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Linked to His Fellow Man of Civilized Life: Washington Irving, the Transatlantic Native American, and Romantic Historiography in A History of New York and The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon

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“Linked to His Fellow Man of Civilized Life”: Washington Irving, the Transatlantic Native
American, and Romantic Historiography in *A History of New York* and
The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon

Kara Kemp

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

“Linked to His Fellow Man of Civilized Life”: Washington Irving, the Transatlantic Native American, and Romantic Historiography in *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*

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As representatives of “an earlier stage of civilization,” Native Americans in early nineteenth-century literature were integral in conversations of race relations, cultural development, and anthropological strata. They were a baseline of humanity against which more “civilized” nations of the world marked their progress, determined the value of their own cultural advancements, and proclaimed their superiority (Flint 1). They were an object of continuing fascination for Americans and Britons seeking to reinvent themselves in the aftermath of war and revolution, but their image in these nations was used as a derogatory slur (Fulford and Hutchings 1; Flint 6–7). Suggesting that a nation had a kinship with Native Americans was becoming an unfortunately familiar shortcut to suggest disgraceful backsliding into primitive ways.

Rather than view Native Americans as markers of social degeneracy, barbarism, or ignorance, Washington Irving argues in his works that these figures could be revived as a positive connecting force for Americans and Britons. He recalls a more dignified Romantic image of the “noble savage”—intelligent, loyal, and proud—to overcome vengeful memories of war and violence. The Indian characters in *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* are more than idle entertainments or broad caricatures; they are carefully crafted Romantic figures that embody the restorative, unifying ideals for which both Americans and Britons yearned in the aftermath of war.

Irving uses Knickerbocker's *History* to reflect the capriciousness of public memory and the sometimes dangerous power of the biased storyteller. He exposes how the Native American legend became tainted by historians who tried to justify the ill-treatment these people received at the hands of the Europeans. In Crayon's *Sketchbook*, Irving continues to explore the mutability of history by showing how nations like Britain had been successful in inventing a heritage that drew their people together. Finally, in “Traits of Indian Character” and “Philip of Pokanoket,” Irving fulfills the promise of the *History* by restoring the Romantic Indian to a position of respect and power in the American and British memory. Though Irving's writing doesn't attempt to correct the image of Native Americans enough to get at the real people behind the image society invented, he embraces the malleability of these important cultural figures to make observations on how we create and perceive history and align ourselves to the invented past. By re-examining these works through their romantic and historic intent in a transatlantic relationship, we can come to better understand Irving's position as he supported his American nationhood and sentimental British roots with a figure that resonated on both sides.

Keywords: Washington Irving, Native Americans, Romantic Historiography, *A History of New York*, *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, Transatlanticism

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“Linked to his Fellow Man of Civilized Life”: Washington Irving, the Transatlantic Native American, and Romantic Historiography in *A History of New York* and

The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon

Native American figures have recently enjoyed a renewed presence in Anglophone literary studies, recalled as important symbols within nineteenth-century transnational rhetoric. Writers such as Kate Flint, Tim Fulford, Kevin Hutchings, and Peter J. Kitson have explored the shifting imagery of the Native American through scientific texts, historical accounts, personal narratives, and commercial literature, all of which influenced how Anglophone readers understood their complex relationships with these inhabitants of the American continent. Scholars’ research into the shifting symbolism of the Native American has drawn open our understanding of the philosophical, moral, and cultural importance of this figure as it was used to express theories of human nature and society at the beginning of the 1800s. As supposed representatives of “an earlier stage of civilization,” Native Americans were integral in conversations of race relations, cultural development, and anthropological strata (Flint 1). Many people, including those in the United States and Britain, thought of Native Americans as the primitive, ancestral “other.” Indians were a baseline of humanity against which more civilized nations of the world marked their progress, determined the value of their own cultural advancements, and proclaimed their superiority; as such, they were the object of continuing fascination for North Americans and Britons seeking to reinvent themselves in the aftermath of war and revolution (Fulford and Hutchings 1).

In this atmosphere of reinvention, both American and British authors turned their pens towards malleable Native American figures, using them to reflect their own personal, political, and cultural aspirations. Indians could be spiritual guides, bloodthirsty villains, vengeful lovers,

or innocent children—whatever the author had need of to make his point. But while we are familiar with these stock figures' appearances in works such as those of Bryant, Cooper, Hemans, Reid, Southey, and Wordsworth, Washington Irving's perspectives on the Native American in this period have been relatively neglected. For Irving, the displacement, complexity, and transnational ambiguities of the Native American figure would hold a particular fascination as he attempted to bridge the gap between feelings of patriotic zeal and the transnational outlook.

While Irving's transatlantic sympathies and attempts to define his national position are certainly appreciated in critical research, the complex cross-cultural rhetoric and symbolism of the Native American figure in his writing remains largely unexamined. Studies by Kate Flint and Tim Fulford have pushed forward the idea of the transnational Native American in recent years, but omit Irving's writings in their analyses. "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket" are treated as anomalies in Pollard's, Eberwein's, and McLamore's transatlantic examinations of *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, not as important features of Irving's cross-cultural maneuvering. The Indians of *A History of New York* are scarcely mentioned in Insko's and Scraba's otherwise ingenious readings of Irving's romantic historicism. And while writers like Bergland, Murray, and Velikova talk about Irving's Indians, they are looking at other issues of Native American history that lead them away from the author's overall literary and cultural goals and his attempt to redefine and revitalize the Native American character.¹ I hope to draw connections and fill in gaps left by previous scholarship in order to showcase the crucial role of Native Americans in Irving's larger transatlantic project.

¹ These writers focus on implications of Irving's writing for Native American culture. Bergland explores the gothic loneliness and superstition surrounding Irving's Native Americans. Murray suggests that Irving shares an anxiety of dispossession with William Apess. Velikova explains the misconceptions and error introduced into King Philip's legend over time.

In *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, Washington Irving develops the Native American into a figure of transnational cultural memory. By first examining the mutability of cultural memory and revealing how it may be transfigured for better or worse in national narratives with Knickerbocker's *History*, Irving is able to argue for a re-imagining of Native Americans within the cultural discourse of America and Britain in *The Sketchbook*. Rather than seeing Indians as markers of social degeneracy, barbarism, or ignorance, Irving argues that these figures could be a positive connecting force for Americans and Britons. His Indians are intended as more than idle entertainment or broad caricatures; they are carefully crafted romantic figures that embody the restorative, unifying ideals for which both Americans and Britons yearn. In short, Irving attempted a literary recovery of the Native American figure, drawing on the power of malleable cultural memory to transcend nationalist and cultural boundaries. This seemed to him a more productive (if still instrumental) use of the Native American in cultural and political discourse.

To contextualize these ideas within Irving's frame of reference, we first need to examine the political and cultural role of the Native American figure during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the role of romantic historicization in forming national ideals. A focused reading of *A History of New York*, then, will highlight Irving's commentary on romantic history and his concern about a complacent public that accepts unproductive narratives, like those of the weak and degraded Indian figure, which may damage America's national image. As we turn to *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, Irving establishes a direct conversation with *A History of New York* by reviving his Dietrich Knickerbocker persona and observing the influence and role that "Indian" inventions had in creating Anglo-American culture. Finally, as we examine the "lesser" American sketches, "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket,"

we see Irving advocate a revival of noble Native American figures in America and Britain's shared history for the general public to exhibit ideal heroism and social unity. These accessible images could transcend their cultural differences and reclaim what was once a source of negative comparison as a unifying model of social grace and dignity to learn from and emulate.

An Environment of National Invention, Romance, and Heritage

The early nineteenth century was an uneasy period in America and Britain's transatlantic relationship; though the American War of Independence had ended, skirmishes of literature and other media were only beginning as rivalries sprang up between new American authors and established authorities of British literature. While nationalist Americans attempted to establish the distinct identity of the new, proud and free America in their texts, Britons were just as resolutely convincing themselves that in losing the colonies they had lost nothing worth having. They denounced America in popular writing in newspapers and magazines as the home of the uneducated, degenerate masses of Europe's cast-offs who posed no real threat to the primacy of Britain on the world stage, angering and alienating America's new writers and philosophers (Bickham 65; Carr 140; Murray 206). As this deep cultural divide gaped wider, some Americans tried to create a national identity in the face of their British background, rejecting their heritage and traditions; others, like Irving, attempted to straddle the divide with creative mixtures of American and British sentiments and subjects, hoping for reconciliation rather than further war (Brock 227; Pollard 124). As historians have repeatedly noted, American anxiety over British influence continued to grow, as did the resentment and prejudice of their British cousins against their former colonies—a thematic tension underlying the transatlantic literature of this period.²

² While this vein of scholarship is well-known in transatlantic readings, for more intensive examinations and historical context of American anxiety over British influence, see Weisbuch's *Atlantic Double-Cross* and Lease's *Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature*.

Before the War of Independence, Americans and Britons had mostly shared their attitudes toward Native Americans as they hoped to gain more territory for the growing colonies (McCoppin 238–39). Sensational captivity narratives and soldiers’ travelogues were the primary sources of information about these inhabitants of the New World, directing public opinion in many cases to imagine Native Americans as a coarse, ignorant, brutal, primitive race. As Fulford and Hutchings explain, such narratives “shaped the literature and culture of the age” by becoming central to transnational debates (1). In anthropological studies that drew largely on these reports, Native Americans were considered representatives of an earlier stage of civilization,³ and nations compared themselves to these living memorials of the past in order to mark their own progress (Sorenson 77; Kitson 22); but these figures were also used to accuse a nation’s enemies of having reverted to their primitive, barbaric roots in order to claim a sense of moral and social superiority (Fulford 42–44). According to Kate Flint, such arguments became common in the post-Revolutionary rhetoric between America and Britain, with each accusing the other of social degeneracy and irrelevance in the modern world (8). For example, some British writers claimed Americans were becoming morally and physically degraded as environmental polemic suggested that in such a harsh landscape, cultural and even racial degeneracy was inevitable (Flint 6–7). Soon, they said, all Americans would be Indians—primitive anachronisms in a modern age. In return, Americans retorted that Britons had already become savage and bloodthirsty in their desire for conquest, because they adopted Indian methods of war and encouraged brutality against their own people during the Revolution (Flint 153). In pictures and cartoons, Americans were depicted as superstitious, dull, and ugly, while Britons were portrayed as domineering, manipulative, and cruel (Flint 43, 62). Suggesting that a nation had a kinship

³ See Ferguson’s *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, and Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

with Native Americans was becoming an unfortunately familiar shortcut to suggest disgraceful backsliding into primitive ways.

While many in the upper echelon of society or those involved with progressive movements⁴ entertained ideas of the “noble savage,” the general public thought of Native Americans in popular fictions as a dangerous, primitive, and strange people.⁵ Though not everyone in Britain or America believed such degrading narratives, these ideas were common enough that in Irving’s time, the Native American was generally considered an unfit subject for fine literature. Cooper’s early adventure tales in the American forests, though entertaining and engaging, were for *popular* audiences, with Indians identified as “good” or “bad” by their loyalties or hostilities towards white settlers. British critics would still call Indians the “beasts” from “the ‘back-woods’ of America” without any sense of refinement or culture to redeem them (McLamore 37; Bickham 60).⁶ Even in the Romantic poetry of authors like Wordsworth and Shelley, Native Americans were, at best, seen as a simpler, naïve, childlike people that, though well intentioned and occasionally profound, were intellectually and socially inferior in the modern world (Fulford and Hutchings 24; Flint 52; Pace 199). As far as many British critics were concerned, America was a land of primitives, savages, and immigrants—a young, inexperienced, volatile nation, cut off from responsibility and influence in the world, whose only evidence of civilization was in their industry, not in their literature or culture (Flint 6).

⁴ See Bage’s *Hermsprong*, Jefferson’s Indian policies in *Documents of United States Indian Policy* edited by Francis Paul Prucha; Kimber’s *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson*; Mackenzie’s *The Man of the World*; Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*; Shelley’s “The Indian Serenade” in *The Complete Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*; Southey’s *Madoc* in *Robert Southey: Poetical Works*; Wordsworth’s “The Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman” in *The Complete Poetical Works*.

⁵ See Carver’s *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America*; Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*; Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House*; Smollett’s *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*; Williamson’s *French and Indian Cruelty*. For critical approaches, see also Colley’s *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* and Richardson’s “The Site of Struggle: Colonialism, Violence and the Captive Body.”

⁶ For examples of primary sources on this topic in British newspapers and magazines, see Bickham’s “I Shall Tear off Their Scalps, and Make Cups of Their Skulls”: American Indians in the Eighteenth-Century British Press” in Fulford and Hutchings’s *Native Americans and Anglo-American Culture, 1750–1850*.

Despite the prejudice which fueled the separation, however, Irving was a true transatlanticist. Irving thought that Anglophonic culture was defined by language and shared tradition, not by nationality. He yearned to bring harmony to the nations he loved, if not in reality, then in writing; making Native Americans with obvious spiritual, heroic, and social virtues desired by both nations more accessible to the people was one of the many ways he tried. Romantic historiography was a popular theme for Irving's contemporaries; authors peered into the past, into the origins of humanity, and drew from those presumably simpler times the virtues and principles they yearned to "restore" to the modern world.⁷ William Godwin wrote that as nations and individuals, "we go forth into the world; we see what man is; we enquire what he was, and... return home to engage in the solemn act of self-investigation" (361). There was a sense that by looking into a primitive, more spiritual past, there might be a way to discover true humanity that had been lost in the devastation of war and the tumult of various cultural and scientific revolutions. History and heritage became central to a modern nation state's identity and presence in the world as evidence of its longevity and consistency (Rigney 148; Anderson 11).

To understand Irving's project, we can consider the parallel case of Sir Walter Scott who, as we may see, works in a similar vein of thought. Scott, who was also a friend and admirer of Irving's, took advantage of the growing interest in the past to great effect in his *Waverley* series, which transformed the image of the Highlander from primitive and ignorant tribes living in the wilds of the North into the chivalric warriors of a bygone age, ennobling and enshrining traditional (if somewhat fabricated) Scottish culture. The *Waverley* series became "a major contributor to the cult of memory in modern societies" (Rigney 4); it was a collection which succeeded in turning the past into something separate and sustainable in a world that was rapidly

⁷ See Klaner's *A Concise Companion to the Romantic Age* and Phillips's *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820*.

changing—preserving ideals and virtues for when they were needed by the rising generation instead of allowing them to be forgotten. Authors wishing to engage public interest began creating similarly romantic heroes of the past that matched modern society's desire to produce a stable cultural narrative in the midst of vast changes (Rigney 132–33). As they had discovered, history and cultural memory could be written and rewritten to develop a sense of national pride and unity (Anderson 24)—Irving had a similar approach in his own work. He questions how such traditions and histories are made, and using his discoveries, attempts to reinvent the mythology surrounding the heroic warriors of the American past: the Native Americans.

By giving the United States a strong, central, unique figure like the Native American on which to build an identity, Irving would be able to promote his new nation as a land of ancient culture as refined and respectable as any in Europe. Instead of an ignorant and obscure American past which undermined their efforts to distinguish themselves on a world stage, they would turn to Native Americans that were unique and invigorating in the Old World, but gave an ancestral heritage for the New. Though Irving's writing doesn't attempt to correct the usage of Native Americans enough to get at the real people behind the image society invented, he embraces the malleability of these important cultural figures to make observations on how we create and perceive history and how we align ourselves to the invented past. He cites their uses and abuses in literature to illustrate the danger of becoming bound to outmoded, irrelevant traditions, and offers a way to reinvent them to create a better future. *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* are particularly important because they were written in Irving's early period, when he was still experimenting with his style and method of addressing the political, cultural, and literary issues which surrounded him, establishing his message and image as an author. By re-examining these works through their romantic and historic intent in a

transatlantic relationship, we can come to better understand Irving's position as he attempted to support both his American nationhood and sentimental British roots with a figure that combined the best ideals of each: community values, heroism, virtue, and loyalty.

Some of Irving's greatest writing has been marginalized or undervalued by most critics (Scraba 390). Often, scholars have favored "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" alone, for example, instead of observing how they fit into the larger narrative of *The Sketchbook*, which is rarely considered as a unified work. *The Sketchbook* is written from the viewpoint of the American Geoffrey Crayon as he travels abroad in Britain, recording his personal experiences and stories he collects and invents along his route: "Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" are only two of the thirty-four sketches which appear in the complete book. In many other studies of Irving, too, readers tend to concentrate on a single text instead of discussing how Irving handles a theme or image, like the Native American, across his works, developing and reinventing a project as he looks at it from different angles. But as we can see in a more synthetic reading of *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*, Irving plays with the negative and positive roles the Native American has portrayed throughout American and British history, showing his audience that these are images which can be reformed, remade, and reinvented. Much as his friend Walter Scott has taught readers to value the nobility and chivalry of Scottish Highlanders and the past they represent, Irving glorifies the personal, spiritual, and communal virtues of America's native peoples, and, by extension, of America herself.

Cultural Memory and Maneuvering in *A History of New York*

In *A History of New York*, Washington Irving satirizes the divisive and self-indulgent "histories" that were emerging in his time to expose the dangers of such works that failed to

create unifying narratives of shared values and purpose for their nations. Benedict Anderson in his study of nationalist narratives famously argues that a nation is really “an *imagined* political community,” an idea which emerged in the late eighteenth century as writers and political figures began actively creating traditions to forge a sense of belonging and common purpose among their citizenry (4–6, emphasis added). Eric Hobsbawm adds that these “invented traditions” would create a sense of “convention” and “structure” within their societies (“Introduction” 2–3). Over time, writers hoped, national ideas and traditions would become real in the minds of the people as they remembered and lived them, and thus gain the cultural capital to unify and inspire. Often, this meant restoring an idealized image of the past to bring the people together in a common cause (Manning 174). But, as Irving observed, while some American historians and nationalist authors pretended to objectivity and authenticity in their representations, some aimed to sever all ties with America’s pre-independence past. In their accounts, Britons were the clear oppressors of their liberty, not their literal and cultural progenitors; Native Americans were a flat, inhuman obstacle to be justly overcome in the search for national glory, rather than, say, a source of ancient wisdom and character. American authors, attempting to respond to British criticism that their culture and writing were derivative by striking out on their own, were leaving the United States without roots to return to in their search for a national identity.

Irving strives in the satirical *History of New York* to expose the artificial mechanisms that promote popular history and cultural memory in modern society, and, as Scraba and Insko have observed, poke at the egos of historians aspiring to roles of objective authority. Irving shows his readers how easy it is to create compelling narratives of the past based on little more than rumors and opinion. The narrator Irving invents, Diedrich Knickerbocker, is, appropriately, little more than a rumor himself; in the weeks and months preceding the appearance of the *History*, Irving

posted notices in the local newspapers asking readers to be on the look-out for “a small elderly gentleman, dressed in an old black coat and cocked hat” who might not be “entirely in his right mind” (*History* 6). While these advertisements helped build an interest in the “manuscript” the gentleman had apparently left behind, they also generated well-meaning reports and advice on how to locate this historian who existed only in Irving’s imagination (Burstein 72).

Though the *History* was always intended as a satire and parody of how historians blurred the lines between fact and fiction, creating elaborate and overindulgent records of the past, Irving found that more serious readers were a little upset at discovering how thin that line between fact and fiction actually was (Insko 609–10). In an “apology” to the readers that Irving added in 1848, he cheekily explains that he chose to write the history because the Dutch period, in its obscurity, was open “to all the embellishments of heroic fiction” that he could invent; he did not think he was “committing any grievous historical sin in helping out the few facts that [he] could collect in this remote and forgotten region with figments of [his] own brain” (*History* 3–4). Irving generally thought the American historians in his day were curmudgeons scrounging for bits of lore and rumor to furnish their histories with “long-forgotten” tales, while pushing their own agendas and biases into what people then took for the reality of their past (Insko 615). They, too, were romancers, however humorless. Yet as Scraba notes, Irving probably did more research than many of these historians to create a realistic parody of their endeavors than they did in preparing their own texts (398). He “provides a generic challenge to historical reconstruction by celebrating the power of ambiguity, imagination, and fiction to shape understanding of the past” as he meets the historians on their own ground (398). With a parody rivaling the quality of the apparently “real” histories around him, Irving challenges the ability of those writers to create a

realistic image of the past when their own biases and desires interfere with and distort those histories as he does in his work.

At the outset of the *History*, then, Knickerbocker's character is established as a parody of the obsessive, classical antiquarian impressed with his own importance and the "epic" history of New York from the beginning of time to the "golden age" of the Dutch settlers. The image Irving creates exposes the perjury of the "disinterested historian," as Knickerbocker expresses his hope that his efforts will propel both New York and himself to widespread approbation and fame. Knickerbocker compares his ponderous, and often tedious, history of New York to the works of Greek philosophers and teachers. He frequently references such authorities as evidence of his learning, as though they are the muses he invokes to grace his history with credibility. He claims that "like my revered prototype, Herodotus, where no written record could be found, I have endeavored to continue the chain of history by well-authenticated traditions," which traditions, we discover, are to be had from anyone with a story to tell to Diedrich about the Dutch inhabitation (if not from the historian's own imagination) (17). Xenophon, Sallust, Thucydides, Tacitus, and Livy are also called in their turn to bestow upon Knickerbocker their powers (17–18). However, while most invocations to the muses in literature are done with professed feelings of inadequacy to the task at hand, Knickerbocker's protestations reveal, despite his feigned humility, his desire to be considered equal to or even superior to these historians of the past. The old Dutchman sees himself "the progenitor, prototype, and precursor of them all, posted at the head of this host of literary worthies, with my book under my arm, and New York on my back, pressing forward, like a gallant commander, to honor and immortality" (19). As Irving suggests in this depiction of the "worthy scholar" who endeavors to write history, historians' protestations of objectivity and disinterestedness nearly always encode a desire to achieve true greatness, to

gain the favor and approval of their readers. Moreover, despite the cry of classical historians that their works are a trusted source of truth and wisdom, their texts are often no more than thinly veiled fictions imbued with personal idiosyncrasies and biases. The national historian, Irving writes, is an all-too-human subject of the temptation to re-write history in a way which suits his own ideals—a long-standing issue that interferes with the reader's attempt to gain an objective vision of the past and the people that inhabit it.

Knickerbocker often protests that he is merely an impartial observer and admirer of the past, recalling William Godwin, as he claims to be “raking up the limbs and fragments of disjointed facts, and endeavoring to put them scrupulously together, so as to restore them to their original form and connection” (*History* 125). However, as Jeffrey Insko wryly remarks, Knickerbocker is “anything but impartial” and is actually an avid “abuser of his power, as a historian, to bestow honor and immortality—as were many early national historians” (614–15). Knickerbocker's primary objective becomes clear as he recounts the great and noble deeds of his Dutch ancestors; he is seeking to reinvent them as intrepid, courageous settlers of America instead of an easily forgotten chapter of the nation's history. The reader, however, seeing through the irony which Knickerbocker seems unwilling to, realizes that these people were really not adventurers at all. In the story of Hendrick Kip, for example, Knickerbocker claims that the name, Hendrick, “which, being interpreted, means *chicken*,” was actually an epithet bestowed upon him for his great bravery (70). When Kip wildly fires a rifle in his fear at seeing Native Americans fishing on the shore while his companions are passing by some distance away, Knickerbocker says Kip “trembled with excessive valor” and fired his weapon “most intrepidly in the face of the blessed sun,” which startles the Indians into leaving (70). “Valiant Kip,” who is knocked back into the boat by the kick of the gun, is then regarded as a hero by Knickerbocker,

who calls it a great “victory” and “achievement” of the early settlers who are then able to take possession of the romantic “meadows of salt marsh” and cabbage patches in the area (70–71). The narrative is amusing and even charming to the reader who recognizes the irony of the situation, but to Knickerbocker, it is simply one of many examples of his ancestors’ great deeds in settling New York. He becomes an unwitting example of the mockery Irving sees historians making of their history.

For though a reader may be fond of the doddering, well-meaning Knickerbocker and the little emendations to his tales, not all of his inventions can help America become what it wishes to be. While Irving is deeply aware of the ramifications and importance of establishing unifying, inspiring cultural narratives with imagined histories, Knickerbocker’s attempts at helpful historical additions place himself and the Dutch people firmly in the past and out of time and purpose in the present. He is so insular in his thinking that the creation of the “huge, opaque, reflecting, inanimate mass, floating in the vast ether of infinite space” that is the world becomes, in his hands, all for the sake of bringing New York into being—the beginning and end of his whole world (21, 26). And all in the modern world seems, to the backward looking Knickerbocker, a “degenerate age” compared to the “most prosperous and blissful era” of years before where he imagines himself “surrounded by the shades of the departed, and holding sweet converse with the worthies of antiquity”—a favorite trope of antiquaries and historians of the day (90–91). Knickerbocker does not live or participate in the present, but lives in the past of his narrative in the company of ghosts—he is completely wrapped up in what was, rather than what might now be made of it. Like the old Dutch inhabitants of the villages in his stories, Knickerbocker is content to let the world pass by as he burrows his nose into his studies and books and into the comfortable invented past and the myths he creates. Against all the American

hopes of progress and power in the larger world, he places all his hopes in an age where the people were suspicious of the outside world and actively rejected the advances of time, sliding back into old superstitions and beliefs in their isolation. It is a mythmaking that cannot advance nationalist ambitions as Irving believes they must be advanced in a modern world.

Many of Diedrich Knickerbocker's tales are mostly harmless legends and myths, fondly cherished by Americans for the quaint image they paint of the past; however, Irving warns against actually giving in to such antiquated beliefs and allowing them to influence present associations as he writes into the *History* some uncomfortably familiar images of Native Americans. As Wynette Hamilton explains, even in the earliest memory of the nation, an Indian "was not shown so much as he was in reality, but as he was in the minds of his Anglo conquerors and society in general. They read into him the character and traits they wished to find... that most suited them in their dealings" with him (25). Troy Bickham adds that "the prevalent public perception of Indians as merciless instruments of death and destruction reached its apogee during the American Revolution" as they became, in the minds of the people, the "benchmarks for barbarity and depravity" (64–65). These images pulled all the prejudices and anger from previous wars and skirmishes into the forefront of public memory to be renewed in righteous anger at Indian tribes who had sided with Britain in the conflict.

In Knickerbocker's *History*, too, Indians are deemed cruel, ignorant, and savage in order to justify prejudice against them—an image of savagery lingering in Irving's day. They are, in Knickerbocker's reports, "a perverse, illiterate, dumb, beardless, black-seed—mere wild beasts of the forests and, like them, should either be subdued or exterminated," recalling in some ways the "bad" Indians of Cooper's novels who resist European expansion at the expense of their people (43). Though the natives live according to their needs instead of capricious wants and live

morally, Knickerbocker calls them inferiors because lifestyles of simplicity and contentment seem incomprehensible to the ever wanting, never satisfied Europeans (44). These views, though appearing obviously ridiculous among the speculative and creative histories Knickerbocker writes, in previous years, were unpleasantly close to what people had actually believed. But filtered through Knickerbocker, such beliefs belong to the past with all their fears and prejudices, not to a modern age where such views destroy their hope of cultural capital and a more noble history than can be provided by doddering Dutch settlers.

Having been born in the final year of the Revolutionary War, Irving was part of a new generation of Americans, and even Britons, that were beginning to realize that their tradition of seeing Native Americans as savages and brutes was not progressive or helpful to their understanding of themselves or others (Fulford 84). One of the most interesting and compelling segments in *A History of New York*, then, is the story of the moon men who treat the people on Earth as the Europeans treated the American Indians—a common plot device adapted from satires like Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* where an outsider comes to offer a biting critique of Western society. As Kate Flint explains in her assessment of the time period, such deliberately written “unease about how European practices might look when viewed from the outside was to become a staple of serious writing about Native Americans during the nineteenth century” (51). Though Knickerbocker cites his “parallel case” as an argument to show how just it was that the Europeans conquered the Native Americans and took the land, it is Irving's scathing rebuke of how easily these people were transformed into an image of primitive savagery based on superficial, external characteristics and the opinion of a few who perpetuated these ideas in history (47). When the moon men come to Earth, they are shocked by sight of the “miserable savages” they see who “carry their heads upon their shoulders, instead of under their arms—have

two eyes instead of one—are utterly destitute of tails, and of a variety of unseemly complexions, particularly of horrible whiteness, instead of pea-green” (49), alluding to the spurious anthropological studies and comparative anatomists who, as Kitson explains, declared Native Americans inferior for their red skin and facial structure, justifying people’s abhorrence and fear of them (23).

However, Irving writes, these are the ideas of “lunatics,” not rational human beings (49). These images are meant to make the reader feel uneasy—to help the reader see what Irving and others like him realized: that what is “known” about Native Americans can be traced back to idle tales, rumors, and prejudice. These segments filter those popular arguments and ideas through the mouths of “utter lunatics” whose assessments of humanity echo the work of the scientific community that claimed that the shape of a skull and color of skin could reveal inner morality and intellect. He reveals how ridiculous it is that such myths have been allowed to endure for so long, unchallenged and unchanged; for though Americans and Britons have perpetuated the image of Native Americans and their homeland as a model of unexamined ignorance, there is still an untapped potential well of culture and sensibility that the Europeans, like the moon men, were at first unable to comprehend.

It is not enough, Irving suggests, that one be able to create a cultural memory: as he shows his readers through Knickerbocker, inventing a history is one of the easiest things in the world to do. As a culture, however, Americans need to be more selective about the types of histories they allow to mold their national identity. If the United States hopes to improve its image, its people must be able to reject the prejudices of the past and rewrite them from a more knowledgeable perspective that allows them to relate to a world outside of themselves. They should be able to distinguish between those cultural memories which lead to a building up and

restoration of admirable past values and those which lead a nation to become unreasoning and suspicious in its dealings with others. What makes *A History of New York* work for Irving is the powerful sense of self-awareness he creates for his readers in selecting and maintaining their national and cultural memories. Memories are not value-neutral; they are not simply traditions to be maintained without reflection. Readers, Irving argues, should be skeptical of their traditions, as well as active participants in their creation, to ensure that the history that is preserved is the one which will best serve the needs of a nation.

Traditions of Memory and Remembrance Abroad

It was almost ten years later in *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* that Irving revisited the theme of romantic history as he highlighted the elements of truly productive national narratives that Americans should be striving to create. While many consider Crayon to simply be a pen name, Pollard suggests that if we think of Crayon as an autonomous character, in conversation with and inhabiting the same world as Diedrich Knickerbocker, we are able to see how the characters' respective narrative views of cultural memory reflect and complement one another in Irving's overall project (123). Crayon represents a new generation of Americans, eager to prove himself in the world but fearing the inadequacy of his efforts. Though readers had affection for Knickerbocker for all his mistakes and bumbling through history, they did not necessarily identify with him; Crayon, on the other hand, was someone who shared their fears and could recognize where they were coming from. His *Sketchbook* records his growing awareness and appreciation for the mutability of history, as he recognizes how it is employed to build national identity and a sense of common community. But Crayon assures the reader through his sketches that it is not just Americans hoping to be able to invent history and national

memory in this way; it is an ongoing process of reinvention and traditionalizing that other nations, including Britain, have been engaged in for centuries in order to build up their image.

Written from the perspective of a displaced American, the British stories in *The Sketchbook* are caught up in issues of memory and absent past that haunt the young American nation. Crayon seems to feel all of that anxiety as he begins his little book of sketches, saying that though an American need never “look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery,” Britain holds a peculiar power over the American imagination (9). As he explains, “Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical associations... My native country was full of youthful promise; Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age” (9). Separated from this rich past, Crayon arrives in England to “the land of [his] forefathers—but felt that [he] was a stranger in the land” (15). Because Crayon comes from a nation that does not yet know itself, the enveloping culture and tradition of Britain seems strange, yet familiar to him, as he tries to reclaim his connections to a long-lost heritage. But everywhere he goes, there is some significant association worthy of intellectual pilgrimage—Shakespeare’s birthplace, Westminster Abbey, ancient libraries filled with voices of the dead; he is simply overwhelmed with the weight of history and association.

Though Crayon is at first entranced by the seeming depth of history in England compared to America, it soon becomes apparent that England’s image is also dependent on the willingness of the people to buy into it. He begins to notice that it is always the imaginative association which takes precedence over actual history. In his visit to Stratford-upon-Avon to visit the home and haunts of Shakespeare, Crayon is introduced to Shakespeare’s chair, which astounds him as it had been sold “some few years since to a northern princess, yet, strange to tell, it has found its way back again to the old chimney corner” (210). Obviously, the chair is a bit of trumpery;

nevertheless people still come to Shakespeare's childhood home and sit in "his" chair in order to feel connected to that great tradition (209–10). As Crayon realizes in this experience, it is not important to know whether *this* was the stool of Shakespeare, or (as he muses in another sketch) if *here* was the Boar's Head tavern of Falstaff: what is important is the constructed memory that inspires the cultural connection, not just with the past, but with other people who share in that memory and make up the nation itself. Crayon asks, "What is it to us whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into the belief of them, and enjoy all the charm of the reality?" (211). By preserving their literary and cultural heritage in a way that allows people to access them, these ideas, based in poetic faith, have the power to pull people together, unite them in common belief.

Jane Eberwein suggests in her reading of *The Sketchbook* that, though Crayon seems to venerate these English cultural shrines, "more attentive study discovers a tendency to debunk assumptions of British superiority" (155). For Crayon, it is really not about which people's traditions are better or worse than another's, or choosing Britain over America; it is all about learning to make traditions which preserve a sense of virtue, belief, and loyalty. He admires that ability to create traditions for future generations to return to and renew their sense of history and belonging not only to the nation, but to each other in sharing a cultural heritage. Much as Walter Scott and his collaborators revived the kilt and invented the tartan to help create a physical connection to the chivalric, joyous history they had reimagined, so do others, Crayon emphasizes, use physical symbols, actions, and places to enact their imagined histories and bring them to life. The traditions of an old-fashioned English Christmas of home, family, and friendly amusements, find their roots, not in centuries-old practices, but in a country squire who stumbled across them and, with his own additions and suggestions, persuaded the people of the village to

reenact them every year (159, 162). And because the people are persuaded to believe in these customs, to identify the “real England” with them, they are able to enjoy “all the charm” of their imagined history which, for them, becomes a reality. As Crayon writes on Christmas morning, “it seemed as if all the events of the preceding evening had been a dream,” but he is soon convinced of their reality as the people continue their celebrations, marking a continuation and stability that Crayon craves—a model of continuing national heritage that he yearns for in his own countrymen (169).

Crayon acknowledges that there is little objective truth about history or the past that people invent, but he allows himself to be temporarily charmed by the images these people create because they foster a positive identity of self-worth and belonging. Though Britain’s history can be just as “made up” as Knickerbocker’s, mixed in with all the myths and legends the people can muster, the English seem to make traditions with an eye towards the future through movements which can occur as naturally as the traditional tales of Shakespeare or as self-consciously deliberate as the country squire’s Christmas. The common people, though perhaps less aware of it, are just as engaged as writers or historians in drawing connections to the past. They are not locked up in their romanticizing and mourning of what has passed. Britons turn to figures and events of the past to build positively on selected virtues and ideals of the people, creating (for instance) traditions of chivalry, kindness, loyalty, and kinship that improve their relationships with one another. It is the personal meaning people ascribe to those myths which allows them to create their idealized cultural memory and identity. Knowing that traditions can be invented, and even changed, to better suit the needs of society, Irving explains, people can be more self-conscious in creating history, not letting it rule over them and fill them with anxiety over the past. He shows with Crayon’s observations how Britain itself has been actively perfecting its

history and the people's sense of belonging to their nation in a very short amount of time—something, Irving seems to suggest in his own literary project, that Americans should be able to do for themselves as well, if they can only find a suitable subject.

Rather than continue to perpetuate the myth of their nation as a wild, uninhabitable place of terrible savages and ignorance, then, Irving strives to prove how, with a few adjustments to their histories, Americans can overcome these negative images and reinvent themselves in the present. With Native Americans that embody the ideals, virtues, and beliefs shared by the people of the United States and admired by their British cousins, they can write a national narrative of power and feeling that draws people together and helps them create an image through which to negotiate a better relationship with the larger world.

Dispelling the Myth of the Native American in *The Sketchbook*

As noted above, in order to overcome the perception that America is a primitive wilderness unworthy and incapable of intellectual cultivation, Washington Irving attempts in *The Sketchbook* to revive the image of the Native American—the personification of America's wild nature—as a more refined and dignified symbol. Crayon is, like Irving himself, a transnational figure who admires the finer qualities of both America and Britain; and because of his understanding of cultural memory and invention, he is acutely aware of the associative damage inflicted by images of savage Native American figures—images he specifically condemns in the latter part of *The Sketchbook*. In this compendium, Irving has Geoffrey Crayon include four sketches set in America: “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” are “posthumous works” of Diedrich Knickerbocker, and “Traits of Indian Character” and “Philip of Pokanoket” are works Irving attributes to Crayon. These last two pieces were originally printed in Irving's *Analectic* in 1814 for the American public, but they were also included in the first

English edition of *The Sketchbook* and in other editions thereafter. Often, these segments are cast aside as a cursory reminder of Irving's Americanness for a British audience (Murray 214; Pollard 131). However, Irving's Indian pieces have a thematic framing in *The Sketchbook* that enhances and highlights the Native American character he was developing. Crayon, the anxious, eager American author, adopts some of Irving's indignation at the degradation of the Native American character. He calls attention to how unjust history has been to them. By placing these American pieces in the context of the sketches on Britain's romantic historicization and in direct conversation with the themes of *A History of New York*, Irving could carefully persuade his British readers to help him reclaim the Indian character as a proper subject of literature—a project he had already begun in with his pieces in the American *Analectic*.

Irving is not simply recycling past work, but placing two finely crafted pieces within the organic unity of *The Sketchbook*—pieces that were important enough to be reintroduced to the public after their first release and which Irving felt would enhance his current work. These pieces resonate with Crayon's anxiety throughout his travel narrative about the seeming absence of heritage and cultural capital in America as it compares to Britain. Like America herself, it seems that the Native Americans are doomed to be misunderstood, undervalued, and cast aside, as Crayon acknowledges in the Knickerbocker texts. However, in "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket," these figures rise up to correct the errors of *A History of New York* and the Knickerbockers who degrade them, even as they relieve Crayon's anxiety about his American heritage. In the context of *The Sketchbook*, these pieces do more than reflect on the Native American struggle; they argue that the heroic Native American figures of the past can easily match the power and longevity of Britain's heroes and traditions, and that America has a heritage as deep and as ancient and as worthy as any in Europe. Rather than cast these pieces

aside as unimportant or insignificant, we read them as a culminating gesture that completes the saga of Crayon's travels and observations abroad with his new perspective on the past and the meaning of historical memory, and with his renewed appreciation for a homeland with such a rich past and potential.

As we turn again to *The Sketchbook* with an eye towards the development of the Indian character, we see that while Knickerbocker's narratives carry with them all the unconscious bias that the old Dutchman instilled in his history of New York, Crayon demotes their influence to the realm of fairy tales and children's stories and contrasts them with his more progressive images of Native American lore to create better cultural capital. Through Crayon's book of tales, Irving extends the theme of invented traditions to an American perspective, not only creating a critical dialogue with Knickerbocker's *History*, but highlighting the absurdity of maintaining savage traditions of Native Americans across the Atlantic. As Crayon gains a finer awareness of the power of myth and memory from his experiences in British society in *The Sketchbook*, he turns to the myth-maker historian Knickerbocker to examine how such traditions and ideas have been created in his own nation. What he finds, however, is that America's traditions have been engaged in self-degradation and an obsession with the past, as shown in their negative portrayals of Native Americans in "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." These tales, Bergland suggests, represent the "madness" of the "diseased and unsettled state of the public mind" that Indians had come to represent in popular remembrance (98). Knickerbocker, unaware of the insular, outmoded ignorance he displays in his opinions, continues to represent the Native American as he did before, as a mysterious and unexplainable phenomenon—a ghostly "other" which lingers on the fringes of American history. But the depictions of natives in these stories are apparitions which haunt Crayon's American ideal with fears of isolation and cultural

stagnation that lead people to cling to ancient, outmoded beliefs in the absence of a firm sense of identity and society. Rip Van Winkle tells the village children “stories of ghosts, witches and Indians,” conflating the image of the Native American with supernatural terrors and unnatural evil, and suggesting that there is little difference in their minds between any of these figures (30). In *Sleepy Hollow*, people say that “an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered” and maintain that the place is still “under the sway of some witching power” (273). Knickerbocker even points to one of the leaders of the Salem Witch Trials as an authority figure that Ichabod Crane cannot help but be compelled by in his portrayal of America as a land of evil (276–77). The Native American of these tales is more creature than man, equated with supernatural magic and even demonism in his effect on the people of these towns. And if one reads only these two stories from *The Sketchbook* (as people often do), it would appear that Americans, cut off from the rest of the world, embrace the folk gothic tradition, filled with irrational beliefs and suspicions which are hardly acceptable in an enlightened modern age.

Though Pollard claims that the inclusion of the Knickerbocker pieces of “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” are simply evidence of Irving’s nationalist confusion and inability to let go of his American sentiments in a work mostly concerned with Britain, these sketches create a thematic connection with *A History of New York* (123). By including these legends, Irving shows that Crayon, like many Americans, feels the power of invented histories and memories as much as anyone in Britain feels the power of their traditions and legends. So much did Crayon apparently enjoy these tales that he felt compelled to include them in his book alongside his own images of Britain. And just as Crayon recognizes the underlying mechanisms supporting Britain’s history, he is also able to see Knickerbocker’s

stories for what they are and what they represent for his homeland. But while Knickerbocker is wrapped up in the glory of his illusions and shining vision of the past, Crayon is acutely aware of the damages that some of these invented notions and ideas can inflict on future generations. Images of the Native American in particular seem to trouble him, and he takes care in identifying the harmful picture they suggest of America, not enlightened and civilized, but superstitious and insular in its understanding of the larger world.

Crayon does not let those old images of Indians lie unchallenged, and he responds to them with “Traits of Indian Character” and “Philip of Pokanoket,” explaining that prevailing myths are simply the errors of an earlier age, no longer common beliefs of the American people who are much more civilized and self-aware of their histories and inventions than their ancestors. In “Traits of Indian Character,” Crayon specifically attacks the claims suggested in Knickerbocker’s tales that natives were demonic, evil, and animalistic, explaining that such ideas are merely the product of “bigoted and interested writers” and of the colonists who “treated [Indians] like beasts of the forest” because they “found it easier to exterminate than to civilize... to vilify than to discriminate” (225). As Bergland reads, colonial depictions of Indians are often “assumptions of willful blindness” that contribute to a degraded American character (93). Crayon endeavors to prove that these depictions are mere fictions and fabrications, like the stories themselves. Though Knickerbocker professes to have “full belief” in the story of Rip Van Winkle, Crayon notes, with a wink to the reader, that “one would suspect” the story is an adaptation from a rather similar German folk tale—and, moreover, that the story changes every time Rip tells it (41). Eberwein similarly expresses that the tales are “undercut” as the author creates “engendering doubts” about their scholarship in provocative ways (161). Even the narrator who told Knickerbocker the story of “Sleepy Hollow” exclaims, “I don’t believe one

half of it myself” (297). In such “undercuts,” Crayon chastises those who might be tempted to continue to believe threadbare stories and depictions of Native Americans and the United States by reminding the readers of “Sleepy Hollow,” both English and American, that “Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered, long settled retreats; but are trampled under foot, by the... population of most of our country places” (289). Though historians like Knickerbocker may attempt to lengthen their influence over people and authenticate their tales with spurious accounts and witnesses, these stories, Crayon emphasizes, are not the productions of civilized, enlightened people, but people caught up in the past or cut off from the modern world. Even if these stories are charming, they do not depict the true character of a nation or a people. To prolong that credulity in such depictions is to reveal profound ignorance—a resounding rebuke of the continuing belief in natural American barbarism that persisted in less educated circles, despite numerous proofs of its prejudiced inaccuracy.

Because Crayon is able to expose for his readers the mechanisms by which histories are invented and remembered in his sketches, it is then possible for him to justify creating a new image for the Native American. He is able to show his readers in “Traits of Indian Character” that these narratives were arbitrarily created in a past age to justify action against an imagined enemy. As Crayon writes, the Native Americans were portrayed as a foreign and strange culture, even animalistic, to prevent the people from relating to them—seeing only their “acts of hostility,” “caprice and perfidy,” and “barbarism” in their dealings with whites, instead of their common humanity (229). In his own reading, however, Indians are a strong people, resisting unjust persecution. He laments the shortsightedness of rejecting their rich cultural heritage, remarking with sadness that “the eastern tribes have long since disappeared; the forests that sheltered them have been laid low, and scarce remain any traces of them in the thickly settled

states of New England,” making it seem as if they are destined to be ghosts forever because of how they have been rejected by his society (232–33).

However, like the intractable Scots of the period’s most popular novels, the natives refuse to utterly fade away, lingering in the edges of memory: images that may be recalled by “the romantic dreams of the poet” and “to people in imagination” (233). America herself, it seems, refuses to be tamed by European expectation and has a power of her own to resist those fabrications: the ghosts of the American past still linger, waiting to be revived and reborn as the romantic heroes of a bygone age (Murray 216). Rather than follow Britain in their caricature of Native Americans and prolong old ways of thinking, Crayon strives in *The Sketchbook* to prove that America has the potential to be a unique nation with a history and cultural memory of its own that resists attempts to roust it from the landscape. Instead of continuing to fear the Indians, Americans can symbolically embrace them as their cultural and spiritual ancestors and allow that legacy to continue through them. While relations with living Native Americans would still be difficult, this would allow the United States to connect to the heritage of their land and develop a national narrative that establishes their independence and unique cultural identity in a way that Britain will no longer be able to ignore or degrade, but even come to admire for its powerful sense of self. As Crayon observes in “English Writers on America,” those “causes which are operating to strengthen and ennoble” the “national character” can only be appreciated by those willing to open their minds beyond themselves and their insular sense of society (44). We must “shake off the national prejudices,” he exclaims, “as we would the local superstitions, of the old world” (49). Though still-living Native Americans would continue to struggle for acceptance, fighting ongoing racial and cultural prejudice, the superstitious and backward images of

“Indians” in American and British history could at least be overturned as Crayon suggests a more useful image of these people to dignify the general American character.

In “Traits of Indian Character,” Irving uses the glowing descriptions of Crayon to portray the Native American as a living link to the past when people lived simply and well, in harmony with nature and their fellow man, relying on and trusting one another with open hearts. While other Romantic authors like Wordsworth and Shelley had made the image of the “noble savage” resonate among the elite, Crayon makes these images accessible to a more general public. He expresses that “There is something in the character and habits of the North American savage, taken in connexion with the scenery over which he is accustomed to range, its vast lakes, boundless forests, majestic rivers and trackless plains, that is, to my mind, wonderfully striking and sublime” (225). Crayon informs his readers that the Romantic idealization of pure, unspoiled nature exists in the Native Americans themselves. He reinforces the hope expressed in years before that the “noble savage” might be the link that brings humanity face to face with the seemingly unattainable mystery of the natural world—the simple, ancient past that draws Man back to his foundations to discover himself. It is a noble character that stems, not from what is deemed “civilization,” but from personal convictions that stem from the land itself and a love of their people and way of life. “Can any one,” he writes, not admire “the loftiness of spirit that seemed to nerve the hearts of these self-taught heroes and to raise them above the instinctive feelings of human nature?” (232). America, Crayon declares, is an untamed, pure landscape unmediated by a modern society that allows access to true spiritual growth.

The images he paints create an indelible link between the inspiring possibilities of America’s Romantic nature and its “natural” children. “No roof then rose,” he writes, “but was open to the homeless stranger; no smoke curled among the trees, but he was welcome to sit down

by its fire” (227). Taught by nature to be generous and kind, these Native Americans are not the callous members of privileged society, not the savage, unthinking beasts of the old tales which have prevented people from “properly appreciating” their “character and customs” (227, 229). They live in the “boundless bosom of the wilderness,” their teacher and spiritual guide, as though they are on “the pilgrimage of the devotee, or the crusade of the knight errant” (231). These passages recall the works of Romantic poets as Crayon suggests that the landscape of America is the great sublime environment of pure, unmediated spiritual feeling. Rather than just admire the traditional, sculpted landscapes of England that produce staid, tamed emotions, authors looked to awe-inspiring, spiritual landscapes, like those of the wild, wind-swept Highlands, or of the grand vistas, tall mountains, and sweeping rivers of the United States (Fulford 24–25, 63–64). America is not a degenerative, but an enlivening environment in Crayon’s writing—uncanny yet sublime in its expression of the inner truths and desires of mankind. As readers search for the divine, poetic inspiration of the Romantic age, reaching towards inner being and self-awareness beyond traditional boundaries and social convention, the Native American presents a ready link between man and nature (Hamilton 8). A link which, though many in the modern, hectic world of industry feared they had lost, Crayon shows can be restored to them if they can find their kinship with people who live so close to their spiritual roots, rather than reject them as godless pagans.

To play into this dialogue of spiritual romantic nature and debunk unproductive beliefs of savagery and demonic influence, Crayon depicts Native Americans as natural and noble philosophers: religious by and through nature. Morality, Crayon argues, is something engrained into the Indian culture, an essential part of their being, instead of the veneer of society as it has been in other nations: “The moral laws that govern [the Indian] are, to be sure, but few; but then, he conforms to them all;—the white man abounds in laws of religion, morals and manners, but

how many does he violate” (227). While the prejudice and hypocrisy of the modernizing world threatened the morality and values that Europeans treasured, the Native Americans of Crayon’s idealization are open-handed and open-hearted: “their wants were few, and the means of gratification within their reach” (227). This is not a land which is threatened by greed and class distinctions which plague more “civilized” societies, but a land where people may learn to live in harmony not only with nature but with each other. This idyllic imagining of Native American society creates a nostalgia for natural, spiritual living and combats the image of “civilized life” where “the happiness, and indeed almost the existence, of man, depends so much on... acting a studied part” and “what is termed good breeding” (234). Their morality is rooted in an organic landscape instead of the hypocrisy of civilization.

Crayon also takes care to promote common humanity and sympathy in his depictions of the Indians, emphasizing the qualities which unite them with the rest of the world in their basic goodness, courage, and concern for their families. America need not be ashamed of these predecessors of her modern age, but may embrace them as kin who continue on in their lives as examples of natural goodness and innocence. Though this does tend to simplify the complexity of these people, as America’s ancestral progenitors, it reminds Americans of their duty as a society, and as human beings, to one another. Crayon writes the Native Americans as the owners of natural courtesy and dignity, and argues that they are possessed, not of demons, but of “those quiet, but invaluable virtues, which silently ennoble the human character” (230). They are dedicated, as those whom Crayon observed in England reliving the memories of the past, to the “sepulchres of their kindred,” revering those who have passed before them and looking to them for inspiration at their graves where they “have passed hours in silent meditation” (228). They have a rooted connection to the lands where they live and die—a connection which the

immigrant Americans were still trying to establish. There is a depth of intimate emotion and sympathy in these descriptions that expresses the basic humanity of the Native Americans. Where they had once been accused of having no “sympathies and affections,” Crayon suggests that their silence is evidence of deeper feelings which their strong connection to one another provides (225). This intimate depiction of humanity and mourning is an act which both Americans and Britons can identify themselves with and appreciate. And as the English characters of *The Sketchbook* remembered and cherished the past, Crayon shows these Indians also have a keenly developed awareness of history, and their long memories create a heritage as rich and as deep as that of any nation of Europe.

Finally, in the character of King Philip, Crayon completes his appropriation of the Native American past into the narrative of the Anglophonic world by invoking the tropes of the romantic hero, particularly scripted with national appeals. King Philip is considered neither good nor evil for his resistance to white settlers, but is a misunderstood, proud, and patriotic leader of his people. For Crayon, Philip represents “a solitary and independent being, [who] obeys the impulses of his inclination or the dictates of his judgment” rather than allow other people to influence his actions (234). With these qualities, Philip seems a designated American patriot. He and his warriors, “a band of native untaught heroes,” are characterized as lovers of liberty and removers of oppression, as if they were soldiers of the Revolutionary War. They are “fighting to the last gasp in the cause of their country,” and this action renders them “worthy of an age of poetry, and fit subjects for local story and romantic fiction” in Crayon’s heightened and idealized portrait (235). Like the Founding Fathers, Philip was rejected as a traitor by those who fought against him as he attempted to protect his nation, but Crayon protests that “we find him displaying a vigorous mind; a fertility in expedients; a contempt of suffering and hardship; and

an unconquerable resolution; that command our sympathy and applause” (240). The image of Philip and his people draws on all the nationalistic virtue and pride which America can claim from its War of Independence and creates a unifying cultural memory of resistance and self-reliance as indelible parts of the American character which seem to have sprung from the land itself, tied back to an ancient heritage which has passed it on to the next inhabitants.

However, Philip is not just a hero for America, but a hero who can rival the greatest Britain can offer. Everything about Philip is dignified and even classical, to the point where critics like Eberwein have argued he seems written to appeal specifically to the English audience of *The Sketchbook* (Eberwein 163; Velikova 318). Because these readers are “accustomed to honoring royal figures and sympathizing with their defeats,” Philip’s tale adopts “the language of chivalric romance—investing tribal chiefs with regal titles” in order to “exalt these human manifestations of natural sublimity” (Eberwein 163–64). Crayon, drawing upon the romantic imagery of the forest king, the natural leader sprung from the earth, imbues Philip with all the virtues of European and American idealism, portraying him as the ultimate pinnacle of such heroes in an age which sorely needed them (*Sketchbook* 246–47). In this appreciative portrait, Philip is both “patriot” and “prince,” with chivalry and skill which rival, and even surpass, the romantic and noble heroes of Britain. He even has the heroic, solitary death of a warrior which graced such tales. Philip is a hero that embodies the best ideals of both nations. He is a warrior firm of heart and purpose, concerned primarily for the welfare of his people—an image specifically tailored for the Britons who fear their modern society was diluting the responsibilities and nobility of the upper class (Fulford 101). While the modern “nobleman” remains in the “ease and luxury of the settlements” of London, firmly seated in the wealth of land, commerce, and industry, Philip is out among his people, sharing in their toils, sorrows, and

defeats, refusing with his noble spirit to abandon his people (242–43). He is everyman's leader, but with the dignity and nobility that the Britons desperately hope to re-cultivate in their own leadership, an exemplar of “the manly virtues that Britons should be relearning... full of courage, passion, coolness under fire, and physical power” (Fulford 24). Philip is an American nobleman, defined not by his birth, but by his deeds, and with his Romantic figure, he unseats the image of the ignorant, mindless, barbaric savage, and replaces it with intelligence, eloquence, and courage.

Conclusion

Despite the artificial boundaries America and Britain had built up in their nationalist mythologies, Irving writes, these narratives serve only to create further division and unprofitable transnational relationships. Their treatment of the Native American figure is symptomatic of these underlying issues, being manipulated and misused to fuel international debates. While Irving begins to confront this separation in *A History of New York* and *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon*—a separation so multifaceted and varied in its manifestations—he creates a Native American figure which allows Americans and Britons to relate to one another in a way that does not threaten their sense of self or degrade their national identity and culture. He envisions a figure which draws on both American and British national values to create a common symbol of chivalry, spiritualism, cultural pride, and communal relationships. That Native American is an idealistic model which incorporates the simple innocence and nobility which people admired in “primitive” cultures with a powerful unifying narrative that ennoble, rather than degrades them. Because cultural memories can be manipulated and transformed, Irving suggests, symbols which had been previous markers of social degeneracy can be re-envisioned as redemptive and restorative of ancient values and a sense of common humanity. His Native Americans embody what he regards as the best values and ideals of both America and Britain,

helping to create a transnational narrative both countries can embrace. In these works, the Native American becomes a restorative marker of shared values which does not threaten their national integrity, but encourages a more productive relationship.

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