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From Native to Nation: Copway's American Indian Newspaper and Formation of American Nationalism

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FROM NATIVE TO NATION: *COPWAY'S AMERICAN INDIAN* NEWSPAPER
AND FORMATION OF AMERICAN NATIONALISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by

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for my parents...

“I wouldn’t take nothing for my journey now.”

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Tess and Obie; you are this man's two best friends. I owe you more than a few long walks. I especially want to thank my parents, Frank and Betty Wallace, whose support (emotional, spiritual, and financial) made this whole thing a reality.

To the spirit of George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh) (1818-1869), I hope I have done you justice.

And above all else, I thank God.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that the publication of *Copway's American Indian* (1851) challenges accepted representations of nineteenth-century American Native peoples by countering popular stereotypes. Interrogating a multiplicity of cultural artifacts at the moment of their meeting and investigating the friction created as they rub against one another within the columns of the periodical, I argue that the texts that contribute to the make-up of *Copway's American Indian* are juxtaposed in such a way as to force nineteenth-century readers to reconsider the place of the indigenous inhabitants in the American nation. Seemingly disconnected tidbits of information, presented not individually but as components of a whole, establish a specific set of ideas within the periodical and I contend that the editor, George Copway, specifically sought pieces for the journal that buttressed the ideology of the vanishing Indian as a means of rationalizing the publication of his newspaper and to convince Euro-Americans that the Native people must be saved. By recontextualizing texts by Euro-American novelists, poets, ethnologists, politicians, and historians that reinforce the myths of American exceptionalism, masculinity, benevolence, and manifest destiny and that attempt to write the Indian out of the national conversation, *Copway's American Indian* reinvests these writings with meaning in support of the need for Indian removal. By reading key instances in the works of Euro-American figures alongside Native folklore and tracing the web that connects them to George Copway and *Copway's American Indian*, I show how these individuals and their texts, existing in contentious dialogic relationships, are employed to achieve a common goal and I argue against those scholars who claim that pre-twentieth-century Native authors were rhetorical innocents and, having no real effect on white writers or writing, did not participate in the construction of the national narrative.

INTRODUCTION

Within this dissertation, I investigate the contents of a single Native owned and edited national newspaper titled *Copway's American Indian* published in New York City from July 10 to October 4, 1851. Throughout this study, I explore the ways in which the editor, George Copway, courted contributors, selected contents, and employed terminology for the periodical as a means of buttressing the ideology of the “Vanishing American” and gaining support for his plan for Native removal, *Organization of a New Territory*. To establish this premise, I trace through archival research the nineteenth-century Native-centered literary creations, political affiliations, and social connections of several well-known figures who penned letters of encouragement for the publication, and in the process I reconstruct the complicated web created by the journal and its editor. Through the lens offered by the newspaper, I also consider many of Copway's previously published writings in an effort to highlight his often-questioned Native voice and to illuminate his dedication to the salvation—both physical and spiritual—of the Native people. In the end, I make the seemingly counterintuitive argument that in order for *Copway's American Indian* to be truly successful and rescue America's indigenous people from extinction via Copway's proposal for relocation, it had to, in effect, deploy something akin to reverse psychology upon its readers, emphasizing Native disappearance to forestall that fate, projecting cultural erasure while “preserv[ing]...the still lingering memorials of [a] people once numerous and strong” whose existence, it predicted, “will be found only in the history of the past” (“Prospectus”).

We cannot locate the exact origin of the concept of the “Vanishing American”, but by the last decades of the eighteenth century the myth had firmly taken its place in the collective consciousness of the fledgling American nation. Brian Dippie points out that as early as 1787

Philip Freneau could in his poetry justifiably romanticize the haunting absence of the Native inhabitants from the landscape.¹ While many Euro-Americans contended that the disappearance of the indigenous residents stood as proof of their inability to adapt to civilization, others asserted their responsibility for this imagined Native depopulation. Importantly, it is with this second group that Copway cast his lot and the entirety of his personal and professional life stood as testament of the Native's ability to exist and even thrive in the face of national progress. *Copway's American Indian* likewise promoted the institutions and ideologies that had shaped its editor's life and thereby functioned as both an example of and an advocate for Native incorporation into the American nation.

While scholarly conversations regarding the formation of nineteenth-century American nationalism are common, my point of entry is rather unorthodox in that I situate a newspaper devoted to a cultural minority and ultimately aimed at cultural separatism within the ongoing discussion.² Theorists of national identity construction typically take an inside-out approach in their examinations and emphasize factors that contribute to nationalistic tendencies as they emerge within the population. However, contributions made by marginalized "outsiders" play an equally important role in this ideological development. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Americans cultivated national identity in direct response to external forces that denied or opposed the nation. After battling the Native inhabitants for possession of the land, gaining their independence from the British through revolution in 1776, purchasing the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, proving their right to continued autonomy in a second war with England and the Native tribes from 1812-1815, and successfully winning a war with

¹ See Dippie's *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1982. 3-4.

² Dippie points out that the American government's Indian policy, like that of the previous British policy, "was committed to the separation of Indians and whites" (47).

Mexico for control of Texas, California and portions of the southwest in 1848, Americans could plausibly suppose themselves the beneficiaries of divine providence, possessing unquestionable cultural and military superiority. By mid-century these proofs of the nation's Manifest Destiny further solidified a uniquely American consciousness.³

Using the criteria set forth by Max Weber, I contend that *Copway's American Indian* participates in American identity formation, ironically, by glorifying the exceptionalism of the United States and by dedicating itself to the cultural "mission" of "the civilization and 'ultimate incorporation' of the Indians into the body politic" (Dippie 47). Weber argues that, "[t]he earliest and most energetic manifestations of the idea [of the nation]...have contained the legend of a providential 'mission'" and he further notes: "the significance of the 'nation' is usually anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values that are to be presumed and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group" (179). Copway's newspaper contributes to the construction of American national ideology through its projection of a specific Christian-American reading audience, which is simultaneously lauded and reminded of its moral responsibility for the uneducated, uncivilized, pagan indigenous inhabitants. It also confirms the Euro-American colonizers' rightful possession and governance of the land through its arguments for the eventual integration of a Native state. The periodical's pleas for the extension of Euro-American education, spiritual uplift, rights, and freedoms to the degraded indigenous population further substantiated the American readers' cultural supremacy. Largely reproducing arguments made by Euro-American writers regarding the disappearance and inferiority of the Native people, the newspaper strategically places the Natives' only hopes of

³ John L. O'Sullivan coined the exact term "Manifest Destiny" in the July/August 1845 issue of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* in an article titled "Annexation." See Julius Pratt, "The Origin Of "Manifest Destiny", *American Historical Review*, July 1927, pp. 795-98.

continued existence in the hands of the more highly advanced and benevolent Americans. The salvation of indigenous inhabitants via removal and eventual renationalization, the periodical insists, will quite simply confirm Americans' national ideological assumptions.

This project's almost exclusive focus on *Copway's American Indian* newspaper and those writings and individuals connected with the journal provides certain pre-determined boundaries and yet expands the traditional field of literary criticism to include analyses of autobiographies, speeches, poetry, fictional prose, personal letters, Copway's proposal for removal, an obituary, histories, folktales, reports from missionaries, and even the layout and masthead of the newspaper itself. Tackling these several genres does present several challenges; otherwise seemingly disconnected tidbits of information, presented not individually but as components of a whole within the paper, establish a specific set of ideas. In the end, I contend, the sum of the newspaper's contents proves greater than its parts. I explore these various texts individually and in concert with one another as a means of sorting through the competing nineteenth-century attitudes regarding America's indigenous inhabitants. Through this process, I foreground the ways in which Copway used his newspaper as a tool to shape national opinion through appeals to his readers.

Within the last three decades, several scholarly works have taken Copway and his writings as their subject. However, in these studies, his final and most adventurous literary endeavor, *Copway's American Indian*, has received scant attention. This project offers both an analysis of the newspaper and a reevaluation of George Copway, one of the most discussed and controversial of pre-twentieth-century Native figures, one whom most scholars have regarded as an emotionally unstable individual with little more than self-aggrandizing, accommodationist motivations. For most scholars Copway's pro-Native/pro-American ideological construction

proves incomprehensible, and they insist on the mutual exclusivity of “American” and “Native” identities. Cheryl Walker claims that Copway “ends up personifying the incoherence of the American subject more than anything else” (106), but fails to note the classic DuBoisian “double-consciousness” he exhibits and that she ultimately enforces.

In the introduction to her text and within a problematically-titled chapter devoted to the author, Walker introduces Copway as “A Canadian by birth [who] migrated to the United States and founded a newspaper called *Copway’s American Indian*” (89), leading the reader to believe that a discussion of the newspaper is forthcoming. Walker addresses the newspaper only as a side note, however, to her larger analysis of the “Terms of George Copway’s Surrender” to point out the author’s contradictory national allegiances and his connection to the nativist Know-Nothing movement.⁴ She later contends that his inability to distinguish between the American Ojibwa and the British-Canadian Ojibwa led to his classifying all Native peoples as North American Indians and argues, “Perhaps for this reason he felt comfortable establishing a newspaper entitled (sic) *Copway’s American Indian* claiming to speak for many Indian nations” (Walker 102).⁵ Her discussion of the newspaper ends there. And yet, her insightful readings of Copway’s earlier works prove instructive to understanding the periodical. She argues that *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh* (1847), Copway’s autobiographical conversion narrative, “present[s] an almost textbook case of subjugated discourse both in its evidence of political longing and in its disturbing implications of self-division and even despair”

⁴ The official name of this organization was the Order of United Americans. The press dubbed them the “Know-Nothings” because when they were asked about the proceedings of the order they responded “I know nothing.”

⁵ Within the text I use various spellings of Ojibwa and other tribal names. In light of the fact that many of the names themselves are contested and have changed over time, I maintain the spellings used by the writers in their works.

(Walker 84).⁶ While I agree with most of Walker's analysis of Copway's works, I argue that, in fact, within the pages of *Copway's American Indian*, the editor uses this perceived "subjugated discourse" to achieve his political aims of Native relocation. He vacillates between the representative "Vanishing American" as seen through the eyes of his readers and the Native presence he both confirms and attempts to secure for Native people. Walker exposes her complete unfamiliarity with the newspaper when she writes, "Copway was outraged by the ideology of the vanishing American" (105), which he openly espouses in the first paragraph of the periodical.

Dale T. Knobel serves as the source of Walker's information on Copway's connection to the Know-Nothings, and his in-depth exploration of the Native editor's involvement with the movement highlights the organization's overtly patriotic and ethnocentric (as opposed to racist) ideology. Although his discussion of *Copway's American Indian* remains limited to those pieces that uphold the ideals of the order, Knobel points out that Copway had long styled his writings and public performances to appeal to members of the nativist group. Knobel also makes the triangular connection between Copway's newspaper, his plan for Native relocation, and the Know-Nothings. He notes,

Proposals for self-governing Indian territories conferring ordinary American citizenship upon their inhabitants began to surface during the very first years of the republic and continued to show up for several decades following the Civil War. What was unique was the energy with which George Copway promoted his statehood plan and the constituency he tried to enlist as his political lobby... what this effort revealed was that devotees of the secret orders were ready to give the proposition that Indians be incorporated into the American polity a sympathetic, even enthusiastic, response. (176-77)

⁶ Walker identifies "subjugated discourse" by "its insistent attention to differential power relations in mode that is metropolitan, particularizing, interventionist, vertical, and strategic" (92).

At least two members of the secret order who would later become active in the arena of politics sent letters of endorsement for Copway's removal plan.

Similar to Walker, Copway's biographer Donald Smith makes only a passing reference to *Copway's American Indian* writing:

The summer of 1851 proved a trying time for Copway. Apparently with financial support from only one individual (who donated twenty-five dollars), he struggled to bring out his weekly newspaper *Copway's American Indian*. For three months he succeeded, but by the end of September he could not continue. (43)

Smith fails to provide any of the much needed evidence regarding the newspaper's financial collapse. In spite of this dearth of analysis, Smith cites the review Copway penned of Francis Parkman's *Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851) in the next to the last issue of the journal as evidence of his mental collapse. Smith's biography of Copway serves as an invaluable resource for this project, and it is in his work that many of the details regarding Copway's personal life appear, but Smith rarely steps out of his role as biographer and engages in cultural or literary criticism.

Bernd C. Peyer provides the most extensive investigation of *Copway's American Indian* to date and praises the accomplishment noting:

neither the short duration nor the textual deficits of the paper can detract from the fact that the realization of Copway's rather intrepid project is a remarkable demonstration of journalistic entrepreneurship. Even though it was preceded by the *Cherokee Phoenix* (1828-34) and the *Cherokee Advocate* (1844-53), *Copway's American Indian* is still one of the few nontribal newspapers to be published singlehandedly by an Indian, an achievement that would not be duplicated in the history of American Indian journalism until 1916, when Carlos Montezuma inaugurated his famous personal monthly newsletter, the *Wassaja* (1916-22)" (256-57).

Unfortunately, the "textual deficits" appear to have dissuaded Peyer from conducting a more complete examination of the contents of *Copway's American Indian* and overall his analysis amounts to little more than a reproduction of the prospectus of the newspaper, which lists

Copway's goals for the publication. Peyer follows this with the observation that, "Copway promised much more than he was ever able to deliver in the ensuing issues" (256). Overlooking the significance of his role as editor, Peyer criticizes Copway's contributions to the project as a whole, observing:

His own editorials...often dealt with dull and contrived topics...With few exceptions, those articles that actually touch upon Indian-related subjects were simply excerpted from his previous publications...Even the scope of his editorship remains somewhat uncertain as he was represented in absentia at least once during the weekly's brief existence. (Peyer 256)

Like Smith's, Peyer's study does not provide any in-depth analysis of Copway's writings, serving as more of an extended biographical account of the author's life and paying particular attention to his years as a public figure. His emphasis on the paper's lack of "Indian-related subjects" ultimately reconstructs the American/Native oppositional binary mentioned previously. Peyer's inability to recognize or accept that any subject addressed by Copway within his newspaper automatically qualified it as "Indian-related" by its very existence exposes his assumptions regarding the absolute outsider status of the Native people. It further suggests that news items that did not take the Native as their subject were of no consequence to Native people and disregards the possible Native readers of the journal Copway lists as a sort of secondary audience.

Although he also stops short of analyzing the contents of the newspaper, Joshua Bellin's treatment of Copway's Native legends as they appeared in *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches* (1850) provides much fodder for this project. Positioning himself as an intercultural literary critic, Bellin situates Copway's texts among those of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Bellin makes the case that unlike Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* (1856), the construction of Copway's tales exposes their membership within

an ongoing Native tradition. I build on Bellin's claims and contend that within the newspaper, Copway projects that tradition forward and no longer makes it exclusively Native. As this exceptionally brief literature review demonstrates, my project exists as the first to directly provide any in-depth analysis of *Copway's American Indian*. Moreover, with the exception of Theda Perdue's *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, scholars have devoted little research to the significance of Native newspapers in general. Thus, much of what I set forth within these pages enters into uncharted territory.

While he never explicitly mentions it as one of the goals of the periodical, Copway throughout the newspaper makes it apparent that he feels something must be done to retard, if not stop, the total obliteration of America's indigenous inhabitants, and in chapter one I provide a detailed discussion of Copway's relocation plan *Organization of a New Indian Territory* (1850) and indicate several prominent individuals and organizations that shaped the national arguments regarding Native removal. Copway's plan never appears in the columns of the newspaper, but an article titled "The Confederation of the Indian Tribes" does highlight many of the editor's main points. I then address the missionary reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a letter from Thomas L. McKenney, and a similar note of encouragement from Edward Everett. Finally, I discuss an article I believe to have been penned by John Neal titled "Can Such Things Be?," a heated pro-Native criticism of Everett's arguments in favor of The Indian Appropriations Act passed by Congress in March of 1851, which, by instituting the first reservations, proved detrimental to Copway's overall plan for consolidation of the Native tribes.

I argue in chapter two that the decision by early Native writers to use the term "Indian" in fact fashions a space for resistance and that Copway capitalizes on this in his arguments for Native inclusion in the American nation. I begin with a discussion of William Apess's *A Son of*

the Forest (1829) and *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* (1833), as well as Elias Boudinot's "An Address to the Whites" and look at the ways each author set about (re)defining Indian identity. Then, I turn to the published letters Copway wrote to his father, which I see as continuing in this tradition, and contend that he expands the terms "Indian" and "American," making them inclusive of all native born individuals, thereby in many ways mirroring claims by nineteenth-century nativist groups like the Know-Nothings. Each of these authors, I posit, employed the colonizer's tools and language as a means of entering into the conversation regarding the nation's indigenous people. I situate these Native texts alongside Francis Parkman's opening chapter of *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851) titled "Indian Character" and note the irony of his opinions, appearing in this Native operated newspaper. I follow with the Euro-Canadian author Major John Richardson's essay "The North American Indians," which directly contradicts that of Parkman. I finally make the case that Copway's established identity as a Christian convert and newspaper editor challenged those writers who claimed Native people could not adapt to civilization.

In chapter three I move to a discussion of the "Traditions and Legends" that appear in the pages of *Copway's American Indian*. I argue these legends established a Native American cultural line of descent, which existed on equal terms with non-Native traditions. I contend that through careful selection and placement within the newspaper, Copway constructed a non-exclusive mythology for the developing American nation and combined what I term non-confrontational cosmological explanations, history, and universal moral axioms. Additionally, in this section I look at the Ojibwa editor's Euro-American contemporaries who published folk material for which Copway served as the source. Finally, the chapter concludes with a look at the ways in which the author and editor, both intellectually and physically, becomes the stuff of folk

material through a discussion of Copway's relationship with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his contribution(s) to the creation and perpetuation of the latter's epic *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855).

I open chapter four with a discussion of an editorial praising James Fenimore Cooper and of the notice that followed his death in the fall of 1851, the wording of which I argue establishes the point that Native individuals have not disappeared entirely, but instead, like the newspaper's Euro-American readers, actively peruse the newspaper, consuming these pieces. These very present literate Natives remind readers that while many Native people have been removed from the forest of the east, they are in the process of being duly civilized and have much to offer the new nation. I then address the poems appearing in Copway's newspaper—texts that represent a broad range of perspectives on the fate of the Native people and their place within the American nation and yet all in some way belong to the cult of the “Vanishing American.” I argue that, in his role as editor, Copway consciously reproduces ideas regarding the disappearance of the Native people, but he intermixes these with arguments for Native salvation via removal. However, Euro-American readers are also made aware that each of these poems has been selected and published by a Native individual who refuses to allow his readers to consume these pieces without also being aware of a Native voice.

The columns of *Copway's American Indian* contain numerous articles with contradictory views regarding the fate of the Native people, and I argue that Copway includes these paradoxical texts in order to increase dialogue surrounding an issue he found of utmost importance. In the end, Copway embraces Native relocation but insists that this move be voluntary, thereby guaranteeing Native agency and promoting their rights as citizens. If we make the mistake of tracing the trajectory of Copway's career in chronological fashion, the publication

of *Copway's American Indian* appears as little more than a journal filled with scraps of information about various disparate tribes and created for the author's own glorification. Moreover, in such a linear context, these scraps seem to provide evidence that Copway had finally aligned himself with those who viewed Native disappearance as an inevitability and had chosen to cash in on the imminent extinction of his own people. Such a reading would ignore the efforts he made to secure for Natives a permanent place of refuge and would also disregard his continued promotion of the relocation plan he authored the previous year. That the demise of *Copway's American Indian* and the editor's literary career, which had thrust him into the public eye less than four years before, coincided with the American government's establishment of reservations for the western tribes and was soon followed by the beginnings of a disastrous removal of the Ojibwas against their will, signals the author's realization that he had been toiling in vain.

Copway's several published writings, particularly his autobiographical conversion narrative, provide the only available details of his early life. Born in 1818 into the Mississauga Ojibwa band that lived near Rice Lake just north of Coburg on Lake Ontario, Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh, for the first decade or so of his life, experienced a traditional Native upbringing. From his father he gained training in hunting and trapping and instruction in Ojibwa spiritual beliefs, and sometime around the age of twelve he experienced a successful vision quest, where he received both an "identity" and an understanding of his life's purpose.⁷ Following in the footsteps of both of his parents who had accepted Christianity a few years earlier, Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh

⁷ The Ojibwa vision quest included a solitary period away from social distractions. As boys began the transition into manhood, they were taken to a remote location that was conducive to spiritual awakening. It was a place that allowed for solitary contemplation regarding the relationship between living and being.

underwent a spiritual conversion to the Christian faith just before his mother's death in 1830.⁸ Four years later, the young Native, now known by the baptismal name of George Copway, joined three other converts as missionary workers among the Native people for the American Methodist Church.⁹ He first served as an interpreter and teacher, but within a year had been promoted to a preacher. During his first winter doing missionary work, Copway and the Presbyterian minister Rev. Sherman Hall of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions translated the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles into the Ojibwa language. The following year Copway helped establish a Methodist mission at Ottawa Lake and, as a reward for his success in the field, in the fall of 1837 Copway began studies at the Ebenezer Manual Labor School in Jacksonville, Illinois. Following his graduation in late 1839, Copway returned to Canada to visit his relatives and there met and married Elizabeth Howell, whose father had emigrated from England. Following their wedding on June 1, 1840, the couple relocated to the area which is present-day Wisconsin and Minnesota to join the American Upper Mississippi Mission. Shortly thereafter, Copway received an invitation from the Native missionary Peter Jones to assist him in his work back in Canada and, after accepting the post, Copway served as an itinerant preacher among the Saugeen and Rice Lake Ojibwas for several years. The Canadian Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church expelled Copway in early 1846 after the Saugeen and Rice Lake bands charged him with the mismanagement of funds and he spent several weeks in jail.

⁸ Donald Smith, having access to personal correspondence from Copway's wife's relatives, provides the most complete background information, but his dates are a bit confusing. He comments that Copway was born in 1818 and converted to Christianity in 1830 at the age of 14. Since by his own account Copway did convert prior to his mother's death on February 27, 1830, I believe that he was 12 and not 14. Notably, Peyer claims that Copway experienced his vision quest at the age of 12. Both Smith and Peyer rely on Copway's own writings for their information and still arrive at different conclusions.

⁹ George Copway's father had changed his name to John Copway upon his conversion to the Christian faith. These other Native missionary workers were John Cahbeach, John Taunchev (Copway's uncle), and John Johnson (Copway's cousin Enmegabowh).

Immediately after his expulsion from the clergy, Copway, in the company of his wife, left Canada and began a career as a public speaker in the northeastern United States. Several individuals who heard Copway's lectures encouraged him to write about his experiences, and in 1847 Copway published *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh (George Copway)* in Albany, New York.¹⁰ This first literary endeavor proved extremely popular and the book went through seven editions within its first year. Copway harnessed this new-found fame and began travelling throughout the eastern United States delivering talks on "Indian" subjects. He first outlined his plans for an Indian Territory in an article titled "The American Indians" published in the June 1849 edition of the *American Whig Review*. This plan, officially titled *Organization of a New Indian Territory*, he later submitted to the 31st Congress of the United States with letters of support from many influential politicians and philanthropists. The next year he published a follow-up to his conversion narrative titled *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* in London, which was reprinted in the United States in 1851.¹¹

Familiar with his status as both a popular lecturer and author, in the early summer of 1850 Elihu Burrit, founder of the League of Universal Brotherhood, invited Copway to attend the Third World Peace Congress in Frankfurt, Germany as a representative of the "Christian Indians of America." Copway departed on July 10, 1850 for a five-month trip to Europe. Five weeks prior to and for several months after his attendance at the Congress in late August, where he garnered mixed reviews on his speech from the local media, Copway received dozens of

¹⁰ According to Smith, Copway's wife was an accomplished writer and, it is assumed, that she provided much editorial (and possibly composition) assistance in all of Copway's published works.

¹¹ In 1850 Copway also published an epic poem titled *The Ojibway Conquest*, but the authorship has been convincingly disputed.

invitations to speak at venues across England and Scotland. Both his speeches and his “performances” attracted large crowds and his appointment calendar, which he later published as part of a travel narrative, rivaled that of any state dignitary of the period.¹² *Running Sketches of Men and Places* (1851) details his transatlantic journey and international experiences but relies largely on tourist brochures for descriptions of European locales. Copway announced the publication of this third and final book in his newspaper *Copway’s American Indian*.¹³

Copway had begun planning the production of his newspaper shortly after his return to the United States several months earlier. The journal, which serves as the final installment in Copway’s literary career, early on received accolades from the national newspaper community and he received great support for his journalistic efforts from some of America’s literary and political elite. However, after only thirteen issues the newspaper ceased publication and Copway returned somewhat half-heartedly to the lecture circuit where he had first found success. It seems that Copway’s celebrity had run its course and he soon faded into relative obscurity. Between 1852 and the time of his death, Copway is mentioned in the columns of America’s newspapers for disinterring the remains of Red Jacket (1852) without the consent of the Seneca as an attempt to prevent them from being stolen, for volunteering to assist in negotiations during the Third Seminole War (1855-1858), for his preparations to join William Walker in the Conquest of Nicaragua (1854-1855), for collecting bounties after illegally recruiting Canadian Indians to join the Union army in 1864, and for hawking medicine in Detroit in 1867.¹⁴ Copway died on January

¹² Copway, who had met Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1847, received letters of introduction from the poet to several of London’s literary elites prior to his departure for Europe.

¹³ Copway reprinted the first three chapters of *Running Sketches of Men and Places* in the columns of his newspaper.

¹⁴ For a complete discussion of the Seminole Wars (also called the Florida Wars) see John Knetsch’s *Florida’s Seminole Wars: 1817-1858*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2003. William Walker (1824-1860)

17, 1869 at the Lake of Two Mountains (Oka) Reserve outside of Montreal. Shortly before he passed away, Copway converted to Roman Catholicism and changed his name to Joseph Antoine.¹⁵

In late November of 1850, only two weeks before he returned to the United States, George Copway stood before a crowd at St. Luke's Anglican Church in London and delivered a speech titled "The Evangelization of the North American Indians." In true ministerial form, Copway began his address by quoting from the Book of Hosea. In the verse, the prophet chides the people of Israel for turning away from God and proclaims, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge."¹⁶ Copway explains to those in attendance, "in the midst of this crowded audience, there is no one more fit to adopt these words than myself" (304). In the ensuing speech, he goes on to point out that the destruction of America's Native population, unlike the Israelites against whom Hosea rages, cannot be held responsible for their own downfall. Indicative of his audience's attitude regarding their American "cousins," Copway informs his listeners that the Indians of North America have come to ruin through their "contact with the *worst classes of society*" (305).¹⁷ The reproofs of Hosea can be more aptly applied to the

was an American physician, lawyer, journalist and adventurer. He organized and led several private military expeditions to Latin America where he attempted to establish English-speaking colonies. During a civil war in Nicaragua, Walker was called upon to help the Democratic Party to defeat the Legitimists. Walker served as President of Nicaragua from July 12, 1856-May 1, 1857. Copway and his wife had four children, three of which died between 1849 and 1850. Donald Smith has discovered through his personal correspondence with Copway's surviving relations that he and Elizabeth separated permanently sometime after 1861.

¹⁵ Smith and Peyer provide significantly more detailed accounts of Copway's life in their works. See Smith's "Kahgegahbowh: Canada's First Literary Celebrity" in *Life Letters and Speeches*. Editors, A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Donald B. Smith, Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. 23-60 and Peyer's "George Copway, Canadian Ojibwa Methodist and Romantic Cosmopolite" in *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. 224-276.

¹⁶ See Hosea 4:6

¹⁷ British writers regularly used the term "cousins" when referring to Americans. It denotes familial ties while also signaling troubled relations.

“swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing” Americans on the frontier with whom the Natives have interacted and it is here that Copway received inspiration for his damning descriptions.

“There is a class of men,” Copway continues, “romantic in their ideas, adventurous in their spirits, and reckless in their lives, having no morals, nor fear of God’s law, nor regard for the common law of mankind; and they are the first to come in contact with the different races of men all over the earth” (305). The familiar construction of this “class of men” within Copway’s text, served to create an identifiable villain who could be held responsible to the destruction of America’s indigenous people. It simultaneously reestablished a bond between those Europeans who possessed the knowledge and the ruined Indians who required their assistance.

With these words Copway introduced to his British audience a revised version of his plan for Native removal. After detailing the justifications for separating the Indians from the adventurous whites who reveled in Native destruction, Copway concluded his speech stating:

I expect now to go across the great deep to my native land again, to renew my request for a grant of land, there to plant missionaries, to open schools, and to invite my Indian brethren to receive education...I purpose laying my plan before [Congress] on the 25th of February, 1851. (321-22) ¹⁸

The full plan titled, *Organization of a New Indian Territory, East of the Missouri River*, had been submitted to the 31st Congress the previous February and while it had been referred to committee, “The committee [had] not yet acted on the measure, in consequence of the agitation on the slavery question” (321). Copway claims that he had been asked at that time to present his plan before a joint meeting of the two houses, but “did not consent, because [he] had not then matured [his] plans” (322). In spite of this first rebuff, Copway’s intention of continuing to petition the American government gives rise to this project. There is no record of whether or not

¹⁸ Earlier in the speech Copway tells the audience that he first delivered the text of his plan to Congress on February 25, 1850.

Copway kept his February 25 appointment with Congress, but the publication of his newspaper *Copway's American Indian* the following summer proves that he had not abandoned his ideas for Indian relocation.

CHAPTER ONE

DEBATING THE NATION: NATIVE RIGHTS AND THE RATIONALE OF REMOVAL

During the early summer of 1851 George Copway launched a letter writing campaign announcing the forthcoming publication of his newspaper and seeking support from a host of individuals he hoped might become contributors to its pages.¹⁹ Copway had been developing his plan for the periodical for more than a year, but not until he had returned from an extended trip to Europe did he begin finalizing the design for what would become *Copway's American Indian* newspaper. Having met with great success writing and lecturing about his people to audiences in both the United States and across the Atlantic, Copway sensed that he might be equally successful publishing an American journal “devoted entirely to the claims of the Indian Race” (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). Copway envisioned the newspaper as having two main goals. He intended it to educate the Euro-American readers of the “means of [the Native people’s] moral and physical elevation” (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). Likewise, it would inform the Indians about the important events of the world. This he planned to achieve by sending out free copies of the newspaper to be read aloud to the Natives by missionaries working among them. “It is designed,” he writes in a letter to the poet Henry Beck Hirst, “for a channel of information for the American people and to the Indian Race of all such things as will tend to give them a better idea of each other” (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). According to Copway, the newspaper would serve as a type of cultural conduit between the Euro-Americans and the nation’s indigenous inhabitants. The soon-to-be editor believed that this exchange of information would prove

¹⁹ Smith has had Copway’s letter to James Fenimore Cooper analyzed by a handwriting expert who concluded that Elizabeth Copway was the writer. It is likely that she penned many of the letters requesting support for the newspaper.

paramount to the survival and possible integration of the Native people into the evolving American nation.

Copway argued that the publication of the periodical was necessary because he, like a host of his contemporaries, had come to believe that the Native people were disappearing from the land. “That race is fast vanishing,” he laments in the newspaper’s premier edition, “only a few years more and its existence will only be found in the history of the past” (Copway, “Prospectus”). While he never explicitly mentions it as one of the goals of the periodical, throughout the newspaper Copway makes it apparent that he feels something must be done to retard, if not stop, this total obliteration of America’s indigenous inhabitants, and the previous year Copway had offered a possible solution to the problem in the form of a proposal titled *Organization of a New Indian Territory, East of the Missouri River* (1850).²⁰ Furthermore, for the betterment of the new nation, Euro-Americans needed to learn about the people who once occupied the lands where they were now residing. “The lingering memorials of [the Indians],” Copway pledges, “once numerous and strong, [will prove] interesting alike to the Christian, the philanthropist, the philosopher, and the general reader” (“Prospectus”). Copway had already established a career educating Euro-Americans and Europeans alike about not only his own pre-Christian Native origins, but also the histories and mysteries of his tribe, the Ojibwa.²¹

Expanding on these previous achievements, he envisioned *Copway’s American Indian* as a

²⁰ Copway had over twenty letters and signatures of support for his proposal from prominent political figures; however the proposal was never introduced as a bill in congress. Interestingly, the letters praising Copway’s plan are all addressed to Thomas Ewing, the first Secretary of the Interior. Ewing had previously served as a Whig senator from Ohio and as Secretary of the Treasury. In 1850 he was appointed to the senate to fill the seat of Thomas Corin (W, Ohio), who had resigned to become Secretary of the Treasury. Unfortunately, Ewing’s appointment was made too late for him to introduce Copway’s proposal.

²¹ See Copway’s earlier publications: *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-gah-bowh*. Albany, NY: Weed and Parsons, 1847 and *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation*. Boston: B. F. Mussey & Co., 1851.

storehouse for a wide variety of cultural artifacts relating in some way to the diverse Native tribes.²²

Possibly concerned that his potential contributors and future readers might assume his paper would serve as little more than a means of attacking the American government for its ill-treatment of the Natives, Copway endeavored to assure his audience of the periodical's presumably objective stance. "I shall abuse nobody" he vows. On the contrary, he promises to "present the good intentions of the government to the Indians and say little about the wrongs of the Indians" (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). Copway refused to deny that the Native people had been (and were still being) wronged by the American government and he specifically sought support for his publishing venture from those "who [were] friendly to the unfortunate race of the red man" ("Prospectus"). In his solicitation letter to Hirst, and it can be assumed in similar letters to all of those he courted through this correspondence, Copway flatters the recipient writing, "As I know of no one who is more justly entitled to be called the friend of the Red Man than yourself, I beg you to allow me to place your name on my list of contributors" (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh).²³

Those whom he regarded as the "friend of the Indian" make up quite a motley crew and exactly what qualifies each of them for this designation proves worthy of consideration.²⁴ He

²² It is difficult to determine the scope of *Copway's American Indian* in terms of tribes to be included. In his prospectus Copway writes that it is devoted to the Indians of America of both North and South. However, in the fifth issue the masthead is altered to state that it is devoted to the tribes of North America. Additionally, according to his removal plan, Copway does not include the tribes of the Southwest among the tribes that need such assistance.

²³ There is no record of Hirst having ever responded to Copway's request. His name does not appear among the list of contributors, nor are any of his writings published in *Copway's American Indian*.

²⁴ Copway (or his wife) reserved even stronger praises for James Fenimore Cooper writing in a similar letter, "For all of the writers of our dear native land you have done more justice to our down trodden race than any other author" (Copway, Letter to Cooper).

obviously chose these individuals because they could prove useful to his agenda. Members of Congress, writers, historians, political figures, anthropologists, and university administrators make up the list. Dale T. Knobel contends that Copway's selection of contributors was not arbitrary. He points out, "Of the fifteen men listed [as contributors to the newspaper], six were principally poets and novelists, five were journalists, and three were Indian officials and reformers. All but two had written about the Indian before" (187). More importantly, Knobel maintains, "Most of these were useful to Copway because their work treated the Indian, in his present circumstances, as doomed"²⁵ Knobel argues convincingly that the Ojibwa Chief selected only those contributors who could be viewed as encouraging Native relocation as the only means of their preservation. Copway, who intended the periodical to function as a repository of articles relating to the Native people, himself laments in his proposal: "The Indian is out of sight—he sends no horror to the pale-face by his shrill war-whoop, nor pity by the wail of his death-song" (*Organization* 4). In order to achieve his goals, the editor needed his readers to accept that the Native people were genuinely disappearing, and he found a way to convince them of this by filling the columns of his newspaper with works by prominent individuals who would reinforce this ideology. The resulting belief in the ultimate disappearance of the Native people from the nation would quite simply provide justification for the existence of a publication such as *Copway's American Indian* and would indeed make it "a thing to be *sought after*, not because of its name, or the appropriate heading . . . , but because of its *innate value*" (McKenney, Letter, *emphases original*). Notably, this approach presented a gamble. The argument of

²⁵ Knobel is correct in his statements regarding those listed as contributors, but his argument loses some weight when there is no way of knowing for certain those whom Copway attempted to recruit as a contributor. The letter to Hirst is one such example.

impending Native extinction was a two-edged sword; it also offered a rationale of inevitability to those indifferent to Native survival.

Copway's attempt to assure the success of his newspaper, coupled with the potential for personal financial gain, may have supplied reason enough for him to align himself with those who embraced the ideology of the disappearing Native, but the soon-to-be editor's prior publications, lectures, and affiliations point to a significantly more calculated and far-reaching plan, which, if successful, he believed could ultimately benefit the larger Native community.

Cheryl Walker notes that Copway's stance on the future of the Indian was complicated.

Although his selection of allies makes it appear otherwise, Copway, she contends, "was outraged by the ideology of the *vanishing* American" (105, emphasis mine). In his *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850) the author dismisses assertions regarding the inevitability of Native disappearance when he writes, "The pale face says that there is a fate hanging over the Indian bent on his destruction! Preposterous! They give him liquors to destroy himself with, and then charge the great Good Spirit as the author of their misery and mortality" (93-94). Citing the Euro-American people on the frontier as those who wishing the destruction of the Native have slandered him, Copway argues in *Organization of a New Indian Territory* that, "The groans of the Indian are occasionally heard by the intoxicated and avaricious throng in the way of complaint; he has waited for justice, while those who have wronged him, like the wild horses of his prairie, neigh over his misfortunes" (4). To place these seemingly contradictory sentiments in context, we must consider that in order for Copway to achieve his secondary purpose of creating an impetus for the deliverance of the Native people from further ill-treatment and possible annihilation, the Euro-American readers of *Copway's American Indian* could not passively accept preordained Native disappearance. To that end, the purpose of the newspaper

existed in engaging its non-Native readers in the physical and moral salvation of their red brethren.

Only when his Euro-American audience faced the real possibility of absolute Native disappearance from the American landscape, and felt that it and the nation's forefathers should be held at least partially responsible for this decimation, would it finally engage in attempts to preserve the remnants of the indigenous tribes. Moreover, in order to increase the breadth of Indian related materials that could appear in his journal, and to strengthen his case that this disappearance applied to all Native people and thus deserved immediate attention, Copway insists on the newspaper's religious and tribal neutrality. "I mean to make it a high toned upright independent Indian paper," he pledges to his potential contributor (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). Officially, the newspaper was independent; unlike every other Native operated newspaper before it and every one after it until the second decade of the twentieth century, *Copway's American Indian* was not affiliated with any specific group.²⁶ In fact, the title Copway chooses for the periodical reflects his goal of "mak[ing] the great family of the Indians ONE...*one* in interest, *one* in feeling, *one* while they live, and *one* in a better world after death" (*Organization* 17, emphases original).²⁷ Offering his newspaper as a sort of template for creating a pan-Indian collective, Copway asserts that the Native people will remain isolated from one another "as long as the American government addresses them as distinct tribes" (*Organization* 12). Aware that government officials continually refused to deal with the tribes as autonomous

²⁶ Peyer cites *The Cherokee Phoenix* (1828-34) and *The Cherokee Advocate* (1844-53) as "nontribal" newspapers that preceded *Copway's American Indian*, but they were very much organs of the Cherokee tribe. Carlos Montezuma began publishing the *Wassaja* in 1916. That *Copway's American Indian* seems to celebrate Ojibwa culture over those of other Native groups is somewhat expected considering Copway's personal bias, but it did not serve as an official organ of the tribe.

²⁷ This final "removal" does not include the tribes of the Southwest. Copway considers these southwestern tribes "the most enlightened of the American Indians" (*Organization* 13, emphasis original).

nations and that the Natives had historically engaged in intertribal warfare, Copway recognizes that in order for the Native people to survive in the new American nation, they needed to be viewed as one homogenous group. Thus, he makes the case that the Native people should be treated as a single entity because, he notes, “[n]ot till they amalgamate, will they lose the hostile feelings they now have for each other” (*Organization* 13).²⁸

Unlike the majority of newspapers in the early and mid-nineteenth century, which openly declared their political leanings, and more akin to the unbiased journalism Americans later came to expect from their news organs, *Copway’s American Indian* presents a wide variety of often contradictory political viewpoints on issues related to the Native people. Although in 1852 Copway became affiliated with the Know-Nothing movement and had regularly supported elected officials who were sympathetic to the plight of the Native people, the newspaper, he states, will not have “anything to do with politics standing aloof from all political questions of a local nature” (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh).²⁹ In a further effort to solidify the objectivity of the periodical in the minds of his readers, Copway had the original masthead, which appeared atop the first four issues and included nothing more than the date and price of the paper, amended to read as follows: “Devoted to the General History of the N.A Indian and American Literature. Neutral in Politics and Creeds.” This lack of firm religious, political, and tribal attachment contributes to the newspaper’s seemingly schizophrenic ideological narrative. However, as a forum in which the writings often engage in antagonistic and paradoxical

²⁸ In this argument Copway in many ways echoes the words of Tecumseh in his speech to the Osages in 1811.

²⁹ The Know-Nothing (Order of United Americans) movement was a middle-class, Protestant, Nativist movement officially founded in 1845 and lasting until the late 1850s, which arose in response to fears that the United States was being overrun by Irish and German Catholics. It was anti-immigration and naturalization. Copway’s membership is noteworthy because the members were otherwise exclusively males of British lineage. Copway was a member, but there were some in the group who believed he did not belong. See “Anti-Copway,” *New York Daily Times*, 3 September 1856, 2. The movement collapsed completely in late 1856.

conversations with one another and with those of the editor, the newspaper that Copway came to publish exists as a manifestation of the ongoing debate that was taking place among members of the larger American public about the place of the Natives within the American nation, a debate that Copway had entered into wholeheartedly the previous year. Moreover, the newspaper chronicles the varied arguments presented, encourages increased dialogue on the subject, and demonstrates to the reading public the continued need for the newspaper's very existence.

The August 23, 1851 issue of *Copway's American Indian* contains an article titled "The Confederation of the Indian Tribes," which argues that, "This is the subject of growing importance, and is receiving the attention of our statesmen and philanthropists" ("Confederation"). While the subject may have gained the attention of these groups, very little serious governmental effort was being made at its realization. Regardless of the numerous proposals to permanently consolidate the various tribes in one territory west of the Mississippi, the Federal Government continued its practice of negotiating tribally specific treaties and relocations. As the anonymous author notes, "Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh, the learned Indian, otherwise known as George Copway, has presented us with a series of lectures on this subject, and submitted a plan for their confederation" ("Confederation"). It is Copway's plan, which had never made it to the floor during the previous session of Congress, to which the article refers. Viewing this rebuff by members of Congress as little more than a temporary setback to his strategy, rather than a wholesale rejection, Copway employs his newspaper to promote his agenda of Native relocation and consolidation. As evidence of his drive to see his plan succeed, Copway decided that if the members of Congress refused to act, then he would find a way to take his case directly to the American people. In order to appear objective, in this venue, he allows another to argue the merits of his proposal, which the Euro-American author "conceive[s] is

every way practicable and efficient, and which should receive the attention of the community and of Congress” (“Confederation”). The unsigned article has been, I believe, incorrectly attributed the editor himself.³⁰ In addition to the fact that the piece refers to Copway in the third person, differs stylistically from all of his previous writings, and provides a questionable summary of the aforementioned proposal, it also stands in direct opposition to several key points in Copway’s original argument. Even though, in his speeches and writings Copway regularly emphasized his status as Indian insider when it proved beneficial, he found Euro-Americans often more willing to accept criticism from one of their own when it came to matters regarding their treatment of the indigenous population. The subject and object construction present throughout the article points to a Euro-American author, not Copway. “[W]e owe it to ourselves and them,” the non-Native author writes, “to bring them within the pale of Christian education and to place within their reach the blessings that have been so munificently showered upon us. We owe this the more,” he continues, “since their present degradation has been owing to the false steps we have taken in their amelioration” (“Confederation”). Just as he relies upon the name recognition of his “contributors” to promote his paper, Copway allows the author to confirm Euro-American cultural superiority in order to sell his removal plan to the newspaper’s readers.

A further exploration into the plan for removal Copway authored in 1850 illuminates what at first appears to be the incoherence of the newspaper’s overarching narrative. In his 1847 autobiography Copway first makes the suggestion of establishing an exclusive Native territory so

³⁰ While there is no definitive proof, the contents of the article relating to the history of the Seneca have led me to conclude that it was penned by William H. C. Hosmer, who also contributed original poetry to *Copway’s American Indian*. Both the writing style and the subject matter match that found in *The Poetical Works of William H. C. Hosmer* (1854). Additionally, Hosmer’s poem “The Grave of the Sachem,” first published in *Copway’s American Indian*, deals specifically with the Seneca. For a further discussion of Hosmer’s poem see chapter four.

that the Native people “may represent their own nation” within the larger American government. He first presented the complete plan for such a territory to a general audience in March of 1848 and introduced additional details in a speech he delivered in Columbia, South Carolina in December of that same year. Copway published the full plan in an 1849 edition of the *American Whig Review* and then again as four letters addressed to the *Saturday Evening Post* in April of 1850. Later that same year, Copway collected the letters and placed them in the final chapter of *Traditional History*. Finally, he then had the official plan printed as a pamphlet before he submitted it to Congress. In the opening remarks of his proposal, Copway establishes his overarching ideology of the emergence of the American nation and writes, “The history of a nation is always interesting. The more obscure the means of tracing it, the more interest attaches to it, as it slowly discloses itself to the eye of research” (*Organization* 3). He further asserts that it has been “the struggle between the two races, the European and the American, [which has] been in steady progress since their first intercourse with each other,” that has defined the new nation. Within these lines, the author emphasizes that the Native people have always been an intricate part of the national identity and strategically identifies indigenous inhabitants as the original Americans. A mere two pages later, he broadens this identifier of nationality and applies it to the larger political body comprised of all those residing within the boundaries of the United States, and thereby symbolizes a significant shift in the developing national consciousness. Copway addresses his proposal to all Americans, which, he argues, is “the only means which can be used to save the Indians from extinction” (*Organization* 4). Similar to the way he envisions the various tribes “amalgamating” into one, within this construction the author designates the Indians as a subset of the American people rather than as a distinctly separate group. In Copway’s opinion, the Europeans, through their contact with the Native people and the Native

land, have been transformed into the new Americans, while the original Americans, through this very same contact, have been transformed into Indians and forced to dwell on the fringes of society, *and yet they remain American*. Copway's plan proposes a means by which the Natives, through cooperative relocation, Christianization, Euro-American education, and agricultural pursuits will undergo a "(re)Americanization" and gain acceptance into the ever-changing fold. Echoing Copway's earlier claims regarding the need for American readers to learn more about Native people and rescue them from certain destruction, the author of "The Confederation of Indian Tribes" critically observes, "there exists in the community a too lamentable ignorance of the Indian nature to hope to arouse public attention to this proposition, without enlightening them on the subject, on which we lament that there exists so general an apathy" ("Confederation"). As if participating in a type of journalistic call and response, the article strategically appears in a newspaper charged with the specific mission of enlightening the American people on the subject of the Indian.

In the process of providing this much needed information, Copway further assures his potential contributors, the periodical will "follow the morals of the Bible and the dictates of common sense," but makes it clear that the newspaper "is to be independent of all creeds and isms of every description" (Copway, Letter to H. B. Hirsh). Despite his previous connections to the Methodist Church, this denominational impartiality provides Copway with the freedom to publish reports from unrelated missionary groups engaged in educating and proselytizing among the Native people.³¹ Additionally, as he argues in his proposal that, "The *doctrines* which have

³¹ The July 19, 1851 edition of the newspaper contains the complete reports of the "Operations of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," which fills almost the entire first and second pages. Similarly, the August 2, 1851 edition devotes three columns to the "Proceedings of the 8th Annual Meeting of the American Indian Mission Association." Also printed in the July 19 issue is the constitution of The American Christian Association for Protective Justice to North American Indians, which had been chartered by Copway on June 3, 1851.

been preached in this civilized country may be necessary for the purpose of stimulating various denominations to zealous labor, but in our country they have had a tendency to retard the progress of the gospel” (*Organization 8*, emphasis original). In fact, he informs the readers, this interdenominational bickering has produced the reverse of the desired effect “and prejudiced the mind of the Indian against Christianity” (*Organization 8*). Similar to his arguments for a pan-Indian territory, Copway makes the case for a sort of pan-Christian territory.

The full missionary reports that eventually fill numerous columns of *Copway’s American Indian* achieve several purposes in the editor’s overall design. Detailed information regarding missionaries endeavoring to civilize, Christianize, and educate the indigenous people demonstrates to readers of the paper that there reside individuals like themselves already in the field working to save the Native souls and Native lives, but it assures all those interested that “there is a great need of more laborers to preach the Gospel” (“An Account”). These missionary journals, which provide the exact numbers of those Natives who regularly attend religious services and missionary schools, who had professed their acceptance of Christianity (and civilization), and who were going out to preach to other Natives, further attest to the educational and spiritual advancements of the previously uncivilized indigenous inhabitants. For Copway’s purposes, providing evidence of such advancements helps to prove that the Natives’ eventual (re)admission into the larger American nation exists as a possibility. “Few Christians,” one missionary among the Choctaw writes, “in any part of the world, have beheld such displays of the converting and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit” (“An Account”). The missionaries also complain in their writings that their tireless work for Native salvation and education, which is vindicated by their resulting successes, has been hampered by the American government’s continuous displacement of the Native people. The report from the Dakota Mission advises the

members of the American Board (and Copway's readers alike) that, "The church at Fort Snelling, with which the members of the mission residing in that vicinity had been connected, having become extinct by removals, last winter the church of Oak Grove was organized, consisting of five white and three native members" ("An Account"). These repeated removals, according to the frustrated missionaries, discouraged the Natives from continuing their religious observations, attending school, and from farming the land. They had also had the effect of making the Natives distrustful of Euro-American benevolence and any promise made by government officials.

The third point of Copway's *Organization of a New Indian Territory* directly addresses the repeated removals of America's indigenous inhabitants and here the author claims that his status as an Indian makes him most suited to understand the frustrations of Native people. "None but an Indian," he argues, "can, perhaps, rightly judge the deleterious influence which the repeated removals of the Indians has wrought" (*Organization* 6). Like the missionaries who rail against the continued displacement of their charges, Copway explains that it is the fear of being relocated again that prevents the indigenous inhabitants from making agricultural, educational, and material progress in their current habitations. "Having seen the removal of many tribes," he expounds, "[the Indian] is conscious of the fact, that the government may, and doubtless will, want more land, and they be obliged to sell at whatever price government may see fit to give, and thus all improvements they may have made become valueless to them" (*Organization* 6). While Copway had not personally been part of a removal during his years among his tribe, the uncertainty attached to forced Native relocation struck close to his heart. In 1850, President Zachary Taylor authorized the complete removal of the Ojibwa from lands they had ceded in a treaty in 1842. However, by the autumn of 1851, "The order of the United States government for

the removal of the Eastern Ojibewas to the west side of the Mississippi, issued in 1850, ha[d] not been carried out” (“Missionary Labor among the Indians”). Copway’s own people sat in wait to be relocated, and as this article titled “Missionary Labor among the Indians” notes, the Natives, “adverse to the proposed change... [had] profess[ed] a desire to adopt the habits of the white men, if they can be allowed to remain where they are” (“Missionary Labor”).³² Notwithstanding their willingness to begin the process of assimilation as a means of forestalling their removal, by means of mass starvation the American government ultimately forced the Ojibwa people out of Minnesota only months after *Copway’s American Indian* ceased publication.³³ The threat of removal, which essentially crippled the Ojibwa, followed by the government’s refusal to allow them to remain on their lands unmolested despite their willingness to capitulate, served as further proof of the need for a relocation plan like the one Copway offered up. In his proposal Copway reasons, “the Indians will never have a permanent hold upon any part of their lands,” because the American settlers will continue to push the Native people westward. Although various treaties had assured the Native people that they would not be required to give up their lands, the reality of the situation moves Copway to point out, “American enterprise will require railroads to be built, canals to be opened, military roads to be laid out through that western country, and this land will be demanded” (*Organization* 11). Prompted by the very real fears that American expansion would continue to drive this type of tumultuous, and (in the cases of the Sauk and Fox

³² The article “Missionary Labor Among the Indians was sent from a session of the American Board for Foreign Missions.

³³ The Sandy Lake Tragedy was the culmination of a series of events centered in Sandy Lake, Minnesota, that resulted in the deaths in 1850 of several hundred Lake Superior Ojibwa. Officials of the Zachary Taylor Administration and Minnesota Territory sought to relocate several bands of the tribe to areas west of the Mississippi River. By changing the location for fall annuity payments, the officials intended the Ojibwa to stay there for the winter and lower their resistance to relocation. Due to delayed and inadequate payments of annuities and lack of promised supplies, about 400 Ojibwa, mostly men (12% of the tribe) died of disease, starvation, and freezing. See James A. Clifton, "Wisconsin Death March: Explaining the Extremes in Old Northwest Indian Removal", in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, 1987, 5:1-40

in 1832, the Cherokee in 1838 and Ojibwa in 1852) deadly removals, Copway made it a special goal of his plan to guarantee that the new Indian territory would be a permanent home for the Native people. He writes in the proposal,

And be it further enacted, that the said territory shall be forever hereafter reserved for the use of the various tribes who may have right to the same, and the faith of the United States is hereby pledged, that all that part of said territory which has been or may be granted to any of the Indian tribes, shall be, and the same is hereby secured to them and their heirs and descendants forever. (*Organization 18*)

That the missionary reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions become tools in Copway's design to convince his readers that the only way to save the Natives was to permanently relocate to lands in the west demonstrates his ability to collect and arrange information regarding the indigenous inhabitants and in turn present it in an entirely new light to suit his purposes.³⁴ The American Board had decisively come out in opposition to Indian removal decades earlier and, although by 1851 its missionaries had come to accept the practice as inevitable, they continued to rail against it in their annual reports. Missionaries of the American Board serving in Minnesota complain openly that, "The unfortunate provision of the treaty made at Washington in 1837, which provides for the expending of \$5,000 per year for the benefit of the Dakotas, in such a manner as the President shall direct, still greatly impedes the progress of this mission ("An Account").³⁵ The yearly sum, of which the American Board received the largest share, had been expressly set aside to fund Native education and religious activities but, as those toiling in the missionary field witnessed, governmental interference

³⁴ The initials of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions are incorrectly typeset in *Copway's American Indian* as A.B.C.C.F.M.

³⁵ The Treaty of 1837, made during the Jackson administration, ceded all Dakota lands east of the Mississippi for \$1 million. Rather than a lump sum, the government agreed to pay a certain percentage each year. The treaty allowed the Dakota to continue to use the land. See Linda Clemmons' "'We Will Talk of Nothing Else': Dakota Interpretations of the Treaty of 1837." *Great Plains Quarterly*, 25:3 (Summer 2005), 173-185.

presented more obstacles to their work than it did benefits. To its chagrin, the American Board came to understand that there may be no end in sight to these removals. It had begged repeatedly for the allotted funds to hire teachers for the Indian boarding schools only to learn that “the officers of the United States government think it inexpedient to attempt any thing of the kind, till after a new treaty shall have been made with these Indians, for a cession of their lands west of the Mississippi, which they hope will be effected before the close of the current year” (“An Account”).³⁶ And yet, the American Board held its ground and still refused to embrace *any* plan for removal, which it felt flew in the face of their avowal of Native human rights.

As a product of missionary education at the Ebenezer Manual Labor School in Jacksonville, Illinois, Copway also believed he had a better approach to Native education than those instituted by the various groups operating Indian schools. In his proposal he writes, “I have tried to convince the different missionaries that it is better to teach the Indians in English, rather than in their own language” (*Organization* 9). Seeing the systems in place as inefficient and ineffectual, he continues “A great amount of *time* and *money* have been expended in the translation of the Bible into various languages, and afterward the Indian has been taught to read; when he might have been taught English in much less amount of time and with less expenditure of money” (*Organization* 9, *emphases original*). The reports published in *Copway’s American Indian* confirm the emphasis missionary societies placed on translations of the Holy Scripture into Native languages and each mission included a separate section devoted exclusively to lists of those religious texts which had been translated and revised, as well as those that were in the process of being completed. In addition, Copway had spent some of his own time in just such an

³⁶ In 1851 the United States Government signed two treaties with the Dakota. The Treaty of Traverse de Sioux was signed with the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands and the Treaty of Mendota was signed with the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute bands.

effort. Peter Jones notes in *History of the Ojibway Nation* (1861) that Copway had translated the Gospel of Luke into his native Ojibwa, so something must have transpired to induce the editor to alter his opinion of the value of this work before he penned his proposal for Indian relocation.³⁷ Although he does indicate that the common spoken language of the new territory would at first be Ojibwa because, it “[is] the great family language of all the Algonquin tribes west,” he insists that all educational instruction should be done exclusively in English (*Organization* 15). In light of this claim, it would be easy to write Copway off as a shameless assimilationist ideologue. However accurate that critique, the reasons he provides for this means of Native instruction appear logical. Copway rationalizes this argument by stating, “the few books that have been translated into our language are the *only books* which they *can* read...whereas, had he [*sic*] been taught English, he [*sic*] would have been introduced into a wide field of literature” (*Organization* 9, emphases original). It appears that those societies charged with the salvation of the Indian considered it neither cost-effective nor necessary to complete similar translations of secular texts.

Copway had struggled to learn English and had regularly been criticized by his contemporaries for his rambling and circuitous delivery when using his adopted language. Thus, he became well aware of the limitations that existed for Indian education outside of religious instruction. Envisioning the eventual suppression of any language which identified the Natives as separate from the rest of the American population and which impeded their progress toward (re)nationalization, Copway writes, “the sooner [they] learned the almost universal English and forgot the Indian, the better” (*Organization* 9). Copway cites additional reasons for the failure of Indian education and why so many Native individuals who, after being educated in Euro-American operated schools, had returned to their tribal ways. He informs the audience that these

³⁷ Donald Smith adds that Copway had also assisted in translating The Acts of the Apostles into Ojibwa.

Native students had been not been given adequate moral training and “not having learned any trade with which to be employed on their leaving the schools,” must to return to their earlier modes of life (*Organization 7*). “Having no employment and no income,” he continues, “they found themselves in possession of all the qualities of a gentleman, without the requisite funds to support themselves” (*Organization 7*). Copway had learned the hard way that once having been trained to be a “gentleman” in the Euro-American system, a Native male had few options for earning a living outside of “selling” his Native culture to Euro-Americans or selling white “civilization” to the Natives.

Having established numerous Indian schools among the tribes, the members of the American Board argued that the Native people had shown signs of improvement and therefore had the right to remain on their ancestral lands.³⁸ Therefore, decades before Copway began publishing its reports in his newspaper, the American Board, headquartered in Boston and composed mainly of Congregationalists and Presbyterians, had become intricately involved in the battles over removal of the Cherokees during the Andrew Jackson administration.³⁹ Francis Paul Prucha’s research reveals that the refusal of the American Board to support the removal of the Cherokees even after Thomas L. McKenney had specifically requested its assistance, coupled with its effective use of moral and religious arguments to sway public opinion, impelled McKenney to create as a counter balance the Indian Board for the Emigration, Preservation, and

³⁸ Jeremiah Evarts, who served as the treasurer of the American Board from 1812-1820 and as its secretary from 1821-1831, encouraged the Cherokee Nation to take its case against the state of Georgia to the Supreme Court. Between August and December 1829 Evarts also published twenty-four “Essays on the Present Condition of the American Indians” in the Washington *National Intelligencer*. He signed the essays “William Penn” and attacked the Jackson Administrations Indian removal policy as both immoral and illegal. See Francis Paul Prucha’s *Cherokee Removal: The “William Penn” Essays and Other Writings*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981.

³⁹ See Francis Paul Prucha’s “Thomas L. McKenney and the New York Indian Board.” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 48:4 (Mar., 1962), 635-655.

Improvement of the Aborigines of America with the enlisted support of members of the Dutch Reformed, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches in New York.⁴⁰

McKenney, who served as the Superintendent of Indian Trade from 1816 to 1822 and as head of the Office of Indian Affairs from 1824 until 1830, contended vociferously for the rights of the Native people and argued for the civilization and education of the Indians.⁴¹ He, like Copway, found the Christianization, civilization, and education of the Native people necessary for their survival and eventual entry into the larger Euro-American society. In his role as Superintendent of Indian Trade, McKenney seemed confident in the success of the Indian schools and the improvements of the Native peoples on their ancestral lands in the East; however, after traveling along the frontier and witnessing their degraded state, he came to think that the Natives' survival depended on their separation from their Euro-American neighbors (Prucha 637). McKenney's belief that the Euro-Americans living along the frontier existed as the worst possible examples of "civilization" and his criticism of their interactions with the Natives would be echoed by Copway some twenty years later in his attempt to explain to the members of Congress why the Indians had not progressed more rapidly in the arts of civilization since the time of contact. Although the frontier had moved westward since McKenney began his campaign for Indian relocation, the argument remained the same.

When in his plan for Native relocation Copway asks, "Why has not the Indian improved when coming in contact with civilization?," he answers by placing the blame not on the Native peoples, but rather squarely on the shoulders of those with whom they have had the most direct

⁴⁰ Prucha points out that although McKenney claimed he had nothing to do with the creation of the Indian Board, his letters prove that he was the original architect of the organization.

⁴¹ The Office of Indian Affairs was established within the War Department, but was moved to the Department of the Interior in 1849. The name was changed to Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1947.

contact. “In their intercourse with the frontier settlers,” he maintains, “they meet the worst classes of pale-faces” (*Organization 4*). Since the Indians had been convinced that the practices of *all* Euro-American were superior to their own, he explains, “[t]hey soon adopt their foolish ways and their vices, and their minds being thus poisoned and pre-occupied, the morality and education which better classes would teach them are forestalled” (*Organization 4*). In order to drive his point home, he reminds the members of Congress that the frontier people, classed as both anti-Indian and anti-civilization, stand in direct opposition to any attempts to save the Natives. “[I]t is generally known,” he argues, “that the frontier settlements are made up of wild, adventurous spirits, willing to raise themselves by the downfall of the Indian race. These are traders, spirit-sellers, horse-thieves, counterfeiters, and scape-gallowses, who neither fear God nor regard man” (*Organization 4-5*). Making a case for the proper type of Indian education, he explains, “when the Indians come in contact with such men, as representatives of the American people, what else could be expected from them?” (*Organization 5*). “It is not strange,” Copway reminds the readers, “that, seeing as he does the gross immorality of the white men whom he meets, and the struggle between the pale-face for wrong and the red-men for right, which begins when they first meet, and ends not until one dies, that he refuses to follow in the footsteps of the white man” (*Organization 5*). In order to save the Native people, they must be dissociated from those rejects of polite society, who, in their mischief, have begun to induce the Indians to view Euro-American ways as misguided.

In the Indian Board’s recognition of the necessity of separating the Natives from Euro-Americans living on the fringes of white society, upon its founding, “[i]ts first task,” Prucha notes, “and its fundamental purpose for being was to create, stimulate, and broadcast public opinion in favor of voluntary emigration” (“Thomas L. McKenney” 644). Seeing that the states

were making headway and the Federal Government refused to move on the Indian question, as a member of Jackson's administration, McKenney adopted the stance that when it came to dealing with the Native tribes within their borders, the laws of the individual states trumped those of the Federal Government. In response to the position taken by the American Board and its vocal and at times physical opposition to Indian removal, one of the key articles of the Indian Board's constitution required it "to co-operate with the Federal Government of the United States, in its operations in Indian Affairs" and in direct opposition to the actions taken by missionaries of the American Board, it was "at no time to contravene its laws" (*Documents and Proceedings* 22-23).

⁴² Thus, the American Board and the Indian Board existed in direct opposition to one another in terms of their support of the individual states' decisions on Native removal. However, the Indian Board, reflecting McKenney's own personal view, insisted that removal of the Cherokees (and other tribes) *must be voluntary*. The death of the Indian Board, as reported by McKenney in his *Memoirs* (1846), proved imminent when it became apparent that despite the decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court, the Jackson administration intended to use force in its plans for Indian removal.⁴³ As Prucha points out, in the heat of the debate the stronger and significantly better organized American Board became the recognized voice of the churches and, following the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the Indian Board's continued support of Indian removal signaled its approval of Jackson's use of force in accomplishing the task. In the end, Jackson's actions conflicted with McKenney's personal ethics and challenged the principles of the Indian Board he had been instrumental in creating.

⁴² The first act of the Indian Board at its inaugural meeting (even before it drafted a constitution) was to "approve a plan proposed by the Government of the United States, as intimated in the letter of the Secretary of War, to remove the Indians beyond the river Mississippi, as the best means for their preservation and improvement" (*Documents and Proceedings* 20).

⁴³ In the case *Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia* the court ruled that the Native American tribes were sovereign nations and in *Worcester vs. Georgia* that state laws had no force on tribal lands.

The intricate web of support Copway wove within his newspaper appears even more entangled when we consider that the premier issue of *Copway's American Indian* contains a letter from none other than McKenney, whose name also appears as one of the fifteen contributors. McKenney's letter of encouragement for Copway's paper, more than any other, provides words of wisdom for the editor-to-be. Although no longer directly involved in governmental relations with the Natives, and yet obviously still concerned with the welfare of the Native people, McKenney urges Copway "to place the paper upon some more certain basis than the accidental or incidental aid which you may receive from occasional contributors" because, he insists, "[t]he undertaking is one of high importance" (McKenney, Letter to George Copway). Whether McKenney fully realized Copway's overall agenda of using the newspaper as a public relations tool for his plan for Native relocation, or if he simply acknowledged the need for a collection of artifacts for a disappearing race remains unclear. In either case, based on his own experiences, McKenney remained all too aware of the possible failure in getting the American public and the government to alter its opinions and treatment of the Native people. He cautions Copway, "[the newspaper] may succeed, and it may not. If it succeeds, it must be upon not only *the merits* of the design, but its *execution*" (McKenney, Letter to George Copway, emphasizes original). Having seen his own efforts at Indian relocation come to naught because of the way it had been handled by the Jackson camp, McKenney advises Copway to remember that "to plan is one thing, to execute another" (McKenney, Letter to George Copway). Possibly harboring doubts about Copway's commitment to the undertaking of publishing a periodical and wishing to prepare his Native friend for the difficulties of the task, McKenney instructs, "You must have *mind*, always in contact with your paper—and in such a cause, you must have *heart*. You must bring to the work the untiring perseverance of the beaver, and the industry and

discriminating taste of the bee” (McKenney, Letter to George Copway, emphases original). The force of McKenney’s advice becomes clear considering that the failure of the Indian Board came about in large part, Prucha points out, because of the comparative lack of commitment of its members. In the end, despite the Indian Board’s promises, “[t]here was no personnel to devote time to the work of emigration, preservation, and improvement of the Indians” (Prucha 654).

After exhausting his fund of advice, McKenney agrees to allow Copway to list his name as a contributor and assures him,

If any thing I can offer, toward the formation of a just opinion of the Indian race, and of the claims of those who survive, and yet linger on our borders, waiting, as did their forefathers, for the interposition of the merciful, for their redemption, and to be hailed and received as BROTHERS, and led up as participants in our fountains of blessings—*social—political—religious*—will be acceptable, it will be at your service. (McKenney, Letter to George Copway, emphases original).

Notwithstanding his final declarations, McKenney, like several others who were listed as contributors, provided neither “accidental [n]or incidental aid” in the form of articles to the short-lived newspaper. McKenney’s support of Copway’s newspaper does not seem at odds with the goals of his earlier career. And yet, his lack of support for Copway’s removal plan does. In light of the several letters from those encouraging the members of Congress to accept Copway’s plan for removal, McKenney’s endorsement appears glaringly absent.

As further evidence of Copway’s ability to amass the backing of otherwise incongruent voices in the debate over Native relocation, there appears in the same column of *Copway’s American Indian* with the letter from McKenney a short note of encouragement from Edward Everett, one of the great orators of the antebellum and Civil War eras and an assistant to

Secretary of State Daniel Webster.⁴⁴ Acknowledging his Indian friend's claims that the journal will serve as a means of information exchange between Euro-Americans and the Native people, Everett assures Copway that, "To your countrymen it would be an important vehicle of instruction; and it could not fail to increase the interest taken by the people of the United States in the fortunes of their brethren, the native races of the continent" (Everett, Letter to George Copway). In this letter, Everett's demeaning tone and exclusionary word choice appear strategic. According to Everett, the passive "native races of the continent" in need "of instruction" exist exclusively as Copway's "countrymen." In contrast, in this construction, the active Euro-American participants, "the people of the United States," exist as those who will "take an interest...in the fortunes of their brethren" (Everett, Letter to George Copway). The two groups may inhabit the same physical space but their roles, just as their identities, remain irreconcilable. Copway must have taken Everett's intimations as an affront and as counterproductive to his overall plan, and yet he remained aware of the role such sentiments could play in his design. The editor feels assured that his newspaper will succeed in educating the white people about the Natives and that this knowledge alone will encourage them to act on the Indians' behalf. More importantly, what amounts to an endorsement by the well-known Everett of Copway's publishing venture was sure to attract readers.

Everett's involvement in the Indian question, like McKenney's, dated back to the time of the Jackson administration. As a member of the U. S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts, Everett opposed the forced removal of the Cherokee and the other southern

⁴⁴ Upon Webster's death in November of 1852 Everett was appointed by President Millard Fillmore to serve out the remaining four months of Webster's term. During the same period Everett was elected as a Senator from Massachusetts. Everett served in the House of Representatives from Massachusetts from 1825-1835, as the Governor of Massachusetts from 1836-1840, Minister to Great Britain from 1841-1845, as Secretary of State, and as a Senator from Massachusetts from 1853-1854. He was also the President of Harvard University from 1846-1849 and it was in this capacity that he wrote in support of Copway's removal proposal, "I fully concur in the above" (*Organization* 28).

tribes. Joshua Bellin points out, “In 1830 and 1831, during the House debates over the Indian Removal Bill, Everett stormed: ‘if we now bring this stain on our annals, if we suffer this cold and dark eclipse to come over the bright sun of our national honor, I see not how it can ever pass off; it will be as eternal as it is total’” (“Apostle of Removal” 11). However, Everett’s utmost concern lay not with the fate of the Native people, but rather in the “‘disastrous violation of the national faith,’ the breaking of treaties negotiated by ‘the fathers of our liberty’” (Bellin, “Apostle of Removal” 13). Like McKenney, Everett insisted that Native relocation proceeded only with the approval of the tribes and, as a means of securing this approval, in 1836 he arranged talks between Jackson and a minority political faction of Cherokees, later known as The Treaty Party, led by Major Ridge, John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and Stand Watie.⁴⁵ The talks culminated in the Treaty of New Echota, even though the men had not received authorization from the Cherokee National Council to enter into negotiations with the federal government. Nevertheless, as the Cherokee people traveled west along The Trail of Tears, the “national honor,” in Everett’s mind, survived unblemished.

If the terse words Everett supplied in support of both *Copway’s American Indian* and the Ojibwa Chief’s earlier proposal for removal serve as any indication, it comes as no surprise that he refused Copway’s request to be a “contributor” to the newspaper.⁴⁶ In spite of this, one article penned by Everett does appear in the periodical’s August 16 edition. Titled “Knowledge Within the Reach of All,” the editorial turns up as a reorganized and abbreviated version of a chapter from Everett’s book titled *Importance of Practical Education and Useful Knowledge* (1840). The

⁴⁵ The Treaty Party consisted of John Ridge, Major Ridge, Elias Boudinot, David Watie, Stand Watie, Willam Coody, William Hicks, Andrew Ross, John Walker Jr., John Fields, John Gunter, David Vann, Charles Vann, Alexander McCoy, W.A. Davis, James A. Bell, Samuel Bell, John West, Ezekial West, Archilla Smith, and James Starr.

⁴⁶ Everett writes to Copway “I cannot promise you assistance as a contributor, but I will thank you to put my name on the subscription list for two copies” (Everett, Letter).

chapter exists as an edited rendering of a speech made as an introduction to the 1831 Franklin Lectures in Boston. As it originally appeared in print, the piece makes several references to America's Native population, but the sections that contain those references have been omitted from the account which appears in Copway's newspaper. Keeping with the common journalistic reprinting practice of the period, Copway most likely selected this pre-published article for the newspaper. Within his writing, Everett presents the Indian as the antithesis of civilized man, and he claims that upon the arrival of the first settlers to New England "the country itself was not preoccupied by a crowded population of savages" (*Importance* 60). Further, in the same tone which he uses in the letter to Copway, Everett argues "We have some means of judging what man was, before any of the useful arts were discovered, because there exist...many tribes and races, nearly or quite destitute of them; as for instance, the native inhabitants of this continent" (*Importance* 283-84). We cannot know why Copway chose to publish the piece authored by Everett, but we can surmise why he chose to amend the article. Copway may have needed Everett's undeniable name recognition to market his journal, but the claims that the latter makes regarding the American continent and its inhabitants challenge everything Copway had published previously.

While in his letter Copway had most likely deemed the notable statesman "a friend of the Red Man" as he had the others he courted as contributors, at least one individual who had enthusiastically accepted Copway's invitation to be included in the list of fifteen took issue with Everett's Indian policy. One of the more unlikely supporters of Copway's journalistic endeavor, the author John Neal writing from Portland, Maine, assures the soon-to-be editor, "You may count upon me as a contributor," and continues, "I think I may venture to add, that you will hear

from me frequently, and I hope for many years” (Neal, Letter to George Copway).⁴⁷ There exist no articles signed by Neal in *Copway’s American Indian*, but one piece of writing does bear the initials J.N. and survives as the most creative and interesting editorial printed in the paper.⁴⁸

Ostensibly a heated criticism of arguments in favor of The Indian Appropriations Act passed by Congress in March of 1851, the article "Can Such Things Be?," appears in the August 2 edition.⁴⁹ The author begins, “The decree has gone forth. It has been solemnly adjudged—by the white man—that his Red brother has no right to the hunting-grounds of his ancestry; and that, therefore, he may be dispossessed at any time by the stronger hand of the neighbor carrying a spade” (“Can Such Things Be?”). The first line sets the tone for the article, which satirizes arguments presented as justification for the removal of Natives from their ancestral lands.

Through an emphasis on the term “white men,” the author mocks those who assume that their racial distinction imparts intellectual and cultural superiority in their decisions regarding “this great land.” Turning the words upon themselves and highlighting the irony to be found in the designations, he criticizes those “righteous men of large views,” the “lawgivers and statesmen, philanthropists and christians [*sic*],” who, embracing their whiteness and all of its trappings, have concluded that the Native people have no rights to the land (“Can Such Things Be”). These policy makers, the author points out, have conceded prior ownership of the soil by indigenous people, but contend that they have since forfeited their rights. The argument offered by these

⁴⁷ Neal’s publications dealing with Natives include a collection of poems titled "Battle of the Niagara, a Poem, without Notes," and "Goldau, or, the Maniac Harper," 1818 and *Logan: A Family History*, 1822, which recounts the story of Logan, a Mingo Warrior, and the madness and resulting murder of his descendants, whom the mixed blood narrator of the tale claims as an ancestor.

⁴⁸ There is no conclusive evidence that Neal is the author of “Can Such Things Be?”. However, Neal is the only contributor listed whose initials are J.N. Apparently in disregard of the initials, the well-developed writing style, and the fact that he was unlikely to take such a strong stance against Everett, the article has incorrectly been attributed to Copway.

⁴⁹ The Indian Appropriations Act of 1851 was one of a succession of acts passed that began instituting agriculturally based reservations for the Native people. Everett’s involvement in its authorship is unclear.

righteous men, the author notes, “may be found in a paragraph—a single paragraph—by Edward Everett” (“Can Such Things Be?”).⁵⁰ Employing a range of Biblical terms in the form of legal rhetoric, the author provides an intentionally rambling summary of the case: God having created earth for man to multiply himself in, and replenish with his living images, therefore the grounds over which tribes of wandering savages hunt for prey, generation after generation, is not thereby appropriated nor taken possession of; and are consequently open to the first comer for cultivation: because, being cultivated, the earth would yield more and support a larger population, *with different habits of life*. (“Can Such Things Be?,” emphasis original)

The deficiency in this line of reasoning, as indicated by the author’s emphasis on the final phrase, exists in its cultural arrogance and its sheer lack of foresightedness. “If the position be sound,” the author points out, “then there is only one title upon the earth. He only is entitled to the land he occupies, or lays claim to, who makes it yield so much that no other man can make it yield more. Otherwise, to that other man, the land would instantly belong by paramount title” (“Can Such Things Be?”). Noting the myopic interpretation of acceptable productivity levels in this line of reasoning, the article goes on to expose the weakness of the case and points out that others with “different habits of life” may utilize the land in such a way “that a larger number of human beings may be fed by it” (“Can Such Things Be?”). If this becomes the case, the author asks, “why should not the land belong to him?” (“Can Such Things Be?”). He notes that when held up to similar scrutiny, lands used by Euro-Americans for “parks or pleasure grounds,” “a garden,” “a lot of wilderness,” “or a patch of green-award,” which quite literally produce no consumable yield, become less justified in terms of “feeding the human family and promoting

⁵⁰ I have been unable to find the writing by Everett containing the paragraph to which the author alludes. Although over two decades old by the time this attack was published in Copway’s paper, it is possible that the piece referenced is Everett’s speech titled “The Battle of Bloody Brook,” which he delivered on September 30, 1835 to commemorate the fall of the “Flower of Essex” during King Philip’s War in 1675.

civilization” than Native hunting grounds (“Can Such Things Be?”). Then, relying on the growing ethnocentrism among the Protestant middle class and the fears of a power shift due to mass immigration by Catholics, the author asks the readers of *Copway’s American Indian*, “why should not that other people—the Irish for example” gain the right to claim the American nation for themselves? (“Can Such Things Be?”). He rationalizes this demand by outsiders, who “might be fed with half that we require,” and simultaneously points out the hypocrisy of the American people, by remarking, “every body knows that what we waste every year in this country would feed another people as large as ourselves” (“Can Such Things Be?”).

The author then turns from the religious interloper toward the extreme cultural outsider, whom he terms the “Red men of Asia,” who “feed on rice, and multiply in corresponding ration” (“Can Such Things Be?”). Ventriloquizing the Chinese, he posits, if man’s ultimate purpose amounts to multiplying and filling the earth, then “Americans!...You have appropriated to yourselves a most unmeasurable [*sic*] share” (“Can Such Things Be?”). Brilliantly connecting the American Indian to the continent of Asia, from which many believed the Native people originated, the writer continues to expose the invalidity of the argument of maximum yield. He continues in the voice of the Chinese critic and directs the audience’s attention to the practice of American imperialism, where the author points out, “It cannot be supposed that God meant you to possess lands that you not only never cultivate—but never saw, nor heard of, perhaps—lands that you could not find upon the map, if you were to try” (“Can Such Things Be?”). The author relies heavily on stereotypical descriptions to establish his position and claims that the Chinese “waste nothing; and thrive upon garbage” by “living on puppy dogs, rats, and reptiles,” and yet, by this ridiculous line of reasoning, in which rates of reproduction exist in direct proportion to levels of agricultural production, the Chinese, not the Americans, he argues, exist “under a

higher state of civilization” (“Can Such Things Be?”). Confident that at this point the reader fully understands the absurdity of the argument he continues to ridicule, the author reveals that the unstated rationale behind Indian removal lies exclusively “in the comparative strength of the parties, and [the Native people’s] deficiency of bayonets, cannon, cartridge-boxes and other like syllogisms” (“Can Such Things Be?”). “Can Such Things Be?” ultimately stands in accusation of those who profess to be “best acquainted with the purposes of our Heavenly Father in creating and peopling the earth; best able to judge of what constitutes human happiness..., and best qualified for saying what is meant, or intended to be meant, by replenishing the earth, multiplying ourselves, and showing what man is good for” (“Can Such Things Be?”). For if these “white men” accept this argument as true then they become guilty of not only lying to the Natives and to the American people, but also of lying to themselves. For in the end, the author urges the reader to admit to himself that might, not right, determines who possesses the American nation.

Primarily due to its hostile attack on a figure as powerful as Everett, Copway’s decision to include this editorial at first appears somewhat difficult to understand. However, the columns of *Copway’s American Indian* contain numerous articles with contradictory views regarding the fate of the Native people, and I argue that Copway includes these paradoxical texts in order to increase dialogue surrounding an issue he found of utmost importance. In the end, Copway, like Everett, embraces Native relocation but insists, as did McKenney, that this move be voluntary, thereby guaranteeing Native agency and promoting their rights as self-governing citizens. Additionally, in his own proposal for a new Indian territory, Copway stressed the need for agricultural production among the Native people. Even prior to passage of the Indian Appropriations Act, history had proved that differences in Euro-American and Native means of

subsistence had regularly been used in arguments for Indian relocation. He also knew that agricultural success would be necessary for Native survival as the American nation continued to grow. In his plan, Copway makes an argument that many of his contemporaries and most modern scholars view as terribly troubling.⁵¹ The author of "The Confederation of the Indian Tribes" specifically differs from Copway on this point arguing instead for a territory, "where their natural inclination for the hunt and their primitive freedom should not be restricted." In an effort to wean the Indians away from relying on hunting game as their primary means of food, Copway recommends strict limits on their lands in the new territory. In their current state, he claims, "This wide field, filled with a variety of game perpetuates their natural propensities to live by the use of the bow or the gun, instead of the hoe or the plow" (*Organization 7*). Also aware that their quest for wild game forced the Indians to live semi-nomadic lifestyles, he notes that a move to an agriculturally based economy will induce them to remain in a fixed location. Here, he once again makes the case that the Natives' lack of rootedness prevents them from embracing a system from which they will benefit. "When they have land that they can call their own, and limited, so that the scarcity of game will oblige them to till the soil for subsistence," he argues, "then they will improve" (*Organization 7*).

In addition to becoming reliant on agriculture for subsistence, Copway foresees the Natives entering into a sort of friendly competitive agricultural economy: "Each would labour for the other's good—a spirit of rivalry would soon be seen were a premium to be given to those who should raise the largest amount of agricultural produce" (Peyer 283). Bellin struggles with

⁵¹ Copway anticipates that many will take exception to this argument and writes, "Some of my Indian brethren may wonder that I should offer this as one of my reasons, and my white brethren may think that I would limit the Indian to rather narrow quarters. If any argument I now bring forward will not bear investigation, why, throw it out. I but write what in my humble judgment is an impartial view of the subject, and state plans which I think best adapted to advance the interests of all, and which should be adopted in order to elevate the condition of the Indians of America" (7-8).

what he perceives as Copway's incompatible terminology. He argues that Copway's dream of agricultural competition among the Natives contradicts the author's previous desire to see the Indians united and contends, "on the one hand, a paradisaal collectivism; on the other, a bracing competition" (Bellin, *Demon* 198). I suggest that in his proposal Copway models the familiar American market system in which competition increases individual productivity. Bellin assumes that the mutually beneficial arrangements Copway sets forth prove contradictory to agricultural competition. However, if this competition encourages the Native people to increase their agricultural output, then it very well might serve the common good.

Copway's hopes for Native improvement under the conditions he suggests remain undergirded by his fears of the consequences if the Native people do not relocate and do not turn to agriculture. He worries that if the Native people do not become inextricably attached to their lands through farming, they will sell them to the Euro-Americans on the frontier, continue hunting, and eventually exterminate the animal resources. If this happens, the Natives will eventually face a food shortage and out of despair, they will begin to slaughter the cattle belonging to their Euro-American neighbors. These events, Copway asserts, will lead to a Native apocalypse and "[d]esperation will drive the Indian to die at the cannon's mouth, rather than 'remove' beyond the Rocky Mountains" (*Organization* 12, emphasis original). Serving as a warning to the members of Congress should they choose not to pass such a measure ensuring a permanent territory for the Native people, Copway proclaims, "Should this time come, (God grant that it never may,) the pale-face must not be surprised should he hear the battle cry resound from peak to peak, and see them descending upon the frontiers, to avenge their wrongs and regain their once happy possessions" (*Organization* 12). Within this context, Copway offers his

plan as a means of avoiding a possible large-scale Native backlash against centuries of ill-treatment.

The land Copway believed should be set aside for the new territory lies between the territories of Nebraska and Minnesota, on the eastern banks of the Missouri River. Scholars have pointed out that the land Copway designates in his plan happens to be the tribal lands of the Sioux, historically the greatest rivals of the Ojibwa.⁵² Although he does specify this location, on at least two different occasions within his plan Copway admits that it may not be the best place for the new territory. He mentions his concerns about the quality of the land and its ability to support the Native people should they be relocated there, and he argues that he settled on the region precisely because “the upper waters of the Mississippi are going to be the greatest source for lumber trade, and the races coming in contact with one another must cause trouble along the river” (*Organization* 14). This land, at a distance from concentrated Euro-American settlement, he feels will allow the Native people to prosper in relative peace.

The designation he chooses for the new territory serves as further evidence of Copway’s insistence on its permanent status. Unfortunately, if the responses by his contemporaries to the removal proposal mirrored those of modern scholars, Copway’s gravest mistake may very well have been in his choice of a name for the territory he suggested. As an indication of its enduring status, he decides upon the title “The Kah-ge-ga Indian Territory,” which he translates in a footnote as “an Indian name of firm, or ever; which would mean ‘Ever-to-be Indian Territory’” (*Organization* 18). Granted, Copway’s choice of the name “Kah-ge-ga” for the new state reeks of self-aggrandizement, and yet oddly, remains well suited to his vision. Unwilling to look past Copway’s choice of moniker, Peyer asserts, “That the intended Indian state was to bear the first

⁵² Copway had gained familiarity with this area when he served there as a missionary.

part of his own name is, of course, an indication that Copway's self-estimation had already risen to somewhat dizzy heights and was fast approaching the level of megalomania (246-47).

Likewise, Smith who, as Scott Michaelsen notes, always "presents Copway as a kind of con man," makes the assumption that Copway had his personal interest at stake in the proposed plan (112). Smith claims, "Copway constantly promoted 'Kahgega,' in which he, the namesake of the proposed territory, would obtain a position of power" ("The Life" 39). Notably, within the same work, Smith questions Copway's Native authenticity because "As an adult he did not return to such a life" ("Kahgegagahbowh" 6). In his agreement with Smith, Peyer makes the case that, "Although he refrained from mentioning any specific candidate for [the position of resident Lieutenant governor of the territory], it does not seem far-fetched under the circumstances to assume that he had himself in mind as the most likely choice" (248). Copway seems to have anticipated a similar response from members of his contemporary audience. "My friends have, in some instances," he writes, "been mistaken in the idea that I was seeking something else than to be placed in a position to do good; and though glad to think that they have been kind in their well wishes, the greatest kindness they will do me is, to aid me in my endeavors to do good to my unfortunate brethren" (*Organization* 24). Smith's and Peyer's assumptions appear unfounded. At the time that Copway authored the plan, he was riding high on success in the metropolitan cities of the Northeast and had only recently returned from across the Atlantic where he received celebrity treatment. As Smith correctly observes, Copway had shown no desire to return and live among the Native people. Therefore, it appears unlikely that he would be willing to forsake the limelight and remove to the western territory he proposes to become a "resident Indian." In fact, Smith's and Peyer's criticisms of Copway expose a non-Native interpretation of Native cultural practice. Native ways of naming have little in common with most western European and Euro-

American naming customs. Within Native communities personal titles carry significance beyond their immediate function of designating an individual or location. Although both Smith and Peyer should be aware of this, in the end, these scholars remain too caught up in what they perceive as Copway's self promotion and seem unwilling to see the connection between the territory he proposes and the apt name he bestows upon it.

Both Smith's and Peyer's insistence that Copway envisioned for himself a position of power within the territory he proposed very likely arises from the author's detailed discussion of the internal governmental structure he wished to see implemented. Seeing hereditary "chiefship" as counterproductive to the success of the territory, Copway calls for its abolishment. Modern scholars note that this goes against tribal norms in which Natives honor their elders and argue that Copway's firmness on this point provides evidence of his disavowal of indigenous culture. Although clearly controversial, Copway claims that the individuals in positions of leadership in the new territory should be those best suited for the jobs. This selection, he argues, should be based solely on the merits of the candidates. As evidence of Smith and Peyer's misplaced assumptions regarding Copway's quest for personal power, such a meritocracy would strip the author of his only right to being a chief of the Ojibwa nation. For his "chiefship" exists exclusively as a hereditary claim. So, it would appear that he makes this proposal without concern for what he himself must lose if the plan came to fruition. Ultimately, Copway's vision for the government of the new territory proves difficult to sort out. Initially the Governor would be a Euro-American appointed by the President of the United States. Further, a resident Indian would be assigned the position of Lieutenant Governor for a period of three years and in this capacity he would also serve as the *ex-officio* Superintendent of Indian Affairs within the territory. However, this arrangement would only exist until the "people of said territory" become

able to govern themselves. The job of filling these positions would fall to the President of the United States, but due to the semi-autonomous nature of the territory, final approval for those chosen must be given by representatives from the various tribes residing in Ka-ge-ga.

Additionally, Copway lists provisions for travel within the boundaries of the territory. Existing in many ways as a distinct nation state, those not affiliated with a tribe residing within the territory will “be required to have the usual license” in order to enter (*Organization* 22). In the plan, he also reserves the right of the individual tribes to prosecute and punish any foreign trespassers for criminal offenses based on their own specific laws. However, to maintain a balance of power, these trials and their resulting punishments must meet the President’s approval. Further, the handling of inter-tribal offenses takes place entirely within the territory without outside intervention. All in all, the Natives’ continued existence and eventual readmission into the American nation depended on several things. Copway felt that in order for them to prosper, the Native people must learn to live as one, must turn to agriculture for their survival, and must learn to govern themselves. If they accomplished these things and accepted the Christian faith, he believed, they stood a chance of surviving the encroaching Euro-American tide.

If we make the mistake of tracing the trajectory of Copway’s career in chronological fashion, the publication of *Copway’s American Indian* appears as little more than a journal, created for the author’s own glorification, filled with scraps of information related to a variety of otherwise disparate tribes. Moreover, in such a context, these scraps seem to provide evidence that Copway had finally accepted the ideology of the “Vanishing American” and had chosen to cash in on the coming extinction of the Native people. Such a reading would ignore the efforts he made to secure for the Natives a permanent place of refuge and would also disregard his continued promotion of the relocation plan he authored the previous year. That the demise of

Copway's American Indian and the editor's literary career, which had thrust him into the public eye less than four years before, coincided with the American government's establishment of reservations for the Natives and was soon followed by the disastrous removal of the Ojibwas against their will, signals the author's realization that he had been toiling in vain.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIAN SIMULATIONS: REIMAGINING NATIVE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Scholarship addressing America's indigenous inhabitants invariably wrestles with the terminology of naming and, at the outset, this discussion of the Native owned and edited newspaper *Copway's American Indian* must make an attempt at explicating the vacillating and often competing connotations and denotations of the term "Indian." Through his newspaper, George Copway stands as one in a long line of Native and non-Native figures who entered the rhetorical fray in an attempt to define, expose, and reshape America's understanding, appreciation, and preservation of the nation's indigenous people. Gerald Vizenor contends that the term "Indian" is an invention, a persistent misnomer, "a loan word of dominance," which has shaped the (mis)understanding of thousands of distinct indigenous peoples inhabiting the Americas (*Fugitive Poses* 14). "The Indian with an initial capital is a commemoration of an absence," he writes, "—evermore that double absence of simulations by name and stories" (*Fugitive Poses* 15). Language proves essential to the construction of identity, for it is language that orders, carries, and expresses individual experience. This is true not only in terms of one's ability to speak or to simply communicate to others; language also serves as a conduit for the meanings, symbolism, and shared history of a particular group of people. Holly Baumgartner emphasizes the ways in which language constructs identity by highlighting the ramifications resulting from the misnaming of America's indigenous peoples when she observes, "Sometimes language oppresses by reducing whole groups of peoples to single entities, such as the name 'Indian' used as a blanket term for many distinct cultures of diverse ethnic heritages and histories" (132). Consequently, many—Natives and non-Natives alike—believe the term "Indian" symbolizes loss. Vizenor addresses and then dismisses this loss by engaging in a play

on language and reinvesting the misapplied term with new symbolic meaning and a revised visual representation. Prior to European and Native contact the American “Indian” did not exist; this “Indian” was quite literally of Christopher Columbus’s creation. “The *Indian* is a simulation,” Vizenor explains; “the *indian* is an ironic crease,...[which] has no Native ancestors; the original crease of that simulation is Columbian” (*Fugitive Poses* 14-15). In many of his own writings, Vizenor complicates this “loan word of dominance” by replacing the initial capital with a lowercase “i” as a means of a return to a historical representation.⁵³ Thus, in his text, he specifically acknowledges the presence of the Native peoples by employing their tribal names and in those same writings “*indians* become simulations, a derivative noun that means absence” (*Fugitive Poses* 15).

In spite of the good intentions of academics to expose the oppressive rhetoric of early Euro-American texts and to simultaneously celebrate the contributions of indigenous writers of the period, Malea Powell laments,

One of the lingering reminders of the ideology of colonization of the Americas is the notion among scholars that Native people, especially pre-twentieth-century Natives, produced texts, naively- that is, they were rhetorical innocents who had none but the most straightforward of intentions in the production of a text. This belief about the rhetorical naiveté of indigenous peoples is too often reflected in critical work that refuses to see early Native textual engagements as calculated and negotiated with a specific audience, and a specific goal, in mind. (69)

Powell and Vizenor among others view this scholarly practice as a reconstruction of the binaries, which situate Euro-Americans as subjects and Natives as objects. Vizenor contends, “Native identities are more than nominal considerations; there are theoretical causes and historical situations that abet the agency of dominance. True, Natives have endured centuries of separation, proscription, removal by treaties, and *disappearance*, but the tragic wisdom of their survivance

⁵³ Vizenor uses “indian” as it appeared in historical dictionaries. He does not list the specific dictionaries.

has been converted by many academics to an aesthetic victimry” (*Fugitive Poses* 20, emphasis original).⁵⁴ This concept of “victimry” stymies Native progress and assumes a Native identity both fixed in time and knowable. Furthermore, projecting an identifiable, “authentic,” pre-contact Native identity that was later shaped only by the colonizers defines Native peoples exclusively by oppression.

Modern scholars such as Vizenor are not the first to directly confront, contest, and problematize the term “Indian.” Even the earliest of America’s indigenous writers to compose in English for a non-Native audience attempted to define both the term and, more importantly, the experience of being an “Indian.” We may very well wonder why, in light of their admonitions about the term “Indian” and all that it came to represent in the minds of Euro-Americans, early Native authors employed it with frequency when referencing disparate indigenous peoples. In answer to this question, we must consider the audiences for whom these authors wrote and their literary aims. For the most part, these writers were not composing for Native audiences, and by the early decades of the nineteenth century the conversation regarding the future of *the* “Indian” was already in full swing in the Euro-American “parlor.” Native authors understood that they had to enter into the dialogue already taking place if they were to communicate their messages to English-speaking (and reading) audiences. These audiences were, for better or worse, familiar with the label “Indian” and Native writers had to rely upon the terminology at hand, thereby rhetorically establishing some means of identification between themselves and their white audience members who often assumed their own superiority. Kenneth Burke emphasizes that, “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality,

⁵⁴ According to Vizenor, “survivance” is also listed in historical dictionaries. However, he provides a new connotation. Powell claims the term is a combination of the “survival” and “resistance” of indigenous populations. Vizenor is inclined to replace “resistance” in the equation with “endurance.”

order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your way with his” (*Rhetoric of Motives* 55). Further, as Vizenor eloquently states, “Those who are relegated to the subordinate position often must, in order to survive, learn the language of their ‘betters’; those who are already betters need not bother to learn any other language at all” (*Manifest Manners* 87). The language of the Euro-American “betters” included the term “Indian” complete with all of its cultural baggage, thereby forcing Native writers to learn to employ the misnomer in their works. This new language acquisition in fact became essential to Native authors who wished to redefine and redirect the conversation, because as Powell points out, “The presence of Native authors... becomes important in disrupting the ideological configurations of manifest manners” (78). Rather than situating Native authors as victims of language oppression in their need to translate their Native ideas into the language of the colonizers, instead let us consider that these writers’ decisions to use the term “Indian” in fact fashions a space for resistance, creation, and what Vizenor terms Native “survivance.”

Drawing on Louis Althusser’s “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” Judith Butler demonstrates that the dominant ideologies that reinforce what a term means rely on repetitive use within a particular social field, and it is within this repetition that the possibility for resistance resides. Early Native authors’ repetitive use of the term “Indian” in reference to identities, individuals, and situations that defamiliarized and contested the recognizable applications of the term as it was used by Euro-Americans, allowed them to resist the dominant ideologies of the time. In a sense, these writers consume and reproduce nineteenth-century beliefs about Indians in order to create “something else,” a new kind of Indian-ness which allows them to maintain their difference in the very space that the occupier has organized. Antonio Gramsci points out, dominant ideology is not set or inflexible; it is changeable and evolves as it absorbs new

concepts that exist in everyday life. In order to alter the dominant ideology constructed around “Indian” identity, Native writers had to work from within and engage in a “war of position” based in that same ideology. Thus, if these early Native authors were to be successful in persuading their respective audiences of the progress of America’s indigenous inhabitants, despite any personal objections to the term “Indian,” they could not completely forgo the use of the otherwise accepted identifier. While pointing out that Native individuals could not assume equal access to the metaphorical parlor Burke made famous in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941), and thus their “texts” were not automatically “momentary entr(ies) into an unending conversation,” Ernest Stromberg confirms that, “many American Indians have, of necessity and by force of will, entered the rhetorical parlor” (4). More importantly he notes, “By bringing an *other*, in some ways incommensurably different, understanding of the world into the rhetorical parlor, these rhetoricians expand the terministic reality we all inhabit” (Stromberg 7, emphasis original). This expansion of “terministic reality” challenges notions of what Gramsci labels *commonsense*, those uncritically accepted ideas and assumptions held by a particular society. Employing the oppressor’s language, embracing his system of belief, and proving themselves wholly civilized, in both their writings and in their own performances of “Indian-ness,” Native authors destabilize the signs and symbols used by Euro-Americans to construct “Indian” identity. A. Robert Lee perhaps sums up the cultural work of these early writers best, writing that “If indeed ‘we’re all invented as Indians,’ then why not by one’s own appointed flights of language and image, . . . re-invent the invention?” (xiv). I maintain many early Native writers did in fact attempt to reinvent the “Indian.”

William Apess was one of the first of these early authors to bring attention to Native responses to the term “Indian,” writing in his autobiography, *A Son of the Forest: The*

Experience of William Apess, A Native of the Forest, Comprising a Notice of the Pequod Tribe of Indians, Written by Himself (1829) that,

I know of nothing so trying to a child as to be repeatedly called by an improper name. I thought it disgraceful to be called an Indian; it was a slur upon an oppressed and scattered nation, and I have often been led to inquire where the whites received this word, which they so often threw as an opprobrious epithet at the sons of the forest. I could not find it in the Bible and therefore concluded that it was a word imported for the special purpose of degrading us. At other times I thought it was derived from the term *in-gen-uity*. But the proper term which ought to be applied to our nation, to distinguish it from the rest of the human family, is that of "*Natives*" –and I humbly conceive that the Natives of this country are the only people under heaven who have a just title to the name, inasmuch as we are the only people who retain the original complexion of our father Adam. (10, emphases original)

Apess then proceeds to explain that through his contact with whites, at an early age he was greatly influenced by these negative connotations that accompanied the term "Indian," which induced him to look with disdain upon his Native "brethren" and "that a mere threat of being sent away among the Indians into the dreary woods had a much better effect in making [him] obedient to the commands of [his] superiors than any corporeal punishment they ever inflicted" (10). During his formative years among the whites, his fear of the Indians becomes so completely entrenched that he develops feelings of terror at the very possibility of contact with his own Native people. To provide readers with an example of how thoroughly he had been culturally brainwashed, Apess relates a story in which he and several members of the white Furman family, to whom he had been indentured, embark upon a berry-picking foray where they encounter a group of white females whose "complexion was, to say the least, as *dark* as that of the Natives" (Apess 10, emphasis original). Terror-stricken and convinced of an imminent bloody attack by dark-skinned Others, whom the young Apess mistakenly assumes are Indians, he flees home from the forest and informs his master of the situation in the woods. While the reader cannot help but note that through the telling of this story Apess undermines his own

argument about Native people being the only ones “to retain the original complexion of our father Adam,” the author seems to miss his own point regarding the visibility of Indian identity. Although Apess does not seem consciously aware of what he intimates, if it is not the color of their skin, there must be something else that defines these “dark” and yet otherwise unidentified women in the forest as *white* and therefore supposedly nonthreatening. Apess leaves the reader knowing simply that, “The whole mystery was soon unraveled” (11). How exactly is it unraveled? When the Furmans later explain to him that the dark-complected white women were not Indians after all, what do they say? If not by skin tone, how in fact do the Furmans—and then by extension Apess—identify Indians, and likewise, how do they identify whites? The reader must sort this out for herself, for at this point in the text Apess explains that he has since learned that he had been misinformed about the extent of Native attacks upon whites and that “[i]f the whites had told [him] how cruel they had been to the ‘poor Indian,’ [he] should have apprehended *as much harm* from them” (11, emphasis mine). However, even in this revisionist thinking, Apess, while realizing that he should fear whites, at this point remains frightened of his Native “brethren.” Despite Apess’s racially oriented claims, ultimately, the point conveyed in this passage confirms that physical appearance alone does not designate one as “Indian.”

Apess compounds this defamiliarization of “Indian” identity in his second published work *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* (1833). Apess himself authors the first conversion account included in the text and as Barry O’Connell correctly notes, it “articulates an almost unqualified condemnation of white people for what they have done to the Natives of the continent” (117). However, the second narrative in the collection, written by Apess’s wife Mary Woods and subtitled “The Experience of the Missionary’s Consort,” informs the reader that, “[her] father was a descendant of one of the Spanish islands, or a Native of Spain.

[Her] mother was an English woman, a descendant of the Woods family of Lynne” (133). The writer’s identity as an “Indian” in this text seems to be constructed merely by her relationship to Apess, and possibly further by her adoptive tribal membership.⁵⁵ Nothing in her narrative of conversion leads the reader to believe that she is of Native descent or that she would under other circumstances be classified as “Indian.” In fact, had this account been published under a different title, it would not be treated as a Native conversion narrative at all. Woods, unlike all of the others whose narratives of conversion appear in the text, never recalls her life in the forest or makes mention of her Native origins. Most notably, she never laments the fate of the “poor Indian.” She does not at any point differentiate herself racially from those white individuals whom she serves or, in fact, assign a race to anyone in her narrative. This forces us to wonder why Apess chooses to include his wife’s narrative in this Indian-centered publication, especially if the larger work, as O’Connell argues, functions as a condemnation of white treatment of indigenous people. O’Connell never raises the issue in the introduction to his 1992 edition of the text. Following Apess’s lead, O’Connell classes this second account with the other “Indian” experiences, highlighting that, “But for Aunt Sally, all of [those whose accounts are included in the text] can achieve a Christian faith only by overcoming not only the indifference of most whites to the state of Indian souls but also the unapologetic racism practiced by white professors of Christianity” (117). O’Connell provides detailed comments on the remaining three narratives of conversion and argues that, “[t]he power of Christian faith, then, is shown to be manifested not in whites but in each of these converts, who are, with it, able to overcome the enmity they feel toward white people and love them despite the absence of any reciprocation” (117). This

⁵⁵ There is no evidence that either of Apess’s wives, Mary Wood(s?) or Elizabeth (who may in fact have been the same person) were Native, nor members of the Pequot tribe. It is much more likely that Apess and Wood were an interracial couple. It is plausible that Wood, like Mary Jemison, was considered a Pequot through her marriage to Apess and the birth of their three children. For more details see Robert Warrior’s “Eulogy on William Apess: Speculations on His New York Death” in *SAIL* 2:16.2, 1-13.

statement clearly does not apply to the narrative penned by the “Missionary’s Consort” Mary Woods. So, if we read Apess’s first two works as written, “Indian” identity cannot be determined by one’s outer appearance, as is the case in Apess’s misidentification of the dark others in his autobiography, nor is it exclusively conferred by heredity, as is the case with the self-proclaimed Euro-American Mary Woods. What then, according to the author does it mean to be “Indian”?

Arguably, according to Vizenor’s explanation, Mary Woods secures her Native identity by means of what he has designated “Native by situations” which exists as one of his “eight Native theatres.” “Some Native identities,” he asserts, “are earned by situational connections, or associations, such as marriage, service, economic virtues, and other circumstances that are honored by Native communities. Situations are as much a connection to a Native presence and identities as countenance and genealogies” (*Fugitive Poses* 90). On the same note, Jace Weaver makes the case that “[o]ne must nevertheless admit that there is something real, concrete, and centered in Native existence and identity...either one is an Indian or one is not. And certain genuine consequences flow from those accidents of birth *and culture*” (14, emphasis mine). Unknowingly, in these two texts it seems that Apess constructs Indian identity as Vizenor defines it: “An Indian is an Indian because he speaks and thinks and believes he is an Indian, but an Indian is nothing more than an invention” (*Bearheart* 195). In these texts Apess challenges the term “Indian” and applies it in unexpected ways. Through this defamiliarization of what it means to be Indian—cloaking white women in dark visages—and the Indianization of his white wife, Apess enlarges the space allotted for Indianness and ultimately foreshadows similar identity contestations of later indigenous writers.

In his criticism of the term “Indian” Apess in many ways emulates the strategy of Elias Boudinot, the editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix* (1828-1834), who regularly complicated the

question of Indian identity in his both his speeches and writings.⁵⁶ In 1826, during a tour of northeastern American cities to gain funds for the establishment of a Native school and the aforementioned newspaper, Boudinot delivered a speech, which he soon published as a pamphlet titled “An Address to the Whites.” As a means of introducing misunderstandings regarding Indian nature as the subject of his criticism Boudinot begins, “To those who are unacquainted with the manners, habits, and improvements of the Aborigines of this country, the term Indian is pregnant with ideas most repelling and degrading” (68). Thus, the term exists as a sliding signifier and open to a range of different interpretations. He continues, “But such impressions, originating as they frequently do, from infant prejudices, although they hold too true when applied to some, do great injustice to many of this race of beings” (Boudinot 68). Boudinot attempts to convince his audience that the times of “ravages of savage warfare... [and] the yells pronounced over the mangled bodies of women and children” represent the Indian of “ancient times” and those Native peoples who stubbornly cling to their pre-contact ways of life, but it does not represent those who are “improved” as are the Cherokee (69). Appealing to a shared sense of humanity, he then asks, “What is an Indian? Is he not formed of the same materials with yourself?... Though it be true that he is ignorant, that he is a heathen, that he is a savage; yet he is no more than all others have been under similar circumstances” (Boudinot 69). Holding himself up as an example to those of the “enlightened assembly” who continued to question whether or not Native people could be civilized, Boudinot points out to his audience, “[y]ou here behold an *Indian*, my kindred are *Indians*, and my fathers sleeping in the wilderness grave—they too were *Indians*. But I am not as my fathers were—broader means and nobler influences have fallen upon

⁵⁶ There is no evidence in his writings that Apess had heard Boudinot’s speech or read his pamphlet; however, it is at least plausible that the two were aware of one another’s work. Boudinot’s widely-publicized and well-attended 1826 speaking tour took him to many cities in New England, including Boston and Salem, at a time when it seems Apess was residing in Colrain, Massachusetts.

me” (Boudinot 69, emphases original). According to Boudinot, despite the fact that the term “Indian” continued to muster up images of savagery among many whites due to their “infant prejudices,” Indians were capable of achieving a level of civilization and Christianization comparable to that of their Euro-American counterparts. Further, as evidenced in the change of the name of the newspaper from *The Cherokee Phoenix* to *The Cherokee Phoenix and Indians’ Advocate* on February 11, 1829, the Cherokee, despite their advancements, recognized their ties and responsibilities to the larger Native population. Nevertheless, as Bernd Peyer duly notes, “[Boudinot] repeatedly stressed in his editorials that the ‘civilized’ Cherokees should not be compared with [the Plains Indians] or any other group of ‘savage’ Indians...he ... regarded the reports on the progress of the Cherokee reform movement as models for other American Indian communities” (188). Boudinot recognizes the term “Indian” as referring to a race of people, but refuses to allow the term to signify an immutable individual character. Like Apeess, Boudinot subverts the term and thwarts the reductionist claims of those who perceive Indian identity as a single, definable, or even knowable entity. Ultimately, he challenges those who adhere to the “stale remark—‘Do what you will, an Indian will still be an Indian’” (Boudinot 69). Although his argument appears a bit convoluted, Boudinot emphasizes his acceptance of a racially defined Indian identity; however, he contends that it remains possible, as in the case of the Cherokee people, to in effect transcend one’s Indian nature. Joshua Bellin points out that in Boudinot’s speech, “Indianness is distinct from savagery or heathenism, such that it is possible to imagine an Indian individual or Nation embracing non-Indian culture” (*Demon* 88). Problems with this refusal to embrace a non-Indian culture are in large part the manifestation of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Euro-American scholars. The possibility of a Native who openly criticizes

Native practices and customs seems to cause tremors in the “enlightened” minds of those who see it as their duty to resurrect the “authentic” Indian from the rubble of colonization.

By the time George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh) arrived on the literary scene in 1846 with his autobiographical conversion narrative, Apess and Boudinot had long been deceased. Along with two of his family members, the Cherokee editor was murdered in 1839 at Fort Smith in the Oklahoma Territory by a rival group of Cherokee who remained unhappy with Boudinot’s reluctant endorsement of the Treaty of New Echota (1836), which, in the end, provided justification for the forced removal of the Cherokee along what has become popularly known as the Trail of Tears. Apess also died in 1839 of rather mysterious causes in New York following several years of literary silence. Despite the decade that separates their writings, it is unlikely that Copway was entirely ignorant of his headline-making Native literary predecessors. In his discussion of Apess’s likely influences, Bellin makes the important point that, “Apess, the highly polished, overtly political Indian autobiographer, did not spring out of nowhere; rather, he relied on a tradition and support system to foster his voice and vision” (*Demon* 128). While by the middle of the nineteenth century the majority of America’s Native inhabitants had been removed west of the Mississippi and thus Copway had few Native literary contemporaries with whom he could collaborate, he did have at his disposal the earlier writings, speeches and performances of not only Apess and Boudinot, but very likely also those of William Warren, Catherine Brown, Samson Occom, Black Hawk, Tecumseh, and Red Jacket among others. Additionally, Copway had many Euro-American acquaintances who had also been connected to some of these earlier Native figures. However, despite the fact that with exception of Warren all of the aforementioned individuals were no longer living when Copway became a public figure, at the time of his

literary debut there did exist many a famous fictional “Indian” of Euro-American origin with whom the Ojibwa writer had to contend.

Beginning in the mid 1820s Euro-American authors, in their quest for a distinct “American” literature, published a wealth of fictional works with Indians as their subject matter.⁵⁷ As removal of the Natives had been official federal policy for two decades, by the middle of the nineteenth century, especially in the eastern states, Euro-American ideas about Native peoples, had to come largely from two sources: the depictions of “Indians” provided by white authors, most of whom had themselves rarely, if ever, come in contact with a living, breathing Native individual, and newspaper reports from the frontier detailing conflicts between white settlers and the indigenous inhabitants.⁵⁸ From these sources, white readers constructed their ideas of the peoples who had once inhabited the continent. Vizenor terms these fictive creations “Manifest manners,” which are “the notions and misnomers that are read as the authentic and sustained as representations of Native American Indians” (*Manifest Manners* 5). Similar to Mary Woods’ Native identity, he locates these “manifest manners” as fashioned by white authors in the realm of his “eight Native theaters.” These theaters, he argues, problematic as many of them may be, are all testaments of Native presence, antecedence, and sovenance:⁵⁹

Consider these eight Native theatres, or the obvious relations and connections of inheritance, creation, countenance, genealogies, documents, situations, trickster stories, and victimry as the most common sources of Native distinctions,

⁵⁷ e.g. James Fenimore Cooper, *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-1841), Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok* (1824), Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (1827), William Gilmore Simms, *The Yemassee* (1835), Robert Montgomery Bird, *Nick of the Woods* (1837).

⁵⁸ Euro-Americans living in the eastern United States also had the opportunity to see performing Indians as part of various touring groups and Native individuals were regularly on display at Barnum’s American Museum (1841-1863).

⁵⁹ Like “indian,” and “survivance,” “sovenance” is a term Vizenor resurrects from historical dictionaries. It is loosely defined as remembrance.

identities, and tries of the self. These eight theatres, or the traces of autposes and varionative memories, are inclusions, not separations, racial divisions, exclusions, or the politics of piecemeal estates of identity. These obvious connections, embodied in Native stories, histories, and conversations are the varionative theatres and estates of survivance. (*Fugitive Poses* 88)⁶⁰

According to Vizenor, nineteenth-century Euro-American authors, who wrote Indian characters into their narratives, may have relied largely on their literary imaginations, but ultimately their creations serve as recognition of a very real national Native presence. “The creation of Native characters has presented and secured Natives in literature,” Vizenor maintains (*Fugitive Poses* 89). Vizenor’s theory exists as one of inclusion and extension whereby those who formulate simulations of Natives literally become, through their artistic creations, Native themselves. Fully aware that his propositions are controversial, he continues, “Some readers may not share the pleasure of every character, but the creation of memorable Native characters in literature is a connection” (*Fugitive Poses* 89). Mentioning by name writers like James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Karl May, Vizenor asserts, “Many artists and authors would be Native by the creation of characters in their novels and other publications... as they created Native characters and images that are forever in the artistic and literary history of the nation” (*Fugitive Poses* 89). Indeed, the very presence of these fictive “Indians” serves as testament to the persistent haunting nature of the Native in the literary imaginations of Euro-American authors and further attests to the essentialness of the Native in the development of a distinctly American national narrative.

Copway, like Apess and Boudinot before him had, engaged in a “war of position” in both his publications and performances with those nineteenth-century Euro-American writers who had created “memorable Native characters,” and in some ways similar to Boudinot’s work with *The*

⁶⁰ Vizenor defines a *varionative* as “an uncertain curve of Native antecedence; obscure notions of Native sovereignty and presence.” (*Fugitive Poses* 15).

Cherokee Phoenix, devised a way to penetrate into Euro-American homes by means of *Copway's American Indian* (1851). From this vantage point he—or at least his ideas—could enter into the conversation in the parlor. By engaging in a dialogic relationship with members of his Euro-American audience Copway attempts to lessen their anxiety about blood-thirsty Native warriors who were incapable of being civilized, to provide reassurance as to his own Indian identity, to situate himself as a representative of the Native people, and, most importantly, to establish a need for Native physical and moral salvation via removal west of the Mississippi.

The Ojibwa editor unapologetically states his wish to be invited into the homes of his readers writing in the third issue of the periodical, “In a word, we want to make a paper for the Indian Wigwam—for the White Man’s Parlor—for the Philosopher’s Sanctum—for the Student’s Closet—and for the favorite retreat, among the trees, of the Silver-haired Grandfather” (“Our Paper”). Quite differently from Boudinot’s *Cherokee Phoenix*—and every other Native-edited newspaper until the early-twentieth century—*Copway's American Indian's* lack of specific religious and tribal affiliation created a space for reporting on the many identities the term “Indian” had come to represent for Native and non-Native alike. Further, to the chagrin of many modern scholars, the periodical, from its inception, refused to openly declare an explicit political agenda. Possibly fearing that his contemporaries would likewise expect the publication to assume a partisan stance, Copway, in a letter to H. B. Hirsh dated June 12, 1851 announcing the impending publication of *Copway's American Indian* writes of the newspaper:

It is to be independent of all creeds and isms of every description and to follow the moral of the Bible and the dictates of common sense. Neither shall I have anything to do with politics standing aloof from all political questions of a local nature. I shall abuse nobody. I mean to make a high toned upright independent Indian paper.

In order to convince his readers of his sincerity, Copway's next line provides more specific information about how he will conduct his paper. "It shall present the good intentions of the government to the Indian," he writes, "and say little about the wrongs of the Indians" (Letter to H. B. Hirsh).⁶¹ Ironically, this impartial "reporting" from a news source is the very aim which has frustrated so many of those modern scholars who have taken Copway as the subject of their research.

Almost exclusively the concern of Euro-American academics, Copway and his refusal to champion the pre-contact Native culture over an acculturated identity has motivated virtually all of these scholars to assign the Ojibwa writer's disappearance from the national spotlight to a mental collapse in the fall of 1851, just as *Copway's American Indian* ceased publication. Donald Smith, the first to write a biography of Copway, promulgated this diagnosis. Smith asserts, "There can be no question that George Copway, stricken by family tragedy, forsaken by his literary friends, and bankrupt, had begun by the summer of 1851 to lose touch with reality" ("The Life" 25).⁶² He continues, "Copway's review of Francis Parkman's *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*—or that which he approved for the second-last issue of his newspaper—gives evidence of his mental collapse. Even the most casual reader of Parkman's *Pontiac* would sense the author's hatred and disgust for Indians" ("The Life" 25). Interestingly, in spite of his own seemingly contradictory evaluations of Natives, as evidenced in his personal relationship with Copway detailed in the following pages, Smith does not provide a similar psychological

⁶¹ Although the first four editions of *Copway's American Indian* include only the paper title, date and place of publication in the masthead, the fifth and all subsequent editions emphasize that the periodical is "Neutral in Politics and Creed."

⁶² Smith was the first to offer up this explanation, which has been accepted and promoted by several contemporary scholars. While there is no evidence among Copway's publicly available writings to corroborate these findings, Smith does have access to documents he acquired through direct relationships with Copway's wife's family's descendants. Perhaps these documents provide further details as to Copway's mental state.

diagnosis of Parkman. In his discussion of Copway, Peyer more or less reiterates Smith's claims, elaborates on this presumed illness and projects it to its most "savage" conclusion. Setting up his argument in the introduction to his chapter dedicated to Copway, Peyer proclaims, "[his] frustrating attempt to shape his identity according to his audience's whims, however, forced him to undergo various personality transformations that finally *broke his spirit*" (224, italics added). Some eighteen pages later he delivers the following remarks regarding Copway's state of mind that are worth quoting in full:

His desperate maneuvers along the way to his envisioned status as the Indian's 'Great Red Father' in the White Man's realm, were as often ludicrous as they were tragic. Finally, consumed by the shame of defeat in the approaching winter of his life, he may have succumbed to psychic stress and temporarily developed symptoms of what has been termed 'windigo psychosis' in anthropological literature. With his self-esteem seriously threatened by the recognition of his failure as a provider and a leader, two principal Ojibwa criteria for male success, he may have been possessed by a 'cannibalistic' urge to turn against his own immediate family, his Methodist fraternity, and, finally himself. (Peyer 263)

It would seem that despite the fact that Peyer spends a full fifty pages convincing readers that Copway had disencumbered himself of all things Native, "in the approaching winter of his life"—at the age of 33—Copway's "failure as a provider and leader," as measured by tribal standards, produced a mental disorder which led him to believe he had been transformed into a Windigo monster. This psychosis of which Peyer writes, found among Algonquin people who have a short supply of food, manifests itself as a cannibalistic monster in the late winter. Like one of those adherents to the "stale remark" Boudinot had railed against in his speech, Peyer, a notable Native scholar, in these lines at least, seems guilty of unconscious stereotyping and professes, "Do what you will, an Indian will still be an Indian."

In addition to Smith's specious diagnosis of Copway, his shock over the Ojibwa editor's review of Parkman's book also seems a bit odd in light of earlier contents published in the

newspaper. A piece titled “Indian Character” by Parkman appeared in the fourth issue of *Copway’s American Indian*, which has been excerpted from the final few pages of the opening chapter of *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), the same book Copway reviews eight weeks later. While it remains impossible to say with certainty whether or not Copway published the piece without the author’s knowledge, other contents of the newspaper have led me to conclude that Parkman submitted the piece for publication. Parkman and Copway had become acquainted some two years prior, and Parkman had provided Copway with letters of introduction when he visited Europe in 1850. A short note from Parkman dated June 22, 1851 also appears in the premier issue of the journal. Apparently cloaking what Peyer views as his “hatred and disgust for Indians,” Parkman writes,

My Dear Sir:—I should have answered your kind communication sooner, had not my time for several days past been completely occupied. I am very glad to hear of your new enterprise. A well conducted journal of the kind would be productive of great advantages both to the white men, and the red. I shall look forward with much interest for the forthcoming number. Please place my name on your subscription list, and be assured that if I can supply anything of service to you, I shall be happy to contribute to your columns.

Very truly, yours,

F. Parkman, Jr.

As evidence of Copway’s dedication to providing often incongruous viewpoints on Native identity and leading credence to my claims regarding Parkman’s hand in submitting to Copway’s journal, appearing in the same issue as Parkman’s “Indian Character” is an essay by Anson Burlingame titled “Pontiac.” The piece valorizes the Ottawa Chief and provides a brief summary of the war exploits that brought him fame. To his submission Burlingame attaches the following note:

This hasty sketch was written by the author some eight years since, with a view to rescue from oblivion a few incidents in the life of Pontiac. Few sources of information were open to him. He is most happy to learn that Mr. Francis Parkman, Jr., of Boston, *is about to publish* an extended life of the great Warrior. From what he has seen from the pen of Mr. Parkman, he is sure he is every way qualified to do justice to a great subject. (Burlingame, emphasis added)

In the end, Parkman's version of the story of Pontiac differs dramatically from that penned by Burlingame. Thus, an extended analysis of Parkman's essay helps to reveal the puzzling, surprisingly critical reflections on Native nature and culture that Copway promulgated in promoting the interests of "Indians." While Parkman's narrative does indeed elevate Pontiac to something of a cultural hero and arguably credits him with more influence in the war than he justly deserved, it is not the praiseworthy account that Burlingame seems to have had in mind.

In "Indian Character" Parkman takes direct aim at those Euro-American authors, like Cooper, who speciously romanticized Native people in their fiction, thereby giving the reading public false ideas about the "true" nature of the Indian.⁶³ He minces no words in his attack when he writes,

Of the Indian character, much has been written foolishly, and credulously believed. By the rhapsodies of poets, the cant of sentimentalists, and the extravagance of some who should have known better, a counterfeit image has been tricked out, which one might seek in vain for its likeness through every corner of the habitable earth; an image bearing no more resemblance to its original than the monarch of the tragedy and the hero of the epic poem bear to their living prototypes in the palace and the camp. ("Indian Character")

The historian goes on to point out that it takes a careful observer—as he imagined himself to be—to grasp the essence of America's indigenous people, and he further contends that the Indian must be observed in his "natural habitat." He muses, "The shadows of his wilderness home, and

⁶³ Parkman is most likely directing his comments at Cooper who was often criticized for including "Noble Savages" in his writings. Positive representations of Indians became known as "Cooper's Indians." For more detail see my discussion in chapter one.

the darker mantle of his own inscrutable reserve, have made the Indian warrior a wonder and a mystery” (“Indian Character”). Like a specimen, “It is in his Native wilds alone that the Indian must be seen and studied” (“Indian Character”). Comparing Native peoples to the circus animals being exhibited by P. T. (Phineas Taylor) Barnum, he notes that, “The imprisoned lion in the showman’s cage differs not more widely from the lord of the desert, than the beggarly frequenter of frontier garrisons and dramshops differs from the proud denizen of the woods” (“Indian Character”).

The first two paragraphs of Parkman’s essay establish the difficulty in understanding the Indian, noting that, “He is full, it is true, of contradiction,” but similarly emphasizing that “Such inconsistencies, strange as they seem in our eyes, when viewed under a novel aspect, are but ordinary incidents of humanity” (“Indian Character”). Sounding ever so much like Boudinot in his “Address to the Whites,” and establishing a sense of shared human traits, Parkman continues,

The qualities of the mind are not uniform in their action through all the relations of life. With different men, and different races of men, pride, valor, prudence, have different forms of manifestation, and where in one instance they lie dormant, in another they are keenly awake. The conjunction of greatness and littleness, meanness and pride, is older than the days of the patriarchs; and such antiquated phenomena, displayed under a new form in the unreflecting, undisciplined mind of a savage, call for no special wonder, but should rather be classed with the other enigmas of the fathomless human heart. The dissecting knife of a Rochefoucault might lay bare matters of no less curious observation in the breast of every man. (“Indian Character”)⁶⁴

In contrast to his previous paragraph, which seems to link the “inconsistencies” of the Indian with his “uncivilized” situation rather than his innate character, Parkman devotes his third section to an explanation of how “Nature has stamped the Indian with a hard and stern physiognomy,” which serves as outward evidence of his inner emotions:

⁶⁴ A French philosopher and nobleman François de La Rochefoucault (Rochefoucauld) (1617-1680) authored “Moral Maxims” (1749).

Ambition, revenge, envy, jealousy, are his ruling passions; and his cold temperament is little exposed to those effeminate vices which are the bane of milder races. With him revenge is an overpowering instinct; nay, more, it is a point of honor and a duty. His pride sets all language at defiance. He loathes the thought of coercion; and few of his race have ever stooped to discharge a menial office. A wild love of liberty, an utter intolerance of control, lie at the basis of his character, and fire his whole existence. Yet, in spite of this haughty independence, he is a devout hero-worshipper; and high achievement in war or policy touches a chord to which his nature never fails to respond. He looks up with admiring reverence to the sages and heroes of his tribe; and it is this principle, joined to the respect for age, which springs from the patriarchal element in his social system, which, beyond all other, contributes union and harmony to the erratic members of an Indian community. With him the love of glory kindles into a burning passion; and to allay its cravings, he will dare cold and famine, fire, tempest, torture, and death itself. (“Indian Character”)

Obviously perceiving this as something of a positive description of the Indian, and possibly fearing that he had given his readers the wrong impression of his feelings about the Native people, Parkman begins his next paragraph declaring, “These generous traits are overcast by much that is dark, cold, and sinister, by sleepless distrust, and rankling jealousy” (“Indian Character”). At this point the essay takes a dramatic turn and the author exposes what appear to be his true feelings regarding the “children of the forest.” But even this obviously negative description betrays glimpses of something akin to grudging admiration. Parkman, returning once again to comparisons between Indians and “our barbaric ancestry,” insists that while warfare and the preparations that precede the foray into battle were filled with “joyous self-abandonment” by the “Gothic races,” as for the Indian, “In his feasts and his drinking-bouts we find none of that robust full-toned mirth” (“Indian Character”). In contrast, “Wrangling and quarrel are strangers to an Indian dwelling; and while an assembly of the ancient Gauls was garrulous as a convocation of magpies, a Roman senate might have taken a lesson from the grave solemnity of an Indian council” (“Indian Character”). Ultimately, it is not the Natives’ war-like pursuits that set them apart from Europeans, it is the manner in which they approach the activity.

“Treacherous himself, he is always suspicious of treachery in others,” the author opines, and “Brave as he is, —and few are braver, —he will vent his passion by a secret stab rather than an open blow. His warfare is full of ambuscade and stratagem” (“Indian Character”). A little further on he warns that, “The inscrutable warrior is aptly imaged by the hackneyed figure of a volcano covered with snow; and no man can say when or where the wild-fire will burst forth” (“Indian Character”). However, despite his cunning and unpredictable nature, the Indian is unable to sustain a prolonged campaign that will lead him to victory. And here it becomes evident why Parkman saw fit to reduce the 40-year long resistance to a mere four year “conspiracy” that ended in the defeat, death, and dismembering of its leader: “The absence of reflection makes him grossly improvident, and unfits him for pursuing any complicated scheme of war or policy” (“Indian Character”).

Mirroring his own claims regarding the character of the Indian, Parkman’s essay, “is full, it is true, of contradiction[s].” In what can only be described as a tone of bitterness, the historian frequently accuses the Indians of extreme, unwarranted pride—repeating the allegation in the essay on four separate occasions—and links this excessive self-importance to “[The Indian’s] curiosity, abundantly active within its own narrow circle, [which] is dead to all things else; and to attempt rousing it from its torpor is but a bootless task” (“Indian Character”). This leads the reader to Parkman’s thinly veiled criticism of the Indian, which is his refusal to bow to the superior nature of the white man. The author laments, “Races of inferior energy have possessed a power of expansion and assimilation to which he is a stranger; and it is this fixed and rigid quality which has proved his ruin” (“Indian Character”).

The downfall of the Indian, Parkman declares, is absolute. Ultimately, it is the Native's stubborn refusal to submit to the colonizers and forsake his land that assures his eradication and the destruction of his home and habitat:

Some races of men seem molded in wax, soft and melting, at once plastic and feeble. Some races, like some metals, combine the greatest flexibility with the greatest strength. But the Indian is hewn out of a rock. You cannot change the form without destruction of the substance. Such, at least has too often proved the case. He will not learn the arts of civilization, and he and his forest must perish together. The stern, unchanging features of his mind excite our admiration, from their very immutability; and we look with deep interest on the fate of this irreclaimable son of the wilderness, the child who will not be weaned from the breast of his rugged mother. ("Indian Character")

Never within these lines does Parkman question the colonization of either the Native land or the Native body. He concludes that the fate of the Indian is made all the more poignant by his capacious generosity and unerring loyalty.

The irony of Parkman's opinions, appearing as they do in this newspaper, is evident. Copway's editorship of the periodical implicitly challenges Parkman's claims regarding the Indian who will not "expand" and "assimilate," or "learn the arts of civilization." Further, this piece, printed directly alongside reports detailing missionary efforts among various tribes and celebrating "the Lord, having graciously poured out his spirit and given [the missionaries] many precious souls," eloquent Indian speeches, and an essay taken from the April 27, 1711 edition of the *Spectator* by Joseph Addison titled "Four Indian Kings" and satirizing London society undermine Parkman's claims. Addison's satirical piece criticizes numerous aspects of European culture including political rivalries, the use of wigs and false moles, and the lack of spirituality among the London "natives." Addison leaves the reader with lines that speak to Parkman's piece as much as they do to those readers of the *Spectator*. He comments,

I cannot, however, conclude this paper without making notice, that amidst these wild remarks there now and then appears something very reasonable. I cannot likewise forbear observing, that we are all guilty in some measure of the same narrow way thinking which we meet in this abstract of the Indian journal, when we fancy the customs, dresses, and manners of other countries are ridiculous and extravagant, if they do not resemble those of our own.” (Addison)

This dismantling of Parkman’s main points continues in a published letter from Henry Rowe Schoolcraft commending Copway on his periodical and enclosing “the ‘*shonea*’ for a year’s subscription.” The renowned ethnographer finishes with the following lines: “I can only say, in the expressive language of my red relations in the north, *Hoh! neeje-kewaizee, Majah, Majah!*” (Schoolcraft, “A Model Letter”), which at once condemns Parkman’s claims that the Indian “seldom takes cognizance of general or abstract ideas; and his language has scarcely the power to express them, except through the medium of figures drawn from the external world, and often picturesque and forcible” (“Indian Character”). According to Bellin, “when Copway could not say what he wanted, he was willing to allow others to say it for—or against—him” (*Demon* 197). And within the pages of *Copway’s American Indian* he allowed others to wage the battle of words and ideologies. The contents of early periodicals were often cobbled together to fill space on the page, but the selection of these specific pieces does not seem coincidental. Within the pages of his *History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac* Parkman’s words strike chords of detached loathing and pity for Native people; however, tucked between Copway’s selections they are neutralized and their damage limited. Copway’s decision to include Parkman’s writings in his newspaper does not indicate, as Smith and Peyer argue, that the editor began to have a nervous breakdown. Instead, I contend that Copway specifically chose to include the well-known historian’s texts in *Copway’s American Indian* in order to challenge their validity. Further, if he were to keep true to his promise to the paper’s readers and endeavoring to make his journal a

repository of artifacts pertaining to the Native people, Copway could not simply ignore Parkman's ideological position.

Parkman's essay was not the first in Copway's periodical to deal specifically with the character of the Native people. The premier issue of *Copway's American Indian* contains a piece titled "The North American Indians" by Major John Richardson.⁶⁵ Unlike Parkman's, Richardson's essay was written expressly for Copway's newspaper. Richardson appears well acquainted with the Ojibwa editor and seems to have been very involved in the production of the periodical. David Beasley, Richardson's biographer, claims that the first issue of *Copway's American Indian* was in fact written entirely by Richardson, using for his proof that "the first issue only...gained any attention in the form of high praise by prominent journalist Julie de Marguerittes in the following issue" (9). Apparently, according to Beasley, the letters of praise from a whole host of American authors, editors, statesmen, and journalists, which appear throughout the thirteen issues of the periodical, somehow rank beneath that of the letter from Marguerittes.⁶⁶

Like Parkman, Richardson makes the case that it is difficult for the casual observer to understand the true character of the Indian, but that he is capable of providing an accurate estimation. "Perhaps there are few persons, at the present day, more competent to speak to the character and attributes of the American Indian, than the writer of this article" he claims

⁶⁵ Major John Richardson (1796-1852) was the grandson of an Ottawa woman who was married to a fur trader. He is recognized as Canada's first novelist, publishing four novels and several short stories. Richardson contributed two essays to the first issue of *Copway's American Indian*.

⁶⁶ Beasley's claims have no merit. There is no indication that Richardson was responsible for the first issue of *Copway's American Indian*. Beasley also claims that Richardson's writings were no longer included in the periodical because of his condemnation of Euro-American treatment of the Native people. However, several other pieces are included in later issues, which make similar claims. While his writings are noticeably absent from later issues, Richardson does provide all of the sketches that appear in the columns of the newspaper.

(Richardson). Due to his familiarity with the various tribes, he, “the student of the natural man” is able “more readily to distinguish the great dissimilitude existing among them” (Richardson). The author notes these differences among the Native people as a means of buttressing his argument that the Natives did not “derive their origin from a foreign source. On the contrary, there is every reason to infer, from the first creation, they have been its sole inhabitants” (Richardson).⁶⁷ In direct contrast to Parkman, who stressed the accuracy of Native physiognomy, he bases this claim on the fact that the members of the various tribes differ greatly in their language and physical appearance and asserts “there are not stronger distinguishing features between the several European communities, than are to be found among the various *nations*—miscalled tribes—of this continent” (Richardson). According to Richardson, the difference in habit, custom, language, and physical appearance attests to the fact that the Native peoples are not related any more than people of the disparate nations of Europe. The author once again emphasizes his point regarding the division of the Native people when he writes,

We will not go from the Rocky Mountains to Florida for a comparison, for the contrast there might in a great degree, be attributed to the difference in climate; but we will take in support of our position, that the American Indians are so many distinct nations—nomad in habit—the people living contiguous to each other in the cold region of the north. The Sac, the noblest in physique among them all, is dissimilar in form and stature from the Winnebago, the Winnebago from the Sioux, the Sioux from the Fox, the Fox from the Pawnee, the Pawnee from the Kickapoo, the Kickapoo from the Menomini,—all differ from each other, even as do the various branches of the European family. (Richardson)

The author’s overall argument progresses as follows: the Native individuals have been on the American continent since creation, their distinctness from one another constitutes them as separate nations, the nations have always been separate because the differences are too great to

⁶⁷ Here Richardson is directly countering those like the Euro-American congressman Elias Boudinot (1740-1821) whose book *A Star in the West* (1816) makes the case that America’s indigenous inhabitants were descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel. Interestingly, this is a claim that both Copway and Apess make in their autobiographies.

have happened in an evolutionary pattern, and finally, because they are distinct, unrelated entities, they should be dealt with by the Federal Government as sovereign nations. Further, because it

cannot reasonably be doubted, the present Indian of America is the first man whom God placed upon this continent, it becomes the solemn duty, as it must be the desire of every man of enlarged and liberal mind, to take at once such measures as best will tend to prevent the utter extinction of a race which purveys not less to the grandeur and sublimity of this great and glorious new world, than do its majestic forests—its sea-like lakes—and its ample and imposing rivers, all of which so harmonize in externals with him. (Richardson)

Richardson, in the end establishes his ideas about the superiority of the Indian over his Euro-American oppressors. Appealing to the “generous and liberal head of the white American— anxious to make atonement for the acts of aggression of his forefathers,” the author ends his argument with a plea to save the doomed race of red men. (Richardson). While Richardson does, like Parkman, cast the Native people as “proud”, his application of the term lacks the underlying vitriol. He pleads with white readers to save the “heart broken, yet uncomplaining Indian [who] has seen his people gradually and slowly disappear from the earth—swept away by the sword and by disease” and rallies the support of “those whose strong sympathies a kindred spirit has roused to exertion, and through whose generous instrumentality the pitiless hand of the insatiate destroyer may yet be arrested in its course of extermination” (Richardson). It is never made clear whether Richardson’s “insatiate destroyer” is disease or the wielder of the sword, but it is likely that the author is linking past Euro-American aggressions with those in the present.

In the end, both Parkman and Richardson come out as adherents of the philosophy of the “Vanishing American.” The reasons and justifications for this disappearance and their reactions to what they, like others, including Apess and Copway, saw as a verifiable reality form the crucial difference. Parkman places the blame for the eventual extinction of the Native people

squarely on their prideful, obstinate shoulders. He asserts that their refusal to learn the arts of civilization has brought about their imminent demise. Richardson, on the other hand, seems to see a flicker of hope for the salvation of the Natives. The answer lies with the liberal Euro-Americans who, as an act of penance for the earlier treatment of the Native people, can put a stop to the pending doom. Both arguments serve to strengthen Copway's claims regarding the disappearance of the Native people.⁶⁸

Copway's professional and personal relationships with many of the contributors to his journal must have affected his ideas about the meaning(s) of the term "Indian." However, whether or not he was fully cognizant of the multiple ways his Native predecessors or contemporary Euro-American authors constructed Indian identity, Copway employs his own definitions. The title of the newspaper, highlighting his adopted Anglicized surname, at first appears rather straightforward. Capitalizing on the success of his earlier publications, speeches, and the widespread fame he gained through his attendance at the Third International Peace Congress in Frankfurt, Germany the previous year, the Ojibwa editor, it is easy to presume, was counting on name recognition to help fuel his foray into the new medium. However, Copway pursues a different path. The prospectus for the newspaper, printed in the first two editions begins: "Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh, better known to the white man as George Copway, a Christianized Indian, and a Chief of the Ojibway nation, proposes to publish a Newspaper with the above title, devoted entirely to subjects connected with the past and present history and condition of the people of his own race" ("Prospectus"). Thus, in direct contrast to the name employed in the title listed on the masthead, the editor introduces himself and his periodical to the reading public using his *all-inclusive* Native name. In this introduction, everything that

⁶⁸ The rationale for Copway's stance is addressed in detail in chapter one.

comes after the initial comma is written for members of his white audience. For those Euro-Americans who are unable to “know” him as Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh, he provides three additional, necessary explanative identifiers. In this guise, he in effect performs the Indian identity expected—if not required—of him.

Copway’s use of the term “Christianized Indian” in lieu of simply “Christian” is doubly symbolic. He understands that his conversion signifies his spiritual movement away from his previous Native belief system and like his pre-Christian name, this pre-Christian religious identity serves to establish a type of historical connection he capitalizes on later in his Native tales. In contrast, a “Christian” has come to the faith as something of a *tabula rasa* as it were. The importance of this assimilation is emphasized in each of Copway’s writings and serves a purpose. Jace Weaver argues, “During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, by necessity, Natives in the eastern United States made great efforts to adapt to and accommodate the Amer-European culture that had engulfed them. Many converted to Christianity, the borrowed religion of the foreign invader. They thought that these things would protect them from further depredations” (3). Like those of Boudinot and Apees before him, Copway’s religious conversion counters claims such as those made by Parkman and serves as a testament to his willingness—and ability—to embrace Euro-American, civilized culture. In addition, this notation of his faith establishes his continued commitment to his earlier vocation as a missionary to the Native people. Although he had been expelled from the Methodist ministry several years prior, Copway continued to include his religious testimony in many of his public addresses.

Additionally, in their ongoing critiques of the author, many contemporary scholars, without grasping the structure of Copway’s Native culture, have chided him for misrepresenting

himself as a “Chief of the Ojibway.” Among the Ojibwa, individuals live in bands and are members of a clan. Each clan has a totem. Basil Johnston notes that traditionally, both the crane and the eagle totem symbolize “eloquence for leadership” (53, 60). Copway claimed membership in the crane clan through his father and the eagle clan through his mother. For lack of more suitable English terminology, Copway’s hereditary responsibility as a leader within his clan became transmogrified into “Chief” to those who came to know him in his non-tribal pose.

Critical of the name by which the editor chooses to identify himself to his public, Edward Watts claims, “‘George Copway’” is an entirely fabricated name with no root in the Ojibwa name (whose [*sic*] literal translation is ‘Firm Standing’)” (73). What Watts fails to realize is that George Copway’s father had “fabricated” his own name, “John Copway,” several years before his son became a Christian convert and likewise took on a Euro-American name. As was often the case, the name was very possibly bestowed upon the elder Copway by the missionaries who introduced him to Methodism. Thus, similar to enslaved peoples who were given names, which they later passed along to their descendants, the English (and possibly Anglicized) family name does in fact have at least a shallow “root” in this particular Native family. Additionally, at least one translator has noted the similarity in the phonetic structure of “Copway” and the last two syllables of the author’s Native name “Gah-Bowh,” which translates simply as “standing.”⁶⁹ This explanation for the origin of the name Copway has credence as it seems to have been exclusive to this family line and it seems has long since passed away. Further, “Gah-Bowh” constitutes the final two syllables of the Native name of Copway’s cousin, the first Native to be ordained an Episcopal Priest, John Johnson (En-me-gah-bowh), and is not a common construction among the Ojibwa, which testifies to the likelihood that this was of

⁶⁹ Cecil King while completing translations of Copway’s three letters noted the similarity in the names.

familial significance. Vizenor argues in “Unnamable Postindians,” that, “Sacred names, those secure ceremonial names, were scarcely heard by missionaries or government agents and seldom translated as surnames; nicknames were assured in tribal stories, but the stories were lost in translation as surnames. Later, most surnames were chosen and dictated at federal and mission schools” (175). Unfortunately, while we know the literal translation of Kah-ge-gah-ga-bowh, its story may continue to remain elusive.

In addition to the use of his adopted name for the paper’s heading, the third word in the title of the periodical is likewise not exactly as it seems. Within the masthead of the journal, Copway, echoing Apress and Boudinot, challenges the meaning of the term “Indian.” We learn by reading the three Copway-penned letters that appear in the newspaper that the editor employs the term “Indian” not simply to reference the Native peoples of the United States or even those of the Americas.⁷⁰ The writer expands this term of reference in a rather unexpected way to apply to the indigenous inhabitants of *any locale*. In the second letter to his father, Copway writes of those arriving in New York City, “From every place all [over] the earth they do come from, all those who are Indians” (“To My Father Letter No. 2”).⁷¹ Despite the fact that Copway earlier refers to the various inhabitants of Europe by their respective national identities as “Germans,” “English,” “French,” “Scotchmen (*sic*),” he still refers to the indigenous inhabitants of these foreign locations as Indians. In doing so, Copway has taken the persistent misnomer “Indian” as applied by Columbus, then adopted and transformed by the European colonizers, and, in a rhetorical act of resistance (whether intentional or accidental), directed it back at them and

⁷⁰ The letters are titled “To My Father: Letter No. 1,” “To My Father: Letter No.2,” and “To Joseph Sawyer, Principle Chief of the Ojibway Nation.” According to Copway’s *Recollections of a Forest Life* Joseph Sawyer was appointed the President of the council or Head Chief of the Rice Lake band in the winter of 1839-1840.

⁷¹ I owe these translations to Cecil King an Ottawa speaker, who in 1977 made them for Donald Smith. Smith was kind enough to send copies of the translations to me.

invested it with new meaning. Understood in this new sense, the “Indian” in the title of Copway’s periodical is those people, who are native—as opposed to simply Native—to the Americas.⁷² This new understanding is also interesting when we note that Copway, in his speeches often referred to himself as a “Native American” and he became a member of a nineteenth-century nativist group by the name of the Know-Nothings.⁷³ In terms of nationalist ideology, it is possible that Copway envisioned his paper as eventually being representative of all those—despite their heritage—born in the Americas.

Cheryl Walker contends that Copway’s ideas about national identity diverge greatly from those, like Richardson, who view Native nations as sovereign entities. In reference to Copway’s notions of political identity as presented in *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850), she argues “Much that is said about the nation seems to refer equally to northern and southern tribes, and even to the broader classification of North American Indians such as Copway believed them to be. Perhaps for this reason, he felt comfortable establishing a newspaper entitled [*sic*] *Copway’s American Indian* claiming to speak for many Indian nations” (Walker 102, italics mine). Although Walker misses it, Copway’s newspaper never claims to be devoted to one tribe or even solely to the indigenous peoples of North America. In the prospectus to *Copway’s American Indian* the editor lists as the first of the ten “more prominent points which the paper will present” as “The numbers and localities of the

⁷² While it is common in many Native languages to use the term for Indian when referring to the indigenous peoples of certain locations (e.g. Maori and Native Hawaiians), this application of the term for Europeans is unique to Copway.

⁷³ The Know Nothing movement was an American political movement of the 1840s and 1850s. It was empowered by popular fears that the country was being overwhelmed by Irish Catholic immigrants, who were often regarded as hostile to U.S. values and controlled by the Pope in Rome. Mainly active from 1854 to 1856, this group it strove to curb immigration and naturalization. See Dale T. Knobel’s “Know-Nothings and Indians: Strange Bedfellows?” *Western Historical Quarterly* 15 (April 1984): 175-98. I discuss the movement in more detail in chapter 4.

various tribes, both in North and South America, as far as they can be ascertained, and the affinities of tribes” (“Prospectus”). As a Native individual, Copway’s status as either an “American” or a “Canadian” in terms of citizenship cannot be understood in the way we view national identity. For those scholars who interrogate Copway’s seemingly contradictory claims about pride in his country (whether Canada or the United States) and his desire to praise the land of his birth, they must take into consideration the author’s ideas about what it means to be American. For Copway the term “American” encompasses both continents—North and South—(as it did for many until the latter part of the eighteenth century).⁷⁴ Further, while the newspaper was “devoted to the cause of the Indian,” it never claims “to speak for” any Native people, but rather *to speak about* those people in a wide variety of ways. Baumgartner reminds us, “Native voice has always contained the knowledge of being multiply voiced, without ‘speaking for’ that generates a kind of tokenization” (136).

Copway’s personal sense of what it means to be an Indian is likewise interesting. Writing of his time in Europe he vows,

I will have one invariable set of rules to observe wherever I shall be during my stay in this country—and it is this... I will uphold my race—I will endeavor never to say nor do anything which will prejudice the mind of the British public against my people—In this land of refinement *I will be an Indian*—I will treat everybody in a manner that becomes a gentleman—I will patiently answer all questions that may be asked of me—I will study to please the people, and lay my own feelings to one side. (*Running Sketches* 55, emphasis added)

We can read this entry in one of two ways. The author is most likely telling his readers that true Native character is like that of a gentleman. Acting like an Indian, he vows to be on his best behavior. A second more interesting reading is that Copway’s oath to “be an Indian” is indicative of the performance he will give, his Indian pose. The author’s presentation makes it appear as if

⁷⁴ e.g. Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781).

the act of “being an Indian” is a choice rather than an innate, inescapable identity. As we will see, this ambivalence proved a complication that long beset Copway and affected the makeup of his newspaper.

Copway’s authorial contributions to *Copway’s American Indian* are few; his participation in the ongoing conversations about Indian and national identity is most clearly seen in his editorial decisions. True to its promise, the newspaper does not present an easily discernable political stance; Copway allows the selections within the columns to speak for themselves and they often engage in ideological battles. However, I contend that the overarching goal of the journal existed as a means of convincing readers that the Native people were disappearing, that they must be saved, and that removal west proved the only alternative. While the presentation seems schizophrenic, the periodical is in every way representative of the nineteenth-century conversation taking place in the parlor regarding the Native inhabitants and the American nation. The sheer size of the collection of pieces dealing with Natives is awe inspiring and each of Vizenor’s “Native theaters” is well represented. *Copway’s American Indian*, short-lived and virtually untouched by scholars, is a testament like no other to an essential Native presence in the American national narrative.

CHAPTER THREE

(RE)INVENTED TRADITIONS: NATIVE TALES ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

A section titled “Traditions and Legends” was the only feature to appear on a somewhat regular basis in the pages of *Copway’s American Indian*. Included in seven of the thirteen issues, the tales in this section provided the periodical’s readers with a sampling of highly sought after stories of America’s purportedly disappearing indigenous people. Placed alongside missionary reports about Natives attending religious services and being converted to the Christian faith, essays on the origin of America’s indigenous inhabitants, and poems and fictional stories with Native, Euro-American and international subjects, these legends established a Native American cultural line of descent, which existed on equal terms, within this newspaper at least, with non-Native traditions. Through careful selection and placement within the newspaper, George Copway constructed a non-exclusive mythology for the developing American nation. The editor, using his periodical as a medium for continuing a longstanding Native oral tradition, contextualizes this folk material as both a means of preserving and passing along the stories of his people. Within the context of *Copway’s American Indian* the “traditions and legends” are imbued with meanings that go beyond the immediate stories they tell; they become part of a larger Native-centered interdiscursive narrative that makes claims for Indian humanity, civilization, literacy, memory, history, and hopes for prosperity. Faced with the task of representing his people to a predominantly Euro-American, Christian audience, Copway chooses tales that combine what I term non-confrontational cosmological explanations, history, and universal moral axioms.

Though this chapter begins with a discussion of the tales and legends as they appeared within the pages of the newspaper, it necessarily returns to the stories as they were originally

published in Copway's *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850). A comparison of the two texts—*Traditional History* and *Copway's American Indian*—allows for a more complete understanding of the ways in which author and editor recontextualized the pieces of folk material to serve entirely different ends. Additionally, in this section I look at the Ojibwa editor's Euro-American contemporaries who published folk material for which Copway served as the source. Several pieces of folk material first textualized by Copway appear in the works of other authors. At times this material lists Copway, or occasionally "Chief Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh," as the source, but just as often the authors neglect to cite their informant or they trace the material back to another "authentic" origin. Finally, the chapter concludes with a look at the ways in which the author and editor, both intellectually and physically, becomes the stuff of folk material through a discussion of Copway's relationship with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his contribution(s) to the creation and perpetuation of the latter's epic *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Through this publication and dissemination of folk material Copway and his medium, *Copway's American Indian*, become involved in nation building agenda(s). I argue that both are engaged in a system of doubling, of (re)imagining different communities simultaneously as an Indian Nation and an American Nation, of existing as both subject and object of (a) national narrative(s), and challenging the very traditions that they perpetuate and in which they participate.

Readers of *Copway's American Indian* could not have been surprised to turn to the third page of the July 19 edition of the newspaper and find the first installment in a series of Indian "Traditions and Legends." Copway had proved the previous year quite capable of (re)producing such stories. His *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850) includes a chapter titled "Their Legendary Stories and Historical Tales," which assures readers of

the newspaper that source material was readily available. He writes in the introduction to the chapter, “The Ojibways have a great number of legends, stories, and historical tales, the relating and hearing of which, form a vast fund of winter evening instruction and amusement” (95). Already having published several of these tales, Copway, with some confidence, lists in the prospectus of his paper, among the “prominent points” to be addressed, “[t]he traditions preserved in various tribes” (“Prospectus”).⁷⁵ Although the premier edition of *Copway’s American Indian*, which appeared a week earlier on July 10, contains no such stories, it does provide an extensive list of questions submitted at an earlier date to Copway by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, which the editor planned to answer in the columns of the periodical. Just above this questionnaire the editor explains to the readers,

The inquisitiveness of the Anglo-Saxon Races is very large, and, when they relate to the Indians, we have been endeavoring for three years back, to answer questions, which have been put to us in every part of the country, in which we have travelled—and, as there are thousands yet, who, will likely still put us to the *end of our wits* in answering queer and odd questions for the benefit of our “pale-face” friends, we shall put in the first number of our paper the questions which, we will, from time to time, endeavor to answer; all of which relate to the Indians of this great continent. (“Brief Memorandum of Topics,” emphasis original)

Euro-American fascination with the indigenous inhabitants of the United States was evidenced in the sheer number of ethnologists, like Schoolcraft, who built careers out of researching the Native people. Copway acknowledges and capitalizes on this interest while simultaneously emphasizing the often unorthodox—and quite likely insulting—nature of the enquiries. Although he was perhaps taken aback by many of the questions that had been posed to him, the Ojibwa editor saw it fit to attempt to shed light on the nature of his people. Realizing that his answers may differ from those other individuals were likely to provide, Copway implores his readers to bear with him:

⁷⁵ The newspaper’s prospectus appeared in its totality in the first, second, and thirteenth (and final) editions.

We shall ask the same amount of charity from the public as we are willing to give it, in prosecuting our plans, which is that we shall allow others to differ with us in opinion, when it is necessary—and we shall let others do so with us; but, at all times, following a common sense course in every thing. We hope to be able to show, that our soul is not kept altogether in a nut-shell. (“Brief Memorandum of Topics”)

Schoolcraft—or less likely, Copway—has divided the questionnaire that follows into seven sections and under the heading of “History” appears the subheading “Vestiges of tradition” and similarly under “Religion” a request for the following: “*Mythology*-Myths and belief in metamorphosis, respect for the bear, wolf, and turtle, transmigration, local deities, woodland spirits, personifications” (“Brief Memorandum of Topics”).⁷⁶ Schoolcraft, a self-proclaimed ethnographer, who, like Lewis Cass, became famous for his “scientific” methods of studying America’s indigenous inhabitants through the distribution and collection of questionnaires like the one he presented to Copway, approached his subjects of enquiry with something less than objectivity.⁷⁷ As evidenced by this list of questions, Schoolcraft seems to have developed preconceived ideas about what types of information he expected to gain from his Native sources and possibly what material he considered valid.

Provided by Schoolcraft with such a detailed, pre-categorized inventory regarding Native spiritual beliefs, Copway knew very well what much of his “pale-face” readership might anticipate encountering in the pages of *Copway’s American Indian*. However, the editor seems to have had a different mission in mind. Schoolcraft, among others, may have desired his friend to deliver Native “mythology,” but conspicuously, with this one exception, the term never appears

⁷⁶ In his questionnaire, Schoolcraft included these additional questions about Indian religion that did not fall under mythology: “Ideas of a Deity, how revealed, moral principles of the government of the Great Spirit, crimes, how expiated, compensations, Indian priesthood, what character, prevailing beliefs, necromancy, sorcery, dreams, their character and influence, actual worship, feasting, fasting, tobacco, fire worship, idea of calorie, omens, idolaters, immortality, beasts invested with souls, peculiar societies.

⁷⁷ Cass served as Governor of Michigan Territory from 1813-1831. During this time he led an expedition north to what is present day Minnesota in an attempt to locate the source of the Mississippi. Schoolcraft served as Cass’s geologist, who identified the source as Lake Itasca.

in any of the thirteen editions of Copway's newspaper. Although Copway had converted to Christianity, he seems reluctant to relegate Native beliefs to the realm of myth and determines the nature, whether true or false, of his "tales and legends" by "whether the traditions are approved by the oldest chiefs and wise men," arguing, "such are most likely to be true" (*Traditional History* 19). Joshua Bellin claims that these types of refusals make the Indian editor's argument compelling. "[T]he force of Copway's methodology," Bellin argues, "lies in its suggestion that 'truth' is local, not absolute: that diverse stories generate diverse grounds of validation" (*Demon* 194). This concept of the local nature of "truth" proves integral to understanding the historical as opposed to mythological nature of Copway's tales and further illuminates the ways Copway's insistence on the local contributes to the nation building agenda of *Copway's American Indian*.

Homi Bhabha explains in his theory of "DissemiNation" that, "Minority discourse sets the act of emergence in the antagonistic *in-between* of image and sign, the accumulative and the adjunct, presence and proxy. It contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority" (307, emphasis original). Copway's use of local "truths" calls into question ideas of the American Nation as merely a repository of Euro-American values and culture. It, in effect, attempts to add yet another factor to the American equation. Bhabha further elaborates,

It is a question that is supplementary to what is put down on the order paper, but by being 'after' the original or in 'addition to' it, gives it the advantage of introducing a sense of 'secondariness' or belatedness into the structure of the original. The supplementary strategy suggests that adding 'to' need not 'add up' but may disturb the calculation. (305)

The tales included in *Copway's American Indian*, as they exist in the context of the periodical, provide the very type of disturbance Bhabha invokes by "challeng(ing) the grounds of ethnology,

the opposition of the ‘historical’ and ‘mythical’” (*Demon* 194). By claiming this material as historical and thus positioned within a temporal framework and not outside of one, the periodical forces the reader to (re)envision a people and a landscape with a definite past, a past that, within the context of the newspaper, thrived prior to European arrival, coexists with a Native present, and provides a foundation for an American future.

Copway, keeping true to his word, includes on page two of the July 19 edition a short article titled “Traditions and Legends,” where he informs the public that

In our present number, we, commence the publication of a series of Indian Traditions and Legends, as one of the features of our paper. Some have been given to the world, but differently told by different authors. In our present, we give to our readers the Origin of Death and the formation of the great Medicine Worship of the Indians, as believed by our N.W. Indian Nations. (“Traditions and Legends”)

What may have surprised those readers who were familiar with the contents of Copway’s earlier *Traditional History* was that the legend with which they were confronted did not appear as part of the book’s chapter of Native stories. This tale, the only one of the legends included in *Copway’s American Indian*, which did not first debut in the aforementioned chapter, Copway had originally penned as part of a later chapter titled “Their Religious Beliefs.” This recontextualization and recategorization of the tale obviously blurs the line between tradition and religious belief, but Copway clearly had a larger plan in mind. When the legend first appeared in the pages of Copway’s book, it served as an explanation for the development of the Natives’ belief in and practice of medicine worship and followed three detailed pages of the layout of the ceremonial lodge and the first level of induction in the Midewiwin, to which Copway claims membership.⁷⁸ The Midewiwin, which according to Copway, “resembles in some particulars the

⁷⁸ Copway does not identify the society by its Native name.

secret societies, so called in the United States,” requires its initiates to go through a series of rituals in order to be inducted into the order.⁷⁹ The first step of this initiation ritual involves the act of receiving the tale concerning the society’s origin, “which is usually related to any one when about to join the clan” (“Origin of Death”). This action of imbibing the knowledge of the Midewiwin quite literally begins one’s initiation process.

The tale begins with a prelapsarian scene. Literally existing in a “pre-historic” age, the “red men” were happy and healthy and their death did not exist. They lived in a type of New World Garden of Eden where “the forest abounded with game, the trees were loaded with fruit, and birds who have now a black plumage were dressed in pure white” (“Origin of Death”). Spirits from heaven regularly made visits to the Native people to check on their well being via an *axis mundi*. These errand-spirits travelled between the two realms by way of a vine that connected the earth and the sky and had made it known that humans were forbidden to climb the vine or they would suffer unspecified, “severe penalties” (“Origin of Death”). An intimate relationship developed between one of the spirits and a young man who lived with his grandmother. The other Natives were jealous of this relationship and made the man’s life difficult. When the spirit learned of the man’s troubles, it agreed to allow him to return with it to the heavens. The grandmother, distraught at the loss of her grandson, attempted to climb the vine and retrieve him. The other Indians saw her in mid-climb and were so enraged that she dared to disobey the spirits that they destroyed her dwelling. Just as the woman reached the top of the vine it broke and she tumbled to earth, vine in hand. Having destroyed the means of communication between the human world and the heavens, the woman received abuse from the

⁷⁹ For a thorough discussion of the Midewiwin society from both Native and Euro-American perspectives see *Discordant Voices, Conflicting Visions: Ojibwa and Euro-American Perspectives of the Midewiwin* by Michael R. Angel (unpublished dissertation 1997).

Native people; “Some kicked her, others dragged her by her hair” (“Origin of Death”). They cursed her saying, “All who shall live after thee, shall call thee *Equa* (woman)” (“Origin of Death,” emphasis original). The Natives in the surrounding area, upon hearing of the woman’s transgression, immediately became ill and “[s]ome complained of pains in their heads, and others in various parts of their bodies. Some were unable to walk, and others equally unable to speak. They thought some of these fell asleep, for they knew not what death was. They had never seen its presence” (“Origin of Death”). The woman’s actions and the resulting punishment temporarily alter Native life and “[t]here was no more hunting, no more games, and no song was sung to soothe the sun to its evening rest” (“Origin of Death”). In this manner, the story informs, the Native people learned that the penalty for ascending the vine was disease and death. When the spirits came again (and we are not told how they made this journey after the destruction of the vine), they found the people in a sorry state. Hoping to gain relief from their newfound troubles, each of the five nations sent a petition to the Great Spirit via the lesser spirits.⁸⁰ In answer to these petitions, the spirits returned with permission to release the Natives from their miseries. They gave the people herbs to cure disease, but the people were still destined to eventually die; they could not be restored to their former state. The tale ends by explaining that the Native people created a dance and a mode of worship and then leaves the reader with these words from the spirits:

“There is not a flower that buds, however small, that is not for some wise purpose.
“There is not a blade of grass, however small, that the Indian does not require.

⁸⁰ This reference to the five nations is interesting as usually the term “Five Nations” refers to the Iroquois confederacy as originally formed by the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples who were the traditional enemies of the Ojibwa. Since this tale was first recorded in Copway’s *Traditional History*, it suggests that the story was borrowed, or that the five nations refers to an otherwise undocumented division among Copway’s people.

“Learning this, and acting in accordance with these truths, will work out your own good, and will please the Great Spirit.” (“Origin of Death”)^{81 82}

In the end, the tale establishes the origins of the Midewiwin and provides some explanation of the Native’s connection to and reverence for the natural world. It further establishes a historical beginning—through death—for the Native people.

To fully understand the ways in which this exercise serves the nation building agenda in which I argue *Copway’s American Indian* was invested, it serves us well to return to Benedict Anderson’s argument regarding the ways in which newspapers and the idea of simultaneity functioned in the construction of “imagined communities.” Speaking of the “mass ceremony” of newspaper consumption Anderson writes,

[newspaper reading] is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. (35)

Thus, in accordance with Native pre-established traditions, the reader, in the act of reading the tale related in *Copway’s American Indian*, in a sense becomes at least a low-level initiate into the “mysterious clan” of the Midewiwin. This erases the line between “outsider” and “insider” and the “traditional” story becomes the shared religio-cultural property of Natives and Euro-Americans alike. Within the framework of nationalistic discourse, this incorporation of the newspaper’s reading public into the society serves to promote a shared identity or “imagined community;” that which had previously been exclusively Native becomes a part of the larger American Nation. The “tradition,” the telling of the tale (which must be clearly differentiated

⁸¹ Christopher Vecsey has collected and published a variety of tales, including this one from Copway, regarding Medicine Worship in “Midewiwin Myths of Origin.” *Papers of the Fifteenth Algonquian Conference*, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1984. 445-467

⁸² The punctuation here, although irregular, keeps with the original as it was printed in *Copway’s American Indian*.

from the custom of medicine worship) has been reinvented or textualized for this new audience. According to Eric Hobsbawm, “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (1). To clarify his thesis of “invented tradition,” Hobsbawm explains the difference between “tradition” and “custom.” He argues, “[t]he object and characteristic of ‘traditions,’ including invented ones, exists in their invariance. The past, real or invented, to which they refer imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices, such as repetition” (2). However, “custom” differs from “tradition” in that it must change, for its existence is quite literally caught up in practice. Copway’s retelling of this tale establishes an invented continuity between the new American Nation and the Native past.

While modern scholars have invariably criticized Copway for his seemingly “schizophrenic” narratives, the Indian author, it appears, demonstrates a clearer understanding of the difference between “tradition” and “custom” that Hobsbawm advocates. Maureen Konkle has indicted the author arguing that, “what Copway attempts to destroy in Ojibwe people, their ‘traditions,’ is also the basis of his own efforts toward poetry, and it is his desire for the literary that particularly forces the contradictions of his thinking to the surface” (194). It may be more appropriate to argue that Copway seems somewhat intent on highlighting the problematic nature of the custom of medicine worship while presenting the (re)telling of the tale of origin as instructive practice. Hobsbawm further points out, “[a]daptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes” (5). The new purpose of this old tradition serves to bring about a shared cultural knowledge via a historical repetition of the tale; the practical application of the contents of the tale is of less significance. Moreover, participating in

an established Native oral tradition, Copway has “told” the tale so that it may be preserved and “told” again.

Cheryl Walker views the epigraph that appears at the beginning of the chapter of Native legends in *Traditional History* as particularly problematic. It reads: “’Tis a story,/Handed from ages down; a nurse’s tale/Which children open-eyed and mouthed devour,/And thus as garrulous ignorance relates,/We learn it and believe” (95). Walker writes, “[p]resumably the point of this epigraph is to undercut Indian belief in superstitions. Nevertheless, Copway seems to relish repeating the legends that follow, so we are left once again with a sense of incoherence” (100). In similar fashion Konkle posits that, “One need only go so far as the epigraph to the chapter, however, for an idea of the inability of Copway’s audience to recognize what he was saying. . . . Indian stories, following from the epigraph’s logic, can only be stories of ‘garrulous ignorance,’ for the amusement of children” (216). Somewhat confusingly, in spite of these criticisms, both draw on the suggestion of Copway’s biographer Donald Smith that due to the extensive use of English poetry throughout the text, it was Copway’s Euro-American wife, Elizabeth, named as a source of these epigraphs, who, in her misunderstanding of her husband’s meaning, inserted this at the beginning of the chapter. Possibly scholars have underestimated both Copway (and/or his wife) and his Euro-American, presumably biblically literate readership. As an alternative reading, I credit Copway with a savvy rhetorical move, thereby restoring his authorial agency and recognizing—as I feel Copway and/or his co-conspirator did—the reasoning abilities of his audience. Considering the obvious, and oft noted similarities between Copway’s tales and Hebrew scripture, the coupling of the above epigraph with the collection of tales and legends challenges the Christian reader to recognize the relatively outlandish nature and yet instructive

strengths of both traditions, thereby privileging neither and honoring both. Copway himself reminds readers that

The present dependence of the pale face on letters, [demonstrates that they are] ... entirely forgetting that the whole of the Old and New Testaments has been handed down in the same form in years back, until letters became the representation of such traditions. (*Traditional History* 138-39)

He does not advocate literal readings of either Native or Judeo-Christian stories, but rather fully appreciates the positive impact each delivers in its instructive messages. He further follows a policy of simultaneously promoting both “histories” as parts of a larger whole. Bellin makes the case that, “[t]hough [Copway] accepts the axiom that Indian and Euro-American stories differ, he disputes the corollary that the two are simple opponents, the former needing to be viewed through, and fated to be vanquished by, the latter” (*Demon* 194).

While we evaluate any writer by the works he or she produces, we gain much by considering not only the tales Copway offers his readers, but also those stories he chooses to exclude from his texts. In opposition to what a reader might expect in Copway’s chapter of tales and legends, it remains significant that although he undoubtedly knew Native creation stories, he strategically chooses not relate these to his aforementioned presumably Christian audience. He purposely writes between the lines of Judeo-Christian scripture. None of the tales and legends he includes in his writings directly contradicts those of his adopted belief system. Although faced with the task of gaining Euro-American support through the establishment of Natives’ shared humanity, Copway makes sure he does not alienate his audience through literary “confrontation.” Bhabha provides an understanding of Copway’s approach when he insists,

The minority does not simply confront the pedagogical or powerful master-discourse with a contradictory or negating referent. It does not turn contradiction into a dialectical process. It interrogates its objects by initially withholding its objective. Insinuating itself into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse,

the supplementary antagonizes the implicit power to generalize, to produce the sociological solidity (306).

Copway offers what amounts to supplementary stories that can fit easily alongside Judeo-Christian biblical history and help in the establishment of an amalgamated theology for the new American nation. “The power of supplementarity is not the negation of the preconstituted social contradictions of the past or present” Bhabha points out; “its force lies...in the renegotiation of those times, terms, and traditions through which we turn our uncertain, passing contemporaneity into the signs of history” (306). Through the combination of the epigraph and texts, Copway establishes a connection between the two sets of stories and by extension between his Native people and his Euro-American readers.

Appearing as it does as the first in the series, “The Origin of Death and Medicine Worship” also serves the purpose of preparing the new Euro-American initiates for the tales to follow in subsequent issues of *Copway’s American Indian*. Although each of the stories published in the series of “Tales and Legends” had been previously printed in some form in *Traditional History*, they do not follow the same order in the paper. As mentioned previously, the first installment had not been classified among the chapter on tales in the 1850 book. The second tale to appear in the paper, “The Star and the Lily,” appeared as the first in *Traditional History*, a fact that might mislead one into believing that Copway simply retains the original order of the tales after inserting a new lead piece; however, that pattern does not hold. The third tale in the periodical, “The First Murder Caused by Alcoholic Drink” follows the tale about the star that fell in love with and came to live among mankind and notably became one of the very flowers that the spirits reference in “The Origin of Death and Medicine Worship.” Additionally, the August 9 edition carries the third tale from *Traditional History*, “The Thunder’s Nest,” another tale linked with induction into the Midewiwin, and the fifth tale, “The Two Cousins,”

had been fourth in the book and serves as a sort of prequel to “The Star and the Lily.”⁸³ The final tale to appear, “The Long Chase,” has been demoted all the way from its position as the second tale. The “First Murder Caused by Alcohol” and “The Long Chase” are the only two tales that are not obviously linked to other legends in the series.

In a later chapter of *Traditional History* Copway critiques Euro-American responses to Native beliefs by noting that, “[Indians] became very cautious in giving information respecting their religious worship to the whites, because they, the whites, ridiculed it” (137). He further chastises those wishing to spread the Christian gospel among the tribes for their reaction to Native religious beliefs and practices. “This laughing at their absurd worship or belief,” he points out, “has prejudiced their minds in proportion to the amount of abuse they received from the pale face, and the benefits of Christian education” (*Traditional History* 138). Writing as one who has been shaped by Native tales and legends as well as biblical stories, Copway offers the readers of his texts a perspective of continuity rather than complete opposition. Although he has accepted the Christian faith, Copway does not discount the importance of his early tribal instruction as evidenced in what appears to be something of a syncretized philosophical approach. He fondly recalls, “Night after night for weeks have I sat and eagerly listened to these stories. The days following, the characters would haunt me at every step, and every moving leaf would seem to be a voice of a spirit. To those days I look back with pleasurable emotions” (*Traditional History* 96). Although he often seems to lament the time he spent in ignorance prior to his religious conversion, the Native author makes an attempt at negotiating his past and present spiritual states, viewing them as a natural succession in his personal “civilization” and by extension a necessary process in the lives of all Natives, and arguably all Euro-Americans as well.

⁸³ “The Thunder’s Nest” mistakenly retains the number from its original printing.

There appears yet one additional “tradition” in the pages of *Copway’s American Indian* and its inclusion proves worth noting. Along with the “Origin of Death and Medicine Worship,” the July 19 edition of the periodical carries a selection titled “Algonquin Tradition of the Evil Serpent.” Copway prints the article verbatim from one of two sources.⁸⁴ The tale, published by Ephraim George Squier, appeared first in the October 1848 edition of the *American Review* and then was later reprinted as a note in Squier’s book *The Serpent Symbol, and the Worship of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature in America* (1851). The pages of *Copway’s American Indian* do not list Squier as the author, but neither does Copway take the credit for the tale, which, as we shall see, he could have justifiably done. In the first two publications of the tale, Squier names Copway as his source, writing that, “The tradition in which this grand event is embodied was thus related by *Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh*, a chief of the Ojibways; and though its substance has often been presented, it has never before been published in its full and perfect form” (227, emphasis original).⁸⁵ The possibility exists that not having actually composed but only recorded the tale himself, Copway did not feel justified in claiming it as his own, but it does seem a bit out of place that he does not include the lines in which Squier credits him with its retelling.⁸⁶

Immediately following the tale in the *American Review* Squier once again makes a reference to his source using the moniker “Mr. Copway” rather than *Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh* as he

⁸⁴ As there is no way to determine exactly when in 1851 Squier’s book was published, it is impossible to know whether the tale was excerpted from the first or second publication. For my purposes, the source from which it was “clipped” is of little importance.

⁸⁵ E.G. Squier includes a note referring his readers to his first publication of the tale in the *American Review* for November 1848, although the piece appeared a month earlier. Somewhat oddly, he also claims that “it has never been published” just prior to noting where it had been previously published.

⁸⁶ Several Euro-American authors seem to have been rather critical of Copway as a writer. In a letter dated November 18, 1848 Francis Parkman, speaking of the forthcoming publication of Copway’s *Traditional History*, confided to Squier that he had “no great faith” in the book because he believed “Copway is endowed with a discursive imagination and facts grow under his hands into a preposterous shape and dimensions” (Jacobs 65-66). Squier seems not to have heeded Parkman’s advice as he maintains Copway as a source in his 1851 printing of the tale.

had previously. There follows yet another tale, which it seems Copway also supplied in the form of an “incident” as Squier terms it. This second story provides an explanation for how the crow became cursed. According to the legend, during the great flood caused by a contest between Manabozho and the Great Serpent, “the men and animals by which the world was to be replenished” floated safely on a raft.⁸⁷ The birds flew out during the day to find food. One day, the crow came back and Manabozho realized that the bird had feasted on human flesh. The crow denies his first transgression, but after being found out a second time confesses his misdeed. He becomes cursed and his feathers and flesh are turned black, his voice likewise becomes transformed so that he can no longer sing, and he is forced from that day forward to eat carrion and live among the buzzards and vultures. Exactly why this tale never appears in any of Copway’s writings or his newspaper may appear somewhat puzzling. In *Traditional History* he makes a reference to the tale as a rejoinder to those who believe that due to the lack of permanent written records the Indian people cannot maintain tradition. He writes,

Many think we cannot keep the words of tradition longer than one hundred years. We have the tradition of the flood; the organization of the medicine worship of the Indians, originating as it did by the introduction of disease in the earth, in the disobedience of a woman. Why do we have these traditions represented in picture records, and transmitted from one generation to another? *And how long since the flood?* (*Traditional History* 138, emphasis added)

It seems at first odd that Copway does not print this tale of the flood. In the second issue of the newspaper, immediately following the first legend, he announces to his readers, “[t]he next number will contain the curious traditions of the flood” (“Traditions and Legends”). Indeed it would seem to have been exactly the piece to follow the “Origin of Death and Medicine Worship,” whose opening lines take place when “[t]he forest abounded with game, the trees were loaded with fruit, and *birds who have now a black plumage, were dressed in pure white. The*

⁸⁷ In Algonquian folklore Manabozho is a trickster god.

birds and the fowl ate no flesh, for the wide prairies were covered with fruits and vegetables” (“Origin of Death,” emphasis added). However, this tale presents the very type of confrontational creation story Copway wished to avoid. Undoubtedly, he was aware that there very well may be no place for a tale about “the flood” for a people who already had a widely-accepted one at their disposal. Further, Copway does not include any tales in which Native deities appear, which adds credence to this argument.

In addition to the tales he self-published, Copway also served as a source for several Euro-American authors who wished to include Native stories in their writings. Charles Lanman, a governmental librarian and private secretary to Senator Daniel Webster, in 1856 published *Adventures in the Wilds of the United States and British American Provinces*, which includes a tale titled “The Fire-Water Sacrifice.” Copway published his rendition of the tale with two separate titles. It appeared as “The Effects of Liquor” in *Traditional History* and was reprinted in *Copway’s American Indian* re-titled “The First Murder Caused by Alcoholic Drink,” which is published beneath an original sketch depicting the tale’s final scene. (FIGURE 1) Copway’s versions begin with a brief historical setting explaining that “a few years after the extermination of the Iroquois from the peninsula which is formed by the three lakes, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, a free and uninterrupted intercourse existed between the French of Montreal and the Ojibways of Lake Superior” (*Traditional History* 118). This provides the reader with a specific temporal frame of the late sixteenth century. Further, Copway locates the events of the tale geographically, adding that “the people had already commenced to inhabit the islands along the river St. Marie, when a quantity of liquor was landed at a point near Grand De Tour, between St. Marie and Mackinaw” (*Traditional History* 119). These geographical markers are easily located on a map providing Copway’s readers with a specific setting for his tale. In a postscript, Copway provides

additional information about when and where the story was passed along to him. Having heard it in 1834, as a sixteen-year-old, while camping near Drummond’s Island, the author notes that this retelling occurred in the very vicinity in which the actions of the tale are located.⁸⁸

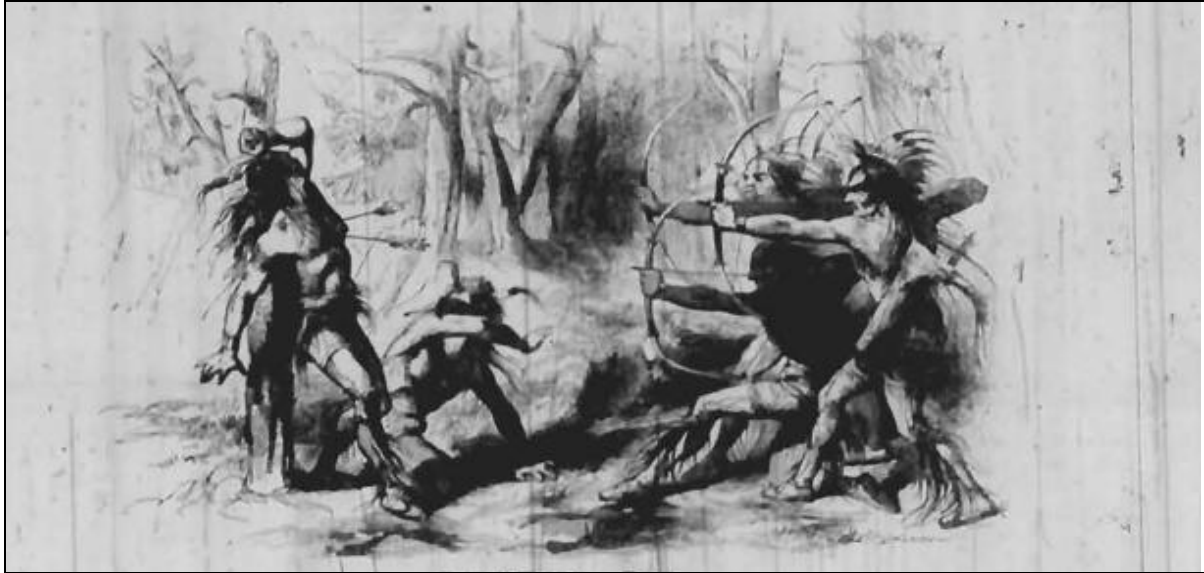


FIGURE 1. “The First Murder Caused By Alcoholic Drink.” *Copway’s American Indian* 1:4 (1851).

The principal actors here are the Native people; no Europeans appear in the story. In “The Effects of Liquor,” Konkle reasons that, “Copway shows how traditional practices incorporate new experiences and the resistance to colonization” (215). Although the tale points out that the colonizing done by the French disturbs the natural order of Native life by introducing the indigenous inhabitants to alcohol, which as the title suggests receives blame for the disruption, ultimately traditional Indian customs—choosing the replacement victim, the arrangement of the execution arena, the death songs, the bravery and death of the warrior, etc.—receive credit for restoring order. Konkle continues, “the presentation of that story to a white audience shows that

⁸⁸ Copway misnames the place where he camped Drumwood’s Island. Based on geographical data, the correct name is Drummond’s Island, which is located only a short distance from Grand De Tour and is located near the St. Mary’s River, which Copway refers to by its French name the St. Marie.

Indians adapt to the conditions and effects of colonization but remain Indians” (215). Not only are they able to overcome this new foreign disruption, but they also significantly incorporate the struggle against colonization into their existing practices, creating a “traditional” tale to memorialize the encounter not with a certain people, but with a substance that would continue to disrupt Native life until even the present day.

The chapter in which Lanman’s version of the tale appears he titles “Indian Legends” and places as the final chapter of a two volume set, which he published as a collection of his travels and his comments on the natural wonders of North America. Interestingly, like Squier before him, Lanman does attribute this tale to the Indian author and editor, explaining that he “obtained it from the lips of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh, or *Upright Standing*, a young chief of the Chippeway nation, who assured [him] that it commemorated the first introduction of the baneful Fire-water in to the Indian country” (406, emphasis original).⁸⁹ Despite Lanman’s respectful use of Copway’s Native name in this instance, he seems to undercut Copway’s authority, citing other Native sources for two additional tales he includes from the Ojibwa’s previously published collection.

The chapter contains some twenty legends from different Native tribes and presents each story as being recorded for the first time by Lanman. In fact, although Copway had published his version of the tale no fewer than three times in the United States alone before Lanman’s book came into print—once in a national newspaper—the latter makes no mention of its being shared previously with a reading public. Due to the significant differences in Copway’s tale and that presented by Lanman, we must in fact question Lanman’s very claim that he received the tale directly from the lips of the “young chief of the Chippeway nation” (406). It seems more likely

⁸⁹ Lanman’s translation of Copway’s Native name is unique. Copway translates it as “Forever Standing.”

that he had access to a copy of Copway's tales, from either *Traditional History* or *Copway's American Indian*, and incorporated them into his own writing at will. Another of Copway's stories included in Lanman's chapter, titled by both authors as "The Long Chase," is purportedly told to Lanman by O-gee-maw-ge-zhick, or Chief of the Sky while the two, along with a party of Chippewa paddlers, are "gliding along the southern shore of Lake Superior" in a "birchen canoe" on a "summer day." (413).⁹⁰ To support his claims of originality, Lanman further adds, "Behind us reposed in beauty the Emerald Islands, in our front appeared the Porcupine Mountains, the sky above us was without a cloud, and the waste of sleeping waters was broken by the presence of a lonely swan, which seemed to be following in our wake, apparently for the sake of companionship" (413) setting the natural scene.⁹¹ Lanman, after "[h]aving requested that [his] comrades to refill their pipes from [his] tobacco pouch, ... inquired for an adventure or a story connected with this portion of the lake" (413). Undoubtedly, the tale Copway presented to his readers had been a part of a Native oral tradition passed along among the Ojibwa people for some time, and thus probably available to Lanman's companion, Chief of the Sky, it remains unlikely that the Chief would have quoted Copway's tale verbatim including a Native song complete with English translation, and it seems even more unlikely that he would have had a copy of Copway's tale in his lap in the birchen canoe.

All of these Native stories serve a specific purpose in Lanman's text. In effect, their inclusion glorifies the white author; they become his possessions. The tales are no more *about* the Native people than the preceding chapters on Salmon, Trout, Bass, Rock, and Pike fishing

⁹⁰ Lanman uses Chippewa as opposed to Ojibwa and here I retain his usage. Many scholars use the former name for those residing in the United States and the latter for those in Canada; others do not differentiate between the two. Both are Anglicized names and refer to the same tribe.

⁹¹ Note that in Copway's version of "The Long Chase" the Iroquois go in the direction of the Porcupine Mountains. Lanman has moved this feature to the frame of the story.

are about the fish. There exists in Lanman's text no other reference to the Native inhabitants of the land; they have in his hands become mere specimens for study. The information Lanman provides on the various types of fishing and the Native legends enforces the author's claims that he is both well travelled and possesses a wealth of knowledge on the natural world.

If Copway's early version of the tale demonstrates the "restoration of order in a society that the introduction of alcohol throws into chaos" as Konkle rightly argues, then Lanman's version undermines both Native agency and the very restoration of that order. While the Natives in Copway's tale freely choose to partake of the alcohol to see its curious effects, Lanman's Native people are duped by the French trader into drinking a beverage that will make them happy. They are presented in this tale as rather slow-witted, seemingly confused as to what caused them to act the way they had the previous night, and, upon waking the following day, they cannot immediately account for their headaches. The story also enters the realm of mythology, losing any historical time frame when Lanman writes, "the historical tradition which I am now to narrate is said to have occurred at an early day" (410). While the tale provides a specific location in "the extreme western point of what is now called Drummond's Island, in the northern waters of Lake Huron," this has obviously (mis)taken from Copway's post-script that relates where and when he first received the story (413).⁹²

In contrast to Copway's tale, in Lanman's story Native customs are only employed *after* the people of the Chippewa village discover that the trader has slipped away in the night and thus cannot be held accountable. Most importantly, Lanman's story does not demonstrate the restoration of Native order. Instead of all being set right by the return of the murderer, who

⁹² Lanman, unlike Copway, correctly situates the story on Drummond's Island not Drumwood's Island.

chooses not to be executed while still under the influence of alcohol and thus not “killed like a dog,” thereby sullyng both his name and the name of his family, Lanman’s version presents the warrior dying in dishonor with thongs tied around his feet. Lanman’s story of sacrifice does not end there, however. The reader ends with a picture of the traumatized brother, The Unbending Pine, who has lost his entire family and must now sit alone in his hut and mourn his disgraced brother, Purple Shell. Order in Lanman’s “The Fire-Water Sacrifice” remains disrupted; the Indians presented in this tale are incapable of resisting the colonizers, and from this point on are forever psychologically colonized and, if this story serves as any indication, moving towards extinction. The title of Lanman’s version suggests as much. A sacrifice, commonly made to some higher being is in this tale made to placate the all-powerful whisky. The Natives have not moved beyond their experience. The alcohol remains in control of their destinies.

On February 13, 1857, the San Francisco paper the *Daily Globe* printed the following one line piece in its “News and Opinion” section: “In his element.—George Copway, the celebrated Ojibway Chief, is on tour through the large cities, giving readings of ‘Hiawatha,’ in full costume.” On February 4, the premier issue of Sacramento’s *The Daily Bee*, edited for that first week by John Rollin Ridge (Yellowbird), also included a short article noting Copway’s performance of Longfellow’s epic poem. Copway’s appearance in these newspapers does not prove particularly noteworthy. Between 1846 and the mid-1860s he was a minor celebrity and his various activities received much attention from presses throughout the northeast and from New Orleans to London. A reading of *Hiawatha* in a public venue likewise lacks significance in and of itself. Published in November, 1855, the poem garnered immediate success. By 1857 Longfellow estimated that he had sold well over 50,000 copies and readings of the poem were a

regular occurrence.⁹³ In his journal Longfellow personally made note of several such readings of his poem by famed actresses. Notably, he never made note of Copway's reading of *Hiawatha*. What does prove interesting about the notices of Copway's reading arises from the factors that coalesced in bringing this performer and this poem together in a performance of significance.

Longfellow met Copway in early 1849. On Monday, February 26 of that year Longfellow recorded in his journal, "Kah-ge-ga-gah'-bowh an Ojibwa preacher and poet came to see us, announced and attended by 'Prince Eugene.' I missed their visit...but met them on my way homeward. The Indian a good-looking young man promises to come and see me on Wednesday. He left me a book of his—an autobiography" (*Life* 135). Longfellow soon to experienced Copway the performer, but he, like the many journalists who would later cover the Ojibwe's speech at the Peace Congress, seemed more concerned with the Indian's appearance. On April 12, the poet travelled to Boston to hear Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh lecture and he later recorded in his journal that Copway delivered "[a] rambling talk; gracefully delivered, with a fine various voice, and a chief's costume, with little bells jangling upon it, like the bells and pomegranites [sic] of the Jewish priests. Two days later the Ojibway chief spoke on 'The Religion, Poetry, and Eloquence of the Indian,' a lecture more rambling than ever, though not without good passages" (*Life* 137). Longfellow's attendance for the second of Copway's speeches deserves notice.

The two men met briefly on other occasions, as noted in Longfellow's journals, and it would seem that Copway may have been the only Native individual with whom the poet had any sort of relationship and possibly the only Native he ever met.⁹⁴ Early on Longfellow had enough faith in Copway's character to write letters of introduction for the Ojibwa to friends in Europe.

⁹³ See Charles C. Calhoun's *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004: 199.

⁹⁴ Based on his research, Donald Smith notes, "Apparently George Copway was the only Ojibwe Longfellow ever met before he wrote his famous poem based on the Lake Superior Ojibwe" (38).

However, sometime between 1849 and 1858 Longfellow had experienced a change of heart. During that time he had published his epic poem the *Song of Hiawatha*. On December 14, 1858 in a letter to the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, to whom he had written a letter of introduction some eight years earlier, Longfellow wrote, “Kahgegahgabow is still extant. But I fear he is developing the Pau-Puk-Keewis element rather strongly” (*Life* 366). By-and-large Longfellow invented Pau-Puk-Keewis for his poem and devoted two cantos to the crafty trouble maker, whose actions vexed his village and whose mischief greatly annoyed Hiawatha. Notably, “Pau-puk-kewiss presents the only truly mythological character in the poem in that he retains the ability to change shapes to escape an enemy” (Ruppert 121). In his notes to *Hiawatha* Longfellow describes the character as “Pau-Puk-Kee’wis, the handsome Yenadizze, the Storm Fool” (170). Stith Thompson points out that, “the adventures of Pau-Pau-Kee-Wis, provided in the poem, are ordinarily told of Manabozho/[Hiawatha] himself” (136). Thompson argues,

In exercising the function of selecting incidents to make an artistic production, Longfellow has omitted all that aspect of the Manabozho saga which considers the culture hero a trickster. The double character of leader of the people and foolish dupe does not appear to strike the Indians as incongruous, but Longfellow would have undoubtedly have spoiled his poem for the white readers had he included the trickster incidents. (137)

Longfellow’s likening of Copway to the trickster figure Pau-Puk-Keewis provides an interesting commentary on the latter’s future performance of *Hiawatha*.

Longfellow pulled from many sources in his creation of the *Song of Hiawatha*. Scholars have devoted much research to the discovery of the myths, legends, poetic forms, ideas of American national identity, etc. that influenced the construction of the poem. The poet himself cited several “authorities” in the notes to his text and specifically mentions Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s “account of [Hiawatha] in his *Algic Researches*...and in his *History, Condition and*

Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States... may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narrations of an Onondaga chief” (*Song* 161). Longfellow continues, “Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians” (*Song* 61). Taking Longfellow at his word, Virginia Jackson devotes a large part of her essay “Longfellow’s Tradition; or, Picture-Writing a Nation,” to the “Picture-Writing” section of *Hiawatha* (XIV), and “especially to Longfellow’s borrowing of the first American ethnographer’s depiction of Indian ideographic characters as cultural inscriptions that doom Indians to a prenatal, prevernacular, prefigurative literature redeemed in Longfellow’s own national, vernacular, richly figured verse” (478-79). Jackson claims, “When Longfellow read Schoolcraft’s *Historical and Statistical Information* in 1854... he found a section on ‘Indian pictography’ that must have seemed a perfect illustration of the universally available composite he wanted European languages to look like to American readers” (481). Interestingly enough, the plates from Schoolcraft’s work to which Jackson refers (and reprints in her article) do not contain many of the pictographs described in Longfellow’s poem.

Although many considered Schoolcraft the father of American ethnography, faithfully collecting materials from reliable Native sources such as his wife and her family, Helen Carr notes, “[f]rom [*Hiawatha*’s] publication the doubters felt the stories were too elegant and pleasing to be aboriginal: ‘too finely and fancifully touched to be of Indian origin’” (64).⁹⁵ However, although Longfellow does not acknowledge it, Canto 14 does have at least one authentic Native source, George Copway. Carr, who recognizes Copway as its provenance,

⁹⁵ Schoolcraft’s wife, Jane Johnston, also a writer, was the daughter of an Ojibwa mother and Irish, fur-trader.

ponders, “Perhaps [Longfellow] felt an Indian couldn’t be an ‘authority’ or maybe a contemporary christianized Indian seemed out of place, too much a part of his world to be juxtaposed with the Golden Age” (71). In *Traditional History* Copway devotes an entire chapter to “Their Language and Writings.” In this chapter he has a section subtitled “The characters used in picture writing,” a copy of which Longfellow obviously had at his disposal when composing Canto 14 of his epic poem. At the time *Hiawatha* was being written Copway was the only one to have presented the material in such a fashion. Note the following lines from *Hiawatha*, which are little more than detailed descriptions of the symbols Copway presents in his earlier text: ⁹⁶

Gitche Manito the Mighty,
He, the Master of Life, was painted
As an egg, with points projecting
To the four winds of the heavens.
Everywhere is the Great Spirit,
Was the meaning of this symbol.

Gitche Manito the Mighty,
He the dreadful Spirit of Evil,
As a serpent was depicted,
As Kenabeek, the great serpent.
Very crafty, very cunning,
Is the creeping Spirit of Evil,
Was the meaning of this symbol.

Life and Death he drew as circles,
Life was white, but Death was darkened;
Sun and moon and stars he painted,
Man and beast, and fish and reptile,
Forests, mountains, lakes, and rivers.

For the earth he drew a straight line,
For the sky a bow above it;
White the space between for daytime,
Filled with little stars for night-time;
On the left a point for sunrise,
On the right a point for sunset,
On the top a point for noontide,

⁹⁶ The images Longfellow describes can be found on pages 134-136 of Copway’s *Traditional History*.

And for rain and cloudy weather
Waving lines descending from it.

Footprints pointing towards a wigwam
Were a sign of invitation,
Were a sign of guests assembling;
Bloody hands with palms uplifted
Were a symbol of destruction,
Were a hostile sign and symbol. (46-78)

In fact Schoolcraft's images for these Native elements are at variance with the ones Longfellow utilizes. To introduce the pictographs in his publication Copway writes,

These are some of the figures used by us in writing. With these, and from others of a similar class, the Ojibways can write their war and hunting songs. An Indian well versed in these can send a communication to another Indian, and by them make himself as well understood as a pale face can by letter. There are over two hundred figures in general use for all the purposes of correspondence. Material things are represented by pictures of them. (133-134)

The knowledge that in *Hiawatha*, as Carr says, "the pictographs...are removed from their context of contemporary life, dehistoricized" proves problematic, especially since Copway presents the system of communication not as dead but continuing to function (Carr 71). Several stanzas earlier in the canto Hiawatha laments,

Lo! How all things fade and perish!
From the memory of the old men
Fade away the great traditions,
The achievements of the warriors,
The adventures of the hunters,
All the wisdom of the Medes,
All the craft of the Wabenos,
All the marvelous dreams and visions
Of the Jossakeeds, the Prophets!

Great men die and are forgotten,
Wise men speak; their words of wisdom
Perish in the ears that hear them,
Do not reach the generations
That, as yet unborn, are waiting

In the great, mysterious darkness
Of the speechless days that shall be!

On the grave-posts of our fathers
Are no signs, no figures painted;
Who are in those graves we know not,
Only know they are our fathers
Of what kith they are and kindred,
From what old, ancestral Totem,
Be it Eagle, Bear, or Beaver,
They descended, this we know not,
Only know they are our fathers.

Face to face we speak together
But we cannot speak when absent,
Cannot send our voices from us
To the friends that dwell far off;
Cannot send a secret message,
But the bearer learns our secret,
May pervert it may betray it,
May reveal it unto others. (2-34)

Jackson argues, “Hiawatha invents picture-writing: to preserve the memorial trace, to create history, to transmit a history, to claim an inheritance, to establish kinships, to disseminate presence across distance, but also to keep communication private” (482). She continues, “How could Hiawatha be saying that his emerging culture needs writing in order to trace its lineage back to characters that, by definition, would already have to have been written by the culture that was to make sure that lineage came to an end?” (Jackson 483). Consider that in *Traditional History* Copway writes, “these picture representations were used by the Ojibways until the introduction of European manners among them. When this occurred, they neglected in a great degree their correspondence with other nations, except by special messengers” (137-38). Thus while Hiawatha receives credit for creating Native culture *cum* writing, Copway insists that the system, created to express Native culture, still exists hidden from the view of the colonizers. One system does not displace the other, but rather both exist simultaneously and serve different

purposes for different audiences. Writing itself has not faded into the past but rather the speaking. Copway explains, “[w]e could communicate by drawings made on bark and on boards to be understood by each of us. Runners have always been sent on such errands of communication...the Indians say that these beads cannot give false stories, for it is not possible for the man who takes it to alter or to add to them, during his journey” (*Traditional History* 139). The indigenous people have found a way to resist total European American domination by transmitting stories that contain double meaning. While Hiawatha’s words may send the message to Euro-American audiences that Native culture and Native lives have come to an end, to Native audiences they present an alternate means of communicating traditional practices that continue to exist.

So one may wonder what would have motivated Copway to give readings of a poem perceived as articulating the end of Native culture and people. Carr notes, “[t]he poem gave to its readers, especially the liberal and humanitarian, a myth which helped make possible, for America, the acceptance of the displacement and destruction of the Indian” (60). However, Copway may have seen this as an opportunity to enforce his own ideas about the Native present and future in the American national psyche. Michael McNally comments,

If it seems jarring that Native people would gravitate toward performances of a script that rendered them absent, it suggests the intriguing possibility that some considered the [Hiawatha] pageants a field wherein they could assert their presence in consequential, if subtle ways...Native people claimed the stage at least in part as a space of their own shaping, a place of conspicuous Native presence rather than absence. (107)

Similarly, Philip Deloria argues “Throughout a long history of Indian play, native people have been present at the margins insinuating their way into Euro-American discourse, often attempting to nudge notions of Indianness in directions they found useful” (8). Copway found

“Hiawatha” useful. He himself had authored a proposal for Native removal titled *Organization of a New Indian Territory, East of the Missouri River*, and the echoes of this bill reverberate in these lines from Canto 21 of Longfellow’s poem:

I beheld, too, in that vision
All the secrets of the future,
Of the distant days that shall be.
I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown, crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked the towns in all the valleys,
Over all the lakes and rivers,
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like.
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other,
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward wild and woeful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of Autumn! (199-220, emphasis original)

Although not entirely original in thought, Copway argued in his proposal that the Native people should be removed to a large plot east of the Missouri river, which they would be granted in perpetuity. There they could be easily reached by missionaries (of one heart), safe from the vices of the whites on the frontier and safe from further displacement. He felt that this was the only solution to what he saw as the continued dispossession and degradation of the Native people. If only they had not been forgetful of his counsels.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ For a complete discussion of Copway’s removal bill see chapter one.

It must have been interesting to see George Copway, standing upon a stage, surrounded by white faces that were just as likely there to see “the celebrated chief” as to hear the poem he was to read. His very existence provided a counter-narrative to the *Song of Hiawatha* and he was well aware of the fact that at least one of the cantos was based on his own pictographic representations. This knowledge provides yet another narrative of resistance to Longfellow’s poem. Echoes of his own writings about the coming of the white man and the need for Indian relocation mix with stories of Copway’s Native people throughout the reading. His very presence on the stage stands as a testament to Native survival. Claude Levi Strauss points out, “[t]he significant images of myth...are elements which can be defined by two criteria: they have *had a use*, as words in a piece of discourse which mythical thought ‘detaches’...; and *they can be used again* either for the same purpose or for a different one if they are at all diverted from their previous function” (Levi-Strauss 35, emphasis mine). Although Longfellow may have exorcised the trickster figure out of Hiawatha, Copway—Longfellow’s Pau-Puk-Keewis—in this event reunites the two identities and merges them into one. McNally writes, “When the show was over, it may have seemed that the real Indians had disappeared to the Land of the Hereafter with Hiawatha. But Nanabozho [*sic*], master of transformation, has managed to have the last laugh” (132). Copway’s reading of Longfellow’s poem provided counter-narratives that complicated, challenged, and resisted the idea that the Native people and their culture were a thing of the past. In the end, Longfellow, like Copway, textualizes Native folk material—albeit to suit entirely different purposes—and commemorates Native presence. His descriptions of Copway’s previously recorded symbols serve as a record of Native pre-contact means of communication and provide a new mode of transmission for a people whose regular intercourse had been disrupted, although not silenced, through contact with Euro-Americans.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POTENCY OF THE PEN: CONSTRUCTING AND CONTESTING LITERARY INDIANNESS

The Saturday, September 20 edition of *Copway's American Indian* contains a piece, the likes of which had never before and would never again appear in the pages of the short-lived newspaper. On page two appears an editorial titled "Death of James Fennimore [sic] Cooper."

The first couple of lines read much like any other obituary of the period stating,

One of the most distinguished authors of the present times has passed away from us, leaving a lasting name, as having contributed in a very great measure to build up his nation's literary taste. James Fennimore [sic] Cooper, died at his residence, Otsego Hall, Cooperstown, on Sunday afternoon last, after several months illness. (Copway, "Death")

After noting Cooper's early penchant for "sea tales" the piece goes on to note that, "his peculiar excellence laid in his description of the haunts and habits of the red man, and the early settlers of the West, and his own State; of this class, Leather-Stocking, the Mohicans, Deer-Slayer, etc., are examples" (Copway, "Death"). For several weeks following his death, notices of Cooper's passing, details of his funeral and various memorial services appeared in scores of American and British newspapers. These other obituaries were all more or less alike; they listed the date and place of Cooper's passing, that he had suffered from an extended illness, and many mentioned the time he spent as a midshipman in the navy. While most of these death notices did laud his immense contributions to American literature, including *The Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-1841), none specifically noted his representations of Natives nor did they refer to these particular works as Cooper's "peculiar excellence."⁹⁸ Copway's memorial to the author stands alone in this regard.

⁹⁸ The Leatherstocking Tales consist of *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841).

In contrast to the lack of notice paid to the author's treatment of Natives in these newspapers' obituaries, since the mid-twentieth century Cooper scholarship has tended to focus almost exclusively on the author's depictions of Native people. Robert Berkhofer notes that, "More than any other American author, James Fenimore Cooper established the Indian as a significant literary type in world literature" (93). Similarly, Brian Dippie observes that Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* is the "solitary masterpiece" of the "some forty novels published between 1824 and 1834 that included Indian episodes, constituting what G. Harrison Orians termed a 'cult of the Vanishing American'" (21). Fascination with Cooper's "Indian" portrayals has risen to such a level that current nineteenth-century literary scholarship dealing with Native people invariably includes a section on the author's Leatherstocking Tales. Since the lion's share of recent non-Native scholarship addressing Cooper's "Indian" novels critiques the author's depictions of the "Vanishing American," we should note that the nineteenth-century obituary, which appears in *Copway's American Indian*, penned by a Native individual, exists as the only one to highlight and, in fact, praise such representations.

Serving as somewhat of a testament to changing attitudes among non-Native scholars towards representations of America's indigenous inhabitants, Cooper's contemporaries criticized the author's Native characters for slightly different reasons. Many of these nineteenth-century critics, including the historian Francis Parkman, viewed Cooper's Indian representations as heavily romanticized and sentimental to a fault.⁹⁹ Thus, as Dippie points out, although Cooper was not alone in including Native characters in his works, due to the immense popularity of the author's Leatherstocking Tales, "Mr. Cooper's Indians' became a nineteenth-century synonym for any positive depiction" (23). Due in part to these "positive depictions," which countered

⁹⁹ See chapter one for more information on Parkman's criticism of Cooper's Indian characters.

characterizations of Natives as blood-thirsty savages, George Copway expressed a particular fondness for Cooper's representations of Native people, prompting him to declare in his memorial to the author, "Mr. Cooper was perhaps, the most original of our novelists, and took particular pains to vindicate and uphold the Indian character. He seemed to understand their character thoroughly" (Copway, "Death"). More importantly, I contend that Copway lauded Cooper's Native representations precisely because they buttressed his own agenda for Native removal. Cooper's eighteenth-century Indians provided literary evidence of the upright nature of Native moral character and issued forth an alarm regarding a history of Native disappearance.

In addition to Cooper's affirmative representations of Native people in his novels, there appears yet another likely reason that the Ojibwa editor penned such a praiseworthy obituary for the famed author. Copway notes in a eulogy for the July 19 edition of the *American Indian* that, "It has been our good fortune to know [Cooper] personally for several years (Copway, "Cooper").¹⁰⁰ A few months earlier, in a letter composed to support the launch of Copway's newspaper venture, Cooper writes to the editor, "I hope you may find leisure to make your promised visit and that we may expect the pleasure of seeing you again at my house" (Cooper).

¹⁰¹ We cannot ascertain the extent of the relationship between the two men, but evidence suggests that they had enjoyed a least a few social encounters and were expecting to meet again.

Dippie argues that, "Like so many authors of his time, Cooper knew little or nothing of Native Americans directly" (93); however, Cooper's biographer Wayne Franklin claims that while growing up in Cooperstown "[the author] personally knew some of the 'last' of New

¹⁰⁰ While a eulogy is most commonly written in response to the death of the subject, it is also not uncommon to pen a eulogy for those still living, especially when the subject is facing a life-threatening illness.

¹⁰¹ From 1960-1968 James Franklin Beard edited and published *The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper* in six volumes. Included in these is the letter that Cooper wrote to George Copway in support of the establishment of *Copway's American Indian*. The letter was published in the premier edition of the newspaper.

York's native inhabitants (28).¹⁰² In addition, as Copway and Cooper were socially acquainted, Dippie's contention seems to suggest that since the famed author very possibly did not have contact with any Natives in their tribal culture, he knew nothing of "true" Native people. While Copway, like Cooper's Native neighbors in New Stockbridge, had, in certain ways, distanced himself from his tribal community and, as many critics have asserted, his personal and professional actions call into question his adherence to "traditional" Native cultural constructions, he still remained very much Native.¹⁰³ Dippie may have simply been unaware of the Copway-Cooper connection as well as the author's early Native associations, but other critics have argued that Copway and these other Christianized Indians were in fact not representative of mid-nineteenth-century Native people. To the contrary, denying Copway's "Indianness," based on expectations of a static Native culture, merely reconfirms a limited Native identity and refuses to view Native character as dynamic and adaptable. To further counter Dippie's claims, Copway, like Franklin, believed that Cooper had other lifelong Native associates. The Ojibwa editor notes in the September 20 obituary that, "[Cooper] courted [Indian] society, and died in the presence of their representatives—and in him they have lost a powerful friend and champion" (Copway, "Death"). We know nothing more of these attendant representatives, but their presumed presence at Cooper's bedside at the time of his death further challenges assumptions about the author's familiarity with Native people.

The two men never met again and a month prior to Cooper's death Copway seems to have wanted to express his respect for the author while fearing the worst. Noting that stories of

¹⁰² Franklin goes to great lengths to document Cooper's personal knowledge of Native people and cites numerous sources.

¹⁰³ See for example Joshua David Bellin's, *The Demon of the Continent*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. 187-199, Bernd C. Peyer's *The Tutor'd Mind*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. 224-277, and Cheryl Walker's, *Indian Nation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997. 184-110.

Cooper's illness had reached him, Copway devotes the July 19 eulogy to praising the author. He writes, "Gratitude is one of the peculiar traits in the composition of the Indian character; and we would dishonor that attribute as an Indian, if we did not express our anxiety for the safety of one, whom, for the few days past we have seen paragraphs in the papers, that our friend Cooper was seriously and dangerously ill" (Copway, "Cooper"). In addition to showing his concern for his friend, Copway takes the opportunity to differentiate Native gratitude from that of Euro-Americans, emphasizing a positive attribute of "Indian character" and likewise reasserting the very "Indianness" modern scholars have questioned. After assuring his readers of his intimate familiarity with both Cooper and his literary works, Copway argues, "we have thought often when we read his life-like descriptions of Indian character, when it was in our power to do him justice we should endeavor to do so, for the exalted manner he has plead [sic] of the wild and noble genius of the American Indians" (Copway, "Cooper"). Although Parkman and others had openly criticized Cooper's romanticized depictions, Copway clearly preferred these to those that painted the Native as degraded, savage, and beyond redemption. In fact, Copway needed the readers of *Copway's American Indian* to believe that the Native people were vanishing and, more importantly, for his purposes, that the Indian was worth saving. Moreover, as Gerald Vizenor points out, although problematic in their overall message, Cooper's historical fictions established an affirmative Native presence for a people whose histories were largely unwritten.

Copway continues his praise of the Euro-American author's works and links the Native and "American" through their similar praise of Cooper's "Indian" novels: "No living writer, nor historian, has done so much justice to the noble traits of our people," he writes; "The whole American feeling takes prides in such a man, as the author of 'The Last of the Mohicans,' and if the American can but be proud of such a literary man, what must the man of the forest feel, when

he reads of heroes (possessing all the noble traits of an exalted character,) as soon as he is brought to read, and finds in the pages of history penciled his forefather's features—yes!” (Copway, “Cooper”). Finally, the Ojibwa editor turns to what I perceive as his main purpose for writing and publishing the eulogy for his friend Cooper and seizes on the opportunity to simultaneously condemn early treatment of Native people and offer forgiveness to those Euro-Americans who, representing a new generation, will do as Cooper has done and record the exalted nature of the Native people. To achieve this rhetorical feat Copway writes,

with us one word of commendation from the white man, either by his pen or in history, learns us to forget outrageous usages—and the sweet morsel of approbation outweighs all other wrongs, which have been inflicted on our races in this country. It throws a rainbow of light around our heads and wins our hearts, when we hear one word of commendation, from a race who have [*sic*] been watching the gradual downfall of our ancestors. (Copway, “Cooper”)

Notably, Copway does not paint Native people simply as passive recipients of liberal-minded Euro-American goodwill; this piece in a number of ways also reconfigures Native / white power dynamics. Although Copway views the author's Native-centered works as a sort of memorial to his forefathers, he, and his fellow “m[e]n of the forest[s],” reading, learning, and later commenting on Cooper's historical eighteenth-century Indian “heroes” during the mid-nineteenth century, as well as surviving to forgive the Euro-Americans their earlier transgressions against the Native people, exist to complicate the “Vanishing American” narratives. According to Copway's eulogy, while Indians may indeed be in danger of vanishing, they have not yet vanished.

Having firmly established Cooper as his example of a writer from a generation of Euro-Americans dedicated to Native prosperity and survival, Copway uses much of the remainder of the piece to appeal to his readers' sense of charity and to slyly promote his plan for Native removal:

We attribute this carelessness on the part of the Americans, for the salvation of the Red Man on the ground, that no feasible means have been used for the recovery of the first owners of American soil, and not on the ground that they have no feeling for his good. (Copway, “Cooper”)

While he does not explicitly mention the plan he authored and submitted to Congress the previous year, we can infer that Copway views his proposal for Native removal as a “feasible means” for saving the Native people.¹⁰⁴

Copway finishes his homage to Cooper in a truly Christian manner and, after mentioning Thomas McKenney as one who, like Cooper, “ought to receive the appellation as friends of the Indian,” challenges established notions of Native civilization, writing: “These men we adore for their love of our race—and may their lives be long spared to us for our special gratification, and if the prayers of the whole civilized race can be answered, they will” (Copway, “Cooper”).¹⁰⁵

The two pieces relating to Cooper, penned by Copway, and published in *Copway’s American Indian* provide examples of Native presence and Native action. Cooper and other Euro-Americans may produce depictions of Native people, but Copway and other Natives earn the responsibility of validating these representations or, conversely, for declaring them invalid. In this case, the Euro-American, Cooper, through death, gets removed from the narrative and the Native individual, Copway, remains to tell the tale. Ironically and singularly, Copway and other Native “representatives” are left to mourn the death of the Euro-American writer who has become most famous for writing the death and disappearance of the Native people.

Their emphasis on the death links the obituary titled “Death of James Fennimore [sic] Cooper” with the fictional and non-fictional accounts, many of which Cooper penned, that

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed discussion of Copway’s plan for removal and the ways his newspaper was employed as a means of support for the proposal see chapter one.

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed discussion of McKenney’s complicated views on Native removal see chapter one.

belong to the cult of the “Vanishing American.” In addition to providing fodder for the columns of his newspaper, publicizing Cooper’s death offered Copway a means of promoting his own agenda and establishing common ground with his Euro-American readers just as non-Native writers had used their works mourning the death of the Indian to connect with this same audience. Lucy Frank points out that, “Death in nineteenth-century America...is not just a biological event but also an ideological operation, whereby the cultural meanings invested in particular bodies are overcome, and historically specific material conditions producing alienation, political difference and lack of freedom no longer signify” (5). In Cooper’s texts and those of other nineteenth-century authors who participated in the cult of the “Vanishing American” the Native, through death and disappearance, becomes the imagined American past. These authors construct the American past out of and directly atop a history of Native displacement and destruction at the hands of the colonizers. As a living specimen, the Indian functioned as an ever-present reminder of European colonization of the pre-inhabited land; his Indianness becomes useful to the development of the new nation only after he has been removed and dutifully mourned by those newly forged “Americans” who take his place. Conversely, Copway’s literary mourning of Cooper and the reestablishment of the Native in both the American present—standing alongside Cooper’s deathbed—and future—forgiving the wrongs inflicted by Euro-Americans and then surviving following his removal west—reconfigures and contests the developing national narrative. Importantly, Elisabeth Bronfen points out, “Horror at the sight of death turns into satisfaction, since the survivor is not himself dead. The dead body is the passive, horizontal position, cut down, fallen, while the survivor stands erect, imbued with a feeling of superiority” (65). Through their representations of the “Vanishing American,” Euro-American authors reinforced their superiority over the weak and less adaptable Native people.

In the letter Cooper penned to Copway the author assures his Native friend that he firmly supports the publication of *Copway's American Indian*, but aware of his declining health warns he may not be able to do much to contribute to its pages. "I will not say I cannot help you, because I feel too much interest in your success to give utterance to the words," he writes (Cooper, Letter to George Copway). Unwilling to refuse Copway's request outright, he continues:

But my health is such, at present, as to render me capable of doing but very little with the pen. If I redeem the pledges already given this summer, it will be quite as much as it will probably be in my power to effect. Still some little anecdotes or sentiment, or sketch, might possibly be thrown off by the aid of an amanuensis, in which case I promise you shall not be forgotten. (Cooper, Letter to George Copway)

Cooper died less than three months after composing the letter to Copway and never did contribute anything more than his name and the attached fame to the newspaper. Respectfully, Copway immediately removed him from the list of contributors after receiving news of his passing.

Only a handful of the remaining fourteen "contributors" submitted original pieces to the pages of Copway's newspaper. In his letter to Copway Washington Irving pledged, "I shall be happy at any time, to contribute to your pages any facts or observations which may appear to me calculated to promote the end you have in view (Irving). Nevertheless, only two excerpts from *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (1819-1820), which had first appeared in print in 1814, made their way into the pages of the *American Indian*.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, William Gilmore Sims alerted Copway that "the constant labors, of a literary kind, which press[ed] upon [him]" would prevent him from promising much but occasionally he would send something having "relation to

¹⁰⁶ Surprisingly, Irving's "Traits of Indian Character," first published in *Analectic Magazine* in 1813 and later included in *The Sketchbook*, was not reprinted in *CAI*. The piece was incorporated by William Apess into the appendix to *A Son of the Forest* (1829).

the red man” (Simms). William Cullen Bryant pledged nothing whatsoever, citing his various engagements as an excuse. Like Irving, neither Simms nor Bryant offered up anything original for Copway’s paper. However, contrary to claims that *Copway’s American Indian* folded due to lack of suitable material, the Native journal received many original submissions. The more established authors listed on the masthead may have felt that they did not need Copway to authenticate their writings (or perhaps they were simply too busy during the late summer and early autumn of 1851 to pen anything original), but several lesser-known poets were eager to have their work published in a news organ devoted to the cause of the American Indian.

Just as it does in many early American newspapers, poetry fills many columns of *Copway’s American Indian*; the thirteen issues contain some twenty-two original poems. Unlike other papers of the period, which may have occasionally included a couple of “Indian” themed poems, nine of the original poetic works printed in Copway’s paper take the Indian as their subject. The original poems that appear in *Copway’s American Indian* represent a broad range of perspectives on the fate of the Native people and their place within the American nation and yet all in some way belong to the cult of the “Vanishing American.”

Poetical works dealing with the dying Indian were definitely nothing new in the mid-nineteenth century. Albert Keiser points out, ‘The Father of American Poetry,’ Philip Freneau (1752-1832), fittingly is also the pioneer figure in the use of Indian material for poetical purposes” (21). Freneau published *American Village*, one of the very first works of poetry to feature the Indian, before his twentieth birthday. As Keiser further notes about Freneau’s poetry, “Only now and then does the savage in hopeless despair strike back at the despoiler; more often, he stoically resigns himself to what seems an inexorable fate” (Keiser 32). By and large poets of the early decades of nineteenth century continued in Freneau’s footsteps when writing about the

Indian.¹⁰⁷ However, with the one notable exception of Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), as Renee Bergland has shown, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Indian has most often been bodily removed from the poetry of Euro-Americans and has been replaced by his ghostly presence, or his body safely resides in the grave underfoot. Bergland argues, "By focusing almost exclusively on those who perished, early American writing enacted a literary Indian removal that reinforced and at times even helped to construct the political Indian Removal" (3). Of the poems that appeared in Copway's newspaper, more than half speak of the Native as having already disappeared from the American Nation.

Addressing Euro-American and Native relations, Laura Mielke explores the concept of "moving encounters." These, she explains, are "scenes in which representatives of the two 'races,' face-to-face in a setting claimed by both, participated in a highly emotional exchange that indicated their hearts had more in common than their external appearances or political allegiances suggested" (2). She further argues that, the

"moving encounter," which may be an actual meeting, a fictional parley, or an imagined convocation of the races, created the possibility of mutual sympathy between American Indians and Euro-Americans, of community instead of division. Essential to such scenes was the sentimental intermediary who provided necessary translation—linguistic, cultural, affective—and attempted to minimize the emotional volatility that so quickly led to confrontation and violence. (Mielke 2)

I contend that the assimilated Copway, by means of his newspaper, serves as this sentimental intermediary narrowing the gap between the Native and non-Native. Copway's newspaper presents Euro-American viewpoints within a Native-controlled framework using Euro-American tools. Through *Copway's American Indian* readers are exposed to the cult of the "Vanishing American," but they are simultaneously treated to a different Native voice; one that both

¹⁰⁷ The most well known "Indian poems" of this time period were James Wallis Eastburn's *Yamoyden* (1820), Samuel Webber's "Logan" (1828) and Elbert Smith's *Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk, and Scenes in the West* (1848).

represents and is represented. In his role as editor, Copway enforces ideas regarding the disappearance of the Native people, but he intermixes these with arguments for Native salvation via removal.

The premier issue of *Copway's American Indian* contains a piece titled "Legend of Mongaup, Sullivan Co., N.Y." by the poet Francis L. Waddell.¹⁰⁸ In the poem, a presumably Euro-American speaker relates a historical narrative of an Indian warrior; "A lonely son of solitude" who stood "high on a rock" above the falls of the Mongaup river and contemplated the disappearance of his people and his way of life before "the white man his lodge disturbed" (lines 1-2, 16).¹⁰⁹ Dippie anticipates Mielke's argument when he writes of the intercultural effect of the trope of disappearance: "Most romantic of all was the impression of the Indian as rapidly passing away before the onslaught of civilization" (88) he points out. "The nostalgia and pity aroused by the dying race produced the best romantic sentiments and gave that sense of fleeting time beloved of romantic sensibilities. The tragedy of the dying Indian, especially as portrayed by the last living member of a tribe, became a staple of American literature" (Dippie 88). As evidence of Dippie's assertion, Waddell's omniscient speaker reveals that, "So raged fierce wars in the warrior's mind, / For none of his tribe remain'd behind" (lines 8-9). Sadly, but not surprisingly, the poem's inaccurate geography locates the legend in "the great Mohecan's

¹⁰⁸ Waddell is also the author of *Texas, Fall of San Antonio, Death of Milam, Goliad, and other poems*. William Applegate: New York, 1844. The poet Alfred B. Street published "The Falls of the Mongaup" in a collection of poems titled *The Poems of Alfred B. Street*. Clark & Austin: New York, 1845.

¹⁰⁹ The Mongaup River, located near the current towns of Forestburg and Liberty, in southeastern New York state, is a tributary of the Delaware River and its falls are listed as the third highest in the state at approximately 70 feet. According to James Eldridge Quinlan, "The Mongaup... was originally known as the Min-gap-och-ka, Mongawping or Ming-wing. The first and last names although more euphonic than the other are no longer used nor is the last syllable of Mongawping. All are Indian words. It is said the word Mongaup when rendered into English is 'dancing feather' a very pretty conceit and very expressive of the character of the stream. The poetical quality of the translation and the fact that Mongaup is but two thirds of the original word, prove [sic] that the translator has used a poet's license. The Mongaup has three distinct branches. As the word *ing* or *ink* in the Lenape language means stream the word or phrase 'M'ing-w'ing' is the Indian mode of expression for a plurality of streams" (327). *History of Sullivan County*. Eds. G.M. Beebe and W.T. Morgans: Liberty, NY, 1873.

hunting place!”(line 11). In this geographical revision, the poet places the Mohecan hunting grounds squarely in the vicinity of the Lenape tribal lands. The Moheicans, more commonly known as the Mahicans, were primarily concentrated in upstate New York. Nevertheless, the lands on which Waddell’s Indian now stands do not belong to *any* Native people. Despite the confusion of tribes, the poem reinforces the loss of both Native lands and Native life as the speaker observes, “And now *alone—alone*, he stands, / Like a blasted oak on the pale face lands” (lines 11-12, italics original). The speaker then imagines that the Indian’s life before the invasion of the white man was like the “free leap” of the raging river below, which races along both “unchain’d” and “uncurb’d.” As evidence of this free state of existence, the next lines depict the activities most Euro-Americans associated (and still associate) with the wild freedom of an otherwise uncivilized life. The speaker informs the reader that, “[the Indian’s] comrade braves had chased the deer, / Or struck the elk with feather’d spear” (lines 17-18). Then, following their wild hunts, the braves returned to the realm of Native domesticity “And laid at the feet of a favorite squaw / [on] The bear skin,” enticed by “the cheerful light of the wigwam blaze,” which “Had guided them home through the forest maze” (lines 19-22). While the domestic scene at first seems rather innocuous, the emphasis resides in the highly romanticized distinction between the Indian way of life and that of the Euro-American inhabitants. The Indian, unaccustomed to agricultural pursuits, relies on the hunt for his subsistence. He returns not to a wife, but rather a “favorite squaw,” in an attempt to highlight the perceived non-monogamous (read non-Christian) habits of Native people.

Here Waddell reminds the reader that this scene from the past exists in a time gone forever. Shifting to the present scene, the speaker asks the imagined Euro-American reader, “Alas! alas! where is now their home?” and then answers himself, “Like birds of the air they are

houseless roam” (lines 23-24). Rhetorically, the use of the terms “their” and “they” establishes the Native people as Others and outside the exchange between the speaker and assumed reader; the replacement narrative reaches its completion. This “houseless” roaming, however, serves as a euphemism for Indian removal and destruction at the hands of the white invaders, for the speaker informs the reader that “[the Indians] are gone to the lands of the setting sun, / Like trout from *Pike* compell’d to run” (lines 25-26). This image of the Indians as the prey of the all-consuming Euro-American predator explains the disappearance of Native people as the result of a natural process. The poetic analogy places the Indian beneath the Euro-American on the food chain, the “trout” to the Anglo-Saxon “pike.” The most troubling lines come near the end of the poem when the Indian warrior, just before leaping to his death over the waterfall, finally speaks through the poet’s act of ventriloquism. Waddell brings the reader back to the present moment, as the Indian subject, apparently accepting this new natural order where the weaker Native people are supplanted by the stronger Euro-Americans, decides his own fate: “‘The *Monetoo*’s just,’ the Indian said, / ‘In my own land I’ll join the dead” (lines 27-28, italics original). Thus, this new world order emerges as both natural and God-ordained. This “last of the Mohecan’s,” as it were, accepts his destiny and “solemn[ly]” leaps to his death “Over the *Mongaup*’s roaring falls, / Where the fearful gulf the sense appalls”(lines 31-32, italics original). At the poem’s conclusion, the lonely Indian chooses to join the dead, in his “own land,” rather than run toward the west from the white predators who continue to pursue him. Although presented as a romantic metaphor, the land of the dead ironically and inadvertently acknowledges the effect of Euro-American genocide on Native populations.

Waddell’s title for this poem deserves consideration. Studying the construction and dissemination of legends in fact reveals more about their circulation than the events or locations

that inspire them. Ultimately, “The Legend of Mongaup” tells the story of Euro-American voyeuristic fascination with the dying and disappearing Indian.

In terms of nation-building, the poem’s narrative structure functions in a variety of ways. Although the speaker of the poem remains unidentified and thus unraced, it can be deduced that a Euro-American survives as the mournful, rightful inheritor and, in fact, it was another of his kind who created of the “Legend of Mongaup.” The poem forbids the speaker from being Mohecan, for within the poem the suicide of the main Indian character officially erases the tribe (albeit the incorrect tribe) from the land. While the poem does leave open the possibility that there exists somewhere “in the lands of the setting sun” a remnant of the Mohecan warrior’s people, the poet places the emphasis on the fact that the Native man was very much “alone” where he resided “on the pale face lands” prior to his demise. The Euro-American speaker memorializes both the (imagined) Moheicans and the specific event that gave rise to the legend he imparts to the imagined Euro-American reader. Due to his uncivilized nature and his inability to stave off the superior and more powerful Euro-American people, the Indian’s own deity consigns him to destruction. In the end, there remain only two options; he can go west and continue to be hunted, or he can end his own life and dwell in the only land left for the Native people, the land of the dead from which he will continue to haunt the Euro-American literary psyche. Bergland points out that this removal of the Native to the land of the dead is common in American literature: “Europeans take possession of Native lands, to be sure, but at the same time, Native Americans take supernatural possession of their possessors” (3). In Waddell’s poem the ethereal Indian continues to manifest himself through a legend that marks the spot where the encroaching Euro-Americans have forced his self destruction.

The July 26, 1851 edition of *Copway's American Indian* contains only two original pieces of poetry written specifically for the newspaper: "The Pequot Graves" by Horace Dresser and "The Graves of the Sachem" by W.H.C. Hosmer. Dresser did not publish "The Pequot Graves" elsewhere; however, W.H.C.Hosmer did republish "The Grave of the Sachem" in 1854 as part of a collection titled *The Poetical Works of William H. C. Hosmer*, which appeared in two volumes.¹¹⁰ Hosmer includes "The Pequot Graves" in this later work as part of a third chapter titled "Indian Traditions and Songs." As the lines are constructed to commemorate the disappearance of the Indian, it remains unclear how this particular poem earned its classification as either an Indian "tradition" or "song."

Both lawyers by trade, neither Dresser nor Hosmer earned his living as a poet. Other than this piece of poetry, the only extant published works to Dresser's credit are legal documents related to his position as a government official as well as an interesting book titled *The Battle Record of the American Rebellion* (1862), which chronicles in minute detail the actions of the various southern states leading up to the American Civil War. Dresser's and Hosmer's poems lament the death and disappearance of the Indian from the American continent but, unlike the subject of Waddell's poem, the Indian subjects in these works have already vanished from the poetic scene leaving the Euro-American speakers to mourn their disappearance and contemplate the loss.

Dresser's "The Pequot Graves" consists of eight stanzas of rhyming couplets that begin with a presumably Euro-American speaker who entreats the reader to "Tell, tell me what these are whereon I now tread, / The graves of the Red-men long, long ago dead" who have "gone

¹¹⁰ William H[owe] C[uyler] Hosmer (1814-77) was born in Avon, New York. After graduating from Geneva College he became a lawyer. His poem *Yonnodio, or the Warriors of the Genesee* is noted for his sympathetic treatment of the Seneca Indians.

away, gone to the bright spirit land” (lines 1-3). The speaker, literally walking on the burial mounds of the Natives, laments that all that remains of America’s indigenous inhabitants are the vestiges of their existence. The second stanza reduces the Natives to the mounds that are little more than features of the landscape and here the reader views the natural world as mourning the loss of the Red-man, as the trees “Breathe forth their sad whispers as passes the breeze” (line 8). These final resting places of the Natives, the speaker notes, are remote from the new civilized world, for “man’s habitation [sic] are far and away” (line 11). Unlike the speaker and imagined reader, the Natives exist only as natural monuments to the past. The final couplet of stanza four finds the speaker imploring a higher power, identified as the “Genius, who dwell’st here,” to tell him whether or not “these dead live again” (lines 12-13). Clearly not questioning the literal reanimation of the Native bodies, the speaker, concerned about the Christian salvation of the heathen Natives, highlights the assumed damnation of the Natives’ souls and further separates them from the civilized and Christianized men of the previous lines.

While the first three stanzas speak in general terms about the possible inhabitants of the graves across which the speaker walks, the fourth stanza finds the Euro-American speaker giving in to a fantasy in which “Perchance here’s the Sachem, who deep counsel gave” (line 13). The speaker has not stumbled upon any ordinary Native grave, but rather that of a great chief of the Pequot tribe. At this point, the speaker, to enliven his fantasy, insists on establishing the connection between the deceased Native and his war-like demeanor. The “Sachem” lays “asleep with his warriors,” still in possession of their “weapons of warfare” (lines 14-15). The following stanza continues this war theme, noting that before their demise, near the very spot where the speaker now stands, “was heard their war-song, with notes loud and clear;” however, “the shrill voice of war was hushed years ago” (lines 18, 20). Despite this emphasis on war, the poem never

specifically states with whom the Sachem and his warriors are doing battle. On the contrary, the poet presents this warmongering as merely indicative of Native identity. In this poem, the lives of “these wild men” and “forest-bred sons” are reduced to their connection with the natural surroundings of the “forests and woodlands” and their blood-thirsty nature, thereby explaining why the Natives no longer remain. The poem asks, “Who weeps for the red aboriginal lord? / Who hallows his ashes? where springs the green sward / That tells of the graves of the forest-bred sons?” (lines 37-39). It becomes apparent from the preceding stanzas that the Euro-American usurper must “weep” for the long-dead Native people. Scheckel notes,

Describing the dispossession of Indians in terms of generational change eliminated both violence and responsibility from the process. 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. (33)

These Euro-American people, as inheritors of the American land, alone honor their fallen Indian predecessors. While the poem firmly establishes that the original inhabitants have departed, and that this outcome was inevitable, it avoids explaining the disappearance. Scheckel furthers her argument stating, “In addition to assuaging guilt, mourning serves as an assurance of continuity in the face of change—an assertion that there are bonds (of love, loyalty, kinship) that remain despite loss, bonds strong enough to transcend the disruptive power of time. But even as it provides a sense of continuity with the past, the goal of mourning, ultimately, is to commit what is past to memory, to allow the mourner to move beyond it” (37-38). In Dresser’s poem, the white inhabitants can celebrate their connection to the Natives through the act of mourning, but they are also invited to forget that Native people did not simply vanish, but rather Euro-American colonizers forced them out through conquest and removal. Briers have overrun the

graves of the Pequot; no blood remains to remind the reader of his role in the creation of these graves. The poem not only memorializes the unnamed inhabitants, but likewise reconfirms for both the reader and the writer the idea of the “Vanishing American.” These lines in effect represent the “graves” of *all* Natives, for none remain to mourn the loss of their fallen comrades and it becomes the responsibility of the Euro-Americans to go forward.

W.H.C. Hosmer’s “The Grave of the Sachem” continues the refrain found in Dresser’s poem and immediately identifies the subject as the “Red Chief” who “long ago was laid / on yonder hill” (lines 2, 1). The “hoary oaks” whose “boughs above the sleeper braid” alone remain to remember the fallen Native are (lines 3-4). The speaker projects Euro-American burial practices onto the graves of the Natives, highlighting the differences in the ways civilized and uncivilized peoples mark the final resting places of their departed, and he notes that, amid Native burial grounds, “no marble rears its head / Erected by some filial hand” (lines 5-6). Despite the lack of a marble marker, in Hosmer’s lines the fantasy of the Sachem suggested in Dresser’s poem becomes more of a concrete, although still imagined, reality. Even though there exists no indicator as to whose body rests in the grave, the poet uses words from the Seneca language for the birds whose sounds one hears near the place of burial.¹¹¹ In addition, the poem appears with a mini-glossary, which provides for the English speaking reader translations of the Seneca words. Through these poetic acrobatics, the imagined identity of the deceased becomes a Seneca Sachem. The lines of Hosmer’s poem that do make mention of the Native’s activities while he lived are few and echo those of the poets discussed previously. His hunting and/or days of battle are over and “The Panther of his Tribe again / Will never aim the feathered shaft. / Or in the

¹¹¹ According to Evert A. Duyckinck and George L. Duyckinck’s entry on Hosmer in their *Cyclopaedia of American Literature* (1856), he grew up the Genesee Valley and “his mother conversed in the dialect of the [Seneca Indians] and was familiar with its legends” (518).

forest conflict stain / His knife in slaughter to the haft” (lines 29-32). Like the Sachem whose time of usefulness has past, “Beneath the shaded turf his spear, / And dreaded hatchet idly rust” (lines 39-40). It remains unclear whether the speaker remembers the Sachem for his prowess as a hunter or as a warrior. Arguably, neither activity preserved his life and both therefore separate him from the Euro-American speaker and the reader.

Arranged as more of a tribute to nature than to the dead Sachem, the author devotes the bulk of the poem to establishing the connection between the entombed Native individual and the natural surroundings as well as noting the passage of time through the change of seasons. Like the trees whose “sad whispers” float through Dresser’s “The Pequot Graves,” “the giants of the forest” in Hosmer’s poem, are personified and stand “Like mourners round his narrow bed” and the oak and maple “solemnly their branches wave” (lines 8, 7, 19). In the poem, the dark and somber imagery signals nature’s enactment of the mourning ritual. The natural world “wears a brow of gloom” and “The pinions of the Tempest” that “fling / Snow-wreathes on his lonely tomb” (lines 22-24). The Sachem has no human relations left to honor his passing, but, keeping the Native company in his place of death, “A near his silent couch of rest” are “The *Ji-a-yaiik* [Robin]” and “The *Gwa-go-ne* [Whippoorwill] on yonder hill” that “Chants oftentimes a fitful hymn” (lines 14-16, 35-36). In the final stanza, the reader learns that, just like the Mohegans and Pequots in the previous two poems, in fact, the larger Seneca population has vanished from the land, for unexplainably “Indian girls with blossoms strew / The damp, sepulchral clod no more” (lines 43-44).

The final four lines of the last stanza find the speaker reflecting on his interest in the Sachem’s grave. He laments that, “Ere long the Bard will seek in vain / Yon mound beneath those mossy trees” (lines 45-46). This speaker does not seem to mourn the loss of the Native as

much as he does the fact that the Sachem has taken his stories with him to the grave. In possession of the knowledge that his search will always prove abortive, the speaker nevertheless appears bitter that, “The share of some unthinking swain / Will give its secrets to the breeze” (lines 47-48). In the end, the poem leaves the reader with the image of Euro-American agricultural progress literally plowing under and supplanting both the Native body and his cultural knowledge. Dippie notes, “The settlers of the New World, who had tacitly repudiated the Old and then had asserted the moral superiority of the society they were hewing out of the woods..., could never escape the fact of the wilderness. As they destroyed it, they mourned it” (23). Yet, in consolation, the Native’s sacrificial body becomes the foodstuff and nourishes the growth of the new nation.

The poem titled “Indian Warrior’s Death” appeared in the eighth edition of *Copway’s American Indian* published on August 30. The name Minna appears in the byline, which conceals the true identity, but it does suggest that the poem was composed by a woman.¹¹² The subject matter also implies a woman’s hand, for the poet gives the Native female a voice, albeit the words remain those of the Euro-American author. Moreover, the poem includes an epigraph, which consists of the first two lines of a poem titled “The Warrior’s Dirge,” authored by Caroline M. Sawyer for Horace Greeley’s *The New-Yorker* and published on August 15, 1840. The poem follows many of the same conventions as the previous three discussed; however, the author offers one significant departure. While the protagonist, an Indian warrior, brings about his own destruction, the poet does not allow the reader to claim Euro-American innocence in his demise. Read in conjunction with Sawyer’s poem, which celebrates the sacrifices made by

¹¹² The poet Minna also authored a second poem that appeared in *Copway’s American Indian* on July 19, 1851 titled “The Voice of God,” which celebrates the presence of God in nature. The only other information provided in the newspaper is that both poems were composed in Brooklyn, the first on June 23 and the second on August 25.

American revolutionaries, this poem establishes a continuum between those Euro-Americans who fought for American liberties and the Native warriors.

Like Dresser's and Hosmer's poems, the narrative of "Indian Warrior's Death" originates at a grave where "He sleeps—the fierce—the rude—the brave— / Beneath his own green tree" (lines 1-2). However, more in the vein of Waddell's "Legend of Mongaup," this poem moves chronologically in reverse to reveal the events that brought about the warrior's downfall. Reminding the reader that conflict with the Euro-American enemies brought about the Native's death, the speaker relates, "He fought for wrongs endured for years / From pale-faced foes around" and repeats the argument a few lines afterwards stating, "Ay, fought for wrongs untired, unmoved, / With stern and fearless pride" (lines 9-10, 13-14). Despite the fact that this poem does not allow the reader to forget that the "wrongs" inflicted upon the Native people came at the hands of Euro-Americans, or that the Indian warrior was no passive victim, for "Oft bathed his tomahawk in blood," the poem ultimately remains a reminder that the Indian "bravely fell and died" (lines 15-16). The poet once again assures Native disappearance from the American landscape, for as Dippie correctly notes, "The noble Indian deserved White pity for his condition and his passing, but his way of life no less than that of the ignoble savage demanded censure according to the scale of progress and the passage of history" (91).

The poem changes to rhyming couplets beginning in line twenty as the speaker entreats the reader to "List! to that chant, so sweet, so wild, / From some heart-stricken forest child" (lines 20-21). The haunting sound seems to come from far off as "Now on the breeze it rises clear, / Now faintly dies upon the ear" (lines 22-23). The mournful voice of the Indian warrior's beloved, who remains unaware that he has fallen, implores him "Ma-Mah-she, wake!" and

naively inquires “why lingers thou?” (line 24). The confused and lonely female continues detailing how she has prepared for the warrior’s return and has waited in vain:

Thy homeward step is far too slow,
Thy food is cooked, thy mat is spread,
Oh! haste, I listen for thy tread.
I’ve watched for thee till one, by one,
The stars all left me, sad and lone;
I’m weary now, dark shades of night
Have gathered round, no ray of light
Breaks through the gloom. Oh! come to me,
I die away from Ma-ma-she. (lines 25-33)

The final line refers to the female subject’s death at the loss of her mate. The following line returns to the poem’s previous rhythm and transports the reader back in time to the scene of the Indian warrior whose “spirit’s far / From home, and wife so dear, Far from the scenes of cruel war. / Of eager hope, and fear” (lines 65-67). Seemingly obeying a higher will, when “Manito called—he bowed his head, / His work of blood was done. / Manito called—and with the dead / He slept at set of sun” (lines 68-72). The poem closes with both the warrior and his “wife” meeting their deaths. As with the lone Indian whose *Monetoo* authorized his jump into the Mongaup, the “Indian Warrior’s Death” insinuates that the deity has chosen to end the lives of the Natives, and their ultimate disappearance fits part of a greater design.¹¹³ The poet never connects the warrior and his wife to a specific tribe. Designated simply as “Indian” their demise represents the death of any (and possibly all) Native people.

The September 20 edition of Copway’s newspaper contains more pieces of original poetry than any preceding issue. Of the five poems published in this issue two deal specifically with Indian subjects. While Waddell presented the suicide of the Mohecan, Dresser reflected on

¹¹³ Both “Monetoo” and “Manito” are versions of the more commonly used term “Manitou,” which is an Anglicized representation of a supernatural power that in Algonquian religious belief permeates the earth. Upon contact, many European settlers in the Americas likened this supernatural power to the Judeo-Christian God. Waddell and the poetess Minna employ the term in this latter sense in their poetry.

the Pequot graves, Hosmer contemplated the resting place of a Sachem of the Seneca, and Minna detailed the deaths of a warrior and his wife belonging to an undisclosed Algonquian tribe, the anonymous author of the first original poem to appear in the eleventh edition of *Copway's American Indian* conveys the tale of the marriage between a Cherokee Chief and a Euro-American female. Taken together, these poems establish something of a pan-tribal disappearance.

In "The Cherokee to his White Bride," a Chief of the Cherokee people stands in the role of speaker. The Chief, rather than extolling his own virtues, attempts to persuade his "sweet singing dove" to "leave the haunts of [her] childhood" in the east "And hie to the west," where she will "teach [his] rude heart / All the pleasures of love" (lines 2, 5-6, 3-4). The lines that reveal the origins of the poem's title compare the bride with the prairie: "But fairer, and purer, / And brighter than all, / Is the flower that once bloom'd / In the white warrior's hall" (lines 21-24). These lines at once speak of the female in terms of conquest and assert a common fantasy of whiteness. The poem positions the white bride as superior to all of nature and assures the reader of the Indian male's desire for white female flesh. Her beauty, which once flourished in the realm of Euro-Americans, becomes further commodified as a battle prize. As a means of further establishing white female superiority the following stanza highlights the "followers" of the Cherokee Chief who wait to welcome him and his "delicate mate." Apparently in awe of her non-Native skin, the Indian "maidens in wonder / will gaze on [the white bride] / and envy the 'pale one'" (lines 29-31). The author, in effect, fetishizes feminine whiteness by insinuating a Native fetish for the white female.

While the first four stanzas seem to depart from the "Vanishing American" theme established in the previous poems, the final two stanzas return the reader to that old familiar

death scene. Following their arrival in the west, the Cherokee Chief bids his white bride “come to the mountain, / and view from afar, / ‘Mong heaven’s bright jewels, / One beautiful star” (lines 33-36). This star he identifies as the heavenly abode of the Native people when they enter the afterlife and he informs his bride that she should “know, when chill death / With his message shall come, / Thou’lt share in that haven, / The Indians’ ‘sweet home”” (lines 37-40). The death imagery becomes even more profound in the poem’s final stanza. After being assured of her place with her newly “chosen” people after her demise, the Chief further implores his white bride to “come, come to the mound / And list to the song / That comes from the grave / Where our warriors have gone” (lines 41-44). The white female, unlike the “Bard” in Hosmer’s “Grave of the Sachem,” will get to learn the “secrets” of the dead Indians. These voices from beyond the grave serve as reminders of the Natives who once fought to preserve their land and their way of life. The word “come” opens the first line of each stanza as an entreaty to both the white bride and the reader to follow the progression (via removal) of the Cherokee Chief. This progression moves from “home” to “forest” to “prairie” to “hills” to “mountain” and ends at the burial “mound,” insinuating that the couple’s journey, physically and metaphorically, represents a move westward towards death. The final four lines of the poem confirm this reading. While viewing the grave of the dead warriors and listening to their ethereal song, the Chief assures his mate that, “there we will sleep / in peace, side by side. / The Cherokee chief / And his own gentle bride” (lines 45-48). Although willing to address the possibility of Native and Euro-American inter-marriage, the poet remains unwilling to confront the issue of miscegenation. She presents the relationship as fruitless and the white female, when aligned with the Native Other, becomes similarly consigned to disappearance. In the end, the poem serves less as a proclamation of affection than a warning to white females of the consequences of their “going Native.” One

wonders at Copway's response to such a poem, as he like his Native literary predecessors William Apess and Elias Boudinot, had married a white woman in spite of the protestations of her family. Perhaps the Ojibwa editor simply read these now seemingly problematic lines as conjuring up images of interracial harmony.

The final poem to appear in *Copway's American Indian* that confirms Native presence while simultaneously assuring Native disappearance appeared on October 4 in the thirteenth edition of the newspaper. The poet, John Stowell Adams, a regular contributor to the pages of Copway's journal and included in the list of distinguished contributors in every issue, contributed three original poems to the newspaper.¹¹⁴ Adams, a man of many talents, composed sheet music and authored novels, children's books, gift books, musical dictionaries, treatises on spiritual intercourse, as well as poetry. "The Battle of the Red Men," which first appeared in *Copway's American Indian* was later published by the author in *Town and country, or, Life at home and abroad, without and within us* (1855).¹¹⁵

Presenting a clearly nationalist argument, albeit revisionist in nature, the piece begins with the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620 and their encounter with the historical Native figure Samoset who generously but unwisely "bade them welcome, welcome, with good will" (line 6). In his poem Adams positions the Abenaki sagamore as something of a tragic hero and his show of hospitality toward the European exiles becomes his fatal flaw. Further, his choice not to rebuff the invaders when "Then power was his to stay the coming throng, / And back the wave of usurpation roll" (lines 14-15) leads to the destruction of the Native people. The speaker reminds

¹¹⁴ The stanza is so named because it is the rhyme scheme (ababcc) used by Shakespeare in the poem "Venus and Adonis."

¹¹⁵ *Town and country, or, Life at home and abroad, without and within us* was republished as *Half-hour stories of choice reading for home and travel* (1858). The second title served as the sub-title in the original.

the reader that it was the “good will” of the Natives that provided them the freedom they and these early religious separatists so enjoy and which defines the American nation noting, “He might have crushed them on old Plymouth’s rock, / And freedom to this day have felt the shock” (lines 11-12). Thus, the Indian leader receives credit for Euro-American prosperity and rights. The poet’s use of “freedom” appears strategic, forcing the reader to consider the many applications of the term in defining the American nation. On a historical timeline, the term refers to the quest for religious freedom by the Pilgrims, the colonists’ battle for freedom from English rule, and finally the Natives’ pleas for the freedom to survive and prosper within the new nation.

The third stanza paints a picture of Samoset sitting with the new arrivals sharing “The pipe of peace in friendship” and additionally introduces the idea that it was during this moment of camaraderie the sagamore “Learned that like [the white cloud from the pipe] the spirits pure and white / Ascend [towards heaven], to live in never-ceasing light” of the Christian God (lines 17-18). While obviously written to appeal to the Christian readers, the lines, following in the wake of the emphasis on religious freedom, inadvertently expose the truth about Americans’ ideas regarding the acceptance of competing belief systems. Moreover, these and the lines that follow ultimately call into question Christian philosophy by holding it up against the realities of Euro-American treatment of the Native people. The speaker, having for three stanzas reminded the reader of the Christian-like charity of Native people, the freedom that Euro-Americans enjoy in the new land, and the religion they profess, begins the fourth stanza with a condemnation of Euro-American actions, asking “But what return did [these Euro-Americans] give / Who were dependent on the red man’s corn?” (lines 19-20). In answer, the speaker points out that the early white settlers did “Not even to [the Indians give] the privilege to live” (line 21). On the contrary, the kindness of the Natives was met with “war and fire, torture, hate and scorn” and they were

“Hunted like wild beasts through the forests’ track” (line 22-23). In the fifth stanza the author presents this ill treatment of the Native people by the Europeans as justification for the Indian’s soul being “roused to madness.” Thus, the early settlers created their enemies. In this state, the Indians “grasped with firmness every one his bow” and “Revenge! revenge! was sounded far and wide, / O’er every field and every river’s tide” (lines 26, 29-30). This madness then passed to “the little child that scarce could lisp a word” who “Was taught to hate the white man” (lines 31-32). Up until this point in the poem, Stowell characterizes the Native people as passive recipients of Euro-American ill treatment. However, as the “madness” became epidemic among the Indian people, “the war began, —the fearful war / That swept o’er happy homesteads like a flood” (lines 37-38). Prior to Indian retaliation, the poet strategically presents the violence as one-sided. The remainder of the seventh stanza and the entirety of the eighth chronicle the all-consuming battle between “The white and red man [who] knew no other law / Than that which wrote its every act in blood” (lines 39-40). The poet’s use of both “law” and “blood” in these lines calls forth biblical imagery. Rather than knowing the laws as proscribed in the commandments forbidding the people from committing murder and coveting that which belongs to another, the Euro-Americans (and in response the Natives) embarked upon a ceaseless war that ignored God’s will and failed in their mission to Christianize the Native people. Likewise, the blood, poured out through acts of violence, should have represented Christian salvation of the indigenous inhabitants.

The speaker relates that the “flight” of the Native people took place “inch by inch” in large part because the Euro-Americans fought “the unjust warfare” against them “With arms more skillful—not with hearts more true, / Or souls more brave to battle for the right” (lines 49-50). As in Dresser’s and Hosmer’s poems, this “flight” of the Indian “From homes he loved,

from altars he revered” affects the Native people as well as the natural world. The speaker asserts that, “From every tree a voice did seem to start, / And every shrub that could a shadow cast/ Seemed to lament the fate that had bade them part, / So closely twined was each one with the past” (line 61-64). Thus, the violence against the Native people becomes violence against the land itself and, as if raping the one they love, the settlers destroy that for which they are fighting. The speaker implores the imagined Euro-American reader to empathize with the plight of the Native people asking, “O, was it strange they fought with furious zeal? / Say, men think, and have warm hearts to feel” (lines 65-66). To encourage the reader to understand the Native people’s situation, the speaker reinforces the connection between the concept of freedom and American identity, noting that as the Natives fought to keep their land, “Each blade of grass that passed beyond their ken, / Was sold for blood, and for a patriot’s grave” (lines 69-70). Emphasizing the value of the soil, the speaker notes, “And white men paid the price—and now they hold / This broad, broad land for cost more dear than gold” (lines 71-72). Euro-Americans paid the price for the land through bloodshed in battles with the Native inhabitants and with the English in the Revolutionary War. Adams, like the poet Minna, aligns the “patriots” who fought for freedom from England with the indigenous warriors who fought for the same right of possession. The poet bases the value of American land on an economy of blood, although in spite of the poet’s efforts to equate the two, there is an obvious imbalance between a battle to gain freedom and a battle to take it away.

Having developed a taste for both land and blood and not satiated with the lands for which they fought the English, the new Americans “cry for more” and the settlers “Hath vexed the Indian, till the Atlantic’s wave / Now blends with it the thunder of its roar” (lines 73-75). Echoing the lines in Waddell’s poem that emphasize the all-consuming pike that devours the

trout, Adams notes that this “cry for more” erupts from the Euro-American people who desire all of the lands on the American continent. Thus, this wail of unquenchable greed “soon shall sound the requiem o’er the grave / Of the last Indian,--last of that brave band / Who once held sway o’er all this fertile land” (lines 76-78). Like many of the poets discussed previously, Adams identifies the lone surviving Indian whom the speaker sees “stand[ing] alone, / Drawing his blanket around his form” (lines 79-80). This all-too-familiar image, etched in the mind of the American public from the early decades of the nineteenth century until even the present day, shows a solitary, tribeless Indian figure, who “hath braved all, hath heard the dying moan / Rise from the fields of strife” as he awaits “the storm / That hath swept all before it, age on age, / On him, the last, seeks to pour forth its rage” clutching his blanket of security (lines 81-84). Ironically, the figure, “raising his hand and appealing to the sun, / ...swears... / That when his life is closed, his life-race run, / A white man ne’er shall stand above his grave” (lines 85-88). Serving as a critique of the earlier poems in which the white speakers quite literally stand above the graves of the Natives, the speaker asks, “Shall he, the last of a once noble race, / Consign himself to such a dire disgrace?” (lines 89-90). Although both Dresser and Hosmer employ the locations of Indian burials to connect the old and new possessors of the land and construct a territorial genealogy, Adams’ poem challenges this one-sided connection and denies the voyeuristic whites an uncontested inheritance, proclaiming “Never!”

This challenge notwithstanding, the speaker, like those in the other poems, continues to participate in the “Vanishing American” fantasy, imploring the reader, “The red man’s brethren, tell him where are they” and “The red man’s homes and altars, what their fate?” (lines 97-98). The poem also seems to make the claim that the Indian cannot survive due to his justified distrust of the Euro-American invaders. Reversing and critiquing popular nineteenth-century arguments

of physiognomy so often used to explain Native nature, the speaker notes, the Native “thinks that wrong is stamped upon [the white man’s] brow” and “That in his good deeds selfish purpose lurks” (lines 105-106). The last two stanzas return to the theme of “freedom” and serve as a direct appeal to the Euro-American readers, the “Sons of the Pilgrims, who to-day do boast / Of Freedom’s favors” (lines 109-110). This sentimental appeal serves as a replacement narrative as it pleads for white paternalistic treatment of the Natives, as when Adams implores his white readers: “From the Atlantic to the Pacific coast! / Let not the race you have supplanted die; / Perish like forest-leaves from off their lands, / Without a just requital at your hands” (lines 111-114). Notably, Adams does not specify exactly what a “just requital” for centuries of Native destruction would consist of. Mielke notes that this type of sentimentalism often assumes an inherent social hierarchy: “The most common characters in sentimental texts—slaves, orphans, animals, those unjustly punished, and dead or dying loved ones—are essentially helpless, defined through their dependence on a kindly parental figure and by a narrator who often pleads directly with the audience for sympathy” (Mielke 9). The speaker of Adams’ poem continues this line of paternalism and racial uplift through education and conversion by asking the white readers to, “give them homes which they can call their own, / Let Knowledge light its torch and lead the way; / And meek Religion, from the eternal throne, / Be there to usher in a better day” (lines 115-118). According to the speaker, through this multi-pronged “salvation” of the Native people and in an echo of the story of the prodigal son, “Then shall the past be blotted from life’s scroll, / And all the good ye may do crown the whole” (lines 119-120). Adams, as Copway does in his essay praising Cooper and appealing to Euro-American sympathies, makes the case that all the wrongs committed against the Native people will be forgiven if they right the wrongs of the past and save the dying race. Mielke further contends, “authors defending Native rights appealed to

audience members' emotions through portrayals of how Euro-Americans harmed American Indian families and, as a result, harmed their own souls ... these authors struggled to transform audience members' interest in the exotic Other into political motivation—into conviction that they were not simply passive spectators of unalterable tragedy” (4). In the end, the remnant of the indigenous inhabitants will be converted wholesale into the image of their Euro-American saviors. Not only will the past wrongs that have been committed against them be “blotted from life’s scroll,” but the Native past as well. The Euro-Americans will be remembered for their kind treatment of the Natives and the atrocities that created the need for their charity will be forgotten. More importantly, others will view this new generation of Americans, already in possession of the entirety of the American continent, as more benevolent towards the Native people and truer than even the founding fathers to the spirit of freedom, liberty, and Christian charity which define the nation.

In addition to assuaging their sense of guilt, Americans' commitment to the salvation of the Indian race also served to confirm ideas about the very meaning of the nation. Scheckel contends, “Debates over the status of excluded groups created anxiety not because they stirred confusion between ‘us’ and ‘them’ but because they produced an alternative, troubling, vision of ‘us’ by calling into question the very principles by which white Americans defined their collective moral ascendancy and national legitimacy” (10). While I agree with Scheckel to this point, I argue that there exists yet another layer being addressed by those writers of the nineteenth century who not only lamented the death of the Indian, but also pleaded with European Americans to take action and save the dying race before its complete demise. By admitting the transgressions of their forefathers and attempting to right the wrongs done to the indigenous inhabitants (as well as end the system of slavery), Americans of the nineteenth

century could reaffirm the “symbolic systems” of freedom, and the Christianization and civilization of the Indians, which constituted the nation. In fact, challenging what the earlier settlers had done to the Indians and aligning themselves with the Native cause, made them “more American” than the early settlers had been.

Very few of the contents of *Copway’s American Indian* are written by Native individuals other than Copway himself. The periodical served for the most part as a forum for the dissemination of Euro-American ideas about the American Indian, albeit solicited, selected, edited, packaged, and distributed by a Native individual. Of course, the most obvious lack of inclusion of writings by Native individuals resulted from the fact that few Native authors of the period composed works in English. Moreover, while Copway very well could have used the journal as a platform from which to make his case for the disappearance and need for physical and moral salvation of his people, he accepted the likelihood that his readers would more easily accept such arguments from their own literati. Copway attempted to achieve many goals. First, he had to assure the success of his newspaper by enlisting well-known individuals to lend their names and their writings to his columns, and he simultaneously needed pieces that confirmed the Native people faced extinction and deserved being saved. Finally, as I argue in a later chapter, Copway constructed his paper as a mechanism of support for his plan for removal. His stewardship of the newspaper proved that Natives could conform to Euro-American society and further validated Euro-American writers’ characterizations of Native people.

One of the original poems published in the newspaper incorrectly claims to be authored by an Ojibwa woman. The byline identifies the author of this poem as O-ge-mah-qua (Sarah).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ O-ge-mah-qua is a relatively common “name” among the Ojibwa. It is variously translated as “Great Mother” or “Queen.” Although the poem is identified as being composed “For Copway’s American Indian” and is accompanied by the byline, it was in fact published in 1808 as “The Warrior’s Return” in a book of poetry by the same name by

This poem deserves discussion not because of the ways in which it addresses Indian subject matter, but rather because it does not directly attend to indigenous subjects at all. Instead, the poem, titled “The Knight’s Return,” chronicles the homecoming of a medieval tragic hero and the discovery of his fatal flaw. While the use of a Native pseudonym suggests the possibility that either the poet, the plagiarist, or less likely Copway himself, felt the need to demonstrate Native poetic aptitude in the genre of the medieval romance, it appears more likely that whoever submitted the poem felt the use of an Indian moniker presented a better chance of publication in Copway’s journal.

Written in simple four line rhyming stanzas, the twenty stanza poem tells the story of a knight, Sir Walter, who after an extended absence battling the infidels in the Holy Land, arrives in view of his castle. Foreshadowing the horror the knight will soon realize, the second stanza reveals the returning warrior filled with “terror” that “the wife he had left / Full fifteen long twelvemonths before, / And the child he had clasped in his farewell embrace, / Might both then, alas, be no more” (lines 9-12). That his son “should not live! (line 17) becomes the father’s greatest fear. When the knight inquires about his son Alfred, his wife Editha replies, “And comes he not with you?” (line 43). Editha then narrates the story of the boy Alfred’s coming of age and, when learning of his father’s religious mission, imploring his mother to allow him “To share [his] sire’s danger and fame” (line 48). The mother succumbing to her son’s entreaties arms him herself, sends him off to join his father in battle, and informs him that his father wears a symbol on his shield that will identify him. Unfortunately, to honor a fallen comrade Sir Walter changes both armor and shield to wear into the final battle. Still unaware of what fate has befallen his son, but somewhat eager to change the subject, the knight tells his wife, “From the

the English poet Amelia Anderson Opie (1769-1853). It is unclear as to whether the plagiarized poem was submitted to Copway as an original or whether the editor was himself involved in the farce.

field of renown / One mournful memorial I've brought” (lines 107-108). In this final battle he wounded a Saracen chief; however, “When lo! as [he] claimed him [his] prisoner and prize, / A warrior disputed [his] right” (line 111-112). The young warrior who challenged the knight wants the “prize” to “wreath [his] young brow with renown” (line 114). Walter becomes outraged and feels that his challenger, lacking a cross on his chest, does not deserve to claim the Saracen chief as his reward. The knight and the young warrior do battle for the Saracen chief’s body and the older man prevails, killing his opponent. Editha, saddened by this story, exclaims, “Oh, ill fated youth! how I bleed for his fate” and empathetically (and ironically) continues,

Perhaps some fond mother like me,
Had armed him, and blessed him, and prays for his life,
As I pray, my Alfred for thee.
But never again shall he gladden her eyes,
Or haste her fond blessing to crave. (lines 129-134)

Once again foreshadowing the eventual conclusion of the tale, Editha also fears that her husband Walter will in some way receive punishment for his deed. She further chastises the man asking if his religious convictions did not weigh on him after he slaughtered the youth noting that the cross on his armor represented “That emblem of Him full of pity and love. / Whose deeds mercy only expressed?” (lines 139-140). The knight admits that his soul did in fact feel “pity” and “shame” at the act and further notes that the accent of young man’s dying voice resembled that of his wife. Although the grieved Walter in vain attempts to help the dying youth, the man dies after fully forgiving his murderer. The final stanza reveals the predictable conclusion to this story as Editha recalls that her husband mentioned a “memorial” that he had brought home with him from that last battle, but that he has yet to reveal. In her moment of realization the woman growing “deadly pale” sees that the “mournful memorial” her husband possesses and recognizes the scarf she had given to her son.

O-ge-mah-qua's (or rather Opie's) poetic contribution feels painfully contrived but much can be learned from the choice of subject matter, the setting, and the interesting choice of terminology. Read against the other poems discussed, "The Knight's Return" serves as a critique of white actions and values and provides a direct challenge to the "Vanishing American" theme that permeates the works of the author's Euro-American contemporaries. This chronicle of white greed that ultimately leads to familial destruction calls into question the Christian tenets Euro-Americans profess. Notably, Sir Walter reserves his guilt for the young Christian warrior whom he slays. He feels no guilt for the murder of the Saracen chief over whose remains the two men are fighting. Neither of the characters shows any remorse for the assassination of the Muslim despite Editha's recounting of Christ's "pity and love." Interestingly, the poem seems to draw parallels between the Saracen chief and American Natives. At the time of the crusades, the Saracens were a nomadic people who existed on the fringes of the Roman Empire and troubled the citizenry, and while the use of the term "chief" was fairly common for Saracen military leaders, its use in the Native newspaper stands out. However, it seems rather obvious that Anderson did not have America's indigenous people in mind when she composed the lines; on the contrary, this work serves as a more of an English nationalist poem. Nevertheless, someone thought that this piece belonged in a periodical devoted to the cause of the American Indian and this same person wanted the reader to believe that the lines were composed by a Native woman. Thus, in the context of *Copway's American Indian* the poem takes on new meaning. If we read this text through the lens of the American national narrative Copway's newspaper embraces, the lines conjure up a familiar familial struggle often employed in Euro-American and Native relations. Symbolically, the knight stands as the white "father" guilty of filicide and, in this equation, the Native becomes aligned with the son Alfred, who meets his undeserved fate at the

hands of his supposed protector. In the end, both men, although originally fighting for the same cause, forget their purpose and turn on one another in an effort to stoke their feelings of grandeur. The son/Native becomes an imagined foe rather than a real threat. The youth's words of forgiveness for his murderer hark back to Copway's earlier claims regarding Euro-American treatment of the Native people. Likewise, Editha's critique of her husband's departure from his Christian mission serves to remind the reader of the original American purpose. The poem's conclusion presents the breakdown of the family (read national) structure in which the father has neglected his filial duties.

There exists one additional "Indian" poem written for the pages of Copway's paper that deserves mention. The poem titled "The Silent Baby," attributed to a poet with the initials A.M., appeared on Saturday, August 9, 1851. The following disclaimer appears just above the text of the poem: "Written upon seeing the wooden image of an Indian infant, who died in Scotland, lying with closed eyes in its curious cradle." There exists no accompanying remarks to explain the turn of events that led to the baby's arrival in Scotland or any details provided as to the cause of the child's death. Considering the fascination with child death that permeated nineteenth-century culture on both sides of the Atlantic, the poem does not appear out of place; however, the poet's lines reveal a much more curious tale in regard to the mourning rituals enacted for this particular child. Further, within *Copway's American Indian*, the poem stands as a warning to the Euro-American readers regarding the preservation of indigenous inhabitants.

In the seven-stanza poem the speaker recalls the infant's appearance informing the reader that, "There is a silent baby, with changeless face, / That hath rested *long* in the selfsame place, / Motionless, tireless, it lieth there / A dark-browed baby with raven hair" (lines 1-4, emphasis original). The reader does not learn how long the baby has been lying there, but the speaker,

seemingly confused by the scene asks, “Oh, why is its slumber so long and deep, / And from whence is the power which hath charmed its sleep?” (lines 5-6). The following lines complete the Othering of the child as the white speaker imagines the baby has some unknown powers and instructing the reader to “Look well at the cradle in which it lies, / It is passing strange in the pale-face’s eyes; / Who knows but *therein* lurks some secret spell / Which lulleth the baby so long and well” (lines 7-10, emphasis original). Continuing the description of the child the speaker notes, “The cheeks of the sleeper are full and round, / But they *are not warm*, and there comes no sound, / No sigh, no heavy and sleepy breath / Through the lips which are cold, and as still as death” (lines 11-14, emphasis original). Apparently arriving at the realization that this body is not that of a dead Indian child, but not quite ready to divulge the truth to the reader, the speaker relates that, “Oh, ne’er will that baby awake, and smile / On the friends which have guarded it all the while, / T’is a faithful image—but *that is all*— / Of a child that has left them beyond recall” (lines 15-18, emphases original). We learn that a carving of some kind created as a place holder for the real child stands as this “faithful image.” Despite the apparently convincing life-like (or death-like?) quality of the counterfeit, and the fact that “they love to gaze on the image still,” the “friends” know that this image “*holdeth a place it can never fill*” (lines 21-22, emphases original). Nevertheless, they continue to gaze upon the image of the child as a means of connecting with the real baby, which reminds them not of what they had but of what has been lost. In many ways, Copway’s newspaper serves the same function as the dead Native baby in the poem. Although it records and preserves knowledge regarding the customs and practices of the Native people, it cannot replace those Indians who have already vanished. While those “friends” in Scotland have no means of replacing the Indian baby that has died and therefore

must settle for this (re)presentation, Euro-Americans, if they act in time, can save the Native inhabitants before they become nothing more than faithful images.

Each of these poems can be seen as participating in the nation-building exercise as explained by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work *Imagined Communities*. In the final chapter titled “Memory and Forgetting,” Anderson reasons that the sacrifices of certain individuals or entire groups of individuals literally made possible that which replaced them “*even when these sacrifices were not understood as such by the victims*” (198, italics original). Taking as his example the writings of Jules Michelet “self-appointed historian of the [French] Revolution” who “was the first to write *on behalf* of the dead,” Anderson explains “Michelet not only claimed to speak on behalf of large numbers of anonymous dead people, but instead, with poignant authority, that he could say what they ‘really’ meant and ‘really’ wanted, since they themselves ‘did not understand’” (197). He elaborates, “In this vein, more and more ‘second generation’ nationalists, in the Americas and elsewhere, learned to speak ‘for’ dead people with whom it was impossible or undesirable to establish a linguistic connection” (198). The speakers in Hosmer’s and Dresser’s poem ask the reader to remember and even to “weep” for the dead Indians and simultaneously encourage the same reader to forget the cause of the Indian’s death. Likewise, and even more dramatically, Waddell and Minna perform what Anderson has termed a “reverse ventriloquism” in which they write the words that they wish the suicidal and sacrificial Indians to articulate. The anonymous author of “The Cherokee to His White Bride,” chronicles the westward movement of the Native people and warns white females of entangling alliances with the doomed Other, and Adams recounts the history of Native / white contact while assuming a misleading pro-Native stance. James Ruppert points out, “As implied readers move from one worldview to another, from one field of discourse to another, back and forth through the

chronological depth of those fields and back and forth between text and interpretation, they are brought to adopt a perspective on the meaning of the text, but this perspective is constantly changing, constantly being modified by a completely different set of epistemological codes. They cannot help but ask themselves if their understanding of previous moments in the reading of the text was correct” (14). The Euro-American readers of *Copway’s American Indian* are also made aware that each of these poems has been selected and published by a Native individual who refuses to allow them to consume these pieces without also being aware of a Native voice. His editorial praising Cooper and the death notice that follows establish the possibility of Native individuals who have not disappeared, but who, like them, are active in consuming these pieces, thereby reminding these white readers that while many of the Native people have been removed from the forest of the east, they exist in entirely new forms and have much to offer the new nation.

EPILOGUE

In this dissertation I set out to show how *Copway's American Indian* newspaper participated in the formation of nineteenth-century American nationalism. As the study has exposed, pre-twentieth-century Native writers and editors engaged in a “war of position” with their Euro-American contemporaries to create a space for resistance within the dominant culture. They used their standing on the margins of two cultures both to confirm and to challenge commonly held ideas about Native character and the ability of indigenous people to adapt to a rapidly changing national culture. Through his successes as a missionary, author, lecturer, and delegate, Copway, more than any other Native individual gained entry into the homes and hearts of many of the nation’s most influential Euro-American figures. With these individuals’ moral, if not financial support, he crafted a newspaper that set about to flaunt the image of the “Vanishing American” to prevent the very conclusion it foretold and to encourage the American reading public to embrace his plan for Native removal.

“The policy of removal, except under peculiar circumstances, must be abandoned,” wrote the Secretary of the Interior Alexander H. H. Stewart on November 29, 1851. “And the only alternatives left are, to civilize or exterminate them,” he continued (502). Notably, earlier plans for Native relocation to lands in the west had placed an emphasis not on civilizing, but rather on isolating tribes from the Euro-American population. American expansion westward continued and, as Copway had warned in his proposal, conflict between the Natives and Euro-American settlers indeed erupted. With the addition of California in 1848, further American expansion lay beyond the waves of the Pacific Ocean. Copway’s plan required too much land that Euro-Americans had no intention of guaranteeing to indigenous people, and the proposal set forth for Native removal and consolidation in *Organization of a New Indian Territory* never became a

reality. Instead the government began implementing the reservation system, which had gained support by the late 1840s. Although members of the Senate ultimately rejected them all, “eighteen treaties negotiated in 1851 set aside large tracts of land in California as reservations for the exclusive use of the Indians” (Dippie 76). Negotiations continued and the system of Indian reservations became fully implemented in 1853.

In this final section I will turn to the question that started me on this journey and that I have yet to answer: Why did Copway cease the publication of his newspaper? The final issue of *Copway's American Indian* appeared on October 4, 1851, only thirteen weeks after the journal first went to press. Based on the contents of this issue the cause of the newspaper's demise remains a mystery. Most scholars have speculated that the newspaper failed due to a lack of financial support from subscribers and in doing so these scholars have displayed their lack of understanding regarding media economics. Newspapers (and other mass media) have never relied upon subscriptions for funding. From their inceptions these news organs have sustained their operations through money collected from advertisers. By these terms, Copway's newspaper at least appeared financially sound; the newspaper boasted a full page of ads, which is comparable to other newspapers of the period and better than most.¹¹⁷ The permanent suspension of the newspaper's publication appears to have come as a sudden shock to the editor because in what became the final issue Copway assures his readers, “We pay our bills weekly, and the paper stands on its own foundation, having paid for itself so far” (“Our Paper”). In an effort to guarantee the paper was running on its own worth and not reliant on charity he notes, “The large sum of twenty-five dollars is all we have received as a volunteer aid towards its maintenance,

¹¹⁷ It is possible that Copway continued to run ads in order to fill the pages of the newspaper and that he was no longer receiving payment for this service.

from a true friend of ours, and our race” (“Our Paper”).¹¹⁸ In fact, he asserts his pride in the success of the journal by relating the story of a fair-weather friend who chose to postpone paying for a subscription until after he had seen the eleventh issue. The friend, meeting Copway on the street and attempting to subscribe, is rebuffed. Seemingly sure of the continued success of his periodical Copway rejoins, “We have done without you, and we still can, and therefore save yourself from subscribing for the paper” (“Our Paper”).

Early American newspapers measured their success by the number of exchanges they had with other papers across the country (and internationally). Through the mail, editors received copies of newspapers from other areas and freely cut and pasted the contents into their own columns.¹¹⁹ Most news of the period lacked the immediacy that encouraged newspapers to “scoop” the competition and editors took this nineteenth-century plagiarism as a comment on the quality of their journals.¹²⁰ Copway’s paper printed dozens of letters from these exchange papers and the editor claimed to have received correspondence of commendation from every State in the Union. It appears he also did not lack original pieces for his journal. The first page and an additional column on page four of the final issue are filled by an essay titled “The Red Men of this State” written specifically for *Copway’s American Indian* by Henry Lewis Morgan, one of the most renowned anthropologists and social theorists of his time. History does not record what happened following October 4 to prevent the editor from publishing subsequent issues. Nor does

¹¹⁸ Donald Smith incorrectly claims that this twenty-five dollars is the sum total of the money Copway had received during the publication of his paper. We cannot assume that Copway had not received money for subscriptions (which Schoolcraft at least had sent) nor from his advertisers.

¹¹⁹ See Richard B. Kielbowicz’s *News in the Mail: The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700-1860s*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.

¹²⁰ Consisting of five New York newspapers, The Associated Press (originally the New York Associated Press) was founded in 1846 by Moses Yale Beach to share the cost of transmitting news of the Mexican War by boat, horse express and telegraph, but it was not until the mid-1850s that newspapers began being protective of their news stories.

it provide us with any answers to Copway's failure to produce any other significant literature in the wake of the journal's demise. Since Copway did continue to lecture regularly, however, I question the argument that he had a mental breakdown in the fall of 1851 and that his diminished psychological state contributed to the collapse of the newspaper. The most plausible answer is the one I put forth in the previous pages; Congress had begun to institute its reservation policy and Copway's own tribe, among which his father still resided, had been informed of their impending move. Copway realized that his efforts to sway public opinion had been in vain. However, the Ojibwa missionary, lecturer, writer, and editor did not simply disappear in body or spirit. Between 1851 and the mid-1860s his name appears scores of times in American periodicals. To apply Susan Scheckel's terminology, Copway continued to haunt the American newspapers for decades.¹²¹

Copway's American Indian may have failed in its ultimate goal of persuading the American government to adopt Copway's plan for Native relocation, but it survives as the most complete collection of nineteenth-century "artifacts" relating to the American Indian. In no other single text can a reader encounter such a wide variety of pieces that serve to document the complicated "Indian problem" that plagued the American nation. The poetry and prose, histories and anthropological accounts, folktales and sketches, missionary reports and personal letters, notices of removal and tributes to famous Native figures, all combine to provide an unparalleled picture of the national drama as played out in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth-century. As I discovered, many of the pieces that appear in the newspaper have been preserved only within its pages.

¹²¹ See Smith's biography of Copway for a full list of the author's activities between 1851 and the time of his death in 1869.

This project only treats a small fraction of the contents of *Copway's American Indian*, but I hope that it will encourage further study of this fascinating and historically significant text. Within its columns resides much information (original and reprinted) waiting to be analyzed. I say this knowing full well that accessing Copway's paper is no small feat. In my search, I discovered only one complete set of Copway's newspapers, housed in the collections at the Library of London. Somewhat oddly, within the United States only eight universities hold microfilm copies taken from the one original and these reproductions make it difficult and at times impossible to make out the words on the page.

This study, and others that explore the works and connections of early Native figures and the corresponding American attitudes toward the Native population, serve to provide a more complete understanding of the nation's complex history. Such projects also enrich the field of indigenous studies by identifying moments of early Native rhetorical resistance. They demonstrate that nineteenth-century Native writers, existing on the margins of the nation to which they neither completely belonged nor could fully escape, at least attempted to shape the American consciousness.

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