in turn points to the social corrosiveness of patriarchal prejudice and the unequal power relationships that inhere in it. Therefore, through this sequence of events involving elopement, interracial marriage and the reappearance of Charles, Child crystallises her discourse of tolerance in an

ideal image of familial and social reconciliation. By orchestrating Salem's transformation, she undermines patriarchal society from within. In addition, Charles's marriage to Mary symbolises the dissolution of hostilities pertaining to Anglo-American relations. His role as a functional element in the creation of American identity is evident when he proclaims that his future is with Mary: "“Wherever I am,” replied Brown, “my home shall be most gladly shared with Mary's father”” (*Hobomok*, p. 75). As a representative of England he is absorbed into the American future through his marital union. The historical continuities with respect to England are thus embedded in the nation's self-conception.

Child therefore restores a modified version of the civilisational order, which entails progressive and conservative elements. In his letter to the Colliers, Hobomok declares his wish to have his marriage annulled: 'This doth certifie that the witch hazel sticks, which were givene to the witnesses of my marriage are all burnte by my requeste: therefore by Indian laws, Hobomok and Mary Conant are divorced' (*Hobomok*, p. 146). In performing this action he signifies the end of the pagan and 'fated' aspects which have characterised their union. Mary can therefore be re-incorporated into the Christian community. Along with racial boundaries, religious ones are also resurrected. The reference to the burning of the 'witche hazel sticks' attests to this. The reinscription of a Christian ethos with established racial boundaries is reiterated by Mr Conant: 'Come to my arms, my deare childe; and maye God forgive us both, in aughte wherein we have transgressed' (*Hobomok*, p. 149). Moreover, he is noted to never again refer to her marriage with Hobomok which is described as a subject that is 'almost equally unpleasant to both' (*Hobomok*, p. 149).

Mary is wed to Charles in a Christian ceremony which overwrites the pagan aspects of her marriage to Hobomok. It is also significant that the wedding is characterised as a joyous event in contrast to the Indian marriage ceremony. The marriage plot is used in a different way in *Hobomok* compared to *Ramona*. This is evident concerning the emotional

outcomes of Mary's Indian and Christian weddings which, as we will see, are the inverse of those that attend Ramona's marriage to Alessandro and her subsequent marriage to Felipe. Whereas Ramona is reincorporated into the Californio household with Felipe as its head, Mary's return engenders a harmonious reunion with her father, as evident in her following words: 'What if he has been harsh and restrained in his intercourse with me? It is cruel to wrench from him his last earthly tie; and to prostrate the soul of a parent because my own lies bleeding in the dust' (*Hobomok*, p. 122). As noted, Jackson and Child draw upon a notion of tribal autonomy to convey their respective visions. Significantly, their narratives erase this as a practical alternative to U.S. hegemony. As will be explored in Chapter Four, Ramona's marriage signifies the impossibility of maintaining an autonomous Indian existence, while Mary's primarily points to the stultifying effects of patriarchy and her need to be reborn as an American. In marriage and voluntary exile Mary occupies a 'stupefied state' and has in a figurative sense lost her identity and thus the memory of her former life in the settlement. For example, she is noted not to recognise Sally when the latter discovers her in the wigwam of Hobomok's mother: 'She said she was so stupid that she did not seem to know me' (*Hobomok*, p. 130). It is through the purging of the history which Salem represents from her own consciousness that she can formulate a new American identity. In this respect, she reflects Child's intention to critically scrutinise and alter her nation's contemporary ideological precepts through reinterpreting its historical narrative. The beginning and end-points of the respective fates of Ramona and Mary are identical despite being differentiated on one critical point; where Ramona's undead condition alludes to the death of tribal sovereignty, Mary's death like state signifies her subsequent symbolic rebirth as an American.

Charles Hobomok can be seen as the product of Mary's decision to abandon Salem and the historical melancholia of patriarchy. He is the physical manifestation of melancholia in that community: 'Under such circumstances, his birth was no doubt entwined with many

mournful associations' (*Hobomok*, p. 136). However, he is also a blank slate for the inscription of a new American destiny. He parallels his mother who is 'reborn' within Hobomok's tribe and thereby liberated from the oppression of her original society. The resolution of religious, racial, sexual and generational conflicts reaches its apex with his assimilation into Anglo-American society in the final pages. Karcher notes that he embodies the figurative marriage between white American colonists and Indian natives, which Child presents as an alternative to white supremacy and race war (Karcher, p. xxxii).²⁶ However, Child's American ideal depends upon the removal of Hobomok's name. Mr Conant requests the allocation of half the family's legacy towards the education of Charles Hobomok who distinguishes himself at Harvard before completing his studies in England. The text's brief treatment of his story indicates that he loses all traces of his Indian identity by effectively becoming white. It is significant that the narrator notes that 'his father was seldom spoken of, and by degrees his Indian appellation was silently omitted' (*Hobomok*, p. 150). In addition, this narrative manoeuvre reinforces his role as an emblem of American identity that distinguishes itself through the native and the frontier. According to Bergland, the younger Hobomok's absorption into white society and his father's disappearance function to equate removal with assimilation. She contends that the novel implicitly accepts Indian Removal through the permanent spectralisation of its title character (Bergland, p. 82).

However, the readings of Karcher and Bergland are complicated by the fact that although Child restores the religious and racial order, she does so under a revised framework of tolerance and inclusiveness. Child advocates that it is only through the toleration of difference that American subjectivity can be realised. Thus, within this logic, although

²⁶ This fusion of cultures is allegorised in the associations between Brown and Hobomok which are reinforced when the former character reclaims Mary. When he greets Hobomok's son with the words 'he is a brave boy' he echoes the 'last word his father said to him' prior to the morning hunt (*Hobomok*, p. 148). Moreover, the name Mary has given her son, Charles Hobomok Conant, identifies him as the progeny of both lovers. The symbolic significance of the name is reinforced by the fact that Charles and Mary have no further offspring.

Hobomok is written out, his disappearance is a matter of choice. Additionally, his marital union with Mary is linked to the social transformation of Salem. The integration of their son into the white community consolidates this altered state of affairs. Child's politics of toleration allow for the autonomous space of the racial Other in abstraction as a defining feature of American identity. In addition, the qualities of liberty and non-conformism associated with the Puritans are realised with the alteration of the settlement. However, this realisation is offset by the novel's ending which re-establishes a racially homogenous context. Child censures her own move in apprehending a societal alternative to that of the U.S.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Child rejects patriarchal systems such as Puritanism and puts forward a proto-feminist national ideal. She sets her narrative in the seventeenth-century past to reframe American identity towards this end. Additionally, she locates patriarchal oppression in the psychological trauma of persecution. While she praises England for its cultural accomplishments and contrasts it to the Puritan settlements to further condemn them as oppressive environments, she also implicitly rejects England's colonial influence in her new vision of American subjectivity framed by feminine values. Furthermore, *Hobomok* uses spectrality to explore the haunted condition of the Puritan psyche and by implication the haunting effects of English colonialism upon the American national consciousness. Child's spectral and otherworldly characterisations of her protagonists allows her to inhabit the perspective of the Other in terms of gender, ideology and less consistently race. This strategy is implicated in the process by which American identity is generated in the text.

Nonetheless, the novel's theme of equality with respect to gender and religious ideology does not extend to race. Child ultimately reproduces trans-historical views of race and state legitimacy and in doing so falls back upon tropes within the historical romance

genre such as savage nobility and Indian disappearance. Hobomok is written out of the text while his son is assimilated into white culture. Her message of egalitarianism is thereby compromised and melancholia emerges in the memorialisation of Hobomok. This relates to how Child contends with the idea of race and native elements in her construction of the American self. Mary never loses her white subjectivity even though she plays the role of the racial Other, which is evident in the conclusion of the novel when she returns to the settlement as a white, Christian woman. In marrying Hobomok she is able to assert her own independence from patriarchal codes and distinguishes herself from the historical legacies of the Old World. Charles Hobomok Conant embodies the new American identity that his mother has sought to fashion. His absorption into white society reflects the novel's support for assimilation but also underscores his status as the first true 'American'. Child articulated some of the inherited values of her time, yet she reformulated gender and racial relations in creating an alternative historical interpretation, which contributed to the omission of her novel from the dominant literary canon and national consciousness of the State. While Bergland, Karcher and Tawil are correct to say that her novel is ethno-centric, reading it purely in this way reduces its complexities and does not fully account for the import of her radicalism in a nineteenth-century context. In presenting a worldview from the perspective of the disenfranchised, *Hobomok* threatened inassimilable possibilities that challenged the national script of the elites.

The theme of Indian assimilation in this novel would be later reflected in the reform literature of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Jackson would imaginatively convey the supposed advantages of assimilation in relation to national identity in *Ramona*. However, as with Child, her outward ideological projections are underscored by a desire to remove the Indian from the State through cultural assimilation, which ultimately introduces a number of melancholic effects to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: The Conflict between Indian Reform and Indian Sovereignty in *Ramona*

Introduction

Ramona (1884) articulates an Indian reformist agenda influenced by the nineteenth-century ideology of domesticity. In view of this, Helen Hunt Jackson attempts to assimilate Native Americans into the national corpus by emphasising their potential for acculturation. She draws upon the Franciscan mission system in the West as a template for the absorption of Indians into civilisation through religious education. I will explore how she also fashions the ideal of an Indian identity that coheres with the values of reform and the nation. Nonetheless, there is a dissonance in the text in that the process of Indian assimilation a priori necessitates a racially and culturally different inassimilable Other. Jackson derives her romanticised portrayal of natives from this Other which exists as spectral influence in the novel. It becomes most apparent when it is used in terms of Indian sovereignty to define a democratic ideal of American identity. This chapter will pose that as an undefined object located beyond the narrative's Symbolic limits, it constitutes a point of intersection between Jackson's divergent ideological drives. Protagonist Ramona's embodiment of Anglo-American traits in conjunction with her Indian identity, which is linked to the theme of Indian sovereignty, also reflects the textual discord between assimilation and recognition for the otherness of an autonomous Indian existence. In symbolising Anglo-American values, Ramona becomes a means for the Anglo-American reader to possess and interpret Indian and Californio cultures. However, her Indian subjectivity persists throughout the novel indicating a failure in its assimilationist protocols. As outlined earlier, Khanna observes in relation to Lacan's concept of the Symbolic that pleasure within a sense of national community is attributable to a

perpetual desire to interpret the Other.¹ In this context, Jackson continuously draws upon the Other to develop her ideal of the American state. It may then be said to have an informing function for her conception of American identity through its particular manifestations in terms of Indian sovereignty and savagery.

Jackson had failed to affect the popular consciousness of the U.S. with her earlier publication *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and therefore adopted romantic conventions in *Ramona* to achieve this objective. Although the meticulous rationalist tone of her rhetorical strategy in her previous work is defined by traditional legal and moral argument rooted in precedence, she concludes the text by asserting that reform can only be achieved by appealing to popular sentiment. Carl Gutiérrez-Jones states that she predicates her legal polemic on the idea that nations and tribes should treat each other with mutual respect and derives this from the principle that favourable relations between peoples are informed by consensual agreements among sovereign individuals.² Consequently, Jackson holds U.S. institutions accountable to their ideological claims and argues for the prioritisation of consent over force. However, as we will see her approach to consent is undermined by the fact that she regards Indians to be wards of the State. These types of perception were encouraged by those in positions of legal, political and cultural influence who regarded Native Americans as children:

Such assumptions were very strong during this [late nineteenth-century] period and were often built on the encouragement given women reformers to pursue their activities, encouragement offered by male legal practitioners, among others, who understood Native Americans as children, benefitting from women's 'nurturing' proclivity (Gutiérrez-Jones, p. 59).

In light of these assumptions, Jackson formulates a problematic conception of social interaction which curtails the reformist energy in both *A Century of Dishonor* and *Ramona*.

¹ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 184.

² Carl Scott Gutiérrez-Jones, *Rethinking the Borderlands: Between Chicano Culture and Legal Discourse (Latinos in American Society & Culture)*. (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 60.

Moreover, she associates nationhood with personhood in interpreting nations to be composed of consenting individuals. For Gutiérrez-Jones this leads to two major failures in *Ramona*. In the first instance, the principle Native American characters are presented as exceptions to their race and thus cannot be considered to be representative of their community. Secondly, Jackson's novel is overtaken by a focus on the Californios and the family romance of the Morenos that signifies a departure from her intended narrative objective of foregrounding the plight of Indians. My reading will follow Gutiérrez-Jones's line to reframe these readings in the context of the national psyche. Therefore, I contend that Alessandro as an exceptional Indian signifies a colonial projection of the Other which reflects Jackson's conception of national identity more generally. Furthermore, the focus on family romance represents a means to repress the implicit collapse of the novel's reform discourse, which labours under the competing drives of assimilation and recognition for tribal sovereignty as a validation of American democracy.

In reiterating her arguments from a *Century of Dishonor* in *Ramona* for a democratic American state based upon freely chosen participation, Jackson denounces the catastrophic effects of unchecked national expansion regarding Californio dispossession and frontier violence between whites and Indians. As noted, the logic of her conception of national identity infers the existence of Indians who wish to remain independent from civilisation. As we will see, the retreat of Alessandro and Ramona into an Indian subjectivity away from the auspices of Señora Moreno's dictatorial rule symbolises the idea of participation based on consent. In this way Jackson mirrors Child, not only in having the Señora parallel the patrician sternness of Mr. Conant but also in basing her national model upon tolerance as opposed to military domination. In *Hobomok* and *Ramona* we have two instances where the female protagonist elopes with an Indian due to the stifling influence of an authoritarian figure as part of a narrative approach to define an alternative, progressive national vision.

Jackson argues against the idea of the nation and its expansion being dependent upon race warfare, something that is advanced in the novels of Cooper and Bird. Like Child, her conception of the national body is one which initially appears to be informed by principles of inclusivity and a greater degree of acceptance for racial Others.

However, an intact tribal existence is shown to be untenable with its encirclement by the American state. Although Jackson condemns the violent nature of U.S. imperialism, she nevertheless will be seen to support the idea of civilisational expansion under the proviso that it is regulated by the enlightened dictates of domesticity. Furthermore, the novel's ending implies an assimilative, racially homogenous national vision which falls in line with texts by Cooper and Bird, whose ideological positions Jackson could be reasonably be presupposed to criticise. A conflict exists in *Ramona* between its desire for assimilation, its suppression of resistance towards this end and its implicit recognition of Indian sovereignty, which underscores its national ideal. This recognition in turn necessitates its paradoxical acknowledgement of Indian resistance. The author's conflicted views on Indian assimilation, sovereignty and voluntary participation in nation can be traced back to *A Century of Dishonor*.

The dichotomy between assimilation and the preservation of national boundaries is extenuated with respect to the superiority of Alessandro and Ramona over their Indian peers despite their proclamations of tribal affiliation. Paradoxically, Alessandro, as a successfully assimilated Indian, never fully transcends his savage status. In this way, he is redolent of the noble Uncas and Chingachgook who will forever remain outside the bounds of civilised society despite being allies of Cooper's white protagonists. This chapter will explore how while Jackson utilises both the idea of racially inherent qualities and upbringing to justify assimilation, she also infers that complete assimilation is impossible due to savage racial traits. Therefore, in postcolonial psychoanalytic terms her novel engages in a form of incorporation as opposed to assimilation, which reflects upon the Indian reformist discourse it

utilises in its advocacy for Indian rights. Melancholic markers are produced by the failings of the narrative's assimilationist discourse in its absorption and erasure of the Other due to its racist assumptions and its internal conflict between ideals of reform and sovereignty. This is primarily indicated with respect to Ramona's 'undead' condition at the end. The novel's romantic plot also deflects attention from its compromised political agenda and therefore contains the inassimilable elements that are generated by its inability to introject the Indian into the national corpus. As such, its generic conventions are implicated in the incorporative process that comes to textually define it.

Ramona can be characterised as a sentimental romance which elaborates the fates of its title character and its hero Alessandro in southern California during the Reconstruction era.³ Ramona is the stepchild of Señora Moreno. Her father, Angus Phail, was a formerly prosperous Scots trader who died during her infancy whilst her mother was a nameless Indian woman whom he married as he descended into poverty and alcoholism. He was earlier betrayed by his betrothed, Ramona Gonzaga Moreno during his final trading voyage. Her subsequent marriage to Francis Ortegna bore no children. Twenty-five years later Phail visited Señora Gonzaga and bequeathed her Ramona. The child was then passed onto Señora Moreno at Señora Gonzaga's death.

Although the Señora despises Ramona for her mixed blood she is compelled to preserve the tradition of family honour and so raises her as a privileged member of the Moreno household. Ramona learns of her Indian heritage only when she falls in love with

³ According to David Luis Brown, the nineteenth-century sentimental novel appealed to the emotions and moral values of its readers in order to influence their political persuasions. It often achieved this through the convention of family separation. He states that sentimentalism is informed by protocols of emasculation and strategies of reform through which the public sphere is represented in terms of domestic tropes such as emotions, love and family. Through this process, women writers were able to claim moral authority in a society that rejected their arguments on account of their gender. David Luis Brown, "White Slaves" and the "Arrogant Mestiza": Reconfiguring Whiteness in *The Squatter and the Don* and *Ramona*", *American Literature*, 69/4 (1997), 813-839 (p. 814).

Alessandro Assis, a mission Indian belonging to the Rancheria of Temecula. They elope following the Señora's disapproval of their relationship and spend their married life in a number of Indian villages, from which they leave at each turn due to the incursions from whites. On their travels they encounter Aunt Ri Hyar and her family. She becomes their advocate in challenging the indifferent attitudes of the Agency officials and is representative of the reader who is invited to overcome his/her prejudices in adopting the discourse of assimilation that she articulates. Alessandro's and Ramona's first child dies as a consequence of the negligence of an Indian Agency doctor. A white settler named Jim Farrar subsequently murders Alessandro for 'horse theft'. This leads Ramona to abandon her life as an Indian when her stepbrother Felipe rescues her. The novel concludes with Felipe's marriage to Ramona in Mexico. The ensuing chapter will take up the five concerns of Jackson's romanticised interpretation of Californio culture, her conflation of domesticity with Indian reform, her condemnation of frontier violence, her interpretation of racial qualities in terms of reform and the conflict between her reformist argument and her recognition for Indian sovereignty, which defines her ideal of a democratic nation.

The Idealisation of the Franciscan Mission System and Californio Culture

As part of her domesticating agenda, Jackson encourages her audience to acknowledge the personhood of American Indians and advocates for a system that will ensure their welfare. Consequently, she provides a romanticised portrait of the Franciscans and the Californios to present an alternative set of racial relations that support the idea of the peaceful incorporation of Indians into the nation state.

Martin Padget claims that Jackson's inclusive vision was intrinsic to her idealised representations of the Franciscans in their attempts to 'civilise' Native Americans.⁴ In Jackson's view, the Indian was transformed from a 'naked savage' into an industrious tiller of the soil, cloth weaver, metalworker and singer of sacred hymns as a result of the missionary effort. John M. Gonzalez asserts that the Spanish mission system provides Jackson with an institutional example for Indian assimilation through religious education. She regarded the missions as 'classrooms of civilisation' and considered the neophytes, namely the Christianised Indians, to be elevated above Indian savagery.⁵ However, she engages in historical revisionism by ignoring Indian resistance towards the missions in order to legitimate her Indian reform discourse: 'To stress the violent resistance of Indians against the missionary effort of both Franciscans and late-nineteenth-century reformers would mitigate against Indians' incorporation into the body politic' (Padget, p. 855). This is evident in her romanticised depiction of the mission system: 'Often too, Ramona had much to tell that Alessandro had said, -tales of the old Mission days that he had heard from his father; stories of saints, and of the early Fathers, who were more like saints than like men'.⁶

As with Californio society, the lauded Franciscan order is depicted as an obsolete, antiquated institution in the new regime of the American state. Indeed, in her treatment of the Californios Jackson parallels Cooper's theme of the inevitable passing of the noble savage, in that a competing political and cultural institution must decline with the westward expansion of the American state. She consequently provides romantic eulogies to them in order to naturalise American regional hegemony. However, this does not contradict her condemnation

⁴ Martin Padget, 'Travel Writing, Sentimental Romance, and Indian Rights Advocacy: The Politics of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*', *Journal of the Southwest*, 42/4 (2000), 833-876 (pp. 845-846).

⁵ John M. Gonzalez, 'The Warp of Whiteness: Domesticity and Empire in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*', *American Literary History*, 16/3 (2004), 437-465 (p. 447).

⁶ Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2008), p. 147.

of the expropriation of the Californios and Indians as she supports the principle of American expansion only according to humane and peaceful criteria. In her sentimental treatment of these Others and her advocacy for their disappearance through assimilation she aligns with and departs from Cooper's romantic extinction narrative. Her assimilationist discourse infers the vision of a racially inclusive yet culturally homogenous nation that jars with Cooper's conception of the nation characterised by Anglo-American exclusivity.

Thus, though the mission system is itself implicated in Jackson's reform rhetoric, it is not allowed to exist as a cultural alternative to American hegemony in the present. Father Salvierderra's advanced age symbolises its deterioration. The values he represents are shown to belong to a different era informed by nobler principles. The decay of the world that the Father once knew is associated with his ailing condition.

The old man had grown feeble during the year that she had not seen him, and it was a very short day's journey that he could make now without too great fatigue. It was not only his body that had failed. He had lost heart; and the miles which would have been nothing to him, had he walked in the companionship of hopeful and happy thoughts, stretched out wearily as he brooded over sad memories and still sadder anticipations,—the downfall of the Missions, the loss of their vast estates, and the growing power of the ungodly in the land (*Ramona*, p. 47).

His religious faith has been compromised due to the failure of the U.S. government to restore the mission lands. Moreover, they have been repossessed, sold and resold by 'greedy speculators' (*Ramona*, p. 48). Consequently, the missionised Indians have been driven back to the wilderness, which is attributed to the aggressive state policy of national expansion. Jackson associates social upheaval with this form of expansion and contrasts it with the Franciscan mission system to promote the latter as a better template for assimilating Indians and running the State as an effective colonial administration.

Another point of comparison with Cooper is found in relation to his use of the wilderness as an essential component of American identity with respect to pragmatic resourcefulness. Overly refined white characters such as Gamut, and Heyward to a lesser

extent, build upon the practical and courageous aspects of their identities through their association with Hawkeye and his Indian allies. The frontier becomes a proving ground for the American character. Hawkeye as a white frontiersman survives in the wilderness by partially emulating the habits of its inhabitants. Jackson likewise looks to a foreign order and the Indian as a paragon of nobility to reform the American nation in terms of its colonial policies. In both novels, the Other serves to develop qualities already inferred to be immanent in American identity.

Significantly, American culture is depicted as being decadent from Californio and Indian perspectives. Father Salvierderra's comment to Alessandro concerning Juan's blasphemous remarks is a case in point: 'Sighing deeply as they walked along, the monk said: "it is but a sign of the times, Blasphemers are on the highway. The people are being corrupted"' (*Ramona*, p. 88). However, the fact that the Father's ideals belong to another era reflects the novel's elegiac treatment of Californio society and its predestined collapse in the context of progress: 'He was fast becoming that most tragic yet often sublime sight, a man who has survived not only his own time, but the ideas and ideals of it' (*Ramona*, p. 48). The order's deterioration may be argued to invite the reader to feel a sense of social responsibility in adopting the reform cause which can be seen to supersede it.

A break occurs in Jackson's idealisation of the mission system in a discussion between Alessandro and Ramona concerning the fortunes of the Indians in the missions. Alessandro disputes the Señora's contention that all Indians have prospered under the administration of the Franciscans: "'The Señora does not know all that happened at the Missions," replied Alessandro. "My father says that at some of them were dreadful things, when bad men had power"' (*Ramona*, p. 308). However, Jackson immediately resumes with her romanticised representation when Alessandro describes the devotion of the Indians towards Father Peyri at San Luis Rey. Ramona continues with her line of inquiry regarding

the abuses that occurred in the missions, at which point Jackson preserves the integrity of her discourse by attributing the responsibility for these injustices to the men who worked under the Fathers. The legitimacy of the Franciscan order and the mission system is thereby preserved. Further historical displacement occurs when the colonial crimes referred to by Alessandro are implicitly associated with Indian perpetrators:

There was one at the San Gabriel Mission; he was an Indian. He had been set over the rest; and when a whole band of them ran away one time, and went back into the mountains, he went after them; and he brought back a piece of each man's ear; the pieces were strung on a string; and he laughed, and said that was to know them by again,—by their clipped ears (*Ramona*, p. 310).

Ramona doubts the credibility of Alessandro's story concerning the Indian and replies that the Franciscans would never permit such abuses of power. The fleeting recognition in the text for the inassimilable historical injustices of the mission system is evidently repressed.

Alessandro's account constitutes another disruption in the narrative's strategy of promoting the mission system in the context of Indian reform. He states that some Indians chose to live according to their cultural traditions as opposed to adopting the customs of the mission. Although the narrative thus far has represented Indians as being unanimously in favour of acculturation, there is a temporary acknowledgement for the historical fact that many Indians resisted assimilation through the preservation of their traditions and sovereignty, which recalls the momentary lapse in Cooper's novel regarding the Oneida discussion and perhaps Bird's dissonant language when describing the massacring of the Shawnees. As with the works of these writers, Jackson's novel represses certain historical elements to advocate for a specific national vision and as a result certain moments of disruption occur, which will be seen to affect the narrative in a more profound sense later on. Jackson immediately neutralises this element by co-opting it into her logic of assimilation. Alessandro comments that they were 'stupid' to remain as 'beasts' although he accepts that it was their right to live as they wished (*Ramona*, p. 310). As can be seen from his remark,

Indians are given a choice in the matter of assimilation, albeit one heavily weighted against their preservation of autonomy. The abstract principle of otherness that is external to and present in Jackson's discourse of reform and sovereignty can also be discerned as a spectral glimmer in Alessandro's words. The matter of choice in the novel will later be discussed in relation to Jackson's view of American national identity.

Jackson romanticises the Californios in part to discount the idea that their society constitutes a viable alternative to American civilisation, in keeping with her discourse of assimilation. Their demise parallels that of the Indians in the novel in this context. For example, Felipe is shown to belong to an antiquated social order, which for all its noble and romantic principles is asynchronous with the modern values of the U.S.

Year by year the conditions of life in California were growing more distasteful to him. The methods, aims, standards of the fast incoming Americans were to him odious. Their boasted successes, the crowding of colonies, schemes of settlement and development, — all were disagreeable and irritating. The passion for money and reckless spending of it, the great fortunes made in one hour, thrown away in another, savored to Felipe's mind more of brigandage and gambling than of the occupations of gentlemen (*Ramona*, p. 485).

Jackson critiques the capitalistic excesses of unregulated national expansion and also portrays Mexican society as being more racially tolerant compared to the U.S. given that it is a 'new world' that holds the promise for a 'new life'. At the same time, she re-invokes the stereotype of the anachronistic Californio who is destined to vanish with the advent of the modern American state. Felipe's semi-barbaric feudalistic society will invariably be superseded by its Anglo-American equivalent, which for all the failings constitutes a more advanced cultural alternative. Like Cooper's portrait of vanishing Indians and frontiersmen, Jackson's text discounts the idea that social and cultural alternatives can co-exist with American civilisation. This will become more apparent later on with respect to the unsustainability of Alessandro's and Ramona's Indian lifestyle.

In her indirect approach towards appealing to the conscience of her audience, Jackson provides a therapeutic palliative for historical crimes associated with national expansion, which is evident in the following romantic passage:

It was a picturesque life, with more sentiment and gayety in it, more also that was truly dramatic, more romance than will ever be seen again on those sunny shores. The aroma of it all lingers there still, industries and inventions have not yet slain it [...] it can never be quite lost, so long as there is left standing one such house as the Señora Moreno's (*Ramona*, p. 16).

By relocating the Californios to an 'ancient' past, Jackson omits the possibility for redress with respect to their dispossession. Anne Goldman suggests that she produces a mythologised world via region to repress the historical elements in her work that would otherwise undermine her support for national expansion tempered by feminine restraint: 'The exotimized picture of "sunny shores" Jackson paints in *Ramona*, a geographically indistinct coastline that could as easily be Hawaii or Cuba as California, mythologises regional boundaries and mystifies their relation to nationalist projects and imperial goals'.⁷ However, as with the infrequent slips in her idealisation of the Franciscans, Jackson's depiction of the Señora's household is offset by the fact that it is an oppressive environment for its inhabitants and Ramona in particular. On a surface level it may appear to be a romantic realm from another age yet beneath this exterior it is strictly governed by the Señora, who wields a virtually unlimited power over her servants and family. For example, Felipe as heir apparent to the ranch is submissive to her rule: 'The truth is, Felipe Moreno was not fit for a kingdom at all. If he had been, he would not have been so ruled by his mother without ever finding out' (*Ramona*, p. 10). The Señora also physically chastises Ramona and prohibits her from seeing Alessandro again when she learns of their relationship.

In light of this, Jackson on the one hand presents the romantic idea of a Californio lifestyle. However, in order to trigger Ramona's exile and subsequent deprivations among the

⁷ Anne Goldman, *Continental Divides: Revisioning American Literature, 1880-1920* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 54.

Indians, she depicts the Moreno ranch as a luxurious prison. The dissonance between these alternating textual threads may also be attributed to a 'return of the repressed' within her idealisation of Californios and Franciscans, which suggests that she is aware of historical Californio racism towards Native Americans. This is reinforced when Alessandro's revelations about the mission abuses are taken into account. The eulogies in the narrative to the Californios and Franciscans actually work to validate the presence of the American state in the California region. Additionally, their treatment of the Indians is generally contrasted with the racist violence of Anglo-Americans to provide the reader with an alternative solution to the 'Indian problem' through peaceful assimilation. The condemnation of Californio and Franciscan dispossession is also tied to the text's overarching critique of violent national expansion.

Domesticity and Indian Reform

Jackson's novel is rooted in the tradition of Indian reform literature, which proposed that tribal sovereignty could be dissolved through racial tutelage leading to the transformation of savages into citizens, subject to the laws of the State. As noted, her treatment of Indians in relation to national expansion therefore differs from Bird who advocates for their outright extermination. In addition, though she shares some similarities with Cooper in depicting U.S. expansion as a predestined phenomenon that necessitates the disappearance of Indians, she adopts a more realist tone by drawing attention to how such a project affects local Indian populations in the South West. She emphasises the potential of Indians for Americanisation by overplaying their nobility and integrity in relation to the whites, which concomitantly serves as a critique of frontier violence. Despite her promotion of Indian reform, there are certain underlying elements in the narrative regarding race, Indian identity and the nature of assimilation itself that compromise her agenda.

As mentioned for Gonzalez, *Ramona* characterises Manifest Destiny as a non-coercive process entailing the consolidation of an inclusive nation rather than a fundamental struggle between tribal nations and the U.S. for political and cultural hegemony, as found in the novels of Cooper and Bird. Gonzalez contends that Indian reform novels such as *Ramona* reframed the logic of racial exclusion that inhered in the earlier discourse of antebellum domesticity by supporting the domestic ideology of the post-Civil War era. The rationales of this discourse were also implicated in the narrative of the vanishing Indian: 'If discourses of Manifest Destiny such as antebellum domesticity depicted Indians as literally disappearing "before the white man," then, within the discourse of post-Reconstruction domesticity, "savages" were to disappear figuratively as the objects of white women's civilising instruction' (Gonzalez, p. 439). Gonzalez asserts that the discourses which justified the conquest stage of Manifest Destiny prevented the nation from assimilating the Native American population following the defeats of the remaining tribal nations by the mid-1880s. Indian policy reformers regarded natives as representative of the nation's incompleteness given that they embodied a unique political and cultural existence: 'exercising tribal sovereignty, Indians would always represent an imperium in imperio, a remainder and therefore reminder of the alternate failure of national completion' (Gonzalez, p. 439). However, there was little support for assimilation due to the issue of tribal sovereignty and the persistent notion of Indian inhumanity. These factors were derived from the preceding phase of U.S. imperialism and thus national modernity would only be achieved with their eradication.

Gonzalez argues that in contrast Indian reform narratives promoted the idea of assimilation rooted in pedagogy. Domestic influence was appropriated for its effectiveness in the project of Indian acculturation. *Ramona*, along with other Indian reform novels articulated the idea that Indians, as a primitive race could be modernised through education. The

antagonistic political interactions between the tribal nations and the U.S. were reconceived by these novels in terms of an evolutionary framework consisting of primitive cultures and their more advanced counterparts. According to Gonzalez, domesticity conflated civilisation with the domestication of 'foreign' races (pp. 440-441). The civilisational influence of domestication enabled the State to implement regimes of disciplinary power. The coloniser and colonised were distinguished from each other based on theories of cultural development (Gonzalez, pp. 440-441).

Indian reformers favoured benevolent assimilation over military conquest and argued that a policy of racial tutelage would be a better demonstration of white civilisation's suitability for colonial rule than outright genocide. In this light, Jackson strongly condemns frontier violence as a form of barbarism and stresses the civilising influence of domesticity and religious education upon frontier settlers and Indians alike. She was motivated to write a novel that would garner support for Indian reform in light of the massive population decline among Native Americans in California and other areas of the U.S. as a result of colonialism and settlement. Jackson along with other white women writers endeavoured to use moral suasion rather than direct action in public affairs.

According to Gonzalez, Aunt Ri as an Iserian reader personifies the idea of moral suasion which informs the novel's textual operations. As a spokeswoman for reform, she represents Jackson's response to an aggressive form of American imperialism and therefore embodies a rehabilitating force with respect to the American state, which defines itself through its treatment of the Other (Gonzalez, p. 446). Aunt Ri realises how she has been misled by popular massacre narratives and newspaper prints concerning Indians upon meeting them, which conveys Jackson's objective in countering discourses such as those espoused by writers like Bird that promoted the extermination of Indians based on their associations with the demonic. She reacts with indignation upon learning of the displacement

of the Temecula and San Pasquale tribes that has been enabled through American law. Aunt Ri personifies an alternative citizen ideal to the Anglo-American male settler and thus constitutes another facet to Jackson's vision of national identity which contrasts with the militaristic conceptions of frontier conquest in the narratives of Cooper and Bird.

While the Señora effectively disowns Ramona due to her racial background and marriage, Aunt Ri becomes a kind of adoptive mother who defends Indian rights to governmental authorities. In advocating that the government should protect the welfare of Indians she articulates Jackson's conflicted position on the matter of Indian dependency and nationhood. She also exposes the judicial impotence of the Agency, noting that while it can prosecute settlers for selling whiskey to Indians it is unable to bring a man like Farrar to justice for killing them:

“‘n’ thet’s why I want so bad ter git at what ‘tis the Guvvermunt means ter hev yeow dew fur ‘em. I allow ef yeow ain’t ter feed ‘em, an’ ef yer can’t put folks inter jail fur robbin’ ‘n’ cheatin’ ‘em, not ter say killin’ ‘em,—ef yer can’t dew ennythin’ more ‘n keep ‘em from gettin’ whiskey, wall, I’m free ter say—” Aunt Ri paused; she did not wish to seem to reflect on the Agent’s usefulness, and so concluded her sentence very differently from her first impulse,—”I’m free ter say I shouldn’t like ter stan’ in yer shoes” (*Ramona*, pp. 476-477).

She therefore challenges the legitimacy of the U.S. administrative system by highlighting the absurdity of its treatment of Indians within its legislative parameters. However, the maternal role that she performs, as noted by Gonzalez, also reflects the colonial drive of the novel. In the above speech, Native Americans are almost infantilised as powerless victims suggesting that existing state policy should be substituted with a reform program. However, this conception of an alternate, subjugated culture is arguably a projection of Jackson's conception of Indians as a component of her national ideal, a topic in the novel which I will discuss in detail later in this chapter.

In addition, Aunt Ri expresses herself in the vernacular of the Tennessee ‘Pike’. According to Gonzalez, this is to distinguish her from the reformist East Coast elite and the

Southern Belle such that she can appeal to the widest possible demographic of readers with respect to her reform message. Gonzalez notes that as a working class female figure who espouses reformist arguments, she embodies the idea that white women can participate in nation building through the civilising project of Indian reform, following the ‘unsisterly’ divisions engendered by the Civil War and Reconstruction (Gonzalez, p. 59). Aunt Ri’s function in this sense parallels the ideals of inclusivity and tolerance which can be found in Child’s novel and Melville’s poetry volume *Battle Pieces* (1866), which advocates for the setting aside of partisan politics between North and South in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Jackson attempts to enact the assimilation of Indians into the State through a discourse of domestic pedagogy. However, her racialist preconceptions and her recognition of Indian sovereignty, which inheres in her democratic conception of U.S. identity, necessitate the existence of an inassimilable Indian presence that cannot be rationalised or fused with the national body. As we will see, the transformation of the Indian into an American through domestic instruction proves an impossible goal, leading to the remainder of an Indian subjectivity that cannot be absorbed into the conceptual parameters of the nation. The ideal of Indians as American citizens existing within a racially diverse and fair society is consequently lost. As a female author, Jackson draws upon domestic and sentimentalist tropes in order to win over her audience to her alternative approach towards making Indians vanish through assimilation. These same elements are later used to repress and contain the inassimilable dimension of Indian presence when the promise of their assimilation is negated.

U.S. Policy and Frontier Violence

As I have explored, Jackson’s ideal of American identity is one based upon peaceful assimilation rather than the demonisation of Indians. Her novel is in part a product of its late nineteenth-century historical context. According to Padget, the issue of Indian welfare

became prominent in the years following the Civil War and resulted in the implementation of policies designed to assimilate them into American society. These included the education of Indian children, the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, the promotion of agricultural practices on reservations and restrictions on the practice of Native American religions (Padget, p. 852). Moreover, Jackson was influenced by her experiences as an agent of the State in writing the novel.⁸ Her exposure to the grim realities of the social and geographical displacement of tribes led her to assume a role of ethical responsibility for their welfare. The very fact that she was able to document their mistreatment is attributable to her historical context regarding the rising prominence of women in the nation's affairs: 'Entering federal employment as teachers in reservations and boarding schools, field matrons and administrators within the Office of Indian Affairs, white women negotiated a larger role in public life through their direct participation in the colonial project' (Gonzalez, p. 441). Jackson's text also eschews the conventional plot of violent frontier conquest as she was writing at a time when the American state had vanquished most of its tribal enemies. Additionally, her ideological beliefs distinguished her from conservative writers who vouched for aggressive colonial policies.

Goldman argues that in contrast to late nineteenth-century Californio narratives that conceal their historical reference points, Jackson foregrounds the historical factors informing her narrative even though she ultimately presents a sanitised history that elides the more brutal aspects of western colonialism (Goldman, p. 50). *Ramona* interrogates the idea that California belongs to the Anglo-American settlers by right. Hence, Americans are not excused for their colonialist activities when the Señora dismisses them as 'hounds [...] running up and down everywhere sucking money, like dogs with their noses to the ground'

⁸ Jackson travelled throughout California from 1881-82 on a commission from *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* to write four travel articles. During this time, she developed a newfound concern for the welfare of Indians. In 1882 she was appointed by government officials as a Special Agent on the basis of this work. Her role was to report the living conditions of Californian Mission Indians to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In 1883, she presented her *Report on the Condition and Needs of the Mission Indians of California* to Commissioner Hiram Price.

(*Ramona*, p. 14). Jackson also seeks to elicit the sympathy of her audience for the Californios and Indians who have both been humiliated through their territorial dispossession. Thus, in the introduction to her novel, Jackson disputes Anglo-American representations of the U.S.-Mexican war as an annexation and the notion that the Bear Flag rebellion was embraced by Californios:

The people of the United States have never in the least realized that the taking possession of California was not only a conquering of Mexico, but a conquering of California as well; that the real bitterness of the surrender was not so much to the empire which gave up the country, as to the country itself which was given up. Provinces passed back and forth in that way, helpless in the hands of great powers, have all the ignominy and humiliation of defeat, with none of the dignities or compensations of the transaction (*Ramona*, p. 17).

There are also subtler allusions to Californio dispossession: ‘The Father knew the place in the olden time. He knows it’s no child’s play to look after the estate even now, much smaller as it is!’ (*Ramona*, p. 6). These are followed by explicit condemnations of colonial violence. For example, Alessandro informs Ramona of an incident in which an Indian was shot in the cheek for his ‘insolence’ by an Anglo settler: ‘One man in San Bernardino last year, when an Indian would not take a bottle of sour wine for pay for day’s work, shot him in the cheek with a pistol, and told him to mind how he was insolent any more!’ (*Ramona*, p. 377). The tension between the theme of vanishing Californios and the condemnation of the American conquest of California may be resolved by placing it in the context of Jackson’s domestic values. Therefore, she criticises the means by which the American state has seized the California territory even though she legitimates it by lamenting the inevitable disappearance of Californio society. It is apparent that she supports the expansion of American civilisation with the incorporation of foreign Others, albeit through peaceful methods.

The novel’s negative portrait of frontier settlement is complemented by detailed accounts of the expropriation of the land of the Temecula and San Pasquale Indians. Felipe witnesses the effects of frontier violence first-hand in his quest to locate Ramona. When he

visits the San Juan Capistrano mission building, he finds it in a state of dilapidation: ‘The sunken tile floor was icy cold to the feet; the wind swept in at a dozen broken places in the corridor side of the wall; there was not an article of furniture. “Heavens!” thought Felipe, as he entered, “a priest of our Church take rent for such a hole as this!”’ (*Ramona*, p. 440). There he finds Antonio, a former Temecula Indian and sheep shearer for the Moreno family who now lives in utter destitution. He explains that the majority of the Temecula people have been reduced to begging because of their displacement: ‘Most of us are beggars. A few here, a few there’ (*Ramona*, p. 442). Felipe also discovers the village of San Pasquale to be in a state of disarray: ‘He found the village in disorder, the fields neglected, many houses deserted, the remainder of the people preparing to move away. In the house of Ysidro, Alessandro’s kinsman, was living a white family,—the family of a man who had pre-empted the greater part of the land on which the village stood’ (*Ramona*, p. 445). Here Jackson provides detailed descriptions of the catastrophic effects of U.S. policy to elicit a sense of outrage on the part of the reader. In one instance, Alessandro describes the aftermath of the Temecula dispossession to Ramona and recounts his father’s humiliation and death:

He would not come out of his house, and the men lifted him up and carried him out by force, and threw him on the ground; and then they threw out all the furniture we had; and when he saw them doing that, he put his hands up to his head, and called out, ‘Alessandro! Alessandro!’ and I was not there! (*Ramona*, p. 239).

At these points in the text, the secondary Indian characters in *Ramona* bear a greater resemblance to the victimised figures of the Indian reform reports than to the demonised archetypes of *Nick of the Woods* or the noble savages of Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*.

It thus emerges that Jackson engages with the devastating social impact of white colonisation. For Cooper and Bird, national expansion is vindicated on the basis that American civilisation is entitled to encroach upon Indian territories by virtue of its superiority and Christian belief. Those Indians who resist the process are demonised to further justify

their displacement. By contrast, Jackson actually delineates the social costs of dispossession, comparing it to a form of nationally sanctioned theft, as indicated with the squatter and his family who move into Alessandro's house. She therefore takes a different approach to this issue, which speaks to the contingencies of her later historical period in conjunction with her ideological investment in domesticity and Indian reform. However, at the same time she sanctions the acquisition of Indian and Californio land by denying her non-Anglo-American characters the ability to seek redress for white violence against them.

Hence, Jackson offers two outcomes for the Indians: one which involves the inevitable extinction of their culture and race, owing to the advance of American civilisation, and another which entails their assimilation. The latter option is presented in vastly preferable terms. The scenes of Indian dispossession and poverty convey the idea that assimilation is the only viable choice for Indians if they wish to survive. The response of the villagers to Felipe's question regarding the possibility of relocation is telling: 'Where can we go? There is no place' (*Ramona*, p. 446). Whether the Indian is incorporated into the national body or whether he is to become extinct, his disappearance is assured.

In addition, the legal system of the State is criticised as it allows the settlers to unjustly seize the land belonging to Alessandro's people. The Señora believes that the governing structures of the American state are defined by their facilitation of theft: 'Once a thief, always a thief. Nobody need feel himself safe under American rule' (*Ramona*, p. 18). Alessandro foregrounds how U.S. law enables state expansion and violent frontier acts:

Among my people there are always some that are bad; but they are in disgrace. My father punished them, the whole people punished them. If there are Americans who are good, who will not cheat and kill, why do they not send after these robbers and punish them? And how is it that they make laws which cheat? It was the American law which took Temecula away from us, and gave it to those men! The law was on the side of the thieves (*Ramona*, p. 321).

His negative remarks are echoed by Father Salvierderra who states that he has 'small faith' in Americans' honesty owing to their greed for land (*Ramona*, p. 89). The corruption that

inheres in the hegemony of American rule is highlighted when he mentions that Californios and Indians alike are ‘helpless in their hands’ (*Ramona*, p. 89). Their victory following the war grants them a legal authority which the Californios and Indians are unable to contest: ‘They possess the country, and can make what laws they please. We can only say “God’s will be done”’ (*Ramona*, p. 89). Father Salvierderra’s reference to ‘God’s will’ reinforces the idea of the predestined decline of the Californios and the Indians.

Although many of the characters in the novel are aware that the law is corrupt in practice, they fail to contest its judgements. Farrar’s case is therefore suggestive of the futility in resistance towards state expansion. Indian sovereignty is undermined in this example. This is apparent at the tribal meeting of the Cahuilla in connection with Farrar’s crime:

Earnestly the aged Capitan of the village implored them to refrain from such violence. “Why should ten be dead instead of one, my sons?” he said. “Will you leave your wives and your children like his? The whites will kill us all if you lay hands on the man. Perhaps they themselves will punish him.” A derisive laugh rose from the group. Never yet within their experience had a white man been punished for shooting an Indian. The Capitan knew that as well as they did. Why did he command them to sit still like women, and do nothing, when a friend was murdered? “Because I am old, and you are young. I have seen that we fight in vain,” said the wise old man (*Ramona*, p. 430).

The Capitan emphasises that nothing is to be gained from seeking redress for Alessandro’s murder when he tells his audience that any form of Indian reprisal will be met with an overwhelming military response from the whites. Furthermore, it is stated that none of the young Cahuilla men have witnessed justice for white crimes against their race. In this sense, the incontestable nature of American power is extended into the past and the future such that it is implicitly inferred to be a timeless monumental force as far as the young generation of Indians is concerned. In addition, they are emasculated in the respect that they are commanded to ‘sit like women and do nothing’. This description suggests the internalisation of domestic values given that the Capitan, as a ‘wise’ figurehead of authority, instructs his men to refrain from violence. Through these strategies, Jackson emphasises that American national expansion cannot be disputed by Indians, who must by necessity become

Americanised through the adoption of domestic values if they wish to survive. The demise of Indian society is inevitable as they are powerless victims, which is reinforced by the fact that Alessandro is unable to verbally defend himself prior to being shot. The women support the Capitan's argument and are shown to exert a restraining influence on the young men who relent. The inability of the Cahuilla to strike back at Farrar is paralleled at an earlier point in the text concerning the dispossession of the Temeculas when Pablo overrules Alessandro's demand to fight the settlers on the basis that resistance would lead to a terrible outcome. This relates to Jackson's ideas of pacifism, domesticity and Indian reform.

As part of this picture, Goldman writes that Jackson criticises U.S. law yet she ultimately presents it as incontrovertible: 'The despoiling of native Californians may be a tragedy but it is one authorized by federal law, racial law and natural law nonetheless' (Goldman, p. 51). Echoing her proposition for natural justice in the conclusion of *A Century of Dishonor*, Jackson puts forth a conception of justice at the end of *Ramona* that precludes the possibility of legal redress. According to this theory, immoral actions invite negative outcomes for their perpetrators. This idealisation of cause and effect in moral terms contributes to the romantic world of the plot. Consequently, guilty individuals will be haunted by memories and imaginings such as Judge Wells, who fails to take any action in the matter of Alessandro's murder. Although Judge Wells' preoccupation with Ramona's plight and Alessandro's murder may be taken to represent Jackson's natural law discourse, he can also be considered to personify the civilised American citizen who is unable to incorporate the legacy of frontier violence into his conception of national identity. In this way, I suggest that Jackson infers that the project of Indian reform must become intrinsic to governmental policy if the nation is to exorcise itself of its historical ghosts. Furthermore, she clarifies her support for the values enshrined in American law against her condemnation of its misapplication by its fallible practitioners: 'Alessandro's face haunted him, and also the

memory of Ramona's, as she lay tossing and moaning in the wretched Cahuilla hovel' (*Ramona*, pp. 434-435). The Judge is affected by Alessandro's murder as he feels a sense of responsibility towards Ramona and her child. He therefore contemplates how he can achieve atonement for his inability to punish Farrar. His representative guilt in the context of the American society is reinforced by his belated attempts to formulate a means of rescuing them.

There are also limits to the extent to which critical and realist viewpoints concerning certain atrocities and key events in the novel are articulated. Thus, speech as a form of resistance is curbed among characters. Wendy Anne Witherspoon argues that Jackson denies her Native American figures the ability to speak out in her fictionalised account of the illegal eviction of Indians from Temecula in 1875.⁹ Alessandro begins to stutter when he recounts the event to Ramona: 'Oh, Senorita [...] don't ask me to tell you anymore! It is like death. I can't' (*Ramona*, p. 239). The fate which befalls Jose and Carmena reinforces the idea that Indians are deprived of a voice as the former descends into madness whilst the latter refuses to speak again. Thus, the unpalatable realities of Indian dispossession which threaten to overwhelm the novel's romanticised world are safely contained through repression. The negation of resistance through speech is also apparent when Ramona succumbs to a fever, which prevents her from testifying at a public inquest into Alessandro's murder. Furthermore, Alessandro is shot before he can explain himself to Farrar, which signifies the denial of a voice to natives by a hostile world that seeks to eliminate them.

Alessandro's nihilism, prompted by the dispossession of the San Pasquale villagers, consolidates the theme of the fated demise of the Indians: 'From this day Alessandro was a changed man. Hope had died in his bosom [...] To whatever was proposed, he had but one reply: "It is of no use. We can do nothing"' (*Ramona*, p. 347). Witherspoon argues that

⁹ Wendy Anne Witherspoon, *The Haunted Frontier: Troubling Gothic Conventions in Nineteenth-century Literature of the American West*, (published doctoral thesis, University of Southern California, 2007), p. 115.

Alessandro's eyes 'look ever on woe' as he is unable to contest the literary and cultural frameworks that are imposed on him (*Ramona*, p. 421). His inability to speak out against white encroachment and frontier violence drives him insane: 'Speech, complaint, active antagonism, might have saved him; but all these were foreign to his self-contained, reticent, repressed nature' (*Ramona*, p. 422). Moreover, despite the fact that his crime is repeatedly condemned in the novel, Farrar remains a free man. Towards the end of the narrative, he leaves the country to escape possible prosecution, or death at the hands of Felipe. Retributive action is negated according to the novel's domestic protocols. Significantly Aunt Ri asserts that Farrar remains subject to the law of God, irrespective of his ability to evade punishment under American law: 'Naow this miser'ble murderer, this Farrar, that's lighted out er hyar, he's nothin' more' n a skunk, but he's got the Law darter him, naow' (*Ramona*, p. 467). Her remark conveys the drives of Jackson's narrative relating to the avoidance of legally authorised violence, the ameliorating effects of feminine influence through domesticity and the futility of resistance towards state expansion.

While the Señora acts as a spokesperson for resistance against American rule, in an analogous way to Magua in *The Last of the Mohicans* or Corbitant in *Hobomok*, within the plot she is vilified to the extent that the values she espouses are discredited. Furthermore, the resignation displayed by Alessandro and Father Salvierderra is implicitly endorsed by virtue of the fact that they occupy protagonist roles, which reinforces the legitimacy of the supersession of alternative cultures by American culture. Goldman writes,

Lamentation rather than exhortation characterises this sunset picture, while the recognition of loss favoured by the text's moral system is not the angry call for revenge voiced by the demonised Señora Moreno (whose hyperbolic language and cruel treatment of Ramona discourage readerly sympathy), but the wistful resignation of Alessandro and Father Salvierderra, the novel's figures of heroism and grace (Goldman, pp. 51-52).

Nonetheless, Jackson expressively criticises Californio and Indian dispossession in the preface to her novel. Ultimately, it is her intent to preserve a national ideal, albeit

reconfigured according to reform and domestic values, which leads to this narrative tension. In both *Ramona* and *Mohicans* there is a melancholic approach to the loss of societies that predate the expansion of the U.S. state, which indicates that they incorporate rather than assimilate the unethical reality of Anglo-American settlement into their respective ideals of the American nation. The use of idealised and melancholic language naturalises state expansion whilst suggesting a kind of mourning for what that entails. Alessandro argues for the futility in opposing the westward advancement of the American state: ‘we might all just as well throw ourselves into the sea and let them have it’ (*Ramona*, p. 238). His eventual madness and death reinforce the idea that the age of U.S. supremacy is predetermined.

The failings of U.S. law are paralleled by the attitudes of the ineffectual and corrupt administrators for Indian affairs. Jackson emphasises the inhumanity of the bureaucratic framework in which they operate. Alessandro and Aunt Ri are informed by the doctor that they must first register with the Agency before Alessandro’s severely ill daughter can be treated. His dismissive response to Aunt Ri’s indignation highlights the absurd tragedy of the situation that confronts them, as the trivial process Alessandro must undergo takes precedence over the fatal implications of the predicament: “‘Well, my good woman, you hear a great deal, I expect, that isn’t true;” and the doctor laughed coarsely but not ill-naturedly, Alessandro all the time studying his face with the scrutiny of one awaiting life and death’ (*Ramona*, p. 397). The doctor reacts with indifference towards Alessandro’s plea to treat his daughter, whose condition has deteriorated. As Alessandro dejectedly walks away, he overhears him laughing callously in relation to the payment he had proposed: ‘And Alessandro departed again, walking so slowly, however, that he heard the coarse laugh, and the words, “Gold! Looked like it, didn’t he?”’ which followed his departure from the room’ (*Ramona*, pp. 402-403). Jackson thus critiques the inhumanity of Anglo-American males and

evokes sympathy for Alessandro so as to challenge the iconic image of the wild, demonic Indian which earlier haunted the American imagination.

In such examples, she substantiates her advocacy for reform as an alternative strategy of assimilation. At the same time, resistance towards the concept of state expansion, regardless of its ethical problems, engenders futility, which in turn naturalises her reformist assimilation discourse. Jackson's national vision is dual in entertaining the disparate ideals of reform and Indian sovereignty as a pretext for American democracy. As already mentioned, this concept of autonomy permeates the narrative's reform dimension in the very proposition of an Other that requires assimilation. The forced imposition of reform as a violation of individual sovereignty would also clash with her condemnation for violent national expansion. Therefore, assimilation must remain as a choice. As will be seen, the Other is a pivotal element in *Ramona's* narrative which is continually reconceived according to the boundaries of national identity. The endpoint of erasing Indian culture via assimilation is occluded by the fact that assimilation must remain optional. Moreover, Jackson's condemnation of frontier violence hides the latent contradiction of her own approach, which entails epistemic violence. Melancholic markers are produced such as Ramona's haunted condition, the implications of Alessandro's murder and so on, which arguably parallel the signifiers for the repression of sublime horror generated by Bird's Indian-hater discourse. As will be discussed in my final chapter, Melville adroitly deconstructs such psychological processes involving projected narratives, their underlying motivations and the secrets they elide.

Noble Savagery and Indian Reform

Along with other Indian reformers of her time, Jackson makes a case for the elevated Indian who can participate in the progress of the nation. She seeks to convince her readers that Indians have potential to be transformed into American citizens, showing via her narrative

that they are of an inherently nobler character compared to the whites. This is most obvious in the paired characterisation of Alessandro and Felipe to which I now turn. In positing that Americans can learn from the unrefined noble qualities of Indian culture, she reiterates her ideal of a racially inclusive nation. However, the theme of superior Indian nobility does not mean the negation of her reform discourse, as it is a tactic of exaggeration designed to win over her audience to the idea that Indians can be Americanised. In addition, there are references to the improvement of Indian character through the missions, which demonstrates that her noble savage ideal is partly invested in European American influences.

Alessandro personifies the notion of the civilised Indian given that he is a literate and industrious sheep shearer. He also possesses a stronger moral fibre in comparison to Felipe:

Felipe was a fair-minded, honorable man, as men go; but circumstances and opportunity would have a hold on him they could never get on Alessandro. Alessandro would not lie; Felipe might. Alessandro was by nature full of veneration and the religious instinct; Felipe had been trained into being a good Catholic (*Ramona*, p. 101).

Whereas Alessandro displays qualities of religious devotion and honour at an inherent level, Felipe has acquired them, to an extent, through training. The fact that these attributes are essential to Alessandro's being as a noble savage means that he will not deviate in his behaviour as Felipe might. Jackson plays up the noble savage archetype by representing it as a phenomenon tied to race to convince her Anglo-American audience of the feasibility for Indian assimilation through domestic tutelage. Alessandro's background as a missionised Indian is omitted in this particular description yet it contributes to the idea that Indians can be incorporated into the American nation. If his character has been refined through Franciscan education then he and others like him can be assimilated by the State through Indian reform programmes. Furthermore, Alessandro is likened to a saint by Ramona: 'There is something in these like the eyes of a saint, so solemn yet so mild. I am sure he is very good' (*Ramona*, p. 109). Felipe later contends that his personal characteristics are the product of his racial

lineage: 'I've seen other Indians too, with a good deal the same manner as Alessandro. It's born in them' (*Ramona*, p. 118). He also links these traits back to the education provided by the Franciscan order: 'Old Pablo is just like him [...] It was natural enough, living so long with Father Peyri' (*Ramona*, p. 118). Alessandro's nobility echoes that of Hobomok in that both characters are permitted to marry above their station based on qualities that distinguish them from other Indians. Moreover, that Child and Jackson use these pairings to explore their respective national ideals is another point of comparison. Both writers incorporate the Indian into their sense of American identity, which they use to criticise patriarchy, frontier violence and intolerance. Similarly, in each case the Indian suitor is either banished or murdered once his use has been fulfilled, which leads to a melancholic dissonance between the messages their narratives project with respect to inclusivity and what they effectively imply through their conclusions in relation to racial homogeneity and assimilation.

Jackson links the noble savage to her reform discourse to suggest that the values it engenders should inform the character of the nation. This may be related to her argument against violent frontier expansion and its substitution with an ethically guided or 'noble' colonialism. For example, David Luis Brown argues that the 'myriads of the finest wires' which characterise Ramona's love for Alessandro imply that the Indian naturally possesses traits intrinsic to the nation's wellbeing (Brown, p. 828).

Nothing could have been farther removed from anything like love-making [...] This is a common mistake on the part of those who have never felt love's true bonds [...] They are made as the great iron cables are made, on which bridges are swung across the widest water-channels, -not of single huge rods, or bars, which would be stronger, perhaps, to look at; but of myriads of the finest wires, each one by itself so fine, so frail, it would barely hold a child's kite in the wind [...] Such cables do not break (*Ramona*, pp. 216-217)

Alternatively, the Indian qualities of kindness, generosity, fidelity and obedience, which inform these wires that consolidate the nation, simultaneously infer the idea of Indians as racial subordinates. This results in the denial of equal citizenship with white Americans and

is emblematic the text's process of melancholic incorporation in terms of a constant pattern of ingestion and expulsion. Concordantly, this does not lead to the conclusion that Jackson intends for a literal Indianisation of American identity. In the same way that Cooper utilises mythology and certain noble qualities associated with the Indian to define a unique American history and societal vision, Jackson projects onto her Indians, values of generosity, religious piety and so forth that can be associated with the principles of Indian reform and white Christian civilisation. In each case, the Indian is absorbed as a function of American identity that brings about his disappearance. By focusing on what she selectively perceives in Native American cultures, Jackson creates an imagined Indian Other that can be controlled and absorbed into the nation. 'Indianness' is therefore co-opted to become an extension of 'Americanness'.

Nonetheless, the fact that such a fabrication is based on her observations of actual Native American tribes means that Jackson's conception of Indianness is at least partly rooted in reality, albeit one which is distorted to fit her reform agenda. Her Indian is a passive noble savage and a victim of the American state who deserves salvation through a reformulated colonial approach by that very same political institution. Similarly, Ramona is domestic yet foreign in her civilised manners and mixed race heritage, independent yet subordinate to the demands of a civilisation from which she wishes to escape. In effect, she personifies this drawing upon and externalising of the Indian in relation to the American ego-ideal.

As with Alessandro, Ramona is a paragon of acculturation. Such is her refinement that she can be considered as a missionary of civilisation in the Indian villages she inhabits after leaving the Moreno household. For example, her domestic influence is evident when she improves the condition of their new house: 'It was a wretched place; one small room, walled with poorly made adobe bricks, thatched with tule, no floor, and only one window [...] Two

months later, no one would have known it' (*Ramona*, p. 389). Similarly, in San Pasquale she transforms the adobe hut built by Alessandro into a veritable 'palace' and village shrine: 'many a woman of the village, when she came to see Ramona asked permission to go into the bedroom and say her prayers there; so that it finally came to be a sort of shrine for the whole village' (*Ramona*, pp. 336-337). The women of the Saboba village also regard her as an angelic figure: 'They all loved her, and half revered her too, for her great kindness, and readiness to teach and to help them. She had been like a sort of missionary in the valley ever since she came, and no one had ever seen her face without a smile' (*Ramona*, p. 343). However, her civilised, mixed race status also differentiates her from other Indians regardless of her assertions of Indian affiliation. This is evident in Father Gaspara's observation: 'She's had some schooling somewhere, that's plain. She's quite superior to the general run of them' (*Ramona*, p. 345).

Ramona embodies the principle of successful assimilation, something that prevents her from ever becoming truly Indian at one level, despite the simultaneous fact that her Indian identity cannot be fully expunged from the narrative. For example, Aunt Ri alludes to her exceptional status: 'Naow when I say Injuns, I don't never mean yeow, yer know thet. Yer ain't ever seemed to me one mite like an Injun' (*Ramona*, p. 393). When Ramona's child dies, the Indian women are puzzled by her lack of emotional display, which draws attention to her different background: "'Why does not this mother weep? Is she like the whites, who have no heart?" Said the Saboba mothers among themselves' (*Ramona*, p. 407). Ramona's differentiated status allows her to be rescued from the suffering that awaits her if she chooses to remain as an Indian squaw.

In this context, Ramona's distinction points not only to her Californio upbringing but also to her part European lineage and by implication her Anglo-American qualities, which enables Jackson's audience to relate to her. Conversely, she is shown to be an Indian in the

emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of her life.¹⁰ The narrative trope of passing is utilised in that she is a member of the Californio elite despite her ancestry of which she is initially ignorant. It is also identifiable when she convinces herself that she is an Indian by virtue of her mixed ethnicity and sensibility. Although Jackson emphasises Ramona's Indianness, linking it to a cultural understanding based on racial subjectivity, it is arguable that in light of her exceptional status, she *performs* the role of an Indian to some extent. Nonetheless, at other points in the text her innate understanding of 'Indianness' becomes a significant thematic element. Jackson selectively uses the idea of Indian subjectivity to espouse her conception of national identity through Ramona's relationship with Indian tribal communities via Alessandro.

In inhabiting Ramona's perspective through her racial and cultural negotiations and ambiguity, the reader is encouraged to adopt the reformist position. Witherspoon argues that she is ultimately an archetypal Anglo-American woman characterised by submissiveness, sexual purity, piety and domestic grace (Witherspoon, p. 122). Her Catholicism is also presented to appeal to Protestant readers through its contrast with the Señora's, which is portrayed as mercenary and insincere. Ramona's relationship with Father Salvierderra implies that her Catholic faith is rooted in an affinity with the human soul rather than an attachment to church relics. Her conviction in individual faith is inferred to be a manifestation of her inner Protestantism. For example, when Alessandro expresses his doubts about Catholicism she replies that awareness of God's love is derived from 'what we feel in our hearts' (*Ramona*, p. 323). Her transformation from a believer in religious icons to an Emersonian self-reliant figure renders her an appealing and sympathetic character for

¹⁰ Ramona's role in enabling Jackson's readership to vicariously experience Indian society is rooted in a longer literary tradition that explores and incorporates Indian culture as a distinguishing element of American identity. This is not only evident in Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* but can also be found in now less well known works such as *Logan* (1822) by John Neal.

Protestant readers and consolidates her status as a signifier for Anglo-American Protestantism.¹¹

Alessandro also occupies a distinguished position. His own people regard him as ‘a distant, cold boy’ and attribute his demeanour to his education at the mission that they link to white racial values: ‘Chief Pablo had not done his son any good by trying to make him like white men’ (*Ramona*, p. 69). However, his aloofness is connected with the burdens he carries on behalf of his people. His education enables him to foresee the dispossession that awaits them and this in turn affects his disposition and outlook.

In the dramatic romance plot centred on them, Alessandro abandons his immediate tribal affiliation to support Ramona despite the fact that they have chosen to assert their Indian identity. This alludes to the reformist idea that Indian women could compel their men to acquire private property through labour.¹² That he contemplates the inevitable deprivations they will endure if he is unable to provide a sufficient means of income suggests that the Indian way of life is obsolete in the new capitalist order of the American state: ‘Could she live in a house such as he must live in,—live as the Temecula women lived? No! for her sake he must leave his people; must go to some town, must do—he knew not what—something to earn more money’ (*Ramona*, p. 156). Alessandro’s reflections in this case once again serve to highlight Ramona’s distinction.

¹¹ Witherspoon argues that Ramona’s approach to Catholicism reflects Jackson’s transcendentalist values that she adopted from Emerson. His focus on human interaction and the spiritual dimension to art in *Nature* (1836) provides her with a set of values, which she would later use for her religious philosophy in addition to her poetry and prose. (Witherspoon, p. 134)

¹² In this sense, Indian men sacrificed tribal communalism for wage labour as a result of a domestic desire to own private property. For individuals such as Merrill Gates, the savage Indian could be transformed into an ‘intelligently selfish’ rational actor, as envisaged by laissez-faire economic models, through the adoption of wage labour. The Indian could then become part of the ‘intelligently unselfish’ nation: ‘Instilling the domesticating desire for private property, the invisible influence of domestic interiors and the racial tutelage of wage labour would make the savage Indian vanish, adding in due time the dark skinned yet civilised U.S. citizen to the nation’s fabric’ (Gonzalez, p. 451). In effect, the disappearance of the Indian was ensured with their economic absorption into the nation state.

Returning to Gutierrez-Jones' assertion that Jackson approaches the nation in terms of individuals, Ramona and Alessandro as the two primary Indian characters implicitly signify the drive of Jackson's narrative to undermine the option of tribal autonomy. This is indicated as they represent the assimilated Indian rather than the sum of autonomous tribal nations through their exceptional status. However, the choice of Americanisation is maintained and conveyed through their relationship and exile. Jackson's conception of American identity orbits the principle of Indian sovereignty, which is ultimately repressed by her reformist position. Her delineation of Indian sovereignty entails an acknowledgement of otherness in abstraction, which structures the narrative's complex reform discourse and its ideal of the democratic nation. In conjunction with the romance plot, this otherness can also be discerned as a spectral form with respect to the imagery used to describe the aftermath of Alessandro's murder and Ramona's melancholic Indian subjectivity, which colours her eventual marriage to Felipe. These cases, which will be discussed in detail later on, evoke the principle of an inassimilable Other that resists assimilation into the State and this in turn serves to validate the State as a democratic institution and the non-violent ethos of reform. As noted, the Other operates as a form which the narrative strives towards yet never fully appropriates. Through this process of constant negotiation parameters are generated which define the nation and its identity. As that which Jackson is unable or unwilling to understand, this Other is not directly articulated but is rather an undefined property engendered in her incorporation of Native Americans into her epistemic framework in relation to the narrative threads of reform and Indian sovereignty. If for Gutierrez-Jones, Ramona's mestiza identity constitutes the absent symbolic core of the novel, it is arguable that the otherness of Indian sovereignty functions as a phantasmal counterpart underscoring the novel's ideal of the democratic American nation.¹³

¹³ Gutierrez-Jones argues that the historical period that relates to the mestiza is denied through the incestuous, necrophiliac and insulating drives that are present in the conclusion (Gutierrez-Jones, pp. 63, 68). Jackson

For example, in the context of reform and the noble savage, Alessandro's moments of regression to a tribal state arguably embody the repressed idea of Indian sovereignty. The civilising project never reaches completion in the novel since even refined Indians such as Alessandro are sometimes guided by primitive impulses. For Jackson the eradication of tribal savagery required many years of sustained effort. In her view it was necessary for the U.S. government to be aware of the slow pace of domestication in relation to its own policy of racial tutelage. A century of civilising education would be required to redeem the U.S. for its century of dishonour. For example, Alessandro's descent into madness engenders a reversion to a barbaric state. According to Gonzalez, he believes that his condition is the result of his choice to marry Ramona at the expense of his tribal nation due to his pursuit of an individual destiny over a communal one (Gonzalez, p. 453). This is indicated when he informs Ramona that his people have been driven from Temecula: 'It is the saints who have punished me thus for having resolved to leave my people, and take all I had for myself and you' (*Ramona*, p. 206). Alessandro's psychological malady is associated with the manifestation of an inassimilable remainder of his tribal existence, brought about by the epistemic violence entailed in its destruction by the American state.¹⁴ His mistaken belief that he is in possession of livestock is symptomatic of the lost communal wealth of his tribe and so his insanity can be characterised as a mental state which recognises tribal relations over those invested in the ownership of private property. These circumstances which lead to his murder are therefore symbolic of the fragility of domestic education and the threat of racial reversion. The idea

ignores the burgeoning population of impoverished mestizas by focusing exclusively on the idealised families of the Morenos, the Hyers and the Assis that make up the world of the novel.

¹⁴ This remainder will anticipate Ramona's later Indian subjectivity at the end of the novel. Senier points out that Alessandro's madness indicates his interiority. Siobhan Senier, *Voices of American Indian Assimilation and Resistance: Helen Hunt Jackson, Sarah Winnemucca, and Victoria Howard* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001) p. 55. In this way, his Indian nature, like that of Ramona's, resides outside the imaginative parameters of the novel and cannot be articulated as anything but that which defies rationalisation and articulation. A parallel can also be established with Child's novel in that these forms of Indian subjectivity are allowed to exist beyond the confines of the novel's symbolic system.

that the savage can be civilised is here undermined by Jackson's racialist preconceptions and thus the potential incorporation of the Indian into the State is diminished.

For Gonzalez, Alessandro's inability to respect private property while he is in a lost state reflects Henry S. Pancoast's contention that Indian society was unaffected by property crime given that it was the symptomatic drawback of more advanced cultures. Thus, property crimes constituted a subversion of the legal relationship to property. However, they also signified the correct conceptual recognition of private property. Alessandro experiences a lapse in his sanity that in this reading signifies the resurgence of the tribal facet of his persona. The fact that he does not intend to commit any crime when he mistakenly rides off with Farrar's horse attests to this: 'Alessandro's madness, in effect, is represented as an atavistic reversion to a state of savagery that only recognizes tribal relations and not private property' (Gonzalez, p. 454). Gonzalez states that Alessandro's savage status also reflects anxieties pertaining to the inability of assimilated Indians to retain the lessons of their racial tutelage. In this sense, their civilised conditioning might be overcome by earlier memories of savage contexts that informed their physical development. The neo-Lamarckian position held that the body was shaped by its culture. Conversely, this contention that behaviours were implicated in biological inheritance could also be applied to the fully civilised concerning primitive impulses. Hence, Lewis Henry Morgan considered racial reversion to be directly implicated in deviant social phenomena that existed within modern societies. Barbaric atavisms which pervaded the outer settlements of civilisation were not coincidental for Indian reformists such as Morgan. Jackson's narrative to some extent reflects these theoretical suppositions. This is identifiable in her focus on Anglo-American male violence that parallels the 'savage violence' of the Kentuckians in *Nick of the Woods*. Concordantly, Alessandro's insanity as a marker of resurgent savagery echoes Chingachgook's spontaneous outburst of barbarity when he slays a

French sentinel in *The Last of the Mohicans*. In both cases regression to a savage state is associated with cultural and ethnic factors.

By implying that Indians cannot be fully civilised, *Ramona* subverts its own model of multiracial national inclusion through its racial politics and thereby preserves the existence of an inassimilable Other, which reflects a pattern of melancholic incorporation. Additionally, natives' inherent savagery justifies perpetual tutelage and thus control through federal programmes of reform, which reflects upon Jackson's dichotomous position regarding Indians as she advocated for their Americanisation whilst seeing them as racial subordinates. Thus, her novel models a form of soft power, cultural colonialism that differs from the narratives of frontier conquest seen in the works of Cooper and Bird. With the loss of the ideal of reform towards the end of the text in light of the circumstances surrounding Alessandro's death, Jackson shifts her attention from the plight of the Indians to the fashioning of a romantic conclusion with the marriage between Felipe and Ramona in an idealised Mexico. Despite this, Ramona's Indian subjectivity demonstrates how the conclusion is haunted by a continuing Indian presence. Indian savage autonomy is not fully erased as this serves to validate the ideal of a democratic American identity.

Indian Subjectivity in the Context of Sovereignty and Assimilation

As discussed, Jackson's limited recognition for Indian sovereignty is the most significant element in the novel that compromises her discourse of assimilation. In William Modellmog's view, she utilises the noble savage myth in her romanticised portraits of Ramona and Alessandro to emphasise their free will and the respect due to it.¹⁵ This contrasts with the argument that she adopts the myth to vouch for assimilation. Moreover, it works

¹⁵ William E. Modellmog, *Reconstituting Authority: American Fiction in the Province of the Law, 1880-1920* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000), p. 82.

against the idea that Ramona is a symbol of acculturation and Anglo-American values. However, Ramona's inter-subjective link to Indian culture is a major element of the novel, which exists alongside her characterisation as an exceptional figure personifying the principle of assimilation. In this section I will argue that the conflict between Jackson's recognition for tribal sovereignty in principle is undermined by the assimilationist drive of her narrative. I will link this to the frame of postcolonial psychoanalysis to delineate how such a conflict results in the collapse of her reform theme and reflects her projection of Indian subjectivity as an extension of American identity, which signifies an incorporation of the Indian into her national ideal.

Moddelmog claims that Jackson's approach to Indian subjectivity is paralleled by the law's treatment of Indian nationhood. For instance, it was imperative for the early Republic to recognise Indian tribes as nations as an all-out conflict with them was unfeasible following the War of Independence. However, by the 1850s the tribes no longer presented a threat to the State. Despite the 'abrogation' of treaty policy by the federal government, the idea of Indian national sovereignty persisted in cases such as *Crow Dog*. Nationhood was perceived as a matter of consent rather than coercion.

According to Moddelmog the inassimilable Indian archetype has a legacy of representation in American letters and American law, which echoes what has been discussed with regards to *Ramona* partaking in a literary tradition of Indian incorporation. Although authors utilised the Indian figure to repudiate European over-refinement, they also warned whites to maintain their status as civilised beings such that they would not degenerate through the adoption of savage customs. The conception of Indians as a noble yet doomed race enabled for the celebration of 'Indianness' without validating Indian culture per se. Moddelmog argues that Indian romanticisation was linked to the forms of Indian nationhood which the government and reformers sought to eliminate (Moddelmog, p. 88). As a result of

their refusal to relinquish their tribal affiliations, Indians embodied the contractual ideology that informed the State's conception of itself as an independent nation.

The premise that assimilation was a matter of choice as opposed to coercion meant that it was necessary to acknowledge the possibility that it could sometimes be imposed. The ideological belief in the superiority of American civilisation over Indian savagery was based upon the preservation of the savage image as this rendered the choice for assimilation into the nation state as a voluntary act. Modellmog claims that Jackson legitimates this choice in her narrative. In *Ramona* Indian identity not only equates to being savage and oppressed but also represents the power one can wield over the terms of one's national affiliation (Moddelmog, p. 87). In this sense, we can see how Jackson's reformist conception of national identity is dual and melancholic as it tries to absorb the Indian into the national realm whilst preserving his savage status to maintain the ideals of U.S. democracy and non-violent assimilation. A perpetual conflict between assimilation and sovereignty is set in motion, which in psychoanalytic terms reflects the text's incorporative dimension with respect to ingestion and expulsion in its inability to reconcile the Other to its idealisation of the nation.

The relationship between Ramona and Alessandro entails a form of Indian subjectivity that haunts the novel's conclusion. As such, their exile from the Moreno ranch and their subsequent marriage constitutes an exploration of Indian identity. This element reflects the conflict between the text's discourse of Indian reform and its simultaneous recognition of Indian sovereignty informing its conception of national identity. In contrast to Mary and Hobomok's marriage in Child's novel, which enables Mary's self-actualisation as an autonomous, ideological dissident, the relationship between Ramona and Alessandro not only conveys a specific vision of American identity but also offers a detailed condemnation of unchecked national expansion.

Jackson represents the relationship between Alessandro and Ramona as one entailing a mystical connection. For example, Ramona falls ill when she considers the possibility of Alessandro's death following his absence from the ranch. However, on the eighteenth day after his departure she suddenly becomes aware that he is not dead and that he is near the estate. No explanation is given for her cognisance other than the suggestion that her connection with him enables her to discern his whereabouts: 'on this evening, she was suddenly aware of a vivid impression produced upon her; it was not sound, it was not sight. "Alessandro is not dead!" she said aloud; and she laughed hysterically. "He is not dead!" she repeated. "He is not dead! He is somewhere near!"' (*Ramona*, p. 233). We learn she is unable to determine the reasons influencing her affection for Alessandro due to her lack of awareness of her Indian origins:

Jackson tells us that Ramona "would have found it hard to tell why she thus loved Alessandro; how it began or by what it grew," but she adds that "the sudden knowledge of the fact of her own Indian descent seemed to her like a revelation, pointing out the path in which destiny called her to walk" (Moddelmog, p. 162).

It is implied throughout the novel that consciousness is defined by national/ethnic affiliation. Thus, the common racial lineage which results in a communal understanding among Indians is also what establishes an immutable boundary between Indians and whites. Ramona is able to pass through this boundary as a mixed race character who is raised as a Californio. Through her narrative perspective, the Anglo-American reader is once again provided with an interpretation of the Other that coheres with the values and sentiments of reform.

Ramona's marriage to Alessandro signifies an affirmation of Indian identity. By marrying him she is implied to establish a union with a 'people'. This is evident when she declares her Indian affiliation to Alessandro: 'Your people are my people' (*Ramona*, p. 112). Her newly assumed identity is loaded with national connotations which are connected to her racial background. When she rejects the Señora's authority she is described as passing into a

country 'where the Señora did not rule' (*Ramona*, p. 128). The Señora is unable to prevent Ramona from marrying Alessandro because of her latent Indian subjectivity. Moreover, Ramona asserts her Indian identity when the Señora caustically remarks that her Indian blood would one day surface in her actions: 'Ramona's cheeks were scarlet. Her eyes flashed. "Yes, Señora Moreno," she said, springing to her feet; "the Indian blood in my veins shows to-day [...] Oh, I am glad I am an Indian! I am of his people. He will be glad!"' (*Ramona*, p. 173). The Señora's vehement opposition to her relationship with Alessandro only serves to awaken her Indian subjectivity: 'At these words, this name, Ramona, was herself again, - not her old self, her new self, Alessandro's promised wife. The very sound of his name, even on an enemy's tongue, gave her strength' (*Ramona*, p. 176). Indian identity is romanticised as it is framed in terms of their marital relationship and the idealised moments they share in locations such as the canyon or the eyrie, which are implied to be realms of Indian subjectivity separate from the American state. Thus, it is through their romance that issues of frontier violence and dispossession are properly delineated. As noted, the romantic plot ultimately eclipses Jackson's political reform agenda. It also serves to contain the inassimilable otherness of the Indian that is crystallised by the implosion of the text's assimilationist discourse.

Ramona's decision to elope with Alessandro initiates her transformation into an Indian woman. Her metamorphosis reaches its fruition when she is given her new Indian name by Alessandro. She regains the Indian identity, which has been suppressed by the Señora by discarding her Spanish namesake in favour of the 'Indian' name Majella. It is notable that Majella is a Spanish permutation on Majel, meaning that it reflects upon her mixed race background. It is also significant that she states that she would henceforth only like Felipe to call her Ramona as this anticipates her later re-incorporation into Californio culture at the end as it is Felipe who rescues and marries her: "'Remember, I am Ramona no

longer. That also was the name the Señora called me by—and dear Felipe too,” she added thoughtfully. “He would not know me by my new name. I would like to have him always call me Ramona. But for all the rest of the world I am Majella, now,—Alessandro’s Majel!”” (*Ramona*, p. 264). Her renaming consolidates her link to Alessandro who has thus far been unable to call her by any other name than her formal title, Señorita. In addition, when Father Gaspara writes down their names for the marriage register, Ramona asserts that she is known as Majella Phail. Her rebirth in terms of her self-fashioned identity is formalised with the written recording of her new name: “The last step was taken in the disappearance of Ramona. How should any one, searching in after years, find any trace of Ramona Ortegna, in the woman married under the name of “Majella Fayeel?”” (*Ramona*, p. 317). The fact that she chooses her paternal surname reinforces her mixed race background.

At the graveyard Carmena warns Ramona not to follow Alessandro into Hartsels. Ramona is able to comprehend her meaning even though she speaks in the Luiseño dialect. This is attributable to the notion of a shared racial consciousness, which is reinforced when Alessandro proclaims that she belongs to his people: ““You see, then, she has understood the Luiseño words,” he said delightedly. “She is one of us!” “Yes,” said Carmena, gravely, “she is one of us”” (*Ramona*, p. 302). However, Ramona’s ‘Indianness’ is no cause for celebration for Carmena as she considers her people to be doomed and is noted to repeat the words ‘one of us’ in a tone of ‘dire prophecy’ (*Ramona*, p. 302). The word ‘prophecy’ is also used when Ramona overhears a conversation between white settlers who wish to appropriate the territory of the Sabobas: ‘She kept it locked in her own breast, but it rankled there like a ceaseless warning and prophecy’ (*Ramona*, p. 391). Indian disappearance is therefore implied to be predestined. Thus, Alessandro and Ramona ‘prophetically’ invite catastrophe when they attempt to live outside the State.

Jackson depicts the retreat of Ramona and Alessandro into a remote canyon following their departure from the Moreno ranch as a journey into the recesses of Indian selfhood. Her representation of the wilderness displays similarities with and differences from Cooper and Bird. Her use of romanticism to idealise the Californio landscape situates her in proximity to Cooper along the continuum of literary generic conventions. However, the fact that she was writing in 1888 in the era of Victorian realism means that these romanticist elements are tempered. For example, even though Felipe's entrance into the ruined San Juan Capistrano mission arguably has gothic connotations this scene pales in comparison to Cooper's mythologised account of the Huron village as an 'unhallowed and supernatural arena' populated by 'spectres' and 'sprites' (*Mohicans*, p. 237). Similarly, while narrative accounts of the canyon and mountain eyrie regions are highly romanticised as paradisiacal locations, Jackson's novel as a whole lacks the same kind of sweeping mythic quality found in Cooper's historical romance. This is evident, for example, in her less than romantic descriptions of Indian dispossession and the sufferings of Alessandro and Ramona.

In conjunction with the mountain eyrie, the canyon is a liberating realm in direct contrast to the Señora's household, which can be taken as a microcosm of the type of civilisation that Jackson rejects regarding its excessively oppressive racial and hierarchal distinctions. Jackson arguably draws upon American Romanticist tropes in her representation of the wilderness in this context to consolidate her critique of what she sees as the grotesque aspects of purely capitalist driven expansion. This is substantiated in relation to her interest in Emersonian transcendentalism. Along with the use of these conventions to complement her depiction of the free exploration of Indian subjectivity, her drawing on Romanticism ties in with her concept of a democratic American identity. Joshua Johns writes

The Romantics believed that nature was the inherent possessor of abstract qualities such as truth, beauty, independence and democracy. In the natural world, people could reclaim or at least approximate the lost innocence of their origins--both individual and national. The image of

America as a garden could apply to the Romantic perspective of nature, but the gridwork of civilization had to be stripped from the landscape.¹⁶

This thinking informs the use of the natural world and symbolic geographies in *Ramona*.

As with Indian nobility, the exploration of Indian subjectivity becomes as much a delineation of American selfhood when framed in terms of Moddelmog's contention that Jackson's concept of American identity is based partly on Indian sovereignty. The associative links of *Ramona* and Alessandro's newly autonomous existence, that is links to American values such as independence and pragmatism, indicate this. Moreover, if Jackson utilises the noble Indian as a figurative embodiment of her political vision for America then it is arguable that she invokes through these idyllic scenes, an ideal of American identity rooted in nature in connection to resourcefulness, freedom and individuality.

Alternately, Indian subjectivity conveys the idea of a separate Indian social and cultural framework. In this sense it has a layered function in that it represents the prized aspects of American identity whilst acting as a signifier for the abstracted idea of autonomy. The canyon becomes a 'friendly home' for *Ramona* that she dreads to leave and contributes to her liberation from the 'miserable pretences of superiority, makeshifts of adornment, and chains of custom' (*Ramona*, p. 208). Jackson challenges discourses that represent the frontier in negative terms, noting how the canyon is a place of renewal for Alessandro and *Ramona*:

Nothing is stronger proof of the original intent of Nature to do more for man than the civilization in its arrogance will long permit her to do, than the quick and sure way in which she reclaims his affection, when by weariness, idle chance, or disaster, he is returned, for an interval, to her arms (*Ramona*, p. 280).

She proceeds to characterise the customs of civilisation as negative, restraining influences.

The remote canyon is a location defined by Indian identity in light of its physical partition from the American state. This is substantiated when *Ramona* ponders whether it is her Indian

¹⁶ Joshua Johns, *A Brief History of Nature and the American Consciousness*, (1996), n.p. <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/nature/cap2.html>> [accessed 31 August 2013]

identity that causes her to feel such an affinity with their surroundings: ‘This seems to me the first home I have ever had. Is it because I am Indian, Alessandro, that it gives me such joy?’ (*Ramona*, p. 281). In addition, Ramona remarks upon Alessandro’s stoical nature, stating that he speaks in the same fashion as the natural features of the landscape. Pleased by this observation, Alessandro explains that she speaks in the language of his people. Jackson links a primal state of harmony with nature to the idea of Indianness. The land is also implicated in Alessandro’s restoration given that his gaunt look is replaced by a countenance of vitality, which is apparent in his following remark: “‘If the air could keep me well, I had not been ill, Majella,” replied Alessandro. “I had been under no roof except the tule-shed, till I saw you. It is not the air;” and he looked at her with a gaze that said the rest’ (*Ramona*, p. 282). The canyon’s rejuvenating effect is later matched by that of the mountain eyrie: ‘There was exhilaration in the place. It brought healing to both Alessandro and Ramona. Even the bitter grief for the baby’s death was soothed’ (*Ramona*, p. 419). Moddelmog identifies that both sites symbolise the resistance of the self to the requirements of civilisation (Moddelmog, pp. 91-92).

Ramona’s Indian tutelage is initiated in the canyon location and its remoteness from civilisation indicates that Jackson considers ‘Indianness’ to be irreconcilable with the demands of the American state. This is reinforced when the couple are compelled to leave each Indian village they inhabit until they have no option but to flee to the mountain eyrie. They are unable to fully remove themselves from the aggressive encroachment of the white settlers as is evident in Alessandro’s murder. The assertion of independence from the Señora’s authority and American society implies a kind of imprisonment through isolation for Ramona and Alessandro, even though their retreat from civilisation initially appears to be liberating. While they endeavour to maintain a semblance of autonomy from white society, their movements are determined by it. At best, they manage to explore and preserve an Indian

subjective domain that is ultimately doomed with rise of the American state, something presented as a kind of unavoidable condition of reality as opposed to a contingent and contestable historical phenomenon. Thus, clear parallels are evident with Cooper's contention that the decline of the noble savage is a destined natural process akin to the changing of the seasons. Both Jackson and Cooper are sympathetic in their representation of Indians and are likewise entrenched in their opinion that Indian tribal autonomy must disappear as an alternative that can challenge U.S. hegemony. Conversely, in Jackson's case Indian tribal autonomy is preserved in order to validate democratic participation in the American nation. However, her emphasis on its inevitable decline via the romance plot between Ramona and Alessandro supports her assimilationist argument.

Ramona soon feels imprisoned in the mountain eyrie due to her sense of helplessness. Her Indian subjectivity has led to her confinement as it is incompatible with the American nation: 'Ramona was as helpless in her freedom on this mountain eyrie as if she had been chained hand and foot' (*Ramona*, p. 424). Freedom from the orders of civilisation is thus ironically associated with captivity through isolation, which is shown to be untenable. The death of their child likewise signifies the impossibility of a sustained purely tribal existence. Alessandro's thoughts in the aftermath of the event indicate this: 'It was well the baby had died; she was saved all this misery. By the time she had grown to be a woman, if she had lived, there would be no place in all the country where an Indian could find refuge' (*Ramona*, p. 412). Their misfortune is prefigured earlier in the text when Jose's child dies shortly after his own death. Alessandro laments the fact that their second child has inherited his Indian features, which will consign him to a life of suffering and misery in a white dominated land: "It is an ill fate to have the eyes of Alessandro," he said. "They look ever on woe" (*Ramona*, p. 421). Nonetheless, their second child also acts as a symbol of Indian identity that is incorporated into the Moreno family in the conclusion. In a parallel with *Hobomok* where

Charles 'Hobomok' Conant is adopted into white society, the future of the Indian race is implied to rest in assimilation. The fact that Ramona is rescued by Felipe demonstrates that assimilation into white society is the only viable option for her. Indian life is associated with poverty, displacement and ultimately death.

Whilst Jackson articulates her acceptance of Indian claims to freedom and self-determination, she also intends Indians to use that freedom to reject their tribal affiliations. Despite this, the inassimilable Other which she entertains in her conception of a democratic American state casts a spectral shadow over the remainder of the narrative. This is evident in the nature of Alessandro's death. As Ramona approaches his corpse, she places a white altar-cloth over his 'mutilated' face before leaving the eyrie. The covering of his face and removal of his body by the Cahuilla compounds his erasure from the national corpus. The process of Indian effacement reaches its zenith in the text with these events. Alessandro's individual status is jettisoned, as he becomes a faceless, foreign group victim who lacks agency and can be possessed by Anglo-American readers without any requirement for them to engage in cultural translation. Nonetheless, his blood is compared to that of a martyr as it soaks into the ground, implying that the soil upon which the nation is built will be affected by his ghostly presence. It is arguable that Ramona in her guise as a representative of Anglo-America absorbs the Other, namely Alessandro through marriage and death. The Anglo-American nation therefore incorporates the Other according to its epistemic framework to define its identity whilst expelling the foreign body from its parameters. However, it remains haunted through this work by a remainder, in this case Alessandro's blood. This process has certain similarities with Mary's marriage to Hobomok as the basis for Child's conception of national identity. Once Hobomok's purpose is served in helping Mary to construct a new identity he effectively dies through his disappearance. However, as with Alessandro's blood, he leaves a

mark upon the nation with his child, which reflects how the American psyche incorporates the Indian to define itself.

Ramona's romantic conclusion also functions to contain the inassimilable possibilities for Indian sovereignty yielded by its conception of national identity, which conflicts with its reform narrative. Jackson attempts to bring about an individual-level, romantic reconciliation when Felipe resurrects the Moreno household by travelling to Mexico and marrying Ramona. As in the case of Alessandro's death, the Other is displaced such that Jackson's audience is absolved from considering the events of the narrative from its perspective. In this reading the prominence of the family romance at the end indicates a transition from the public domain of political action to a private sphere informed by insularity. Gutiérrez-Jones contends that the contrived imposition of sentimental domestic conventions results in a form of shut down:

The newly contained Ramona claims her hacienda legacy, including the family jewels, and what is Native American (or, more properly, racially 'crossed') in her becomes safely contained in a closing vision of her passive young daughter (a literal infantilization) and in an occasional memory of Alessandro's voice lovingly calling Ramona by her Native American name, Majella or 'Wood Dove' (Gutiérrez-Jones, p. 63).

Jackson's support for assimilation is implicated in the prioritisation of sentimental conventions over her focus on Indian subjectivity and tribal relations that exist outside the State.

However, the optimistic ending is hollow and, I argue, underscored by melancholia despite the imposition of such conventions. The disappearance of the Cahuilla occurs in tandem with Ramona's salvation. Regardless, her experiences among them persevere in her mind and inform her Indian identity. Her repressed Indianness signifies their erasure from the text and at the same time draws attention to the image of Indian subjectivity. This is signified through her isolation that persists despite her rescue by Felipe. Her marriage to him lacks the spousal relationship she had with Alessandro because of their shared Indian identity. Moreover, she is fundamentally altered by Alessandro's death. Although she becomes firmly

entrenched as a 'daughter of the house' within the Moreno family, she retains an element of the Indian subjectivity that she shared with Alessandro.

Month by month it grew clearer to Felipe that the mainsprings of Ramona's life were no longer of this earth; that she walked as one in constant fellowship with one unseen. Her frequent and calm mention of Alessandro did not deceive him. It did not mean a lessening grief: it meant an unchanged relation (*Ramona*, p. 482).

Felipe is unable to enter 'the world where Ramona really lived' as she is unwilling to reveal her Indian self to him (*Ramona*, p. 487). Jackson thereby connects her love for Alessandro to the romance of Indian nationhood. This is reinforced when Ramona informs Felipe that part of her is dead: 'do you not know, Felipe, that part of me is dead,—dead? can never live again? You could not want me for your wife, Felipe, when part of me is dead!' (*Ramona*, p. 488). Felipe can never truly know her as an element of her life and being remains locked away from his gaze: 'When the notes of doves, calling to each other, fell on her ear, her eyes sought the sky, and she heard a voice saying, "Majella!" This was the only secret her loyal, loving heart had kept from Felipe' (*Ramona*, p. 490). Although Ramona's Indianness might be the product of a white imagination, its haunting resonance highlights how Jackson's novel represses the idea of Indian autonomy despite it underscoring its democratic national state ideal.

Jackson's treatment of Indian identity is balanced between two versions of nationhood. One is a homogenous, coercive conception that prohibits the possibilities of resistance and consent. The other entails a heterogeneous vision of voluntary nationalism to the extent that the nation loses its coherency. In basing democratic American identity upon a notion of tribal sovereignty, Jackson inadvertently allows it to be influenced to some extent by the concept of Indianness. The narrative retains that which it seeks to destroy as the Other has to some extent become part of the Self. This is evident in relation to Indian and American identities and the ways in which they inform each other. However, the Other is primarily used as a

means for exploring and defining American national identity. Jackson avoids reconciling Indianness with American identity by refusing to promote the 'inveterate habits' that would render it a form of nationality. If Indians were to consider themselves as members of the nation whilst retaining their tribal affiliations, Americans would potentially lose the sense of identity that informed their most vaunted institutions.

As an Indian reformer, Jackson believed that Indians should be Americanised before being granted citizenship. This was necessary to avoid the inadvertent legitimisation of tribal identities which were incompatible with American identity. According to Moddelmog 'Rather than "Americanising" Indians, the premature "marriage" involved in the granting of citizenship might mean "Indianizing" America, disrupting the terms of national identification and allegiance in the United States to the point of incoherence' (Moddelmog, p. 84). Thus, following this line Felipe's marriage to Ramona only occurs once she has worked through her Indian identity, which is now safely removed from his understanding. In addition, the incompatibility between her white and Indian identities is implied in her compartmentalisation of the native and European dimensions of her psyche. Moddelmog's contention that tribal sovereignty underpins Jackson's conception of a democratic American state provides the basis upon which to identify the psychological aspects to Jackson's incorporation of Native American subjectivity into her framework of national identity. Furthermore, we can see how this echoes a similar process that occurs in Child's novel and how this may in turn reveal a psychological pattern in American fiction whereby the Indian figure is used to differentiate American identity whilst being disavowed once this function has been executed. Moreover, we may also discern how this produces melancholic fragments as in the case of Alessandro's 'erasure' and Ramona's haunted condition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Jackson's narrative advocates against violent frontier conquest whilst propounding an Indian reform discourse. Indian-hater fiction and literature celebrating aggressive frontier expansion are challenged through her vilification of the Anglo-American male settlers and her idealised representations of the Californios and Franciscans. She accentuates the historical dimension that characterises her setting whilst repressing historical factors, which threaten to undermine her idealised representations and the linear narrative of decline and supersession that validates her conception of domesticated imperialism. She also focuses on the noble qualities of the Indians as she conceives of them to demonstrate their suitability for Americanisation. The theme of the noble savage concomitantly serves to express her vision of American identity according to the formula that the American state can reform itself in reforming its colonial subjects. Conversely, a perception of their innate savagery prevents them from ever achieving full assimilation. *Ramona* is informed by a melancholic attempt to incorporate Native Americans as it subverts its own assimilationist discourse to preserve racial distinctions. Furthermore, while Jackson advocates for the acculturation of Indians, she simultaneously romanticises the idea of Indian subjectivity and Indian sovereignty to underscore the democratic spirit of American identity. Her novel reflects the conflicted approach of the U.S. to its own sense of national selfhood and is therefore comparable to the works of Cooper and Bird. In contrast to them, she forgoes the narrative of frontier conquest yet her text displays the same melancholic symptoms that arise from the loss of the national ideal.

While Jackson critiques the ideal of 'imposed' civilisation, her own fictional interpretation of Indian reform leaves few alternatives other than destitution and death for Indians who wish to remain autonomous. However, the idea of Indian sovereignty haunts the novel as is evident with Ramona's Indian identity, which continues to exist powerfully,

despite her reincorporation into the Moreno family at the end. Ramona's European and Indian heritage is used to absorb the Indian Other into the conceptual parameters of the nation. Nonetheless, this process never reaches completion as the Other remains outside national boundaries so as to validate the U.S.'s democratic dimension and its racial and cultural exclusivity. As I have explored there is a dissonance in the text between its assimilation discourse and its recognition of Indian autonomy, brought about by its constant attempts to define the national ego-ideal through the external axiom of the Other. As a result, it is arguable that Jackson's *Ramona* reflects the impasse of the nation to reconcile its Enlightenment principles and its own sense of identity with the violent nature of its expansion.

Chapter 5: Satire, Symbolism and the Exorcising of Historical Ghosts in *The Confidence-Man*

Introduction

In *The Confidence-Man* (1857) Herman Melville explores the questions of faith and distrust in his satirical take on American society. The ship the *Fidèle* and its passengers can be considered to be representative of the nation during the 1850s. The novel's satirical focus is constituted by humorous instances, where the double standards of the characters are exposed via an allegorical critique of the inauthenticity of national politics and culture as facilitated by the dominance of market principles. This is connected to Melville's exploration of truth verification as a philosophical extension of his political themes. As will be explored, the novel's prevailing nihilistic atmosphere is identifiable in its lack of any recuperative national narrative and its depiction of a society invested in masquerade. Consequently, I argue that the ghosts of the nation's past are allowed to indirectly emerge through Melville's satirical attack on national ideals and narratives of legitimation. In particular, by highlighting the isolation of the Indian-hater backwoodsman from civilisation and the fact that no true biography can be recovered of the Indian-hater figure *par excellence*, Melville exposes how the American psyche compartmentalises the violent dimension of national expansion. Looking at genre and national consciousness regarding a conflicted past reveals new ways of reading the novel as a response to the social transformations of antebellum America and as an allegory that exposes repressed aspects of the national psyche behind the masquerade of its projections.

Melville's work concerns a confidence trickster, implied to be the Devil incarnate, who possesses the ability to change form at will. He preys upon the *Fidèle* passengers, attempting at every turn to win their trust in his various swindles. In the most Satanic of his guises as the Cosmopolitan, he sells a disingenuous philosophy of universal love for mankind.

At the start of the novel, he attempts to win alms from the passengers as an African American named Black Guinea. In the episodic chapters that comprise the text, the characters reveal their inner prejudices, double standards and ideological assumptions as they react with either trust or distrust to whatever the confidence-man is peddling. The various tales not only constitute a linear narrative concerning the confidence-man's activities; they also reflect on and speak to each other in terms of theme and character. Rather than resisting attempts to probe its myriad of meanings, the novel actively solicits interpretation through the mystery of the masquerade, which reinforces its satire on American politics and its treatise on epistemological questions relating to confidence and the limits of knowledge. However, masquerade has a secondary function in signifying a permanent political and cultural malaise wrought by inauthentic social relations.

In this chapter I argue that Melville's Indian-hating segment epitomises the novel's exploration of the dichotomy between appearance and reality, regarding the nation's outward pretensions towards Enlightenment principles and its historical and contemporary actions, which exist in contradistinction to them. In this respect, the novel presents unique possibilities in terms of a postcolonial psychoanalytic reading, relative to the other authors examined in this thesis. As we saw with *Nick of the Woods*, a typical Indian-hater narrative concerns a frontiersman whose family has been massacred by Indians. In revenge, he begins to adopt the methods and customs of Indians to eliminate those natives who have committed this grave crime against him. In many cases the Indian-hater is implied to be more savage than the Indians themselves as he becomes an ever more efficient, bloodthirsty killer.

Melville's text illuminates how the national psyche incorporates the historical memories of Indian removal via the revisionist techniques of the legitimating Indian-hating narrative. At the same time, this narrative allows it to disavow the realist aspects of such memories that would otherwise destabilise the ideal of American identity. Melville's nihilism and historical

awareness allow him to address what he perceives as the nation's corruption. In contrast to James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Montgomery Bird, Helen Hunt Jackson and Lydia Maria Child, who to varying extents reinforce national discourses of legitimation such as Manifest Destiny and civilisational progress via reform or conquest, Melville draws on caricature to work through the repressed aspects of the American psyche, refusing to provide a rehabilitative national vision. While forms of melancholic incorporation variously beset all my chosen texts, Melville's novel critically approaches the subject of national identity and so lacks this symptom of repression. In effect, *The Confidence-Man* may be regarded as a project of mourning which engages in accepting the loss of the national ideal.

In Chapter Twenty-Six of the novel Charles Noble discusses the metaphysics of Indian-hating, the role of the backwoodsman and the distinctions between the diluted Indian-hater and the Indian-hater *par excellence* with the Cosmopolitan. In Chapter Twenty-Seven he then narrates Judge Hall's account of Colonel Moredock, a man for whom Indian-killing became his vocation following the slaughter of his mother and fellow settlers by a band of Indian outlaws. I contend that Melville locates Indian extermination as the original sin of the nation and as an origin point for its disingenuous discourses and historical revisionism. He utilises the account of the real Judge Hall as source material yet invests his own version with such grotesque violence and burlesque characterisations of Indians as to mock Indian-hater narratives and by implication, the discourses through which the American state legitimates its establishment. The Judge's role as an historian is deliberately thrown into doubt and thus we cannot trust in the veracity of his account. In Indian-hater novels such as Bird's *Nick of the Woods*, the Indians are essentially cast as satanic opponents of civilisation and Christianity who must be wiped off the face of the Earth for civilisational progress to continue. Melville, through satirical techniques, incorporates such narrative themes as instances of national self-projection, where the profiteering drives for state expansion are legitimated through dubious

characterisations of Indians as irredeemable barbarians in addition to suspect appeals to higher principles such as the propagation of civilised culture. It is in this context that I will first discuss the theme of appearance versus reality, the function of the confidence-man and the novel's status as a text which either invites or resists attempts to delineate its meaning. In the second half of the chapter I will detail the Goneril episode and how it relates to the implications yielded by the Indian-hating segment, the exposure of national hypocrisy and the confidence-man's redemptive role.

The Meaning Behind the Mask: The Role of The Confidence-Man, Satire and National Deception

Joyce Adler argues that Melville had lost faith in America and its potential to change for the better by the time he had finished writing *The Confidence-Man*. In earlier works he entertained the possibility that the nation's wrongs, even those such as slavery and Indian removal, which extended back to pre-Revolutionary times, could be redressed. In his view, human relations were increasingly determined by profit at the expense of empathy. In addition, he believed that the country was headed towards disaster and did not possess the self-knowledge that could save it from this fate.¹ According to Adler,

[...] with his awareness of history and his special concern with the history of the United States, with his consciousness of the divisions in the society and of the lack of common moral purpose to hold it together, with his long-held conviction that a nation's flaws and crimes must bring historical consequences, he knew that disaster in some form was imminent (Adler, p. 418).

Melville therefore in this reading envisages a nation inevitably headed towards catastrophe and heralds this in the moral crisis in *The Confidence-Man*.

By contrast, a critic like Lara Cohen argues that Melville's response to the cultural climate of antebellum America was one that was symptomatic rather than reactionary:

¹ Joyce Adler, 'Melville on the White Man's War against the American Indian', *Science and Society*, 36/4 (1972), 417-442 (p. 417).

‘Certainly *The Confidence-Man* stands as one of the bleakest cultural critiques the mid-nineteenth-century United States produced. However, Melville himself suggests that its suspicions about print culture, at least, may be more symptomatic than idiosyncratic’.² She argues that the novel itself veers into the fraudulence it professes to represent in its digressions into literary theory, and claims that doubling occurs between the language used by the narrator and the confidence-man in his attempts at analysing literature.³ In one instance the PIO agent invokes the metaphor of the butterfly and caterpillar that was previously expressed in the discussion on characterisation in Chapter Fourteen, when he sells Pitch a servant through his employment agency.⁴ With this observation in mind, Cohen argues that there is no singular confidence-man in Melville’s novel (Cohen, pp. 166-167). It is difficult to locate fraudulence aboard the *Fidèle* as it is everywhere to begin with. She also cites an article published in *The National Police Gazette* on William Thompson, a real life confidence-man who inspired the novel, as evidence that nineteenth-century audiences, in

² Lara Langer Cohen, *The Fabrication of American Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 173-174.

³ The three chapters which concern fiction, namely Chapter Fourteen, Thirty-Three and Forty-Four can be regarded as literary discussions of genre and as constitutive of an epistemological commentary on the narrative world. The theme of identity is delineated throughout the novel in the interactions between the confidence-man and the passengers and most fully in his conversation with the mystic philosopher Mark Winsome. Melville bases his argument on the idea that character is neither consistent nor easy to know in reality. Thus, a consistent fictional character in using one mask to represent a complex whole is prone to misrepresenting reality. In Chapter Thirty-Three Melville states that fiction allows one to discern a truer reality than that which we are presented with: ‘And as, in real life, the proprieties will not allow people to act out themselves with that unreserve permitted to the stage; so in books of fiction, they look not only for more entertainment, but at bottom, even for more reality, than real life itself can show’. Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1984), pp. 182-183. In each of these chapters, it would seem that Melville is defending the verisimilitude of his work, in terms of broaching an underlying reality beneath the appearance of reality, and part of this process involves the reader determining what that reality is.

⁴ The ‘Philosophical Intelligence Officer’ is another guise of the confidence-man in which he attempts to sell boys or slaves to Pitch, a Missourian ‘hardcase’ misanthrope who proclaims to hate them. The butterfly and caterpillar metaphor relates to literary characterisation, whereby different facets of a character are not paradoxical but may instead be seen to exist on a spectrum of behaviour: ‘that author who draws a character, even though to common view incongruous in its parts, as the flying-squirrel, and, at different periods, as much at variance with itself as the butterfly is with the caterpillar into which it changes, may yet, in so doing, be not false but faithful to facts’ (*Confidence-Man*, p. 70). Again, we may see the confidence-man as exposing Pitch’s hypocrisy given that he professes to hate boys yet will freely agree to purchase one. Furthermore, we can also identify how this principle of characterisation is reflected in Pitch’s behaviour, which is realistic precisely because of its inconsistency.

contrast to modern readers, were not inclined to reduce the confidence-man to a single individual.

Cohen's arguments are useful for establishing the context of Melville's satire insofar as he directs his attacks on fraudulence in its many manifestations, from the unreliability of the press to national discourses of legitimation. However, I will argue against what she and others like William Ramsey, Michael Paul Rogin and Gary Lindberg propose: that the novel resists any kind of attempt to define an underlying purpose. For example, the article which she cites advocates that the real life conman Thompson's actions reflected a wider societal malaise. This in no way contradicts the reading that the confidence-man is an individual who symbolises deteriorating social relations through the adoption of various disguises. Instead, Cohen's citation of the article substantiates such a reading. Her contention that there is no persona behind the garb of the confidence-man and that rather the ship is overrun with different confidence-men overlooks the single mindedness and continuity that inform the confidence-man's characterisation as a unified satirical symbol. While it may be true that he encounters other confidence-men, this does not preclude him from being the novel's primary vehicle for deception and exploring deception. Furthermore, that Melville presents the novel as a hoax may be considered as a gambit to encourage the reader not to take anything at face value so as to reach their own judgements. This will become a recurrent point in my argument that Melville's work encourages its audience to some form of decisive resistance against the fraudulence and inherent corruption of the State.

Deception is so omnipresent aboard the *Fidèle* that we are led to believe that the novel itself at a formal level dissuades interpretation or any kind of fixed meaning such that it would seem futile to define a narrative subtext. On the other hand, this characteristic of the text can be regarded as a strategy in which we are posed with a mystery that we are required

to solve. Such an interpretation is reinforced when we recall the novel's satirical purpose.

Ruben Quintero's overview of satire is useful to consider in this context.

The satirist, in seeking a re-formation of thought, expects readers to engage the satire by applying their reasoning, moral values, and taste to the subject. Through an aggressive strategy of distortion or defamation that demands our critical judgment, the satirist seeks to affect our attitude or perspective, and often through the indirection of a narrator purposely designed to befuddle and obscure whatever exact direction the satirist would probably have us go.⁵

Melville may seem preoccupied with falsity, yet his choice of satire as a literary mode for the novel is telling as it is one that is utilised to expose truth rather than to conceal it. For example, Linda Morris cites James Russell Lowell's argument on the function of satire:

The aim of the true satirist is not to be severe upon persons, but only upon falsehood, and, as Truth and Falsehood start from the same point, and sometimes even go along together for a little way, his business is to follow the path of the latter after it diverges, and to show her floundering in the bog at the end of it. Truth is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak or a pine.⁶

In a possible reference to Lady Justice, Lowell personifies truth as a woman. At the same time, he highlights the co-dependence of truth upon falsity and therefore casts falsity as her sister. In the context of the novel, Melville explores the interrelation between truth and falsity. The characters 'flounder' when their falsity is exposed by the confidence-man. This is significant in terms of Noble's version of the Judge's Indian-hater account which similarly 'flounders' due to its ridiculous exaggerations and comic deflations. The ideological precepts of the State, its values and the dignity of its founding fathers are all held up for interrogation. Similarly, Arthur Pollard refers to Alexander Pope's statement in *The Epilogue to the Satires* (1738) that satire is a 'sacred weapon, left for Truth's defence' in his contention that the satirist is the 'guardian of ideals' insofar as he defends a set of values.⁷ As I will discuss later, the confidence-man exposes the true motives of his victims and political discourses such as

⁵ Ruben Quintero, *A Companion to Satire: Ancient and Modern* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 5

⁶ Linda A. Morris, 'American Satire: Beginnings through Mark Twain', in *A Companion to Satire* ed. by Ruben Quintero (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 377-399 (p. 387).

⁷ Arthur Pollard, *Satire: The Critical Idiom* (London: Methuen, 1970), pp. 2-3.

Indian-hating. In so doing he reflects upon Melville's disillusionment with the nation in its failure to live up to the values by which it was meant to be guided. In addition, Pollard notes that the satirist is not merely an alienated denunciator of his society but is instead a figure who critically engages with it in terms of the ideals he believes it ought to uphold. As a result, he is placed in a better position to explore the differences between appearance and reality and to expose hypocrisy. In this context, it is unsurprisingly that Melville takes a typical satirical setting, namely a ship of fools, and fashions a world of deceptive appearances.

For Cohen, the Colonel Moredock section provides a cautionary warning against trying to attribute any definite meaning to the novel. The Judge's historical knowledge about Indian-hating is imperfect, as it is derived from the diluted Indian-hater who has supposedly abandoned the values of this way of life:

This epistemological cautionary tale, however, is exactly what we forget if we try to crack *The Confidence-Man* like a riddle, to sort its chaotic fakery and detect a pattern of organised deception beneath – some 'little lower layer', as Elizabeth Foster says, quoting from *Moby Dick* while seemingly forgetting that it is monomaniacal Ahab, surely not a model reader, who believes in the existence of such a thing (Cohen, p. 169).

However, it is unsupported to say that the Indian-hater has forsaken the tenets of Indian-hating as Noble states within the narrative that he simply fails to live up to its requirements. The knowledge we are presented with, though unreliable and probably invented cannot be dismissed as inherently worthless with certainty. Instead, in the spirit of scepticism and further inquiry, Moredock's case is another example in which we are encouraged to critically evaluate the information with which we are presented. On a superficial reading, the novel appears to dissuade us from further examination. This is evident, for example, in the web of tautological analogies it establishes between the characters, which will be discussed later, and its seemingly endless qualifying statements. However, this tactic is ironically belied by the text's suggestions of a deeper meaning in line with its satirical tone; I will argue that we find that there is an organised pattern to the confidence-man's actions and it is one dedicated to

satirising antebellum America. Rather than ‘dizzying’ nineteenth-century audiences, as Cohen claims, with its ‘hall of mirrors’ effect generated through its depiction of the con artistry, I propose that Melville’s novel possesses a clarity of purpose precisely because of this effect. Mirroring Cohen’s appraisal of the text, in his discussion of satire Ronald Paulson states that the *satira* as an expository form is comparable to a ‘house of mirrors’ whereby a particular theme is repeated again and again in alternating circumstances.⁸ In *The Confidence-Man* it is the theme of appearance versus reality, trust and deceit, which is reiterated and which becomes more and more explicit when confidence games run rampant towards the end.

When considered within the overall context of Melville’s views on mid nineteenth-century America it becomes apparent that the confidence-man, like the Indians of the Judge’s account, has more than one function in the novel. For example, his symbolic role cannot simply be said to epitomise an ironic conflict between Christianity and the forces of darkness. Although his satanic credentials are referenced throughout numerous parts of the text, it is more useful to consider him as Satan, the prosecuting angel from the book of Job, as opposed to Satan the root of all evil. His adversarial role is substantiated when we consider Melville’s overarching aim to dismantle the sacred values of his society. For example, the Cosmopolitan in response to Pitch’s rant regarding humanity, remarks that there is ‘something Satanic about irony’ before calling upon God to defend him against ‘Irony and Satire, his bosom friend’ (*Confidence-Man*, p. 136). When discussing the Judge’s account with Noble he also states: ‘Man is a noble fellow, and in an age of satirists, I am not displeased to find one who has confidence in him and bravely stands up for him’ (*Confidence-Man*, p. 158). Melville thus foregrounds his own use of satire as satanic or adversarial to the societal consensus. In his

⁸ Ronald Paulson, *The Fictions of Satire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), p.43.

representation of the American society's propensity for delusion, that which is satanic is anything that shatters its sense of legitimacy.

The nature of the confidence-man also has a significant bearing on how the novel goes about satirising the nation and Indian-hating, whereby we are persuaded to conclude that the Indian-hater account resists attempts to ascertain its underlying meaning. Melville suggests the following about his text through the words of the Judge: 'The career of the Indian-hater *par excellence* has the impenetrability of the fate of a lost steamer' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 150). With its myriad of qualifications and paradoxes it would seem that the narrative world of the *Fidèle* is one mired in a fog of confusion that actively dissuades the location of meaning. However, this is not necessarily the case when we try to understand the inner persona of the confidence-man. As with Lindberg, Rogin affirms that the confidence-man lacks an interior self.⁹ However, it is arguable that he has an identity but one which cannot be adequately described according to any system of human epistemology. Thus, it should be qualified that he lacks a *human* self as a distinctly hostile, alien presence aboard the *Fidèle*.

We get a glimpse of his nature beneath the disguises he wears in Chapter Thirty-Two when the confidence-man performs a ritual to placate his fellow demon, Charles Noble who 'hisses' his outrage at the thought of loaning him fifty dollars, despite earlier proclaiming that he would do a good deed for man. The *Cosmopolitan* rises, 'the traces of previous feeling vanished', and lays out a circle of ten half-eagles around his friend who has '[undergone] much such a change as one reads of in fairy-books' to the extent that he resembles 'Cadmus glided into the snake' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 180). Waving 'his long tasselled pipe with the air of a necromancer, an air heightened by his costume, accompanying each wave with a solemn

⁹ Michael Paul Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 242-244.

murmur of cabalistical words' he restores Noble's previous geniality (*Confidence-Man*, p. 180). For Lindberg this scene demonstrates the confidence-man's 'awesome mastery' of his game'.¹⁰ If the confidence-man has no interior nature we must then conclude that he performs a purely abstract function in the novel as a force of nature without individual agency.

However, I contend that this is a highly unusual moment when the narrative briefly becomes fantastical and we are afforded an insight into what the confidence-man truly is. In this scene we can say that the confidence-man when he temporarily drops his mask to reset the game, himself parallels the characters he fools into 'becoming more themselves'. In fact, we may even go so far as to say that this is an instance where he diverges from his archetypal role to the extent that he is no longer a character whose only purpose is to act as a solely abstract symbol for fraudulence in the universe that Melville has crafted. Therefore, unlike the Indian-hater *par excellence* for whom no biography can be written, the possibility of understanding the confidence-man is presented to us through a brief glimpse of his alien nature, which in turn leads to endless interpretation. He thus epitomises the satirical function of the text that invites us to decode its critiques.

Additionally, Melville's ending with its overt religious symbolism and apocalyptic atmosphere suggests another side to the confidence-man that is diabolical, which invites us to speculate on his intentions. Thus, we must go beyond the novel's surface level emphasis on the impossibility of finding meaning behind appearances and tautological references. The text's satirical mode invites the divining of embedded meanings. As the novel constantly illuminates the dangers of taking things at face value, we cannot simply conclude that the confidence-man is a shell without an interior unless we wish to mistake the part for the whole which Melville warns against in Chapter Fourteen. The argument against Lindberg's interpretation of the confidence-man as a character lacking in any underlying depth will be of

¹⁰ Gary Lindberg, *The Confidence-Man in American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 42.

particular relevance later on in relation to Ramsey's claims that the novel works against any act of judgement.

One of the confidence-man's roles is to function as a grotesque reduction ad absurdum and condemnation of a culture increasingly driven by profit and the maintenance of appearances. This is indicated when he states that 'Confidence is the indispensable basis of all sorts of business transactions' and when he regrets that the 'destroyers of confidence' wiped out the stock prices of the Black Rapids Coal Company (*Confidence-Man*, pp. 128, 48). Rogin states that in Melville's society, strangers expressed their identities through performances when they came together to barter and persuade. The public persona was a performative act quite distinct from the private self at home (Rogin, p. 239). This contrasted with the traditional societal model where an individual could be readily identified by their costume, status, heritage and rank. From this angle, the confidence-man personifies the performance of a role as opposed to the expression of a true self. Rogin cites David Brion Davis's contention that social roles were ambiguous during the antebellum decades when many moved to cities and newly established communities. Success was linked to individual effort and so self-presentation became paramount due to the rapid social mobility that was cultivated by the rise of industrialism and market capitalism during this era: 'Both on the popular and literary levels of culture, we find a virtual obsession with hoaxes, impostors, frauds, confidence men, and double identities [...] The freedom which allowed each citizen [...] to become a self-made man, also opened the way to mass deception'.¹¹ Thus, economic conditions generated a culture that arguably allowed for a greater degree of social advancement compared to Europe. However, this led to anxieties about the true self behind the performance, which found its expression in nineteenth-century literary works such as *The Confidence-Man*.

¹¹ Michael Paul Rogin, *Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 239.

Rogin claims that the insulation of the self from the external world results in it being expressed through an endless performance of roles in *The Confidence-Man*. Consequently, Melville offers no future for the American state beyond moral annihilation.¹² The self and performance are interlinked yet the performance is prioritised for the interests of the self, which are often shown to be dubious. Extended to a political frame, the novel is then profoundly nihilistic, not in the sense that it posits an absence of meaning but in terms of its bleak assessment of national politics and human nature. In this absolute annihilation, an implicit provocation is aimed towards exciting the reader to action. This may be regarded as a possibility yielded by the narrative's construction, as opposed to a direct call for social revolution. In addition, American identity is inferred to be a fabrication consisting of various discourses, projections, myths and so on and as a result its artificiality is foregrounded. This may be seen to provide a commentary on the construction of various forms of national identity in the novels that have been discussed.

The Indian-hating segment exemplifies Melville's promise of annihilation in its most unequivocal terms as a direct reflection on the detrimental effect of market ideals upon American society. The project of Indian removal was ongoing during the time that Melville decided to write about a society that disguised its avariciousness under the mask of civility. In this light, the Indian-killer personifies the true nature of such a society as is indicated at the start of the text: 'in new countries, where the wolves are killed off, foxes increase' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 4). The backwoodsman advances the interests of American civilisation on the distant frontier, such that it can maintain its façade of innocence pertaining to the atrocities committed under its name. As a spokesman for this civilisation, the Judge attempts

¹² Nathaniel Hawthorne noted that Melville's writings at the time of *The Confidence-Man*, 'indicated a morbid state of mind' (Rogin, p. 255). Thus, we can see how the overwhelmingly apocalyptic vision of the novel was in part borne from his increasing disillusionment with American life. One may identify a parallel between Melville's statement to Hawthorne that he had 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated' and the annihilation of the confidence-man's self through perpetual masquerade (Rogin, p. 255).

to disguise the motivations for Indian-killing by providing a distorted account of history. The novel establishes a direct link between inauthenticity in 1850s America and the establishment of the State through Indian displacement. Consequently, Indian-killing is not only symptomatic of a lack of morality in society but also demonstrates how that society has come to be what it is. Its hypocrisy and corruption are implied to derive from its refusal to engage with the moral implications of its dealings with the Indian and African through the invocation of legitimating discourses. The novel's constant subversion of an objective reality, which is heavily implied in the Judge's account, may then be tied to its attack on the American state and societal relations based on trust and appearances fuelled by the demands of market capitalism.

Rogin argues that Melville conceives of a world without mythic fathers in *The Confidence-Man*. The values that were associated with the national patriarchs were obsolete in a world where profiteering often called for deception and the breaking of social relations based on trust and human bonds (Rogin, p. 236). In addition, the novel suggests that such values were never put into practice since the nation's establishment. This is particularly pertinent in terms of the Indian-hating section, which posits that the State cannot be a noble institution if it has been founded upon bloodshed and sustained through discourses that legitimise this bloodshed. Thus, such principles are as much an illusion as the confidence-man's disguises. For Rogin, Melville attempted to escape from the stifling influence of the nation's patriarchs through a movement between the symbolic, imprisoning qualities of stone and disguise, something that he explored in *Israel Potter* (1855) and to a greater extent in *Benito Cereno* (1855). Melville moved from representing American values as fixed to emphasising their artificiality. During the 1850s: 'He began with Pierre's charity for Isabel as a religious heresy; he ended with charity on board the *Fidèle* as a confidence game. Theatre, Melville's evolution suggests, had the power to dissolve stone walls by revealing them as

constructions' (Rogin, p. 235). Rogin states that Melville highlighted the dependence of seemingly immutable ideological discourses on the willingness of individuals to believe in them. In view of this, we may discern a parallel between Melville's text and that of Child. Where Child delineates the willingness of Puritans to believe in their own narratives, Melville extends this as a general condition of the individual with respect to how he or she would like to be seen by others and his or her ideological beliefs. It is also significant that both writers are critical of ideology when it serves to distort reality. In Child's case, she primarily denigrates Puritan dogmatism in *Hobomok*, while with Melville, it will become apparent that in the example of the Judge's account, the version of history he provides is lampooned precisely because it elides historical reality.

Melville's dismantlement of American ideals can perhaps be regarded as prophetic. In the chapter concerning the charitable lady, she is duped by the confidence-man into donating twenty dollars to a charity which he briefly mentions is for Seminole widows and orphans. That the charity itself is a scam calls into question the nature of American society, which with one hand wages territorial wars of conquest while with the other apparently extending an olive branch of alms to the vanquished native. It is arguably implied that America's sins cannot be washed away through empty charitable gestures. This is supported when the lady is seemingly unconcerned with the specifics of the charity or the circumstances of the dispossession of the Seminoles, referring to them simply by the generic term, Indians: 'Poor souls—Indians, too—those cruelly-used Indians. Here, here; how could I hesitate. I am so sorry it is no more' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 45). Again, the idea that the nation and its citizens avoid self-knowledge through apathy and denial is in evidence here. This interrogation of such conflicting interests anticipates the double standards of the late nineteenth-century reform movement, which fashioned itself as a humane political alternative to race war despite its intent to eliminate Indians through cultural assimilation. Such an ideological double-bind

can be identified in Jackson's *Ramona* in its oscillation between critiquing national expansion and its repression of an autonomous Indian identity at the end. In any case, we will see how Melville takes a critical yet open-ended approach to Indian removal and American identity through his satire of a market driven culture and the entanglements between truth and falsity it produces.

National Narratives of Confidence and the Issue of Trust in the Indian-hating Episode of *The Confidence-Man*

It is from a position of scepticism towards the nation's achievements and history that Melville explores the philosophical question of trust versus distrust. In foregrounding the historical revisionism at work in Indian-hating literature, Melville highlights its ideological aim of promoting state interests whilst casting Indians as deserving of eradication. Through this critical approach in emphasising the generic and political functions of Indian-hating literature, he does not directly challenge the Indian-hater narrative of the actual Judge Hall and instead satirises it with his own burlesque version. Rather than trying to articulate or rationalise the horrors of Indian extermination through the formulation of a narrative that would maintain a sense of faith in the nation, he leaves them unarticulated and thereby demonstrates their inassimilable nature for the national psyche. However, he gestures towards them through the comically excessive violence and historical unreliability of the fictionalised Judge's account. In essence, Indian removal is shown as a permanent mark on the nation's history, one that points to its inherent moral corruption.

This contrasts with Bird's narrative which justifies Indian-hating on the basis of good versus evil and civilisational progress, yet which falls short of its goals due to the return of the repressed in its inability to fully exculpate the atrocities it seeks to justify. Melville also echoes the lack of distinction between the savagery of the whites and Indians seen in Bird's

novel, albeit with a greater degree of self-awareness, in his references to Indian artefacts aboard the ship. As Cohen points out, the distinctions established by the Judge's account between Indian deceit and white integrity are undermined, given that the white American passengers are depicted as 'playing Indian' despite condemning the Indians as objects of their pantomime (Cohen, p. 168). In addition, Melville is arguably more successful than Child in presenting a radical interpretation of national history insofar as it pertains to Indian removal. While Child still had an investment in the 'value' of American identity, it is apparent that Melville had no such attachment by the time of writing *The Confidence-Man*. Rather than trying to speak on behalf of the Other to preserve a sense of faith in the nation's future, he dissects the various means through which American identity legitimises itself. Consequently, by satirically taking apart the ideological structures, which underscore American social relations, culture and politics, repressed historical memories are allowed to surface. I will suggest that the absence of any central authority or fixed point of reference amidst the shifting identities of the confidence-man and the hypocrisy of his victims allows for the ghosts of the past to speak. Melville places a vote of no confidence in the nation and thereby abandons its repressive structures, which enables an indirect articulation of its past horrors.

The satire on the precarious truth claims of American cultural discourses extends to the textual fabric of *The Confidence-Man* itself, although as I have maintained, such a stylistic gesture does not preclude the analysis of its embedded meanings. As I will sketch Ramsey asserts that Melville intentionally prevents us from deriving any central message from his work. This view is echoed by Lindberg who contends that the book concerns problems of identity and social relations as opposed to theological and moral questions.

In the first instance, Ramsey's argument, that we cannot reach any conclusions as to the narrative's embedded meanings, fails to account for the critique of the American state that may be discerned in the novel's satirical logic. Although he examines this satirical logic, he

contends that it is directed towards something that almost approaches a kind of postmodern solipsism concerning a web of tautological references that prevents judgement.¹³ While solipsism has been mentioned as a formal feature of the novel, the underlying motivations for it involve communicating a specific, damning conception of the nation. Consequently, it is important to differentiate the web of confusion that Melville creates as part of his satire from the objectives of that satire itself.

In Ramsey's view, the reader is faced with the issue of responding to the novel with either confidence or distrust (Ramsey, p. 225). However, their choice is irrelevant as either option without moderation invites damnation. To successfully resist the confidence-man is to embrace a toxic form of misanthropy. For example, the *Cosmopolitan* posits that confidence is an intrinsic part of being human. In this case it can be argued that Melville is modelling how a complete lack of trust or confidence in any ideal or social contract entails the dissolution of human civilisation and by extension of one's humanity:

Can a misanthrope feel warm, I ask myself; take ease? Be companionable with himself? Can a misanthrope smoke a cigar and muse? How fares he in solitude? Has the misanthrope such a thing as an appetite? Shall a peach refresh him? The effervescence of champagne, with what eye does he behold it? Is summer good to him? Of long winters how much can he sleep? What are his dreams? How feels he, and what does he, when suddenly awakened, alone, at dead of night, by fusillades of thunder? (*Confidence-Man*, p. 157).

The *Cosmopolitan* lists characteristics and habits of human identity in terms of questions that suggest the impenetrability of the misanthrope. In other words, the misanthrope *par excellence* is unknowable as he cannot be human in any meaningful sense and is therefore beyond the limitations of human understanding. While Melville argues against blind faith in favour of a sceptical approach, he also demonstrates that a comparable risk is attributable to the renunciation of all human ties. In the case of a total absence of faith, one denies any semblance of humanity. (Ramsey, p. 225). In light of this reading, one can argue that the

¹³ William M. Ramsey, 'The Moot Points of Melville's Indian-Hating', *American Literature*, 52/2 (1980), 224-235 (pp. 227-228).

novel's labyrinthine exploration of truth and falsity does not encourage us to surrender to epistemological futility, but instead inculcates in us a critical approach.

Ramsey asserts that it is futile to determine whether Indian-hating is unequivocally sanctioned or condemned in the novel as the narrative revels in its own unreliability, confusion and endless verbal qualifications. Ramsey notes that the Indian-hater chapters engender a tautological function (Ramsey, pp. 227-228). Colonel Moredock's story serves as a reflection on the character of the misanthropic Pitch. We are invited to assess Moredock's character in relation to Pitch and vice versa. Nonetheless, we are not permitted the opportunity to equate Pitch's misanthropy with Moredock as the former character disappears following the rendition of Moredock's tale. Therefore, any new insights that we have gleaned from the analysis of Moredock's character are neither confirmed nor denied by the physical absence of his double Pitch. Ramsey concludes that 'the entire fabric of *The Confidence-Man* is a web of analogies most of which, through separate, successive appearances of the various impostors, are deprived of direct narrative confirmation' (Ramsey, p. 228). In Ramsey's view, the tautological nature of the narrative invites the reader to locate evil in his own heart by going beyond the evidence presented and choosing to support or oppose Indian-hating on the basis of where he perceives evil to exist.

However, even if we are to go on the terms of Ramsey's analysis, we may yet arrive at the same conclusion, namely that Melville is implicitly indicting American society for its involvement in Indian displacement. This is substantiated if we assume that Melville had a primarily American audience in mind for his novel. Coupled with the idea that Melville 'garbles' the message of the Indian-hater narrative to ridicule its legitimating function, namely that all Indians should be exterminated in order that the State can expand its borders to access resources for industry, markets and so forth, one may argue that he locates America's 'original sin' in its establishment through territorial conquest. The inauthentic

social relations characterising nineteenth-century America are implied to originate from a social, political and cultural falsity, which gave birth to doctrines that justified the founding of the State and which posited motives different from those that drove its expansion. This plays into the absolute sense of disillusionment in American society that is present in the novel. Indian-hating is neither explicitly sanctioned nor condemned in light of the text's strategies of obfuscation. However, along with the comical, grotesque and satirical undertones of the Judge's account, the reader is implicitly encouraged to reach his or her own conclusion and this conclusion is weighted towards distrust in the American state. In *Nick of the Woods*, the ethical issue of state expansion is inadvertently expressed as a repressed but readable element in terms of Nathan's murderous desire, which is as much a source of evil within his own mind as it is a product of his quest for retribution. This is also evident in the telling language, which is used to describe the actions of the settlers towards the Indians and in the use of gothic conventions, whereby the wilderness is aligned with the disavowed objects that attend territorial conquest through Indian genocide. Melville parallels this in a self-conscious fashion by flagging up and parodying the savagism of the violence, which is part of the Indian-hater genre, thereby highlighting its internal paradox as a discourse that legitimates civilisational expansion with the annihilation of Indians.

This reading of Melville as an author who critiques such discourses is substantiated when we turn to his other works. Adler points out that in *Clarel* (1876) he describes Anglo-Saxons as 'grave, canting Mammonite freebooters' and notes the 'Indians' hapless feud/Under the white's aggressive rein'. In *John Marr* (1888) he mentions the prairie with its 'remnant of Indians thereabout- all but exterminated in their recent and final war with regular white troops, a war waged by the Red Men for their native soil and natural rights' (Adler, p. 436). Adler also notes that in *Typee* (1846) Melville describes the Anglo-Saxons as having 'extirpated the greater portion of the Red race' from the frontier (Adler, p. 435). He as well

conveys his admiration for the courage of the Indians, denounces the invaders who have made native peoples interlopers in their own ancestral lands and asserts that the vindictiveness of the wars of the white man distinguish him as the ‘most ferocious animal on the face of the earth’ (Adler, pp. 435-436). In *Mardi* we are presented with America’s single-minded purpose of exterminating the American Indian: ‘Not yet wholly extinct in Vivenza were its aboriginal people [...] who year by year were driven further and further into remoteness till, as one of their sad warriors said, after continual removes along the log, his race was almost on the point of being pushed off the end’ (Adler, p. 436). In light of these examples, Adler concludes that Melville satirises the Anglo-Saxon historical account of frontier settlement that some of his critics ascribe to him in the Moredock story.¹⁴

In view of the constant battle between trust and distrust that takes place throughout *The Confidence-Man*, Melville does his utmost to shake our confidence in the Judge’s account. For example, he highlights the impossibility of recovering a true history. Adler’s reading of Noble’s preface to the Judge’s account reinforces the argument in this chapter that Melville reveals through satire, the bogus nature of national discourses such as Indian-hating: ‘Noble’s introductory remarks to the Judge’s story convey Melville’s warning that the “methodic” repetitions of a “history” to impress it upon impressible minds and the unquestioning verbatim circulation of it by others make the telling of a true history impossible’ (Adler, p. 426). As she points out, Melville is providing a warning to the reader before the story begins that it is not to be believed in without reservation. In addition, it is suggested that Noble may be another type of confidence-man to his counterpart, Francis

¹⁴ Melville’s sympathetic view of Indians is further evident when we consider his objection to Francis Parkman’s contempt for the Indian in his review of *The Oregon Trail* (*Literary World*, IV [1849], p. 291). ‘We are all of us-Anglo Saxons, Dyaks, and Indians-sprung from one head, and made in one image [...] The savage is born a savage; and the civilised being but inherits his civilisation, nothing more’. Roy Harvey Pearce, ‘Melville’s Indian-Hater: A Note on a Meaning of *The Confidence-Man*’, *PMLA*, 67/7 (1952), 942-948 (p. 943). Although he expresses the nineteenth-century distinction between savage and civilised, he does not view such qualities as inherent but instead as products of culture.

Goodman. This is indicated with his salesman-like introduction to the story and nebulous appearance, which makes him perfectly placed to be a shape shifter. He is 'neither tall nor stout, neither short nor gaunt; but with a body, fitted, as by measure, to the service of his mind' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 139). However, although he advocates for the banishment of Satan and his minions, the children of the forest, Noble's underlying demonic character attests to the darker aspects of American history. Thus, while his clothes may display 'the fineness of the nap', his skin is described as 'something the reverse of fine' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 139). As with the nation, there is a discrepancy between the appearance Noble projects and his true nature.

But, upon the whole, it could not be fairly said that his appearance was unprepossessing; indeed, to the congenial, it would have been doubtless not uncongenial; while to others, it could not fail to be at least curiously interesting, from the warm air of florid cordiality, contrasting itself with one knows not what kind of aguish sallowness of saving discretion darkening behind it (*Confidence-Man*, p. 140).

His outward cordiality is associated with a sense of sickness and falsity, which is indicated by the fact that the word 'florid' has a double meaning in that it may either refer to an over-elaborate display or ruddy complexion. The sense that his amiability is sweetly sickening is reinforced by the following reference to his 'sallowness'. The analogy with the State in terms of false appearances is further supported by the fact that Noble is the primary exponent of America's legitimating doctrine, namely civilisational expansion under a militaristic ethos. Another hint as to whether Noble may be a facet of the confidence-man can be identified in his surname which is mirrored by the Cosmopolitan's. In effect, we have a 'noble' man who attempts to convince a 'good man' to subscribe to the view of Indian-hating. Conversely, the 'good man' persuades his 'noble' counterpart to embrace universal humanitarianism. However, each position is inferred to be neither 'good' nor 'noble'. Falseness constitutes the axiomatic condition that informs existential experience aboard the *Fidèle*. Melville in other

words suggests that there is no way out of the masquerade insofar as far as authentic social relations are concerned.¹⁵

Our confidence is further undermined when we remember that Noble's story is not even a first-hand account of Moredock. In one respect Noble's telling of the Judge's account is truthful given that it is based upon the real Hall's *Sketches of History, Life and Manners, in the West* (1835). However, as noted, Melville modifies the real Judge Hall's brief progressivist apologia, rewriting it as a lengthy, detailed and frank account from which the theme of progress is absent. In a comparable way to Child's Puritan references, he reinterprets an actual historical source to convey a specific political critique of the nation regarding the idea that its history is fabricated, which in turn links with the theme of the disparity between projected and interior forms of the self.

Roy Harvey Pearce argues that in contrast to Hall and his contemporaries who attempted to justify the terror and isolation of Indian-hating via the rhetoric of progressive civilisational expansion, Melville focuses solely on its terror and loneliness. Melville's Hall is caught up in the violence of the Indian-hater that is committed for its own sake: 'We are moved from the commonplace, quietly ordered, straightforward narrative of the Hall of the *Sketches* to the flamboyantly eruptive rhetoric of the pseudo-Hall of *The Confidence-Man*' (Pearce, p. 946). Melville presents the Indian-hater and Hall in a grotesque light to bring us to an awareness of the terrors that inhere in instances of unadulterated hatred. During the

¹⁵ The *Cosmopolitan*'s conversation with Noble is paralleled at the end of the novel when a boy in the 'fragment of an old linen coat' appears to swindle an old man with novelty items including a traveller's lock, a money belt and a counterfeit detector (*Confidence-Man*, p. 244). Echoing Noble's sallowness, which belies his outwardly respectable exterior, the boy is noted to have 'leopard like teeth' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 244). The demonic nature of both characters is suggested by the yellowish hue of decay. In addition, the boy is decidedly un-childlike when with the 'phlegm of an old banker' he attempts to sell the *Cosmopolitan* another traveller's lock. In addition, he mocks the old man for asking him to leave: "'Yes, child, - yes, yes"' said the boy; with which roguish parody, by way on congé, he scraped back' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 247). His association with the *Cosmopolitan* is further underscored when the old man compares him to a 'public benefactor' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 248). As will be seen later, the *Cosmopolitan* and his demonic minion work together to buy the old man's soul.

Moredock section, Melville closely follows Hall's sketches and makes alterations to emphasise the palpability of Moredock's actions. In the editorial appendix to the Northwestern-Newberry Edition of *The Confidence-Man* there are thirty-four corresponding passages in the Moredock section compared to twenty-six for the preceding segment. Ironically, this is where Melville's judge employs his greatest rhetorical flourishes.

Whereas Moredock's mother is widowed on several occasions by the Indians in the actual Hall's account, it is specifically stated that she has lost husbands on three occasions to the Indian's tomahawk in *The Confidence-Man*. Moreover, Melville implies a more gruesome version of the family massacre in comparison to *The Sketches*. In Hall's account Moredock 'was just entering upon the years of manhood, when he was thus left in a strange land, the sole survivor of his race. He resolved upon executing vengeance, and immediately took measures to discover the actual perpetrators of the massacre' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 508). By contrast, Melville's Hall states:

He was just entering upon manhood, when thus left in nature sole survivor of his race. Other youngsters might have turned mourners; he turned avenger. His nerves were electric wires-sensitive, but steel. He was one who, from self-possession, could be made neither to flush nor pale [...] as the tidings were told him, after the first start he kept on eating, but slowly and deliberately, chewing the wild news with the wild meat; as if both together, turned to chyle, together would sinew him to his intent. From that meal he rose an Indian-hater (*Confidence-Man*, p. 153).

Melville's judge also compares Indians to a 'gang of Cains', a rhetorical flourish which is absent in Hall's account (*Confidence-Man*, p. 153). Melville's concentrated focus on the violent dimension of the Indian-hater genre could be described as an attempt to broach its underlying historical realities. However, as discussed, the Judge narrates Moredock's story in a highly stylised manner that encompasses myth, the grotesque and the burlesque. We never get a glimpse of the real Moredock as his mythological self is all that we are allowed to see. If the Judge were to document the exploits of the actual Moredock in a detailed and palpable fashion, he would summon horrifically sublime memories of what was involved in Indian

extermination and removal, which would jeopardise the moral legitimacy of his interpretation of history. The fictional Hall's account of Moredock is also informed by rumour, repetition and rhetoric. As Noble points out himself, he can 'render' 'upon a pinch [...] the judge upon the colonel almost word for word' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 142). Additionally, his advocacy for the 'nobility' of Indian-hating is later cast into doubt when in comparing himself to Polonius he states that he is 'paralytic all down one side, and that the side of nobleness' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 173).

Noble points out that despite his eloquence, the Judge is not as educated as he seems: 'Why, though he knew how to read and write, the judge never had much schooling' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 142). Ramsey attributes this revelation and other moments of deflation to the burlesque undertone of the narrative (Ramsey, p. 232). The Judge as a seemingly dignified representative of the State is comically undermined by his lack of 'schooling'. Again, this is another signpost, placed by Melville, which warns us to approach his tale with a healthy degree of scepticism. As stated previously, he fashions a world lacking in authority by illuminating how the ideals that were meant to inform the nation were never put into practice in the first place. Where there are figures of authority like the Judge, humorous deflation must follow, which reflects upon the overarching atmosphere of disillusionment that pervades the novel. In some cases, Hall's flamboyant and highly exaggerated prose in the novel is comically inappropriate. For example, he draws an analogy between the backwoodsman and the opossum, a cowardly animal that plays dead when threatened by predators: 'As with the 'possum, instincts prevail with the backwoodsman over precepts' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 145). Ramsey states that Melville also portrays Mocmohoc as a burlesque version of a real Indian chief (Ramsey, p. 231). Embedded in his very name is a coded reference to the Mohawks that can be identified if we divide it into two parts, thereby yielding Moc-Mohoc or mock Mohawk. In addition, his depiction is implicated in the

theatrical genre of Indian burlesque, which would have been familiar to Melville during his years spent in New York.¹⁶

This use of Indian burlesque is echoed in the circulation of Indian artefacts aboard the ship. Cohen argues that it is significant that artefacts such as a calumet are empty vessels that the white passengers fill as they desire, as they suggest that the whites are projecting their fantasies of what Indians should be (Cohen, pp. 167-168). For example, just prior to narrating the tale of Moredock, the *Cosmopolitan* ironically interjects with the following: ‘One moment, [...] and let me refill my calumet’ (*Confidence-Man*, p. 151). This runs contrary to the premise of the chapter on the ‘metaphysics of Indian-hating’, which holds that proponents are knowledgeable as to the innate characteristics of Indians. In addition, that the voyagers consume the contents held by these artefacts suggests that they are savouring the flavour of their fraudulent conceptions of Indian culture. The abundance of such artefacts also implies that the projections of the metaphysics chapter extend beyond Moredock’s tale to the attitudes of the passengers, as indicated in their consumptive patterns. This is reinforced when we recall the incomplete information we have about Indian-hating courtesy of the mediated diluted Indian-hater. Noble admits that very little can be gleaned from the occupation of the Indian-hater *par excellence* who vanishes into the ‘forest primeval’ (*Confidence-Man*, p. 149). Indians and Indian-hating are inferred to fall outside the realms of recorded knowledge and therefore the gaps must be filled with mostly invented knowledge, informed by whatever we can ‘surmise, however inadequate’ from the return of the diluted

¹⁶ Ramsey reinforces this point by noting plays such as John Broughan’s *Metamora; or, The Last of the Pollywogs*, performed in 1847, which features character names such as ‘Whiskeetoddi’, ‘Tapiokee’ and ‘Metamora, or The Last of the Wampanoags’. Ramsey attributes this same style of parody to Melville’s Indian-hating segment in light of its debased unreliability (Ramsey, p. 231). Beverly Hume parallels Ramsey in her assertion that Melville was more than likely familiar with mid nineteenth-century minstrel shows such as Dan Gardner’s ‘Seven Ages of Women’ which featured burlesque parodies of Shakespearean theatre, women’s rights lectures and Indians. Beverly A. Hume, ‘Of Cuttle Fish and Women: Melville’s Goneril in *The Confidence-Man*’, in *Melville and Women*, ed. by Elizabeth Schultz and Haskell Springer (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2006), pp. 199-213 (p. 203).

Indian-hater to civilisation (*Confidence-Man*, pp. 150-151). This relates to the projected beau ideal of noble Indians we find in *The Last of the Mohicans*, the demonised Shawnees of Bird's text, the sympathetic Indian victims of *Ramona* or the elevated, sacrificing savage as a mere vehicle for a different form of national identity that we find in the character of Child's Hobomok. The calumets scene in *The Confidence-Man* can be applied to these works as a critical lens on the disingenuousness of formulations of American identity and imaginings of the national past. This particularly relates to the Indian as the historical events involved in his removal and eventual assimilation yield up the most potent memories of violent displacement and forced incorporation that threaten the stability of the nineteenth-century American psyche. Effectively, this particular episode highlights the idea that the nation's history is a projection of its desires, which serves to repress an alternate past that would otherwise jeopardise its legitimacy.

Mocmohoc is linked with the confidence-man given that he wins the confidence of the settlers 'with such fine art and pleasing carriage' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 148). In the story, the white settlers are concerned about Mocmohoc's 'suddenly changed ways' as the Indian chief dispenses with his ferocious enmity and adapts an affable exterior. The settlers are aware that this may be another instance of Indian treachery. In an effort to protect themselves they draft a covenant with the following provision: 'that though friendly visits should be exchanged between the wigwams and the cabins, yet the five cousins should never, on any account, be expected to enter the chief's lodge together' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 148). Nonetheless, Mocmohoc eventually wins their trust through his affected friendliness. The five cousins enter the chief's lodge for a feast where they are subsequently slaughtered.

To Ramsey's assertion that the reader is invited to perform a self-appraisal of his or her own morality, I would add that Melville's novel also suggests true evil to reside in the false appearances adopted by characters like Mocmohoc. Thus, in a broader sense, the

nation's moral corruption is again associated with the 'evil' that inheres in the 'sin' of deceit, something engendered by the masquerade, which is personified in the archetype of the confidence-man as Satan. Confidence becomes the currency by which one can purchase the souls and destinies of the gullible and the corrupt. When transposed to a political context, the very discourses that the State employs to win the confidence of its subjects, such as Manifest Destiny, Indian-hating and civilisational progress, are painted in a similar diabolical light. It may therefore be argued that Melville seeks to reclaim the American 'soul' from such a social malaise of hypocrisy though it would seem doomed to failure in the context of the novel. In the absence of any kind of ideal, the author works through the historical factors and repressive cultural discourses of frontier colonisation, which still inform the ideological precepts of 1850s American society.

Furthermore, the one-sidedness of Judge Hall's account reflects Melville's association of unfettered confidence with the blind acceptance of discursive, ideological precepts. The Judge notes that those of a more sympathetic disposition would be forgiven for thinking that the backwoodsman is excessively severe in considering the Indian in 'every evil light' and in comparing him to a 'horse-thief like those in Moyamensing [...] an assassin like a New York rowdy [...] a judicial murderer and Jeffries, after a fierce farce of trial condemning his victim to bloody death' and so forth (*Confidence-Man*, p. 146). He maintains a semblance of impartiality by absolving himself of responsibility for making any judgement. While he may provide a seemingly detached analysis of the backwoodsman through his use of legal diction, his argument implies the same conclusion about Indian villainy. Despite the fact that he attributes them to the backwoodsman, the sheer number of the comparisons he lists between Indians and villainous figures implies that they are irredeemable. As a representative of the State, he implicates national interests in Indian-hating through this barrage of analogies and in the conclusion he reaches, which strongly suggests that the Indian is ultimately evil. This is

evident when he discusses the story of Mocmohoc's deception of the Wrights and Weavers and in his reference to Indian Christians who will testify to the 'depravity' of their race though they themselves may be 'the arrantest horse-thieves and tomahawkers among them' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 147). Again, what is clear from the Judge's outwardly non-committal stance is that the State is invested in violent Indian removal, despite maintaining a distance from it to preserve its moral integrity. The formalisation of Indian villainy within the national psyche through the discourse of Indian-hating and a legal system which presumes Indian guilt is suggested in the following:

Still, all this is less advanced as truths of the Indians than as examples of the backwoodsman's impression of them—in which the charitable may think he does them some injustice. Certain it is, the Indians themselves think so; quite unanimously, too. The Indians, in deed, protest against the backwoodsman's view of them; and some think that one cause of their returning his antipathy so sincerely as they do, is their moral indignation at being so libeled by him, as they really believe and say. But whether, on this or any point, the Indians should be permitted to testify for themselves, to the exclusion of other testimony, is a question that may be left to the Supreme Court (*Confidence-Man*, pp. 146-147).

Despite the humorous tone, Melville casts the question of state legitimacy as a fundamental one in referencing the Supreme Court. In this case, we have the same pattern whereby the Judge will distance himself from the backwoodsman's views on Indians to maintain the appearance of impartiality, though this is merely a mask and one that is compromised.

The Judge as an historian therefore seeks to erase the true history of Indian removal. He can be linked to the absent national fathers as his authority is undermined through the use of irony. The principles of law, justice and state authority which may be affixed to the Judge are not only irrelevant in the market economy of the Fidèle; they are suggested to serve as hollow values that are not practiced yet which legitimate the interests of a nation fixated with profit from its very outset. Melville draws upon Indian-hating to show that the nation was morally bankrupt from the beginning despite the ideological precedents that attended its foundation. Therefore, the authority of the State and its founders is undermined through the Judge's account.

In terms of the historical bias of the Judge, the dialogue between Goodman and Noble is interesting in that it can be read as a satirical take on the dangers of unanimous political or social consensus at the expense of alternative perspectives. The Cosmopolitan's humanist principles are rendered suspect when he states that he has never had any reason to distrust anyone. The absolutism of his claim makes it as dubious as the Judge's seemingly historical account of Moredock: 'Never has it been my lot to have been wronged, though but in the smallest degree. Cheating, backbiting, superciliousness, disdain, hard-heartedness, and all that brood, I know but by report' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 158). The Cosmopolitan ultimately succeeds in winning the heart and mind of Noble. For example, the Cosmopolitan states: 'Indeed [...] our sentiments agree so, that were they written in a book, whose was whose, far but the nicest critics might determine'. Noble responds: 'Since we are thus joined in mind [...] why not be joined in hand?' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 158). As a gloss on the Judge's account, the strength of their mutual agreement can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the dangers of unquestioning consensus between the political and cultural strata within American society, which serves to suppress alternate views and histories and which is consolidated by cultural narratives such as the Indian-hater discourse. It is the tone of their agreement which conveys the idea of 'unquestioning consensus'. Melville indirectly invokes wider issues such as Indian genocide, which are repressed and incorporated into the historical memory of the national psyche by these narratives. This is doubly reinforced by the fact that the Judge's account is no more than a story that is soon forgotten. It would seem the history of frontier colonisation can be neatly packaged with its disturbing aspects rationalised and dismissed through narrative.

The Judge's exaggerations also give the account a mythical quality that dispels any semblance of historicity. For example, he states that the backwoodsman is 'Worthy to be compared with Moses in the Exodus, or the Emperor Julian in Gaul' and compares

Mocmohoc to 'Caesar Borgia' (*Confidence-Man*, pp. 145, 148). These instances suggest that misplaced confidence in any source, reputable or otherwise, is ill advised. Melville foregrounds the larger than life aspect of the Judge's description of the Indian-hater *par excellence* by briefly referencing Cooper's Leatherstocking, a character who inhabits a mythological and historically revised world, created by Cooper for the purpose of legitimating American territorial acquisition: 'Ever on the noiseless trail; cool, collected, patient; less seen than felt, snuffing, smelling –a Leatherstocking Nemesis' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 150). Furthermore, the Indian-hater *par excellence* provides us with the image of a veritable Übermensch devoted to the extermination of all Indians. In terms of motivation, the Judge states that he muses upon 'some signal outrage' committed by the 'red men' 'till the thought develops such attraction, that much as straggling vapors troop from all sides to a storm-cloud, so struggling thoughts of other outrages troop to the nucleus thought, assimilate with it and swell it' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 149). Additionally, he is compared to 'an intenser Hannibal' whose hatred 'is a vortex from whose suction scarce the remotest chip of the guilty race may reasonably feel secure' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 149). Although Moredock may in the end be a diluted Indian-hater, he is portrayed as an almost superhuman character: 'As an athlete, he had few equals; as a shot, none, in single combat, not to be beaten' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 154).

In addition, Chapter Twenty-Seven opens with the epigraph: 'Some account of a man of questionable morality, but who nevertheless, would seem entitled to the esteem of that eminent English moralist who said he liked a good hater' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 152).

Moredock is not named and his life history is merely referred to as 'some account'. The legitimacy of Indian-hating as a vocation is also undermined due to his 'questionable morality'. This is immediately offset by a reference to an 'eminent English moralist' who likes a good hater. The epigraph presents us with a farcical image of American society,

represented by the moralist, temporarily suspending a morally superior position to show support for the actions of the Indian-hater. Melville subverts the historical reliability of the Moredock section in order to lead the reader to question its content and to portray Moredock as a legendary figure as opposed to an historical one. Hence, the Judge's seemingly factual account can be better described as a 'tall tale'.

The *Cosmopolitan*, not surprisingly, responds with disbelief when Noble finishes his version of the Judge's account: 'That story strikes me with even more incredulity than wonder [...] Either his lone campaigns are as fabulous as Hercules'; or else, those being true, 'what was thrown in about his geniality is but garnish [...] As for this Indian-hating in general, I can only say of it what Dr. Johnson said of the alleged Lisbon earthquake: "Sir, I don't believe it"' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 157). It is arguable then that Melville parodies the kind of historical fiction promulgated by writers like Cooper and Bird. At the same time, the *Cosmopolitan's* dismissal of Moredock's reality is partially undermined by the fact that the Lisbon earthquake actually occurred. Thus, his refusal to acknowledge Moredock as a real figure establishes Moredock's existence as one antithetical to and independent of the confidence-man. In a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame, his rejection of the story is a reflection of America's disavowal of the grotesque dimension of its expansionism, which threatens its narrative of national identity. However, such a renunciation merely gives new life to this buried past, which may be seen in the compromised denial of Colonel Moredock's reality.

The Indian-hater's Role in the National Psyche's Displacement of Inassimilable Memories

In his description of the backwoodsman, the Judge emphasises qualities that configure him as a symbol of the American spirit. He is 'self-willed; being one who less harkens to what others

may say about things, than looks for near himself to see what are things themselves' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 144). The backwoodsman is therefore a personification of American self-reliance and individualism. A similar theme can be identified regarding Hawkeye's general disposition in *Mohicans*, Mary's rebellion against Child's Puritan patriarchy and the independent, survivalist instincts of characters like Ralph Stackpole and Nathan in *Nick of the Woods*. It would therefore appear that Melville provides a highly self-reflexive, critical engagement with the hallmarks of American identity as it was conceived in the nineteenth century. Melville also invokes the traditional image of the backwoodsman as an uneducated person who relies on his wilderness training, instinct and cunning to negotiate the hazards of the frontier. In this sense, he is again inferred to embody the nation in laying the bedrock for its foundation. Furthermore, through this description Melville highlights the inassimilable realities that inform the establishment of the State. The backwoodsman is a 'creature dwelling exclusively among the works of God' though he lacks a 'godly mind' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 145). Again, this conveys a web of connections to the various representations of this archetype. For example, Hawkeye, though in effect Christian, inhabits a state of nature that is evoked in this passage. Conversely, Bird's Nathan, though a devout Quaker, certainly appears to have strayed from his path concerning his excessive murderous brutality as an ultimately 'fallen' man. On this basis the backwoodsman symbolically gestures towards the incorporation of the 'godless' injustice of frontier expansion. As noted in Chapter Two, frontier crimes are displaced onto Nathan who must remain outside the confines of civilisation.

The Judge explicitly depicts the backwoodsman as a pioneer who represents and advances the interests of American civilisation: 'Though held in sort a barbarian, the backwoodsman would seem to America what Alexander was to Asia- captain in the vanguard of conquering civilisation' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 145). The use of the word 'conquering' also

suggests the violent history of American territorial acquisition, which can be linked to the way in which Moredock reflects upon American society and its failings. To return to Chapter Twenty-Seven's epigraph, he is described as 'a man of questionable morality'. Melville implicates American society in that same 'questionable morality'.

Adler claims that Moredock represents the idea of 'sinning by deputy'. This theme is raised in Chapter Seven of *The Confidence-Man* regarding a wealthy individual who wears a white kid glove and is reiterated in Chapter Eight in relation to the charitable lady.¹⁷ Melville highlights that the rich man's hands are exceptional for their spotlessness upon the soot-streaked deck of the *Fidèle*. However, he avoids touching anything himself and has a black servant to touch things on his behalf. In this parallel, Moredock works as a legitimating symbol for American expansionist policies. Adler writes, 'He is the symbolic figure made heroic by society to justify the hate it feels for those it has wronged, the legendary figure to whom it can transfer its guilt and whose conduct it can then proceed to whitewash' (Adler, p. 426). In this sense, he may be regarded to parody the logic of proxy that informs the creation of a character like Nathan Slaughter in Bird's novel, who advances the interests of civilisation through battles of annihilation on the frontier yet who must remain isolated in the wilderness, given that what he represents is irreconcilable to the nation's ego-ideal. Adler states that there are also links between Moredock's role and the New England mystic philosopher, Mark Winsome. In the novel, Winsome maintains his virtuous outward appearance by virtue of his deputy, Egbert who carries out mercantile endeavours on his behalf. Winsome's reference to Egbert's involvement in slavery underscores how the relative affluence that allows him to be a transcendentalist philosopher is dependent upon his disciple's involvement in exploitative industries (Adler, p. 421).

¹⁷ In relation to the man with the white kid glove, the narrator describes his other hand as being almost as white. The implication here is that his hands remain implausibly clean aboard the soot-streaked deck of the *Fidèle* and may be interpreted as another instance of the sinning by deputy theme.

Moreover, Winsome in conversation with the confidence-man expresses his wish to be like a snake with the ability to kill without responsibility, knowledge or conscience:

When charmed by the beauty of that viper, did it never occur to you to change personalities with him? to feel what it was to be a snake? to glide unsuspected in grass? to sting, to kill at a touch; your whole beautiful body one iridescent scabbard of death? In short, did the wish never occur to you to feel yourself exempt from knowledge, and conscience, and revel for a while in the carefree, joyous life of a perfectly instinctive, unscrupulous, and irresponsible creature? (*Confidence-Man*, p. 170).

The Moredock section epitomises this wish in that it is an allegory for American civilisation, which preserves an outer veneer of justification despite the underlying atrocities that accompany its territorial conquests. In other words, it seeks to deny knowledge of its actions and remain 'iridescent' even though it advances its interests through the 'scabbard'. The national psyche sells a validating narrative to itself that masks historical realities. The reference to the viper can be read as a biblical one with respect to it being an avatar of Satan. This echoes the conflation of good and evil in the minds of the white characters in *Nick of the Woods*, which is linked to the menacing surroundings that signify the memory of Indian extermination. The national psyche maintains two facets, one rapacious and the other noble in its narrative of self. Conversely, it is arguable that Melville is not by necessity directly concerned with the Bible but is instead delineating the appeal of cold, instinctual action, which determines the behaviour of the viper. For a moralistic narrative of national identity this implication would be objectionable, but it is one Melville nonetheless brings to the society he critiques.

In a postcolonial psychoanalytic framework, the depiction of frontier conquest as a rightful, courageous endeavour in Indian-hater narratives requires an historical interpretation that represses the possibilities for reflection on the unethical dimension of territorial expansion from the point of view of the native. This is associated with the nation's simultaneous support for and disavowal of the Indian-hater and the melancholic aspects of

violence and bloodshed, which are perpetually legitimated and thus incorporated by such narratives. Melville illuminates these issues in his parody. Driven by economic goals, the settlement of the frontier by whatever means necessary produces historical memories that must be carefully partitioned and revised within the national consciousness. Melville elucidates how such Indian-hating narratives fulfil this purpose and how they reflect upon the American psyche concerning various methods of repression. As with Winsome who provides his practical disciple with justifications for ignoble deeds, the Judge as historian invokes historical rationales for Indian-killing, describing it as vengeance and thus refusing to engage with the factors underpinning it.

Moredock's symbolic personification of the nation's double position regarding its civilisational ideals and its imperialist policies is further evident when he refuses the governorship of Illinois. In the actual Hall's account 'Colonel Moredock was a member of the legislative council of the territory of Illinois, and at the formation of the state government, was spoken of as a candidate for the office of governor, but refused to permit his name to be used' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 510). Melville modifies the actual Hall's words whilst retaining his direct reference to the governmental apparatus of the State to suggest that the practice of Indian-killing is something of a dirty secret within the annals of American history: 'And even did no such contingency arise, yet he felt there would be an impropriety with the Governor of Illinois stealing out now and then, during a recess of the legislative bodies, for a few day's shooting at human beings, within the limits of his paternal chief magistracy' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 159). Thus, Moredock's pastime is described as an 'impropriety' that involves shooting at other 'human beings'. Here we are again presented with the suggestion that Indian-hating, and violent national expansion, are amoral activities involving the elimination not of satanic creatures, but of fellow humans who have as much a claim to their territory as the State that seeks to deprive them of it. Melville therefore indicates that Indian removal

constitutes a chapter in American history that the nation would prefer to excuse through deceptive rationalisations such as civilisational progress, which perform repressive functions in reconceiving historical memories associated with territorial conquest. This relates to the aforementioned theme of sinning by deputy that is reinforced through Moredock's refusal of the governorship. Although he advances his nation's interests, as seen in this passage, he cannot officially represent it as to do so would implicate it in its own crimes.

Moredock's self-willed exclusion from political office reflects upon Ramsey's contention that the Indian-hater *par excellence* is a ghost of history. The Judge states that the ideal Indian-hater 'will not be seen again' in the settlements and that the settlers now 'never look for him, nor call; they know he will not come' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 150). The Judge also admits that there can be no biography of an Indian-hater *par excellence*: 'How evident that in strict speech there can be no biography of an Indian-hater *par excellence*, any more than one of a sword-fish, or other deep-sea denizen; or, which is still less imaginable, one of a dead man' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 150). In this removal from knowledge Melville therefore implies the dissociative effect of the Indian-hater narrative within the American psyche. The Indian-hater *par excellence* renounces his life within civilised society. In other words he metaphorically dies, becoming an undead misanthrope, indifferent to earthly distractions, so that he can carry out his mission as a *persona non grata* that indirectly advances the interests of American civilisation: 'With the solemnity of a Spaniard turned monk, he takes leave of his kin; or rather, these leave-takings have something of the still more impressive finality of death-bed adieus' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 149). Thus, we can see how the Judge's description links to the theme of appearances in the novel. The Indian-hater *par excellence* represents the principle of American domestic imperial conquest that is associated with economic interests. However, the grotesque and excessively violent outcomes that principle entails are incompatible with the nation's civilised exterior. Hence, as with the Jibbenainosay in *Nick of*

the Woods, the Indian-hater *par excellence* is relocated outside the bounds of American society. This plays into the legitimating function of the Indian-hater narrative that operates through repression and revisionism. Melville self-consciously reveals how the American psyche compartmentalises aspects of its history to preserve its ego-ideal.

Furthermore, the Indian-hater is a haunting figure. He will continue to plague the American consciousness even though he is likely to become an historical relic. This is indicated in Noble's following lines: 'And Indian-hating still exists; and, no doubt, will continue to exist, so long as Indians do' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 142). In the absence of total extermination, the Indian will continue to point to the brutality of the genocide committed upon his race by that 'vanguard of American civilisation' the Indian-hater. Indian-hating is almost characterised by Melville as a perpetual acting-out, a cyclical practice for the legitimization of American expansion, which is further reinforced when we consider that the tale of Colonel Moredock is repeated again and again to Noble by the Judge who regales the yarn in 'every company': 'I heard his history again and again from my father's friend, James Hall, the judge, you know' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 142). Furthermore, that Noble recounts the tale to Goodman also evokes this cyclical aspect. The Indian-hater as a recurrent figure indicates that the historical memories of Indian genocide and displacement cannot be assimilated into the American psyche's self-image without being perpetually repressed through this narrative.

This features uncanny parallels with the uncolonised 'dark frontier' in *Nick of the Woods*, where the prospect of a return of the evil embodied by the Shawnees is never fully expunged and where the continued lack of settlement points to the disavowal of memories associated with frontier conquest. Additionally, this acting out and the recurrent nature of haunting that it evokes relates to the melancholic signifiers in *The Last of the Mohicans* discussed in relation to spectrality. It may even be related to a novel like *Ramona* where the

titular character is unable to forget her Indian subjectivity and her enduring ghostly link to Alessandro. Such a narrative ending constitutes a haunting signifier for the sudden erasure of the Cahuillas and by extension the Indian presence in the text, which serves as an unintentional insight into the dissonance between the epistemic violence of Jackson's assimilationist discourse and her recognition for tribal sovereignty. The pattern that Melville's text reveals in these other novels is the fact that repression of the Indian, whether through discourses of hatred, civilisational progress or assimilation, depends upon his removal from the nation's parameters. In the case of *Bird* this involves extermination, whereas for Cooper, Child and Jackson there is also an element of the incorporation of elements of Indianness, as projected by the white imagination, into American identity. In any case, the repression of an alternate history and perspective is paramount if American national identity is to be secured and consequently this gives rise to the cyclical pattern described in Melville's text, where historical erasure summons haunting signifiers that require the reinscription of rationalisations, revisionism, appeals to ideology and so on.

The Goneril Story and the Subversion of National Discourses of Legitimation

The Goneril chapter in Melville's novel also provides a number of insights into his delineation of the repression of alternate historical accounts and his attack on the less than civilised aspects of mid-nineteenth-century American culture. According to Egbert Oliver, Goneril was also intended by Melville to lampoon Fanny Kemble, a Shakespearean actress and dramatic reader of the period.¹⁸ While Oliver argues that 'the Goneril of *The Confidence-Man* grew out of Melville's knowledge of Fanny Kemble, not out of disillusionment', I contend that the caricature element is the basis for a tale that is imbued with political and

¹⁸ For further detail on the parallels between Kemble and Goneril see Egbert S. Oliver 'Melville's Goneril and Fanny Kemble', *The New England Quarterly*, 18/4 (1945), 489-500 (p. 491).

philosophical connotations relating to Indian expropriation and national integrity and not simply its end-point (Oliver, p. 500). This becomes all the more apparent when the chapter is considered in the context of the satirical aims of the work and particularly in relation to the Indian-hating segment. In addition, many of my following arguments relate to aspects of the text that can be characterised either as unintended effects of the narrative's satirical bent and its overarching national theme, or as products of authorial intention.

In a circular pattern the confidence-man, under the alias of John Ringman, tells the story of Goneril to the merchant, Henry Roberts, before Roberts recounts it to the confidence-man in another form. The narrator adds that 'as the good merchant could, perhaps, do better justice to the man (Ringman) than the story, we shall venture to tell it in other words than his, though not to any other effect' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 59). I will suggest Goneril is a symbol that points towards the repressed historical crimes of the national consciousness. She is therefore associated with Mocmohoc as a signifier for American double standards as she embodies those memories the American psyche would rather repress to maintain its otherwise self-congratulatory narrative of self. Like Mocmohoc and Moredock she is a semi mythological figure in her exaggerated characteristics and otherworldly, alien behaviour.

For example, Goneril's inhuman status is foregrounded from the outset: 'It appeared that the unfortunate man had had for a wife one of those natures, anomalously vicious, which would almost tempt a metaphysical lover of our species to doubt whether the human form be, in all cases, conclusive evidence of humanity' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 60). As with the little Indian girl in a later chapter who stares back at the confidence-man with a resistant expression which places a question mark over the history and future of American civilisation, Goneril is noted to seldom speak all the while 'looking out of her large, metallic eyes, which

her enemies called cold as a cuttle-fish's' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61).¹⁹ In each instance, American civilisation finds a mirror for its crimes within the gaze of the racial other that stares back at it. Goneril we are told resents the greater part of the human race and can only suffer to be on 'speaking terms' with people after a 'thaw' of self-imposed isolation. Furthermore, her very nature seems distinctly alien: 'Those who thought they best knew her, often wondered what happiness such a being could take in life, not considering the happiness which is to be had by some natures in the very easy way of simply causing pain to those around them' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61). As with the misanthrope/Indian-hater *par excellence* and the confidence-man, who arguably lacks anything resembling human drives, she is without passion: 'Goneril held it flattery to hint praise even of the absent, and even if merited; but honesty to fling people's imputed faults into their faces. This was thought malice, but it certainly was not passion. Passion is human' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61). Furthermore, she is described as 'reaping a secret delight' from habitually touching young men. However, the narrator adds that 'whether from the humane satisfaction of having given the evil-touch as it is called, or whether it was something else in her, not equally wonderful, but quite as deplorable, remained an enigma' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61). Hence, like the confidence-man, Goneril exists beyond the limits of human comprehension in being decidedly non-human, her motivations unknown.

In addition, she arguably parallels the Indian-hater *par excellence* if we take into account Hume's argument concerning her possible fictitiousness. Ringman is implied to be

¹⁹ Adler asserts that Melville represents America's two most wronged peoples by highlighting the 'Creole/Comanche heritage' or 'alien maternity' of the small girl who accompanies an invalid giant. Her Indian ancestry is further emphasised when she is wrapped in an Indian blanket to shelter her from heavy rainfall. The confidence-man, who in another form has dismissed the capacity of the Negro to feel pain, disregards her distress. He refers to her as his 'little May Queen' and chides her to dance in her moccasins: 'Come, chirrup, chirrup, my little robin' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 86). For Adler the fact that she regards him with a glare of melancholic repugnance signifies that rather than being a little Robin or May Queen, she is in fact more comparable to a 'little Cassandra' as a symbol of doom for both the conqueror and conquered (Adler, pp.439-440).

another guise of the confidence-man and the fact that he narrates the story of Goneril undermines its authenticity. This consideration is reinforced when we take into account the circumstances of its telling. Following his success in gaining Robert's sympathy and alms with his 'touching story', Ringman coldly informs the merchant that the 'transfer-agent of the Black Rapids Coal Company' is selling 'valuable stock' aboard the ship (*Confidence-Man*, p. 22). In the next chapter Ringman undergoes a startling transformation, eschewing in private the 'cold garb of decorum, and so giving warmly loose to his genuine heart, seem[s] almost transformed into another being' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 25). This description indicates that Ringman has performed an elaborate hoax to gain the favour of the merchant.

As Beverly Hume points out, Goneril with her Indian and squid-like 'masculinity' or otherness is an exemplar of the impenetrable 'deep-sea denizen' described by Noble in his later assertion that there can be no biography of an Indian-hater *par excellence* (Hume, p. 210). Her amphibian characterisation is apparent in the following: 'Those who suffered from Goneril's strange nature, might, with one of those hyperboles to which the resentful incline, have pronounced her some kind of toad; but her worst slanderers could never, with any show of justice, have accused her of being a toady' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61). Her hatred of all men and most humans, including her daughter, attests to this. Her characterisation as an 'undead' Indian figure, who cannot be adequately described by language and who later exacts revenge upon her husband, reinforces the idea that she is a strange, symptomatic reminder of America's repressed history; in other words the alternative history which is not discussed in the Judge's account. In this sense, the confidence-man, Indian-hater and Goneril may be collapsed into one unified symbol in that each character functions as an expression for the legacies that ensue from a fundamentally corrupted state.

Although Ringman endures Goneril's disruptive, apparently callous behaviour in their marriage for a time, he is compelled to act against her when she decides to torment their

daughter out of 'deranged jealousy'. He attempts to leave Goneril, taking their child with him, but suffers the wrath of the 'whole female neighbourhood' who are sympathetic towards her (*Confidence-Man*, p. 61). Furthermore, Goneril with the aid of a women's-rights group brings a suit against Ringman and succeeds in gaining custody over the child and a settlement from him. In Goneril's tale, traditional male authority is overturned by a coalition of the oppressed, in this case women and Indians. Goneril as an Indian woman symbolically embodies a union of such interests. This ironic reversal of fortune for the white man parallels Mocmohoc's use of treaty conventions to sanction the wiping out of the five cousins in the story of him.²⁰ Again, as with the Judge's legal terms and mention of the Supreme Court when describing Indian grievances against the backwoodsman, Melville satirises the legislative structure that serves the interests of the American status quo. He provides a mirror as it were, to the violence of that structure in presenting ironic examples, where oppressed classes are able to use the law against those who would normally be its architects or beneficiaries. In this context, it is arguable that Goneril embodies the negative resonance of tyranny as a general principle as opposed to one relating specifically to the oppression of women. This is evident in that her case against Ringman relates to race as well as gender and the fact that the outcome is based not so much on ethics but rather on Goneril's successful political manoeuvring.

In view of this, it is likely that Melville is focused on how the law can be wielded as an instrument for self-interest as opposed to justice. This can be extended to his satirical

²⁰ Mocmohoc ironically outwits the white man at his own game with respect to the breaking of treaty provisions given that, in strictly legal terms, he is innocent while his victims have been justly executed for violating the contract. Despite his apparent treachery, he is consistent in following the covenant, which is nullified when the whites choose to break the article that forbids them from entering the wigwam. Mocmohoc points this out in a joking, burlesque manner: 'Treachery? Pale face! 'Twas they who broke it first, in trusting Mocmohoc' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 148). Judge Hall's earlier declaration concerning Indians colours the outcome of this parody in which he notes that there is a type of creature 'in whose behalf mercy were not wisdom; truce is vain; he must be executed' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 144). As evident in both the cases of Goneril and Mocmohoc it is arguable that the Indian narrative is used to reflect oppressive or corrupt aspects of nineteenth-century American culture.

critique of the nation and how the law might be used to secure the interests of the privileged through the oppression of second-class citizens such as Indians, women, African Americans and so on. It is within the law itself that the greatest hypocrisy can be identified in the gulf between its design and practice and therefore it is fitting that Melville uses Goneril's case to demonstrate the discrepancy between the appearance of courtroom justice and the actuality of its consequences with Ringman's destitution. In the account Goneril's appeal to the women's-rights group is disingenuous as it is a means of exacting revenge on Ringman. Her case demonstrates the outcomes that may be expected under the tyrannical structures of such a society. The fact that Goneril uses her society's legislative system to achieve a verdict that is the inverse to what one could expect in nineteenth-century America, given her racial and gender status, indicates that she is a reflection or mirror to its oppressive structures. Thus, with the narrative's satirical framework in mind, Goneril becomes representative of the implacable force of America's historical ghosts coming back to seek redress for the nation's historical crimes of genocide, displacement, oppression and treaty violations.

Ringman is forced into exile as an outcast, wandering the vast expanse of the Mississippi region upon learning of his wife's intention to have him committed to a lunatic asylum. Significantly, Ringman had earlier attempted to enter a plea of the mental derangement of his wife through the court. Again, Goneril, who would be branded a pariah and lunatic in any other case, is instead the benefactor of a legal system that would be expected to act against her interests. It is arguable that her alliance with women's rights advocates recalls the proto-feminist discourse of Child's *Hobomok*, which critiques patriarchal politics through its consideration of Puritan society. Mary Conant conveys an inclusive, non-patriarchal model of social relations by challenging the religious, sexual and racial prohibitions of her Puritanical society and eventually returning to it as a welcomed dissident. Similarly, Goneril triumphs against the odds, in this case a legal system and culture

that would seemingly be set against her as an Indian woman, and becomes a celebrated member of her community. In addition, Goneril's victory over her husband in having him declared insane and exiled constitutes an opposite outcome to Alessandro's madness and isolation in Jackson's *Ramona*. In this sense, Ringman, a white individual, experiences the dispossession and ostracism that Alessandro endures in Jackson's text regarding the displacement of his tribe and his decision to elope with Ramona.

Turning back to the confidence-man, Lindberg's analysis of him as a 'prosecuting angel' elucidates his 'recuperative' function. Lindberg argues that the confidence-man tricks his fellow passengers into revealing their internal dispositions through the affectation of confidence. Thus, he constantly affirms his belief in the beneficence of men and nature whilst asserting the sincerity of friendship. This constitutes a gambit to encourage his victims to reveal themselves for who they are. As Lindberg states: 'One learns about others by measuring their divergence from the suppositions of trust, whereas outward distrust, the self-fulfilling prophecy, blocks the manifestation of all varieties of trustworthiness' (Lindberg, p. 40). The confidence-man's second strategy is to entertain the roles the other players have given themselves and to test their ability to live up to the image they project. This function forms a basic template for his adversarial role. Lindberg in his reading of the China Aster story, argues that the confidence-man exposes the schism between the ideological positions adopted by the characters and their inner thoughts which run contrary to them (Lindberg pp. 34-38). Therefore, if the confidence-man can be seen to highlight the dangerous duplicity that inheres in the segmentation of principles from their enactment in his encounters with various passengers, it can also be argued that this pattern extends to a political critique of national attitudes and values, particularly with respect to what is covered in the Indian-hating segment. The discussion on how the nation's self-conception as a democratic civilised institution is compromised by the circumstances of its territorial expansion is relevant here. The image the

American psyche projects of itself is characterised by a reciprocal relationship with national interests rooted in socio-economic imperatives. As highlighted, discourses invoking such concepts as 'progress' and 'native diabolism' are employed to disguise and exculpate inassimilable memories and so a discrepancy arises between the repressed and projected aspects of American identity. Melville portrays the nation as a vessel of inauthenticity, host to the smaller scale duplicitous actions of its inhabitants, insofar as the confidence-man and the Fidèle passengers are concerned.

As evident from this reading, Melville's narrative efforts are invested in exploring the verification of truth in conjunction with the relationship between the self and self-projection, as this pertains to social relations and the nation. For example, the Goneril story leads Roberts to temporarily abandon his usual good nature. As Lindberg points out, in retelling the story to the Black Rapids Coal agent, Roberts becomes its victim when he exclaims that charity and hope are 'mere dreams and ideals, they explode in your hand, leaving naught but the scorching behind!' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 67). He is subsequently at a loss to explain his uncharacteristic 'rhapsody popping out of him unbidden' and returns to his normal self, yet he is nonetheless led to question his 'most important persuasions' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 65). His outward identity has therefore been compromised (Lindberg, p. 33). The confidence-man's expository and recuperative role is most clearly discerned in his conversations with Noble. Hume contends that both the Judge and Noble fabricate fictitious and paradoxical legends about Indian-haters *par excellence*, which owe their existence to the racist myths promulgated by 'diluted' Indian-haters (Hume p. 211). As the Cosmopolitan highlights through his scepticism, such myths can be packaged and sold to these receptive 'diluted' haters and those who are oblivious to their distortions in relation to racial supremacy and

economic exploitation.²¹ Goneril's story can be characterised as another instance of this type of myth. In this context, Hume's reading is useful in clarifying and extending the positive dimension of the confidence-man's adversarial role in terms of the way in which he tricks and goads his victims to reveal their inner selves. My reading has sought to link him to a wider symbolic system and form of national satire whereby the interrogative role he performs illuminates the dichotomy between the American psyche's projected facade and its underlying, repressed histories, which reaches its most pronounced form in the Indian-hating section. In a sense the dichotomy between the exterior and interior selves of the Fidèle passengers arguably relates to the consciousness of national identity as represented in its official narratives, and its unconscious or repressed, disavowed historical memories, which also play a role in defining it.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Indian-hater section of *The Confidence-Man* encapsulates the central purpose of Melville's novel to expose various forms of corruption and hypocrisy at a national level. A devastating sense of futility regarding any ideal, objectivity or aspirational hope for the future is conveyed through the novel's depiction of an endless sequence of American masquerade. The double standards engendered in roleplaying and fictions of selfhood predominate and variously reinforce, alter and exclude historical realities, prejudices, values, hypocrisies and ulterior motives. Melville's text implies that in the context of the relentless pursuit of profit, such a state of moral bankruptcy derives from what can be described as the nation's original sin, namely Indian removal. Instead of providing a definite and overt political message, he weaves a complex symbolist satire, which ultimately leaves the questions it poses to be answered by the reader. In the case of the Judge's account, Melville

²¹ Interestingly, Melville's satirisation of prejudicial attitudes in relation to native peoples and women through the Moredock and Goneril tales are precisely those that Child and Jackson argue against in their novels.

suggests that an alternate history exists but it is one too horrific to the American ego-ideal to be articulated. Forgoing any attempt to win the confidence of his audience, Melville allows them free rein to decide for themselves what kind of history and future they wish to construct. In this way, although he rehearses the Indian-hater narrative, he does not replicate its doctrinal and repressive functions, instead offering both satire and a field open to interpretation. Here the task of fashioning a recuperative national model would be to draw from a poisoned well of history. However, in refusing to offer an ideal that the reader can place his confidence in, Melville in effect works through the historical ghosts that plague the national psyche. This outcome is achieved by the ironic inversions in the text concerning the stories of Goneril and Mocmohoc in conjunction with the use of burlesque conventions, irony and unreliable narrators. The nation's victims, its oppressed spectres, are also acknowledged rather than repressed through a nihilistic acceptance of the American state's unsalvageable corruption. In contrast to the other authors I look at in my study, Melville forgoes any attempt to redeem national identity and displays a unique historical awareness regarding the links between the nation's past, present and future.

If the confidence-man assumes many different guises, he may then be argued to represent nineteenth-century America's Janus-faced condition in its pretence of being a civilised nation and its simultaneous oppression of Indians, African Americans and women. His satanic role therefore has a third function in the text. Not only can he be variously read as the embodiment of evil and as an adversary who exposes the fallacies of the passengers aboard the *Fidèle*; he may also, like Goneril, be regarded as a 'monstrous creation' borne from the nation's hypocrisy. In addition, as the personification of Melville's brand of satire, he heralds a redemptive catastrophe that awaits such a nation beyond salvation, something that is reinforced when we consider the text's apocalyptic ending. In the context of the novel's political work, his numerous disguises, when paired with his exposure of the inner

dispositions of the passengers, arguably suggest national forms of repression built on projection and the reconceptualisation of various states of interiority. He is, in a sense, Melville's America and its refutation, a nation characterised by performance and deception which envelopes all social relations. Furthermore, the aura of confusion Melville's narrative creates relates to the indeterminate boundary where projection begins and the interior self ends. Therefore, as has been seen, the nation like its inhabitants is vulnerable to self-deception. This theme applies most readily to historical accounts like that of the Judge, where history is reconfigured so often as to become the consciously perceived history of the nation, though an implicit knowledge of its falsity is ever present. By extension, such an oscillation in performance, motive and the confusion between the two may reflect upon similar psychical-ideological patterns in the works of Cooper, Bird, Child and Jackson.

The final chapter is tellingly introduced by the epigraph 'The Cosmopolitan increases in seriousness' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 240). Whereas before he may have played the role of a fool, it seems, in light of this epigraph, that the meaning of his actions should now be taken in earnest. The reader is asked to place his or her confidence in the idea that there is no truth and no way out of the world of the confidence-man. This is symbolised in the 'counterfeit detector' that the old-man uses to determine the authenticity of two bills he received from St. Louis: 'there's so many marks of all sorts to go by, it makes it kind of uncertain' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 248). The chapter begins with a 'perverse man', namely the Cosmopolitan, being warned by the steward that it is 'not becoming' 'in a place full of strangers, to show oneself anxious to produce darkness' after he attempts to put out a lamp belonging to the old man (*Confidence-Man*, pp. 240-241). The sense of impending doom that characterises this chapter is made explicit when another passenger interrupts the Cosmopolitan's discussion of biblical apocrypha: 'What's that about the Apocalypse?', to which the Cosmopolitan responds 'He's seeing visions now, aint he?' (*Confidence-Man*, p.

243). After conversing with his beleaguered, ancient acquaintance, the Cosmopolitan extinguishes the lamp in spite of the steward's warning and kindly leads him away.

Prior to being led away by the Cosmopolitan, the boy persuades the old man to buy the traveller's lock with a demonstration in which his mahogany door contraption leads to the imaginary 'state room'. In this context, the state room is a metaphor for the realm of the confidence-man which the old man ultimately desires to see. By placing his confidence in the Cosmopolitan, he surrenders himself and the national principles he embodies to this figurative hell. In symbolic terms, the boy and the Cosmopolitan work in tandem to purchase the old man's soul and by inference the soul of the nation. The old man and the Cosmopolitan personify two versions of America and the fact that one has supremacy over the other indicates that the America represented by the old man is as subject to falsity as the Judge's account or any other spurious story in the novel. By implication, the founding narrative of the nation and the heroic age embodied by the founding fathers are suggested to be myths. Again, in this confidence-trick focused final chapter there is a total absence of faith in the State as a political and civil institution. The nation is therefore doomed by its present and the past that led to it, and in this absolute futility there is a sense of mourning, for I suggest the voices of the nation's ghosts echo through its dissolution. The final words of the text attest to this: 'Something further may follow of this masquerade' (*Confidence-Man*, p. 251). The masquerade aboard the *Fidèle* rather than being finite renews itself in perpetuity with this incantation by passing into the real world of 1850s America. As a result, Melville's nihilistic demolition of the national ideal reaches full circle. However, because of this absolute, pessimistic verdict, a space is left open for positive action on the part of the reader. A flame of hope for change, kindled by the possibility of provoked action, issues from the void that is left by these final words of the novel.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have argued that the project of national expansion was not only a colonial one but one involving the loss of a national ideal, something revealed in a range of literary representations. The nineteenth century constituted a period in which American national formation was crystallised in tandem with the removal and assimilation of Native Americans. In this respect, how does the nation reconcile its self-conception as a democratic, civilised institution to its historical legacies of Indian displacement and enforced assimilation? I have explored the selected literature under the aegis that fiction represents a window onto a nation's identity, its cultural unconscious and its repressions. I have used frameworks of postcolonialism and psychoanalysis to demonstrate how five novels dealing with this subject reflect a variety of approaches to national identity and the figure of the Indian. I have shown how each writer reveals a particular perspective or new aspect within an overarching national consciousness that can be identified in the literature and culture of this period. Therefore, a writer like Robert Montgomery Bird can be said to present an Indian-hating dimension while writers like Lydia Maria Child and Helen Hunt Jackson articulate positions within this matrix that play into a national desire for assimilation and reform. With the exception of Herman Melville who forgoes any attempt to convey a national ideal or recuperative history of the nation, each writer's work reflects the incorporation as opposed to introjection of the Indian into the national archive. I have argued throughout that this can be linked to the idea that in defining itself as a democratic institution differentiated from its European predecessors, the American psyche is unable to reconcile its historical policies of Indian removal to its ego-ideal. By combining a postcolonial psychoanalytic frame with a sense of the field of Americanist criticism on this topic, I have sought to delineate how the psychological and political factors relating to Indian expropriation, co-optation and eventual reform influenced

the evolution of discourses of American identity. Furthermore, through such an approach, I have aimed to contribute new readings of these works and their genres that build upon existing critical literature.

A melancholic critical agency manifests itself in these novels through a myriad of forms, from generic devices such as the gothic frontier to implicit ideological discursive conflict and indicators of the haunting effect of frontier colonisation upon the American psyche. In James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* there are a number of alternating strategies employed to incorporate the Indian into a narrative of national origins. A predominating theme is the inevitable decline of the Indian, as noted by George Dekker and Roy Harvey Pearce.¹ However, as I have demonstrated, the idea of the vanishing Indian is accompanied by the manifestation of melancholic signifiers. For example, there are allusions to historical crimes against the Indians, including the Oneida episode looked at in Chapter One, which undercut the structure of mythological Indian-white alliances that characterise Cooper's romance of the West. In addition, where the possibility of an alternative societal model arises in the resistance of the Hurons, it is effectively foreclosed with their reduction to the role of superficial villains. The expansion of the State is therefore partly legitimised on the grounds of clearing out the 'savages'. Nonetheless, their characterisation in this way constitutes a form of repression in terms of the ethical realities underpinning that expansion. By denying Indians an equal or human status, the history of opposition that they embody is invalidated, which is crucial if the State is to remain as a legitimate institution. Furthermore, as described in my introductory theoretical frameworks, the gothic can be used as a way of displacing unresolved tensions and latent drives within a stylised universe, away from the rational order of society. It is fitting that the Hurons are

¹ George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilisation: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

relegated to a Gothicised version of the wilderness, characterised by dark forms, spectres and epistemic uncertainty. Moreover, in belonging to such a distanced realm, their claim to the American land is one dismissed by the civilisation that comes to replace them.

In addition, the depiction of Tamenund as an undead, ancient monumental figure and the imagery employed in the funeral scene at the end of Cooper's text suggests the idea that the Indian sacrifices himself for the establishment of the American state and that his reign has naturally come to its conclusion. There are certain parallels in the late depictions of Tamenund and Uncas, and Ranjana Khanna's discussion of monuments as palliatives for the losses of the nation, where mourning and melancholia can be channelled. The image of Tamenund as an historical relic and his pronouncement concerning the inevitability of Indian decline prefigure him as a monument to Indian removal. Similarly, the body of Uncas, seated with 'grave and decent composure' signifies that he is a monument to the death of his tribe.² He has sacrificed himself in the defence of Cora and the white characters, who represent a future American state, against those Indians such as Magua who would resist the inevitable march of progress. In each instance, they constitute a means to contain underlying ethical problems and historical memories associated with frontier conquest and enable the nation to mourn the image of a bygone Indian era, such that it can disavow its involvement in violent Indian displacement. Finally, Cooper uses the Indian to distinguish the nation from its European predecessors. In relation to the psychological schism introduced by the War of Independence, the Indian becomes a symbolic conduit of inheritance where the threat of further revolutionary violence and the patricidal dimension of the Revolutionary war are repressed.

² James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 340

In contrast, Bird does not focus so much on the issue of Anglo-American relations, although at various points he both echoes and departs from Cooper's brand of reconciliation between warring parties. As discussed, Bird's novel emphasises that the era of national heroes, at one point symbolised in the decaying trunks of the forest, cannot be replicated by succeeding generations. Moreover, *Nick of the Woods* venerates the founding fathers and a model of patriarchal hierarchy that reinforces the militaristic Manifest Destiny underscoring his view of frontier expansion.³ Cooper incorporates the Indian into American identity as a way of disavowing the more grotesquely violent aspects of national expansion, which he legitimates through denial, historical revisionism and rationalisation. Nonetheless, he maintains a relatively stable boundary between the Indian and white identity. This is not the case with Bird, despite his more outward pronouncements of absolute differentiation between savage and civilised.

Nick of the Woods can be considered to take certain elements of Cooper's novel to an extreme that reveals the postcolonial melancholic symptoms in the latter novel in a more pronounced way. Bird's Shawnees are deprived of any metaphorical status as humans and as citizens of an alternative social structure, in order to legitimate their outright annihilation. The American state in his text has a divinely sanctioned right to the frontier and therefore its native inhabitants as the children of Satan must be exterminated. However, the disturbing historical memories associated with Indian killing surface in the graphic narrative language.

In addition, as mentioned, the seemingly immutable boundary between savage and civilised is continually undermined in *Nick*. White characters regress to savage behaviour due to the demands of the wilderness environment; Nathan in particular outclasses his savage adversaries as the Jibbenainosay. While this may be argued to merely reflect the conventions

³ Robert Montgomery Bird, *Nick of the Woods* (New Haven: College & University Press, 1967).

of the Indian-hating genre, I demonstrate that the idea of characters like Nathan becoming more savage than the savages themselves points to the repression of an awareness that there may be little separating that civilisation from its demonised enemies. Furthermore, Bird portrays the wilderness in gothic terms to a greater extent than Cooper, depicting it as a fallen world of bloodshed, perpetual violence, volatility and uncertain knowledge, which may be considered in itself as a melancholic symptom of the repressed underlying aspects of his Indian-hating discourse. The brutally violent task of wiping out an entire race is thus partitioned into an alternate, nightmarish world. There is further displacement in the character of Nathan. Bird arguably reflects the nation's disavowal of historical memories associated with violent frontier conquest, which are inassimilable to its ideal of being civilised, with the investment of such memories in the semi-civilised backwoodsman. As we have seen, this is identifiable in Nathan's inability to integrate with civilisation at the end of the novel. As the paragon of Indian-hating and all that it encompasses he must remain outside the bounds of society. Significantly, though the Shawnees have been eradicated the wilderness is left unsettled. This may reflect a conscious wiping out of the historical memory of genocide or a latent expression of the nation's lack of a legitimate claim to territories it has seized through such means.

In comparing the works of Cooper and Bird it is possible to see how they reveal and further a national desire to revise the American state's historical treatment of Native Americans. At the basis of this argument is the idea that the palpable historical memories associated with displacement and the massacre of other human beings ultimately become manifest through melancholic symptoms. This serves to offset racial distinctions, philosophical rationalisations and use of containing conventions in the forms of myth, the gothic and the historical romance. Moreover, such a pattern arguably constitutes the seed of a

movement away from Indian-hating in the national consciousness to later acknowledgements of guilt and contradiction towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

However, such an idea would apply even more to representations within Child's *Hobomok* and Jackson's *Ramona*.⁴ As has been explored, both writers took a very different approach to American-Indian relations compared to Cooper and Bird. In the case of Child, it is noteworthy that she advocated for an inclusive model of the nation, based not on race war but on the idea of assimilation and racial tolerance in the same decade that *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Nick of the Woods* were published. In principle and in symbolic terms, a humanitarian effort to transform Indians into American citizens can be found to exist in her work. This would later gain political traction in the form of reform ideas by the time Jackson was working on *Ramona*.

Another significant dimension of Child's work, is her treatment of patriarchy. In analysing this aspect of *Hobomok* via a postcolonial, psychoanalytic framework I hope to have provided a new interpretation, relating it to the psychological effects of exile and how these influence the novel's consideration of Anglo-American relations and national identity more generally. Child links the doctrinal oppressiveness of Puritanism to the experience of banishment as can be seen for example in Mary's father who acts out his experiences through his strict patriarchal rule, replicating the traumatic pattern across generations.

Child draws upon the Indian figure, epitomised by Hobomok, to fashion a new American identity distinct from Old World origins. Echoing Cooper, there is an element of inheritance at work. In his role in enabling Mary to formulate a new selfhood outside the stifling structures of Puritanism, Hobomok is posed as a figurative national father. In being

⁴ Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok* (Berkeley: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2008).

born from a union that defies the patriarchal authority of Salem it can be posited that Charles Hobomok Conant symbolises Child's proto-feminist national ideal. The treatment of Anglo-American relations bears similarities with Cooper in terms of a combination of affinity with England and a drive towards differentiation.

In addition, *Hobomok* suggests an uncolonised space, which contains an alternate Indian perspective on the State through the alliance Child sets up between the oppressed classes of white women and Indians and by featuring the spectralisation of her white male hero Charles. In a unique narrative moment rather than Hobomok being seen as a ghost, he perceives Charles in these terms, which reflects a reversal of roles and suggests the possibility of a different, non-white viewpoint on the nation. However, this is not developed and before the end the vanishing Indian discourse is deployed to full effect with Hobomok moving westward so that Mary can marry Charles. Their reintegration into the Puritan community as dissidents reflects the final piece in Child's non-patriarchal and religiously tolerant vision of national identity. Charles Hobomok Conant grows up to lose all traces of his Indian identity and the writing out of an Indian presence suggests that Child solely uses native elements to further a conception of the State that rejects patriarchalism. However, to say that the ending is ethnocentric is to disregard many aspects of Child's narrative that are radical in terms of Indian representation when compared to the conservative, supremacist racial politics articulated in Cooper's and Bird's. By looking at her work in a comparative context alert to postcolonial psychoanalytic dynamics this understanding emerges more clearly.

The assimilation of the Indian becomes a primary focus in Jackson's *Ramona*. Her national ideal connects the moral reform of the State to the reform of its Indian wards. Furthermore, at least on the surface, assimilation is presented as a choice. Alessandro and Ramona choose to live outside the confines of civilisation only to become further

marginalised when that civilisation encroaches on their autonomous Indian existence. This narrative thread performs three functions: it provides a window onto native destitution due to unfettered national expansion, it shows the untenable prospect of an independent Indian existence, and it renders the idea of assimilation as a choice Indians must willingly make. This last supports Jackson's conception of the nation as a democratic institution, which reflects and contributes to a wider national self-conception that has been detailed relating to the American state as a departure from European tyranny.

Nonetheless, a conflict arises from these competing drives in the novel regarding the desire to erase the Indian through assimilation and the desire to recognise the Indian as Other and sovereign. Ramona's haunted ambivalence in the conclusion concerning her locked away Indian subjectivity and the subordination of the political themes to a contrived romantic ending reflect this. As with Child's novel, the preservation of an undefined Indian-Otherness, one that cannot be reduced to the parameters of the American imaginary, exists to validate the choice of assimilation and define the boundaries of national community in *Ramona*. This is not only a product of its tribal sovereignty discourse but is also identifiable in Alessandro's madness when he reverts to a tribal perception of property relations. Nonetheless, this epistemic space of the Other is never fully delineated or directly explored. As in *Hobomok*, Indian identity is used in *Ramona* to define a sense of Americanness and by extension to support Jackson's national vision.

While Jackson criticises the kind of racial politics that underscore the narratives of violent frontier conquest found in Cooper and Bird, she ultimately falls back upon the same distinctions between savage and civilised, though with a focus on the possibility of assimilation through reform. While Indianness is absorbed into the imaginative parameters of the American state through Ramona's anglicised sensibility and mixed race background, Indians and the history they represent cannot be fully assimilated, which reflects the loss of

an ideal in the novel relating to the idea of the nation as democratic, inclusive and legitimate. As with Child's work, this compromised outcome may be tied to the cultural and psychological limitations that inform the context of its production.

While it would be inaccurate to say that Melville enjoyed a privileged vantage point in writing about the Indian, the mixture of self-reflexivity, misanthropic disaffection and nihilism that informs his treatment of the nation in *The Confidence-Man* arguably allows him to address the forms of repression employed by my other writers.⁵ The Indian-hating section of the novel can be taken as a prime example of the narratives of duplicity he relentlessly satirises, not least because it is symbolically located in the centre of the text. The project of frontier conquest, the displacement and massacring of native inhabitants, is shown to be the original sin of the nation and one that continues to damn it. Melville's refusal to advance a national ideal or offer a revised history serves as a gloss on the other writers discussed in this thesis. Where they attempt in various ways to rationalise national history in terms of the Indian while propounding their respective visions for the future, Melville denies the possibility that the nation can be saved or is worth redeeming. The Judge's Indian-hater account is strongly suggested to be bogus in being narrated by the confidence-man in one of his guises. Moreover, the violence of the tale is taken to a caricatured extreme, which suggests not only its unreliability but also the stylisation of Indian-hating crimes that are too horrific for the American psyche to reconcile to its ego-ideal. Where Nathan Slaughter reflects the nation's disavowal of its sins via the figure of the Indian-hating backwoodsman, we find a parallel in Melville's man with the spotless kid glove, symbolically representing an institution that wishes to remain outwardly 'clean' and therefore separate from the realities underpinning it and actions performed by a proxy. Where Jackson advocates for the all but imposed assimilation of Indians, Melville satirises the idea of the nation's avoidance of self-

⁵ Herman Melville, *The Confidence-man: His Masquerade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1984).

knowledge and anticipates the hypocrisy of the reform movement by including a charitable lady who donates to a Seminole charity scam. Furthermore, where Child, Jackson and Cooper project visions of the Indian to suit their various agendas in defining a national identity, Melville parodies this absorption of the Other via Indian artefacts such as the calumet that the Cosmopolitan metaphorically 'fills' with his conceptions of Indianness.

The confidence-man himself embodies a prosecutorial examination of the national psyche. Accounts like those of Colonel Moredock become ways of reimagining the past in a performance of deception. That they may obtain currency as 'truthful' narratives is subverted by the fact that they are believed in because it is convenient and are therefore known at some level to be untrue. The numerous anecdotes in the novel thus become parables for the self-deceptions of the nation and its citizens. By repudiating any possibility of a national ideal in the acceptance of the American state's fundamental corruption, Melville opens a space for the spectres of its past to resonate.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a definitive analysis of literary representations relating to the American psyche's grappling with its history of Indian removal and assimilation. However, further research through a postcolonial psychoanalytic lens would be of interest concerning the fiction of nineteenth-century writers such as James Hall, James Kirke Paulding, John Neal, Washington Irving and William Gilmore Simms among others.

In addition, the Euro-American representations of Indians that I have detailed have been revisited and called into question in Native American and indigenous studies. While historical and political scholarship on subsequent periods complicates the picture, so too do literary representations by Native Americans themselves. Further research contextualising the reform arguments of writers like Jackson in relation to Native agency and the development of tribal sovereignty into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would be of benefit. While not

within the scope of this project, it is useful to briefly overview some perspectives on this issue here. For example, Stephen Cornell explains that certain Indian tribes are recognised as politically sovereign within the U.S. federalist system. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, hundreds of tribes were recognised under international treaties signed with the United States. The Indian nations agreed, often under military duress, to place themselves within the jurisdiction of the U.S. in exchange for reservation land, over which they were allowed legal authority⁶

As a Native American scholar, Vine Deloria's arguments in relation to tribal self-government are interesting to note here. He states that in the fifty years after the Civil War, the U.S. was determined to assimilate Indians into its constitutional framework. Deloria highlights that non-Natives viewed Native tribes from a biased philosophical perspective that prevented them from recognising that First Nation peoples had their own forms of governance. Therefore they believed that the tribes should be educated in methods of societal organisation. For Deloria self-government implies the idea that the Indian nations were never truly sovereign as they were under the watchful eye of a superior political power that guarded its own interests.⁷ The term also suggests that the peoples were originally incapable of making decisions for themselves and that they were only ready to assume certain municipal responsibilities. The post-World War One generation of Native Americans believed that self-government was a means to address the disempowerment of tribes under the General Allotment Act when the federal bureaucracy controlled all social and political functions on the reservations. According to Deloria, having a tribal government that was recognised by

⁶ Stephen Cornell, 'American Indian Self-Determination: The Political Economy of a Policy that Works', *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP10-043*, (2010), 1-27 (p. 3).

⁷ Vine Deloria and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), p. 14.

federal agencies, responsible for providing services to the tribe, helped Natives regain a degree of self-respect that had been absent for several generations. In his view, while Indian tribal governments have many of the powers of nations, these privileges fail to compensate for the needs of a spiritual tradition that remains within most tribes. Deloria contends that self-government is a non-Native idea, originating in the Euro-American consciousness, that has destroyed traditional forms of governance (Deloria and Lytle, pp. 14-15).

Cornell points out that the historical overriding influence of the U.S. government on the economic, political and social realities of Indian nations has led to socio-economic deprivation. Furthermore, it has constituted a failure in the government's trustee responsibilities and for the objectives of tribal self-sufficiency (Cornell, p. 17). Yet the 1960s and 1970s witnessed policy changes which contributed to tribal self-governance and economic self-reliance. The passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975 ushered in the era of tribal self-determination. By the latter half of the 1980s self-determination had resulted in a widespread transformation of tribal governments and their relations with the U.S. government. This process has been termed the 'nation building' movement (Cornell, p. 12). For Cornell federal policies of self-determination have had a positive impact on the economic, social, cultural and political status of Native American nations and have served to partially reverse the damage caused by prior decades of federal mismanagement of tribal affairs. Tribal nations have experienced improved economic growth with the wealth gap closing between Native Americans and the rest of the U.S. citizenry (Cornell, p. 27). Based on this summary of Deloria and Cornell's arguments, future research could explore the question of Indian agency in relation to the collective identities of tribal societies or the contemporary U.S. national psyche.

At the beginning of the thesis, one of the questions posed was whether a pattern emerges in literature with respect to the psychological formation of a nation state and its

negotiation with the displacement of another culture. The novels were selected based on their contrasting yet comparable approaches to the Indian. I considered generic categories such as the historical romance, Indian-hating, Indian reform and satire regarding the different ways they influenced and related to the negotiation with the Indian in terms of the American national psyche. Gender discourses became a significant area of differentiation between the works of Cooper and Bird and those of Child and Jackson with respect to themes of violent frontier expansion and the peaceful assimilation of native inhabitants within American national boundaries. The frontier has also been seen to move further westward; where Cooper, Bird and Child set their novels in more distant historical eras in locations such as Virginia, Kentucky and New England, Jackson depicts the last vestiges of a space autonomous from civilisation in California as something of a national treasure to be preserved. In addition, my approach has allowed the imbrication of readings on the American gothic with Khanna's work on postcolonial melancholia and spectres. The psychoanalytic interpretation of gothic tropes as signifiers for the containment, distancing and repression of inassimilable historical memories allows for a new angle on nineteenth-century U.S. texts, and also on Indian/frontier topics that have been treated in key American studies works by writers such as Renée Bergland and James Folsom. This can be identified for example in the forbidding wilderness environments of Cooper and Bird that are informed by the very inassimilable aspects of frontier conquest that they are designed to repress and rationalise for their respective national ideals. Additionally, as seen in Chapter Three, Bergland's argument on Mary's spectral status in *Hobomok* can be reconsidered instead as part of a symbolic rebirth and rejection of psychical legacies borne from Puritan exile.

It has been found that during the early part of the nineteenth century the rhetoric of frontier conquest and the passing of an inferior societal model held a greater sway over the national consciousness. This is reflected in the works of Cooper and Bird. However, this was

not a universal representation. It is significant that a female writer and abolitionist such as Child followed an assimilationist line on the Indian question. At the same time, she also sought to erase the Indian and echoed Cooper in utilising 'Indianness' to define a sense of American identity. This process of erasure through assimilation and a movement away from race warfare culminated in reform texts such as Jackson's *Ramona*. Effectively, a national culture such as the United States, informed by principles of democracy and plurality, allowed for an evolution in literary representations of the Indian in terms of defining American identity. Melville's work may be regarded to sit somewhere outside this pattern, given that he arguably does not participate in a process of national definition. *The Confidence-Man* conveys a sense of political and epistemological nihilism and so foregoes repressive strategies. In contrast to the other works, Melville's text thus 'works through' the ghosts that haunt the nation's past. Although its experimental form probably contributed, the novel's uniquely bleak view and ridiculing of the American state along with its people, may have led to its relative obscurity and neglect until the twentieth century.⁸

In summation, this thesis has attempted to reach a deeper understanding of the psychical patterns underscoring the formation of American identity in fiction during the nineteenth century with respect to the Indian. To this end, I have sought to extend and reframe existing readings in both psychoanalytic and postcolonial terms as a way of delineating the shaping force of inassimilable historical policies and memories. Furthermore, I have combined well known works with the less familiar and critically neglected. The relegation of a once popular work such as *Nick of the Woods* to relative obscurity may arguably reflect what I have examined in this thesis, namely how culture reveals and is informed by the national consciousness at a particular historical moment. Child's *Hobomok* arguably fell out of favour due to its approach to interracial marriage, Indian representations,

⁸ For further discussion on Melville's reception by his contemporaries and the American Melville revival see O. W. Riegel's 'The Anatomy of Melville's Fame', *American Literature*, 3/2 (1931), 195-203.

patriarchy and so forth, which undermined a national script that favoured the certainty of Cooper's mythological revisions of American history. The shifting fortunes of these works along with other issues raised relating to narratives of national self-definition, indicate that a fruitful field of further research exists in bringing postcolonial psychoanalytic concepts to bear on the literature of nation states such as the United States, states that have orchestrated imperialist and domestic projects of domination and continue to do so.

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