A SCIENCE OF LITERATURE: ETHNOLOGY AND THE COLLECTION OF INDIGENOUS ORAL TRADITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

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James A. Puckett
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Examining Committee Members:

Dr. James Salazar, Advisory Chair, English
Dr. Katherine Henry, TU English
Dr. Talissa Ford, TU English
Dr. Bethany Schneider, External Member, Bryn Mawr College

ABSTRACT

In *A Science of Literature*, I examine how and why US ethnologists and popular authors of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries collected, read, and interpreted Indigenous oral traditions as works of literature. “Oral traditions” in this case refers to the narratives and songs that Indigenous peoples maintained mostly orally, and which variously served religious, historical, philosophical, educational, and entertainment purposes within Indigenous communities. I track how, through the collection process, Euro-American authors transformed oral traditions into “Indian oral literature,” (re)writing versions of oral traditions that aligned with Western literary categories and attitudes toward the “primitive.” For the most part, this reconceptualization, I argue, worked to discredit oral traditions as bodies of knowledge—as works of fiction and poetry, oral traditions became, in effect, untrue—and it supported removal and assimilation efforts in so far as it was used to shed light on a primitive Indian psychology, one that was naturally poetic, but not rational, not scientific. And yet many Indigenous writers, like George Copway and Zitkala-Ša, took advantage of the popularity of Indian oral literature to produce their own print collections of oral traditions. I analyze these collections as works of Indigenous “counter science.” I show how Indigenous writers, for example, moved from informant to ethnologist as they cited, summarized, and transcribed oral traditions as tribal records (histories, maps, deeds) and later as works of moral philosophy, thus explicitly contesting their interpretation as merely works of the imagination. Oral traditions, as I argue, have functioned as important resources to which Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers alike turned to validate scientific and literary practices, to contest the history of colonization, and to debate US-Indian relations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: FABLE OR FACT? INDIGENOUS ORAL TRADITIONS AND ETHNOLOGY

In this dissertation I examine the collection and study of Indigenous oral traditions in the United States from the early republic to the first decades of the twentieth century. Throughout the colonization of the Americas, Euro-American missionaries, soldiers, traders, and itinerants of all kinds wrote continuously, compulsively even, about the continents' Indigenous peoples. Part of the extensive, written discourse that emerged around the original occupants of the "New World," as Europeans called it, included documentation of those peoples' oral traditions: orally maintained records, narratives, and songs, which Euro-Americans translated and sometimes published, typically as part of reports, travelogues, or histories of the Americas. By the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, the collection of Indigenous oral traditions both accelerated and changed as ethnology—the science of man, later known as "anthropology"—emerged as a distinct scientific practice, the primary focus of which, in the United States at least, was the Indian. A sizable print archive of Indigenous oral traditions emerged within ethnological writing, fragmentary and haphazard at first, but increasingly deliberate, both methodologically and theoretically. I track this progression, focusing on a persistent preoccupation among ethnologists over the literary dimensions of Indigenous oral traditions. To Euro-Americans, oral traditions—which could be simultaneously histories, religious beliefs, philosophy, maps, constitutions, lessons in ecology, and entertainment—posed epistemological challenges. The uncertainty around their generic status, however, proved highly generative for ethnological discourse, as many Euro-

Americans became interested in oral traditions as both literary works and empirical evidence, analyzing their literary dimensions to debate, prove, and elucidate various scientific theories, such as the common origin of humankind (monogenesis), psychic unity, and cultural evolution and diffusion. I call this work, collectively, ethnology's "science of literature."

Although ethnology in the United States purportedly described and revealed the character of the Indian, Euro-Americans' attempts to understand, translate, and transform oral traditions through familiar Western categories like "fiction" or "poetry," and simultaneously to study them as scientific objects, registers many currents of Western thought at the time. Broadly speaking, the collection of Indigenous oral traditions exposes the interrelatedness of political, scientific, and literary developments within the United States. It reveals the importance of literary studies and literary movements to the trajectories of ethnology, and vice versa, as well as the centrality of Indigenous knowledge, intellectuals, and writers to the developments of both US ethnology and US literature. It has long been recognized, for example, that Western conceptions of literature and science evolved in tandem during this period, as two supposedly antithetical discourses—one subjective, figurative, and imaginary, and the other (its opposite), objective, literal, real. This development has typically been viewed as a schism, in which the differentiation of scientific and literary modes of communication and knowledge was a key method of defining and giving "birth" to the sciences, including ethnology (Debaene 14-16). An examination of US ethnologists' interests in oral traditions and their uncertain status as literary works both confirms and furthers our understanding of that process. It reveals how definitions of the literary and ethnology were intimately bound up

with one another, but also (and simultaneously) with those of primitivity and civilization. As I argue, US ethnologists, rather than simply identifying and excising literary elements from ethnological discourse—and thus relegating them to the poet or novelist—steadily incorporated the literary into their work as an object of study, which, surprisingly, they used to define and validate ethnology as a scientific practice. Through ethnology's collection and study of Indigenous oral traditions, the literary and the primitive were conflated with one another. The Indian was figured as embodying the literary, possessing an essentially poetic psychology and mode of expression, which contrasted directly with the prosaic objectivity of the Euro-American ethnologist. This characterization of American Indians and their oral traditions (as literary) dovetailed, I argue, with removal and, later, assimilation efforts in the United States, namely by confirming the Indian's supposedly stunted mental and cultural development—the Indian could produce poetry and fables, but not history, nor science. And yet the methods and arguments of US ethnologists regarding oral traditions reveal the degree to which popular literary movements, from Romanticism to regional fiction, influenced their thinking, undermining the very distinctions between science and literature, primitive and civilized, that they constructed. Similarly, ethnology's study of oral traditions directly contributed to the development of nineteenth and early-twentieth century US literature by providing collections from which popular writers appropriated material to produce new works of poetry and fiction and to articulate uniquely American literary traditions. Like the ethnologists, on whose work they often relied, popular writers turned to Indian oral fiction and poetry to define and validate their own literary practices.

I examine three main phases of this history: antebellum, postbellum, and modernist. My first three chapters, including this one, concern antebellum collection practices, whereas my fourth chapter focuses on postbellum ones, and my final two chapters consider the collection of oral traditions amid literary modernism. US ethnology's collection and study of Indigenous oral traditions had many influences that shaped it over the years, including German folklore studies and Edward B. Tylor's work on mythology and culture. However, US ethnology's nearly myopic focus on the Indian meant that most of the important work done in the field occurred within the United States, none of which stands out as an origin point more than Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches* (1839). Although *Algic Researches* had many precursors, which I explore later in this chapter, Schoolcraft, with the aid of Indigenous storytellers like the Odawa chief Chusco and Indigenous writers like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, presented the US public with the first stand-alone collection of American Indian oral literature. With its publication, Schoolcraft transitioned from a career as an Indian agent to become one of the first government-funded ethnologists; meanwhile, *Algic Researches* initiated widespread interest in Indigenous oral traditions among late-antebellum readers and authors, the most conspicuous of which was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who utilized Schoolcraft's collected works to write his immensely popular poem *Song of Hiawatha* (1855). But other popular writers of the time, such as Anna Jameson and Susan Cummings Johnson (the latter of whom was known best by her pen name, "Minnie Myrtle") likewise capitalized on the public's fascination with Indigenous oral traditions by publishing selections of Indian "legends." Schoolcraft's work, furthermore, led to critical responses from well-known Indigenous authors like the Mississauga-Ojibwe

writer George Copway (Gaagigegaabaw), who produced their own ethnological studies in which they translated, transcribed, and utilized Indigenous oral traditions, and which I examine as alternatives and even rebuttals to Schoolcraft's work. Since the publication of Roy Harvey Pearce's *Savagism and Civilization* (1953), the importance of the Indian as a symbol in US literature has been well established among scholars. Beginning in the early republic, novelists and poets turned to colonial encounters with the Indian as a subject with which to distinguish American literature from that of Europe, as well as to construct a shared national past that both acknowledged and placated the dispossession that marred it. This dissertation further examines that function by seeking to better understand the roles played by both real and imagined Indian authors in the histories of US literary nationalism and the science of ethnology. Euro-American writers, I argue, conceptualized the Indian as not just a subject but a *producer of* American literature, creating images of the Indian as a supposedly natural literary artist. Euro-Americans recorded, read, and rewrote Indigenous stories and songs, and Indigenous authors in turn recorded their own print versions of oral traditions, often contesting Euro-American representations of them.

This interest in Indigenous oral traditions in the antebellum period helped launch the "science of mythology," as it was described by its postbellum practitioners, especially Daniel Garrison Brinton and John Wesley Powell (Brinton, *The Religious* 157). Brinton was an important and formidable figure in the professionalization of ethnology, and following the Civil War he collected and wrote extensively about "Aboriginal American Literature," including an eight-volume anthology, which Brinton edited during the 1880s. Powell, who for two decades directed the Bureau of Ethnology, later called the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), likewise oversaw a team of researchers and their

collaborators—such as Frank Hamilton Cushing, James Mooney, Erminnie Smith, Albert Gatschet, J. N. B. Hewitt, and many others—who together appropriated material objects and data from American Indians living across the United States, a key component of which were their oral traditions. By 1898, Powell's last year as director, the BAE identified its "most important and valuable property" as its manuscripts, "embracing more than 2,000 titles," which were held in "two large fireproof vaults" on the sixth floor of the Adams building on F street in Washington D.C. (Powell, *Fifteenth* xci). As Powell's and Brinton's influence on ethnology waned, Franz Boas and his students continued the hurried work of preserving Indigenous oral traditions in written form, what many scholars today refer to as "salvage" ethnology. They published their findings in the *Journal of American Folklore* (*JAF*), BAE reports, and stand-alone collections, seeking to record Native languages and further ethnology's understanding of cultural diffusion before Indigenous cultures supposedly "vanished." Alongside that endeavor, popular writers of the early-twentieth century—like Ernest Thompson Seton, Mary Hunter Austin, and Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa—worked as amateur ethnologists, publishing versions of Indigenous oral traditions as children's adventure tales and even imagist poetry. As the nation coped with the dislocations and disorientations of modernity, including mass urbanization, industrialization, and immigration, thousands of Euro-Americans turned to Indian stories and poems to imaginatively reconnect with nature and America's origins. Collections of Indian tales for children were sold as school primers across the United States; meanwhile, Harriet Monroe's avant-garde literary magazine, *Poetry*, issued a special Indian edition in 1917, and literary critics and poets pulled from BAE annual reports to produce anthologies of Indian oral poetry for the lay

reader. This dissertation explores and analyzes the complex linkages among these various historical approaches to collecting oral traditions.

In each of these phases, the collection strategies varied and evolved over time. The arguments that emerged regarding oral traditions, and the stakes of those arguments, changed in response to shifting understandings of literature, ethnology, and the primitive, as well as to new social and political landscapes, all of which actively shaped and reshaped a prodigious, complex, and historically vexed archive of Indigenous oral traditions. Throughout that history, both Euro-American and Indigenous authors, as well as amateur and professional ethnologists, turned to oral traditions as resources with which to debate US-Indian relations, authenticate scientific and literary practices, and contest the history of colonization. Given that they were, by definition, originally maintained orally, Indigenous oral traditions proved malleable in the hands of the collector; even previously recorded traditions could be rewritten, repackaged, and thus transformed through republication. Each generation of writers essentially saw Indigenous oral traditions anew, constructing different, sometimes competing versions of them through the collection process: from distorted tales of the Old Testament, oral traditions became romantic "legends"; later, professional ethnologists like Powell revealed them to be primitive works of natural history, veiled in the fictional language of "myth"; at the turn of the century, popular authors yet again transformed oral traditions, this time, however, into nature tales for children, and soon thereafter into proto-modernist poetry. The motivations behind, and the implications of each of the various collection strategies that I examine in this dissertation cannot properly be understood independent of the specific historical contexts in which they emerged, nor without consideration of the specific men

and women who practiced them. Nonetheless, throughout this history a general picture does emerge. As I argue in this introduction and in the chapters that follow it, the collection of oral traditions as *literary* works—that is, as artistic works of the imagination—most often ran counter to Indigenous epistemologies and interests, and it functioned, even when celebrating the literary artistry of the Indian, to discredit those traditions as bodies of knowledge, especially in so far as they might document tribal histories, territories, or colonial aggressions and transgressions. Whatever cultural capital they may have gained as "literature," Indigenous oral traditions, as fiction or poetry, became, in effect, *untrue*. Designating oral traditions as *oral literature* shifted their value, firstly, away from the historical to the literary. That shift, as I argue, was a prerequisite for, on the one hand, their study as scientific objects, in which they now provided evidence, not of tribal or colonial history, but of ethnological theories regarding the primitive mind and the evolution of culture; on the other hand, that shift also enabled their appropriation as artistic material for US authors from Longfellow to Austin. The collection of Indigenous oral traditions, of course, provided linguistic data needed by the US government, and once reinterpreted, the traditions could bolster the United States' view of treaties and land ownership, but perhaps more than anything else, the collection of oral traditions justified westward expansion through its commitment to representing the Indian's inferiority, his innate opposition to civilization—what Pearce, in his landmark study, called "savagism," or what Gerald Vizenor has more recently called "simulations of dominance" (5).

The belief that oral traditions were really works of oral literature, however, was not uniform, nor were its implications. Among Euro-Americans there were many

disagreements over the character of both the Indian and his oral traditions. The public interest in oral traditions, moreover, created opportunities—even if circumscribed by the racism of the day—for Indigenous writers like Copway and William Whipple Warren (a Minnesota congressman and interpreter, of Ojibwe descent) to position themselves publicly as experts on Indigenous cultures. I demonstrate how they contested Euro-Americans' understandings of oral traditions by pursuing alternative collection strategies that were grounded in Indigenous epistemologies and concepts, and by explicitly refuting the work of preeminent ethnologists. This dissertation seeks to do more, therefore, than detail yet another way in which "savagism" or discursive "dominance" occurred throughout US history. My goal is not to write what Donald Bahr has called a "victimist" history, in which helpless Indians are seen to suffer at the hands of ruthless, land-hungry Euro-Americans (qtd. in Krupat, *Ethnocriticism* 20). There was, of course, much suffering on the part of American Indians during these years, which this study recognizes. But the collection of Indigenous oral traditions did not feature the expansionist-exploiters and scientists on one side, with the Indian victims and their liberal sympathizers on the other. Vizenor has famously contrasted such "victimry" with what he calls "survivance": "an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name . . . renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry" (vii). This study consistently highlights stories of American Indian survivance, exploring the extent to which those stories influenced the science of ethnology and, through it, US literature.

As both its subjects and its producers, American Indians were the foundation of US ethnology. They did the work of ethnology in two senses. Firstly, Indigenous informants related their people's oral traditions, sometimes verbally and sometimes

through transcription and translation, or they otherwise acted as intermediaries for non-Indigenous ethnological writers, the latter of whom typically recorded and published the informants' traditions and cited their names within footnotes—behind every non-Indigenous ethnological publication I consider in this dissertation is the knowledge and labor of such individuals. Secondly, Indigenous writers from David Cusick to Eastman produced what Mary Louise Pratt has called "autoethnographies," works in which the colonized "describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them," appropriating and remaking the genres and terms of the colonizing culture in the process. Ethnological discourse, especially as it concerned Indigenous oral traditions, was thus a "contact zone": a "social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt 34-35). Whether as informant, intermediary, or ethnologist, American Indians were critical to (and of) US ethnology. In drawing attention to their importance to the science, and in insisting that we view them as creators (and not just the subjects or victims) of ethnological discourse, this dissertation extends the recent work of scholars like Margaret Bruchac, who in her book *Savage Kin* (2018) traces the behind-the-scenes work and unacknowledged expertise of Indigenous women who collaborated with early-twentieth century anthropologists. This dissertation likewise builds on the recent work of Britt Russert, who in her book *Fugitive Science* (2017) examines the relationship of African Americans to early-nineteenth century science, arguing that race science "created opportunities for African Americans both to criticize racist science and to mobilize scientific knowledge in anti-slavery activism and adjoining forms of struggle" (4). Ethnology and the collection of Indigenous oral traditions provided similar, even if

limited and imbalanced, opportunities for Indigenous authors to assert themselves as authorities of their cultures; it created discursive platforms to contest removal, to protect Indigenous lands, and especially to revise prevailing stereotypes of the Indian.

Russert underscores the fact that US race science and what she calls "counter-sciences" existed within the same print networks, which were mostly popular. As I argue in this dissertation, the same was true of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authored ethnological work up until its professionalization at the end of the nineteenth century, at which point Indigenous "counter-sciences" moved into more explicitly popular literary genres and publication channels, such as children's literature, while ethnology's formal study of Indian myth and folklore receded into narrower, specialized reading networks. Between the years 1825 and 1881, for instance, David Cusick (Tuscarora), William Apess (Pequot), George Copway (Mississauga-Ojibwe), Peter Jones (Mississauga-Ojibwe), William Whipple Warren (Ojibwe-French-English), Peter Dooyentate Clarke (Wyandot), and Elias Johnson (Tuscarora) all produced lengthy ethnological studies, many of which were acknowledged and cited by preeminent Euro-American ethnologists.[1] Although each of these authors and their texts (and contexts) were unique, their work tended to resist the emerging consensus that Indigenous oral traditions were fictional, and thus these authors resisted efforts to dislodge oral traditions from tribal concepts, people, and places. Instead, they grounded their ethnological studies in their peoples' oral traditions, insisting that those traditions be treated as legitimate historical

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[1] Apess's appendix to *A Son of the Forest* is, of course, a composite of other ethnological works, as is Johnson's *League of the Iroquois*, but each author alters, recombines, and adds to the source materials in novel ways, particularly Johnson.

records, thereby tying them indelibly to native landscapes, and working to connect them to present-day tribal realities rather than relegating them (and the Indian) to a distant, mythical past. Oral traditions were not literary works (myth, legend, poetry) for these Indigenous writers, but archives: deeds, maps, legal documents, and histories that, as such, challenged clichés of savagery, fortified Indigenous claims to ancestral lands, and highlighted the ignorance of Euro-American ethnologists. As ethnology professionalized at the turn of the century—through universities, government research, and academic journals—such "counter-sciences" continued to be produced, but they existed for the most part outside ethnology's official publication channels. Rather than taking up the pen as an ethnologist, authors like Eastman and Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or Zitkala-Ša, instead produced works of popular literature (e.g., children's stories), and they emphasized the philosophical as opposed to the archival dimensions of oral traditions, but they nonetheless engaged (directly and indirectly) with ethnological discourse and its representations of Indigenous oral traditions in ways that resonate powerfully with earlier Indigenous authors like Copway and Warren. Collectively, these authors resemble Vizenor's "postindian warriors," who "hover at last over the ruins of tribal representations and surmount the scriptures of manifest manners with new stories . . . [and] counter the surveillance and literature of dominance with their own simulations of survivance" (5).

As Indigenous authors engaged with and participated in ethnology and its science of literature, they created significant contributions to US ethnology and US literature, which this dissertation seeks to foreground. Their works can often be seen capitulating to the colonizing logic of ethnology—for instance, to the ideological motif of "the vanishing

Indian"—but they also (and simultaneously) challenged that logic, at times subtly and at other times quite explicitly. That is to say, Indigenous authors worked within the Western, discursive parameters of their eras, but they also sought to revise the discourses and, consequently, the dominant, colonizing culture in which they operated as writers and intellectuals, as numerous scholars of Native American and Indigenous Studies have brought to light recently, including, but not limited to, Philip Deloria, Robert D. Parker, Cathy Rex, Elizabeth Hutchinson, and most recently, Philip Round, Kiara M. Vigil, and Thomas C. Maroukis. My elucidation of those discursive limitations and acts of revision both draws upon and extends these scholars' work.

The Origins of Ethnology

At this point, I need to clarify what I mean by both "oral traditions" and "ethnology." "Ethnology," sometimes called "ethnography," was the preferred name for what its nineteenth-century practitioners conceived, broadly, as the science of man, or men (peoples), what in the United States in the early-twentieth century would come to be called "anthropology" by many (but not all) of its practitioners. Ethnology, like any other discursive practice, has many origins, including travel literature, philology, and historiography. In general, it may be said that an ethnological perspective, as it were, emerged during the age of exploration as Europeans documented and tried to make sense of the peoples they fought, proselytized, enslaved, and traded and interbred with around the world, especially in the Americas, where Europeans encountered peoples previously unknown to them. This "discovery" raised many thorny questions about the veracity of the Bible, whether there had been one or several acts of creation. Origins were thus of utmost importance to ethnology in its early years, and its practice was often

indistinguishable from historiography except for its overt focus on so-called "savage" or "primitive" peoples. The first Euro-Americans who wrote in what might be called an "ethnological mode"—a motley crew that included traders, soldiers, missionaries, and statesmen—did so through travelogues, governmental reports, colonial histories, works of natural history, and the like. And they wrote for a variety of reasons: to profit from book sales, provide data useful to their respective governments, establish reputations, leave records of events, advance (ostensibly) the West's knowledge of the Americas, or exalt the colonies and states the writers called home. As it developed and gained coherence, ethnology colonized other fields of study like physiology and psychology and was eventually reorganized, first under the rubric of evolutionary theory and then under that of cultural diffusion. Historians of US anthropology sometimes locate the discipline's start date at the turn of the twentieth century, when, as George W. Stocking, Jr. has shown, it became ensconced in academia and, like many other sciences, professionalized, assuming a recognizably modern institutional form ("The Founding" 11-14). "Anthropology," however, was a new name for a scientific field that had been acknowledged since the early-nineteenth century. Its motives and methods shifted over time, but twentieth-century anthropologists worked out of (even if often against) an existing and robust intellectual tradition, as Stocking's own work on Victorian anthropology testifies. Nonetheless, when speaking of the late-eighteenth century, and even of the early-nineteenth century, it would in many cases be more proper to say "ethnological writing" than "ethnology" per se, and that is true especially of the United States. As Robert Bieder has explained, no one during the antebellum period was by profession exclusively an ethnologist, unlike in the late-nineteenth century when

professional ethnologists joined the payrolls of universities and institutions like the BAE. Although the American Ethnological Society (AES) was founded in 1843, it was merely "a network of communication" for those investigating ethnological topics, as opposed to a gatekeeper and standard-bearer for the discipline (Bieder, *Science* 13). As a result, early US ethnology lacked resources as well as theoretical and methodological unity, allowing for a range of views and approaches from diverse authors.

US ethnological writing of the antebellum period nonetheless coalesced around its primary subject, the Indian, as Bieder has argued. Bieder, the foremost historian of early US ethnology, has described ethnology's focus on the Indian as a "patriotic reflex," meant to set the emerging discipline apart from similar European pursuits, particularly those occurring in Germany, where Johan Herder and the brothers Grimm were investigating the folk roots of modern-day Germanic culture (12). As in the literature of the early republic, including the novels of James Fenimore Cooper and Lydia Maria Child, the focus on the Indian within ethnology was thus tied to national identity formation. This explanation in and of itself, however, understates what Robert Lawrence Gunn has referred to as the "coordination of scientific and national agendas" in the period (4). In *Ethnology and Empire* (2015), Gunn, for example, triangulates the study of Indigenous languages, works of popular literature, and US expansionism, arguing that "relays between developing theories of Native American languages, works of fiction, travel and captivity narratives, and the political and communication networks of Native peoples gave imaginative shape to U.S. expansionist activity and federal policy in the western borderlands" (4-5). Ethnology's interest in the Indian was fundamentally linked to expansionism. The most prominent ethnologist of the late-antebellum period, after all,

was Schoolcraft—a poet, geologist, and US Indian agent, who initially carried out his investigations of the Indian at the behest of his mentor Lewis Cass, the Governor of the Michigan Territory and later Secretary of War under the Jackson administration (Schoolcraft, *Personal* 23). As such, Cass oversaw Indian removal, and, tellingly, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was originally part of the War Department.

Ethnological writing thus provided evidence that served practical and ideological purposes amid the debates around, and the enactment and resistance of, Indian removal, as it later did during the push for assimilation at the turn of the twentieth century. The various ethnological authors and texts of the antebellum period were bound, furthermore, not only by their common interest in the Indian but by their desire to shed light on the question of Indian origins, what was referred to as the monogenesis-polygenesis debate: a debate that arose (and ended) in the nineteenth century over whether there were one or several acts of creation and, consequently, how the races of humankind stood hierarchically in relation to one another (Stocking, *Victorian* 49). At stake in this debate were both the veracity of the Bible and a justification for Euro-American imperialism. It should come as no surprise that amid the Second Great Awakening, antislavery agitation, and Indian Removal, the monogenesis debate was important to many US readers and authors. Whether humans shared a common origin held clear implications regarding race relations.[2] As Americans contested the future of slavery, westward expansion, and what W. E. B. Du Bois later called "the problem of the color line," ethnological writers in the

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[2] Those implications were later made explicit in the work, for example, of Josiah Nott and George Gliddon, who in their *Types of Mankind* (1854) used polygenesis as a defense of white supremacy and slavery.

United States like Schoolcraft, Samuel George Morton, and Lewis Henry Morgan worked to establish ethnology as a scientific discipline, which by the second half of the nineteenth century crystalized as a study of human races within the paradigm of evolution (Seth 839-40, 845).

Ethnology and the (Re)Writing of Oral Traditions

Although still a far cry from the professionalization that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century, specialized reading publics and resources did slowly materialize for ethnological research in the antebellum period, thanks to institutions like historical societies, the AES, and (beginning in 1846) the Smithsonian Institute. As that happened, ethnological writers labored to define ethnology as a scientific practice, including its methods and materials, to the latter of which were added, increasingly, the oral traditions of American Indians. That correlation, as I argue in this dissertation, was not coincidental—the collection and analysis of Indian "oral literature," as it was sometimes called, played an important role in ethnology's evolving understanding of itself as a science. Schoolcraft has long been recognized as the first Euro-American writer to intensively study and collect such works.[3] Schoolcraft served first as Indian Agent of the Michigan Territory and then as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, for a combined total of nineteen years. After the Whig victory in the 1841 election, Schoolcraft was forced out of office, at which point he became one of the

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[3] Richard Bremer, Schoolcraft's biographer, writes, for example, that "more than anyone else," he "essentially discovered and reported the existence of Indian folklore." For Bremer, Schoolcraft's lasting contribution to the study of American Indians was not in the production of any original ideas but in "the presentation of new and authentic material," (354).

country's leading ethnologists and Indian experts (at the time, one and the same). And in the 1850s, he spearheaded the first national study of American Indians, fully financed by the US government. He also worked hard to bolster his status as the nation's leading Indian authority, a status which depended on his "discovery" of Indian "fictitious legendary matter," as he described it in his memoir.[4] Schoolcraft promulgated this image of himself as discoverer of "Indian oral literature" in articles and in the prefaces and introductions he wrote for his numerous ethnological studies. As he explained it, "fictitious tales of imaginary Indian life," such as Cooper's novels, or "poems on the aboriginal model," such as Philip Freneau's "The Indian Burial Ground," had "been in vogue almost from the days of the discovery" of the New World—but actual Indian tales by actual Indians, Schoolcraft argued, like the ones he had collected for *Algic Researches* (1839), had never been known to the public (*Myth* xx). The "existence of an intellectual invention had never been traced, so far as it is known, to the amusements of [the Indian's] domestic fireside; nor could it well have been conjectured to occupy so wide a field for its display in legendary tales and fables" (*Algic* 37; vol. 1).

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[4] He writes, "Nothing has surprised me more in the conversations which I have had with persons acquainted with the Indian customs and character, than to find that the Chippewas amuse themselves with oral tales of a mythological or allegorical character. Some of these tales, which I have heard, are quite fanciful, and the wildest of them are very characteristic of their notions and customs. They often take the form of allegory, and in this shape appear designed to teach some truth or illustrate some maxim. The fact, indeed, of such a fund of fictitious legendary matter is quite a discovery, and speaks more for the intellect of the race than any trait I have heard. Who would have imagined that these wandering foresters should have possessed such a resource? What have all the voyagers and remarkers from the days of Cabot and Raleigh been about, not to have discovered this curious trait, which lifts up indeed a curtain as it were, upon the Indian mind, and exhibits it in an entirely new character?" (*Personal* 109).

Surprising as it undoubtedly was for him, Schoolcraft's encounter with Ojibwe "fictitious legendary matter" can be called a "discovery" only with qualification. On the one hand, many Euro-American traders, who not infrequently married Indigenous women, would have known of such stories, if not been familiar with many. And for the thousands of mixed-race residents in and around the Great Lakes region—such as the Johnston family, with whom Schoolcraft resided upon arriving in Michigan (and from whom he first heard the stories he later collected)—Indian oral narratives were simply a fixture of the dynamic cultural world historian Richard White described as the "middle ground."[5] John Johnston, the patriarch of the family, was a successful, educated trader from Ireland, who had emigrated from Belfast to North America in 1792. Like many Euro-American traders seeking to establish themselves in the region, Johnston married an Indigenous woman, Ozhaguscodaywayquay, or Susan. As Parker explains in his study of Jane Johnston, Ozhaguscodaywayquay was the daughter of an important Ojibwe band chief, Waubojeeg, known regionally for his leadership acumen as well as his "eloquence in story and song" (*The Sound* 6). The Johnston couple settled in the French-English-Ojibwe world of Sault Ste. Marie, where their seven children grew up versed in both European and Ojibwe cultures. As a child, daughter Jane, or Bamewawagezhikaquay,

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[5] White explains, for example, how peoples like the Ojibwe, as a social and cultural unit, were themselves composite products of colonization, as old groups were dissolved through disease and warfare and the refugees went on to form new ones (19). The region, known by the French as the pays d'en haut, was in some respects a new world for both Indians and Europeans, in which they were mutually remade, their admixture creating "new systems of meaning and of exchange" (x). White characterizes the period in which Schoolcraft arrived as the beginning of the end of that "middle ground," during which "the compromises intrinsic in the middle ground yielded to stark choices between assimilation and otherness" (518).

who married Schoolcraft not long after his arrival, listened to her father read Shakespeare and Milton, and she later travelled to both Ireland and England, yet she was also fluent in Ojibwe and knew well its oral traditions, as recounted at home by her mother, who like her father before her was "renowned for her knowledge of traditional stories and lore" (13). Jane in fact was the author of several of Henry's "Indian legends."

Henry's "discovery" was thus merely a personal one. But the West also had long-been acquainted with Indigenous oral traditions. Arriving in 1494 to the island of Hispaniola, friar Ramón Pané lived among the Taíno people, learned their language, observed their ceremonies, and evangelized. As part of a report he prepared for Christopher Columbus, Pané translated and transcribed Taíno accounts of creation and migration, becoming the first person of European descent to do so (Arrom xxiv-xxv). Colonists recorded and published similar accounts from the sixteenth century onward. By the time Schoolcraft made his "discovery," numerous US ethnological studies of American Indians had been published which actively translated, summarized, or cited Indigenous oral traditions. Conceived in the broadest sense of the word, these early reports, accounts, and histories were "collections" of oral traditions; although their authors did not offer stand-alone collections, they nonetheless recorded versions of Indigenous oral traditions in print and thereby built up an archive (again, considered in its broadest sense) that extended up through and far beyond Schoolcraft.

Schoolcraft extended but also redirected this work by collecting oral traditions as works of Indian "oral literature." In doing so, he may not have "discovered" Indigenous oral traditions, but with the help of his wife and the Johnston family, he did develop a new approach to the collection and study of those traditions. Such an argument, of

course, begs clarification of what I mean by "oral tradition" and "oral literature." Indigenous peoples of the Americas, like all peoples around the world, have maintained bodies of knowledge through spoken narratives and songs handed down from generation to generation, as well as through writing technologies like the quipu, hieroglyphics, pictographs, and wampum (and later, print). Collectively, the content preserved through these various means are Indigenous "traditions"; the traditions that were maintained through primarily spoken forms are "oral traditions."[6] All oral traditions are performed as part of distinct genres, although the exact nature of those genres is culturally specific and varies. The genres are often formally recognized—that is, named by the people who recount the oral traditions—although there are sometimes unofficial sub-genres according to which oral traditions are also maintained (Vansina 79-81). The essential point here is that every society has its own generic conventions for its oral traditions, conventions that sometimes appear similar to Western, written ones, but which just as often depart from them.

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[6] I am aware that this definition is inadequate in several respects, but any definition I put forward of oral tradition will be to varying degrees inadequate since I seek to make sense of non-Western concepts in Western terms, and that is precisely what I seek to draw attention to in the collection of Indigenous oral traditions. "Literature" is a western concept, as are "oral" and "orality," and these are problematic, as Christopher Teuton has recently argued, given their participation in the illusory historical opposition between primitivity and modernity. Teuton suggests that instead of using terms like "oral tradition," we use tribal-specific language and concepts. When possible, I have tried to do so, but given that many of the collectors I examine viewed American Indians and their traditions in the aggregate, it is often necessary to do likewise. And, misleading as it may be, the tag "oral" seems necessary to distinguish certain recorded works grounded in spoken source materials from contemporaneous written works by American Indians which were produced from the start in familiar Western genres. Moreover, in discussing the texts outside the context of a specific collecting practice, such as Schoolcraft's, I prefer to use oral "tradition," as opposed to oral "literature," as it is the transformation of American Indian oral traditions into oral literature that this dissertation in part examines.

The oral traditions of the Anishinaabeg are a good example. The Anishinaabeg live in portions of present-day Canada and the United States and include the Potawatomi, Odawa, Saulteaux, Oji-Cree, and Ojibwe peoples, the latter of whose oral traditions Schoolcraft was most familiar and collected most often. There are two broad types of Anishinaabe oral traditions: the *aadizookaan*, or sacred story, and the *dibaajimowin*, or narrative. *Aadizookaanan* (also spelled *aadizookaanag*) are religious in nature, traditionally told during only the winter months, and they describe a timeless world that existed prior to the current, historical one, in which remarkable events frequently occurred. They tell, for instance, of the world's creation, and they often teach explicit lessons. Perhaps most famously, they include the cycle of oral traditions involving the trickster figure Nanabozho, whose exploits Longfellow drew upon to write *Song of Hiawatha*. *Dibaajimowinan*, on the other hand, can be told any time of year. They are "about events that took place within the memory of the storyteller or of successive tellers of the story" and "involve individuals widely known for their historical significance or locally known for their current presence in the community" (Willmott 33). According to Paula Giese, the root "*dibaa*" "suggests [the words of the story] are measured, thoughtful, observed, judged," and hence "true."[7] Margaret Noodin explains that the closest literal translation of *dibajimowinan* ties it to "*dibaajimo*, the act of collecting and redistributing the truth that you've heard" (176). It is a "simpler, more direct narrative style," although it also includes a wide range of narrative-types, from personal experiences to communal

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[7] Giese was an activist based in Minneapolis who sometimes collaborated with the Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College. She published online about American Indian culture and topics. Her article "Dibaajimowinan idash Aadizookaanag" was accessed through kstrom.net.

events to tribal migration. Like *aadizookaanan*, *dibaajimowinan* teach lessons, amuse, memorialize, or serve numerous similar functions. They may even become *aadizookaanan* over time, losing their historical and local specificities, as a particular lesson or other cultural significance assumes increasing importance to the account.[8] While one may be tempted to describe *aadizookaan* as "fable" or "myth," and *dibaajimowin* as "history," both types of Anishinaabe oral traditions contain historical and seemingly symbolic or fantastical elements, and they demonstrate many points of overlap that resist easy recourse to Western genres. Moreover, words like "fable" and "myth" are "laden with implications of fiction that are not necessarily part of the Anishinaabe classifications" (Noodin 176). As Christopher Teuton explains, "unlike much of Western literature, Indigenous oral narratives rarely sunder material reality from the spiritual, thus imposing separations between fact and fiction, fantasy and reality" (172). *Dibaajimowinan*, for instance, may utilize elements of *aadizookaanan*, or may seem like "fables" with didactic functions, though they describe real people and places.

The story of Gitshee Gauzinee, or Gitshee-gausiné, which Schoolcraft subtitled "The Trance," is illustrative of this point. Gitshee-gausiné was an Ojibwe leader who, like other prominent American Indians living around the Sault, made visits to Johnston's home, where on at least one occasion he told, or likely retold, the story of his death, vision, and return to life. Anishinaabe custom dictated that the dead be buried with their

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[8] Many Indigenous cultures of North America maintain similar distinctions. The Ho-Chunk (or Winnebago), for instance, distinguish between *waikq* and *worak* traditions. *Worak* are typically tragic, whereas *waikq* are not, but the key difference is found in the temporal and physical settings of the traditions, with *waikq* documenting contemporary events (Radin, *Winnebago* 12-13).

earthly belongings, as they would need them in the afterlife. The wife of Gitshee-gausiné, according to the written account, insisted that he was not actually dead, but nonetheless she tied some of his belongings for him in a sack, forgetting, however, several important objects, such as her husband's kettle and bow. On the fourth day of her vigil with her husband's body, Gitshee-gausiné awakened and told of his "dream" of the afterlife, where he met many people "encumbered" with goods, who freely offered him the belongings he was missing. He realized through the experience that the dead need not be buried with so many objects. The story was a favorite of Schoolcraft's, who was highly religious and thus curious about Ojibwe conceptions of the afterlife, and he felt that the story encouraged more civilized forms of property ownership, which is to say, behaviors more aligned with capitalist economies. And these narrative features were what he emphasized in his collections, as he informed readers that the tale was told by the Ojibwe as "semi-traditionary," meaning semi-historical, but that there was no need to attach "importance to it in that light" (*Algic* 127; vol. 2). Schoolcraft likely heard the oral tradition first from Johnston, who according to Colonel Thomas L. McKenney, told it at a gathering at his home in 1826, where he described it as an Indian "superstition" (Bauman 251-54). Schoolcraft thus first knew it reinterpreted through Johnston, and Schoolcraft in turn described it as an Ojibwe "allegory" in *Algic Researches*, including it alongside stories of Nanabozho. As Richard Bauman has argued, by translating, retelling, and eventually publishing Gitshee-gausiné's *dibajimowin* as an allegorical tale, Johnston and Schoolcraft purged the story of the specific "political and economic" context of its original telling, which would have been driven by trade and treaties, including desired western reforms to American Indian lifestyles like burial practices (254-55). As with any

dibajimowin, Gitshee-gausiné likely had specific motivations for recounting his vision at that particular place and time, and for recounting it in that particular manner, but interpreted as an "allegory," and appended to other "fictitious" myths and tales, that context was not only lost but explicitly dismissed as inconsequential.

Viewing the world through a foreign epistemology, with its own set of cultural assumptions, Euro-Americans like Schoolcraft were, perhaps understandably, confused by Indigenous oral traditions and their apparent generic hybridity, to which they responded in numerous ways, but always such that the endemic conventions and meanings of the oral traditions they collected were ignored or suppressed, enveloped in Western terms to make them comprehensible to Western readers. Collectors curated, recontextualized, and altered the source materials to highlight the meanings and values they perceived in the oral traditions. Because oral traditions were traditionally (and by definition) not maintained through print—and have historically been transcribed, translated, collected, and edited by many non-Indigenous persons—they have been particularly susceptible to this form of mediation. And it is with this, call it, "editorial" level of textual mediation that this dissertation primarily concerns itself. The collecting practices that I seek to draw attention to in many ways resemble what André Lefevere has called "rewriting." Lefevere laid the groundwork for modern translation theory through his emphasis on the "ideological" and "poetological" constraints that come to bear on translations, and therefore how translations historically have been bound up with power, particularly in so far as they have shaped literary canons. Examples of "ideological" constraints may include class or national prejudices, whereas "poetological" constraints may include, for example, contemporary literary trends, or the desire to establish

narratives of literary development. Acting under these pressures, translators and critics create "images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre, sometimes even a whole literature" that exist "side by side with the realities they competed with . . ." (4). Originally employing the term "refraction" to describe this process, Lefevere ultimately settled on "rewriting," a notion especially helpful due to its comprehensiveness (Williams xi). "Rewrites," for Lefevere, include not just standard translations, but "literary histories . . . reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions," through which "rewriters adapt [and] manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time" (6). Following Lefevere's lead, I view collectors of Indigenous oral traditions as "rewriters," who created "images" of either transcriptions of oral performances or the oral performances themselves, as the case may have been. In the latter scenario, the collectors' "images" often stood alone (in print), as opposed to "side by side" with the "realities they competed with." The "re" in "rewrite" is thus something of a misnomer here, and it would be more proper to use *(re)write* to convey the particular mode of reproduction at work in many of the texts examined in this dissertation.

Rather than simply misunderstanding their materials, however, ethnologists, through the (re)writing of oral traditions, often intentionally obscured the work that Indigenous men and women performed in collecting them, as well as their varied interests in performing that work, to which some scholars have brought attention. Bethany Schneider has argued, for example, that Henry Schoolcraft's "translations" of Jane's writings are more properly conceived as "citations." Citations, for Schneider, are colonialist in logic. On the one hand, print culture and its system of citation inherently

privileges European texts, which provided Euro-American writers a "long history of representation of Indians to construct . . . [more] conquest fantasies." On the other hand, when Euro-Americans have utilized Indigenous knowledge in their works, they have subordinated that knowledge as yet more citations within a "complicated network of references," putting it in service of the "'ideologies' of conquest" ("Citation" 123). In her work on Zitkala-Ša, Schneider pushes this argument further by comparing "unacknowledged citation"—in this case, Lara Ingalls Wilder's modeling of *Little House on the Prairie* on Zitkala-Ša's "Impressions of an Indian Childhood"—to cannibalism ("Modest" 66). The subtle transformation of Native stories into Euro-American ones, Schneider argues, displaces American Indians from the nation's history and from the present day, as it also replicates Indians' historical displacement from their ancestral lands—what Schneider calls an "annihilating feast," which merges (and erases) Native bodies into Euro-American ones. However, it is possible (and imperative), as Schneider demonstrates, to not only critique such cannibalistic texts, but to reconstruct an obscured Indigenous presence within them, and to highlight acts of Native survivance that have contested or even reversed such citational practices. Although I use the term "(re)write" rather than "citation," I likewise am working to reconstruct, when possible, Indigenous voices embedded in ethnological texts and to track how Indigenous writers actively resisted their "citation," in some cases by employing a different, oppositional system of citation, and at other times by citing ethnologists in service of anti-colonialist arguments.

Before Schoolcraft: Oral Traditions as Fable or Fact?

In the remainder of this chapter, I model the kinds of analyses that I will be pursuing throughout this dissertation, but I also establish the intellectual context out of

which Schoolcraft worked, whose collections are the focus of Chapter 2. The ethnological writers who immediately preceded Schoolcraft were preoccupied with the reliability of American Indians' oral traditions. Their concerns, however, had less to do with the authenticity of the accounts than they did with their apparent fictitiousness, a problem that every ethnological writer was forced to confront. If they did not dismiss Indigenous oral traditions outright as fabulations—meaning imaginative inventions, typically of a marvelous or fantastic nature—they had to circumvent the problem of their seeming fictitiousness in one way or another. Some early writers chose to ignore the fabulous elements, others analyzed those elements for their allegorical-historical significations, whereas others presented "marvelous" oral traditions as distorted biblical (and thus true) accounts. In each case, the literary aspects of the oral traditions were denied, suppressed, or leaped past to access the historical realities to which they purportedly alluded. Whatever form in which they ended up entering ethnological discourse, the recorded oral traditions were most often presented as evidence of monogenesis. But their significations were fluid, with some documenting colonial abuses and Indian magnanimity, while others attested to the Indian's unfitness for life in civilized (i.e., white) society.

Vincent Debaene has recently argued that the distrust and outright disdain of elements now widely associated with "literary" discourse was a common feature of ethnological writing into the twentieth century. It was through critiquing these elements that ethnologists defined their discursive practices as belonging to the sciences, in the same way that in the early-nineteenth century naturalists like Georges Cuvier helped define science more broadly through its opposition to those same elements, contrasting

the subjectivity of the poet, for example, with the objectivity of the scientist, only the latter of whom was capable of truth claims. Michel Foucault, Hayden White, and subsequent scholars like Arnold Krupat have suggested that these contrasts steadily broke down the older, comprehensive meaning of "literature" (a body of written, or lettered, works) and lent it its modern significations: fiction, poetry, imagination, figurative language, beauty, masterpiece, etc. In *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault, for example, wrote of the scientist's desire to "neutralize, and as it were polish, scientific language to the point at which, stripped of all its singularity, purified of all its accidents and alien elements . . . it could become the exact reflection, the perfect double, the unmisted mirror of a non-verbal knowledge," what Foucault calls, "the positivist dream of a language keeping strictly to the level of what is known" (296). At the same time, and as a function of this same process, literature was devalued by scientists, and "progressively more differentiated from the discourse of ideas." This differentiation was in fact the emergence of "literature as such," the emergence of our modern notion(s) of the "literary" (300). Some scholars have located this rift earlier—George Levine, in his book *One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature* (1989), traced the split between literature and science to "Bacon's liberation from words into facts" (10)—but the argument is, in broad terms, the same: over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scientific writing distanced itself from artistic forms of expression (by denigrating them), which following what Foucault calls the "Romantic revolt," became the sole purview of the poet and the novelist.[9]

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[9] In essays and books, such as *Ethnocriticism* (1992), Krupat has similarly described the breakdown of literature as "whatever information a given culture wished to

In his history of historiographical discourse, White focuses on this bifurcation within historiography, which is especially helpful for understanding early US ethnological writing, given that so much of it purported to elucidate the "history" of American Indians. White explains how "nineteenth-century historical consciousness took shape within the context of a crisis in late Enlightenment historical thinking" (39). Prior to the Enlightenment, there were three conventional types of historiography: fabulous, true, and satirical. "Fabulous historiography was conceived to be a product of pure invention; facts were made up and presented sub specie historiae, but in order to entertain or delight by giving to what imagination desired to believe the aspect of an actuality" (49). People like Voltaire despised such approaches to history, arguing that the historian "had to cleave to the truth, insofar as humanly possible, avoiding the 'fabulous' at all costs, inventing nothing not justified by the facts . . ." Their sense that historical records and even formal works of histories were wholly unreliable led to debates over the principles by which historical truth could be attained, and as a result "whole bodies of data from the past—everything contained in legend, myth, fable—were excluded as potential evidence for determining the truth about the past" (52). "Once recognized as products of fantasy," poetry, myth, legend, and fable "testified only to the superstitious nature of the imagination that had produced them or to the stupidity of those who had taken them for truths" (53). Following Voltaire, philosophers like David Hume and Immanuel Kant struggled to maintain firm distinctions between history and fiction, "effectively dissolving" them, resulting in White's "crisis," the details of which are not as

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preserve and transmit by the technology of writing," becoming instead whatever was artistic and imaginative (58).

important for this dissertation as is the recognition that by the nineteenth century it was becoming incumbent for historians to fortify their claims to having produced a "true" or "realistic" (i.e., scientific) history, and that the use of "literary" texts, or even the presence of literary aspects in one's writing, could threaten their ability to do so.

For ethnological writers in the United States, who sought to write histories of the American Indians, the problem of fictionality and historical truth was compounded by the fact that many of the records on which they might rely were not only *not* written, but hopelessly entangled, it appeared, with fables. The most revered US ethnologist of the antebellum period, Albert Gallatin—also a US congressman, Secretary of the Treasury, and diplomat—espoused Voltaire's disdain toward literary discourse. In his work, Gallatin focused on subsistence, physical appearance, territory, and the origins of Indigenous peoples. Language could offer glimpses into those shadowy origins, Gallatin argued, but "every thing [sic] concerning our Indians prior to their first and recent intercourse with the Europeans" was necessarily "left to most uncertain conjectures." Indians, Gallatin explained, "had no means of preserving and transmitting the memory of past events," and "no reliance [could] be placed in their vague and fabulous traditions," which failed, for example, to "even give an account of the ancient monuments, found in the valley of the Mississippi and of its tributary streams" (6). Aware of Indigenous oral traditions, Gallatin chose to ignore them, to (re)write them off as unsuitable evidence. Indigenous oral traditions were at best vague, at worst fabulations, and either way, of no concern to the ethnologist.

Gallatin's blind eye towards Indigenous oral traditions was shared by other ethnological writers of the late-enlightenment period, whether that ignorance was willful

or not. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, in his chapter on "Aborigines" in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), focused like Gallatin almost exclusively on questions of language, population size, and territory. And his history of the region's tribes, which begins with European contact in the year 1607, relied strictly on written historical accounts. Appealing to "our historians and records," in which he found "repeated proofs of [land] purchases," Jefferson, the son of a surveyor, concluded that the notion "that the lands of this country were taken from [Indians] by conquest, is not so general a truth as is supposed" (221). Rather, the Indians had disappeared naturally, and their vacated lands were inevitably (and, it is implied, justifiably) occupied by white settlers.

Modern scholars of colonialism have thoroughly critiqued this form of archival "monovocalism," tending to view the development of archival practices, and of writing in general, in skeptical terms. In *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (1995), Walter Mignolo, for instance, makes the case that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries modern printing and archival practices expanded in Europe as support for the colonization of the Americas. Europeans denied the existence or legitimacy of Indigenous forms of record keeping while constructing a body of written historical and legal evidence from which Indigenous peoples were excluded. For Jefferson and many other Euro-Americans, American Indians were without writing and therefore without history; the only legitimate sources regarding their past were Euro-American accounts of the colonial era, which produced thoroughly Euro-American portraits of the Indian—as inferior and as possessing illegitimate claims to lands.

And yet that picture is incomplete. Unlike Jefferson or Gallatin, many other early ethnological writers were inclined to center their investigations of the American Indians

on their oral traditions. In doing so, the writers, out of necessity, characterized those oral traditions as reliable historical records. Instead of denying the utility (that is, the veracity) of oral traditions outright, as Gallatin did, the authors who engaged in this mode of (re)writing instead ignored certain "fabulous" traditions, while elsewhere working to suppress or read past "fictitious" elements they saw as unreliable, in order to access the veritable cores that they believed the traditions nevertheless contained. The authors created as a result, and in accordance with Western tastes, an "image," in Lefevere's terms, of the oral tradition as historical document. In analyzing their (re)writing strategies in the following pages, I do not intend to put forward an argument about the historicity of oral traditions per se, about whether they are or are not reliable historical records. Following the work of Jan Vansina in the second half of the twentieth century, many anthropologists now recognize that oral traditions are historical accounts, although they also recognize that the oral nature of the accounts means that they must be approached as such in ways that differ from how historians would typically approach written historical documents. My concern here, rather, is how and why early ethnological writers interpreted Indigenous oral traditions as historical records, how and why they (re)wrote them as such. They did so through the actual recording of oral traditions in writing (through putting what was primarily oral into print), but they also did so by working to make the traditions resemble, for readers, Western historiographical writing: they wrote "histories" of the American Indians, and they viewed Indigenous oral traditions as factual records of those histories, as opposed to cultural objects that spoke indirectly about the people who created them, as later ethnologists would come to view them. And in that respect, I am using the terms "collection" and "collecting" to refer broadly to the

transference of oral traditions—whether as citations, summaries, or full-length transcription—into a range of print texts, not just stand-alone collections.

John Heckewelder's *Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (1819) is exemplary of the above-mentioned approach. Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary who lived and travelled among American Indians for more than three decades, learning their languages and becoming one of the nation's foremost Indian experts. In his widely read *Account*, Heckewelder insisted that Lenape oral traditions were not only legitimate historical evidence, but that they were absolutely necessary evidence for the ethnological historian.[10] On the one hand, Heckewelder underscored the precision and detail with which they had been maintained over time, not unlike written records (xxiii). He also (re)wrote them in prosaic terms, however, by rejecting "superstitious" narratives and by ignoring the fabulous elements in the ones he did record.[11] Heckewelder lamented that the Indians were "fond of metaphors" and prone to

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[10] He writes, "if we ought, or wish to know the history of those nations from whom we have obtained the country we now live in," Heckewelder argued, "we must also wish to be informed of the means by which that country fell into our hands, and what has become of its original inhabitants. To meet this object, I have given their traditions respecting their first coming into our country, and their own history of the causes of their emigrating from it . . ." He thus chose not to rely principally on information "communicated from the writings of others, but from the mouths of the very people" of whom he wrote (xxiii).

[11] Heckewelder's version of the Lenape migration tradition was remarkably prosaic (49). In contrast, Reverend Charles Beatty had published in 1768 a similar account of Indian migration; in Beatty's version, however, the Nanticoke (who had begun to intermarry with the Lenape by that point), on arriving at "a great water," the Mississippi River, were "non-plussed" as to how to cross it, until "their God made a bridge over the water in one night, and the next morning, after they were all over, God took away the bridge" (*The Lenape* 139). Likewise, James Adair had recounted a tradition (presumably one he heard from the Chickasaw) that stated, "when [the Indians] left their own land, they brought with them a sanctified rod by order of an oracle, which they fixed every

"embellishment"—discursive "ornaments" which could be excused and ignored, however. And he warned his readers against being duped by "incredible stories," as the Indians were likewise "fond of the marvelous," inclined to lead along credulous white people with "fabulous stories" to have a laugh. Travelers, he wrote, ought to trust only those informants "who would be candid" with them (321-22). A decided product of the Enlightenment, Heckewelder reiterated the era's skepticism towards figurative language and other non-literal forms of expression, which were already being identified with discourses we now call "literary," namely poetry and fiction. For Heckewelder, they had no place in ethnological writing, and so he filtered his oral traditions of literary features, eschewing "superstitious" narratives, many of which likely would have had religious significance for his informants. Through his Protestant bias and his Enlightenment assumptions regarding truth, Heckewelder (re)wrote versions of oral traditions that accorded with his and other Euro-Americans' religious and scientific beliefs.

Heckewelder's (re)writing of oral traditions was, therefore, undoubtedly ethnocentric, but that does not mean that it should be dismissed on those grounds. Rather, it is the goal of this dissertation to understand the ideological constraints and political motivations that shaped collections and their authors. And in Heckewelder's case, his eschewal of elements that smacked of fiction was arguably a precondition of their entrance into serious ethnological discourse, given the increasingly secular and objective mien of the sciences, as well as the skepticism toward literary texts within historiography.

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night in the ground; and were to remove from place to place on the continent towards the sun-rising, till it budded in one night's time; that they obeyed the sacred mandate, and the miracle took place after they arrived to this side of the Mississippi . . ." (195).

It enabled, moreover, the documentation of Lenape accounts of more than two-hundred years of Euro-American betrayals and injustices, so outrageous they made Heckewelder "ashamed of being a white man" (76). And Heckewelder's book, which drew its authority first and foremost from oral traditions, critiqued Euro-Indian relations and the public's derogatory views of Indians at a crucial moment in US history—the Shawnee War had initiated a frenzy of land sales and migrations westward, Congress had just approved more than ten-thousand dollars in Indian "civilizing" funds, the Indian Affairs office was rapidly expanding, and in the press Euro-Americans publicly debated the so-called "Indian question," deciding whether "Indians ought to be assimilated as Christian citizens, banished to western hinterlands, or (if they resisted) sacrificed to advancing 'civilization'" (Kennedy 130). It is admittedly difficult to gauge the influence of a single book and a single author on the larger culture, but through his *Account* Heckewelder without a doubt emerged as an authority on American Indians in the first decades of the nineteenth century, rivaled only by Gallatin. And his work helped fuel more than a decade of guilt-laden representations of white-Indian relations in novels and popular magazines, by celebrated writers like Washington Irving, Cooper, and Child, thus creating a discursive space for debating US hostilities toward American Indians.[12]

Heckewelder's approach to, and reasons for, (re)writing oral traditions was far from universal, however. Most of his peers in the field of ethnological study, such as

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[12] Cooper, as is well known, drew directly from Heckewelder's work in writing his Leatherstocking Tales. And Child's *The First Settler's of New England* adopts many of Heckewelder's positions on the history of Euro-Indian relations. Irving's 1819 essay "Traits of the Indian Character," although written earlier, nonetheless reinforced Heckewelder's views as it was republished and quoted during the next decades.

James Adair and congressman Elias Boudinot, legitimized the historicity of oral traditions by viewing them as distorted versions of biblical narratives. They argued that Indigenous oral traditions alluded to stories from the Old Testament—for example, to the global deluge described in *Genesis*. Over time, oral traditions had been corrupted, they believed, by the imperfect process of oral record-keeping, but as biblical miracles, the traditions were nonetheless historically true. These writers were driven not by a desire to critique US-Indian relations, nor to challenge the press's vilification of the Indian, but by a need to confirm a Christian account of history at a time when Christianity was perceived as being under threat from secular thought.[13] They argued, like many other Euro-Americans at the time, that the American Indians were descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Boudinot, for instance, turned to ethnological writing late in life with his *A Star in the West* (1816). An armchair ethnologist, Boudinot collated a mass of evidence published by other ethnological writers, including Adair, to support the theory of the Indian's Jewish origins, an essential component of which was, of course, oral traditions, the focus of the fourth chapter of Boudinot's book. For Boudinot, a biblical literalist, oral traditions, as tribal historical records, proved that American Indians migrated from the Old World and that their histories were in substance Judeo-Christian, although altered versions of the familiar Old Testament narratives. By interpreting oral traditions as Old Testament accounts, Boudinot implicitly imbued them with cultural authority within his

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[13] This is particularly true of Boudinot, who in his *Age of Revelation* (1801) attacked the "sceptic" Thomas Paine for his Deist understanding of the universe. *A Star in the West*, Boudinot's ethnological text, was an extension of his natural theology, and in the wake of a brief Deism revival following Paine's *Age of Reason* (1794), Boudinot aggregated previously recorded traditions—as allusions to Old Testament stories—to demonstrate the active hand of God.

highly religious society, which sat on the cusp of the Second Great Awakening. If the oral traditions included miraculous occurrences like a magical, blossoming rod—as one migration story recorded by Adair did—what were those fantastical elements but allusions to the very real miracles of the Old Testament, like those performed by Aaron's rod? Proving the Indians' Jewish origins also supported Boudinot's proposed answer to the "Indian question": "Christian benevolence" all but demanded they be returned, if possible, to the Holy Land, a feat the United States and Great Britain—as the world's greatest maritime powers—could accomplish together, God-willing (298).[14]

While the motives of individual writers may have differed, the authors were all bound by a common need to (re)write oral traditions in such a way that their fictional qualities were excused or otherwise accounted for, and in that way, the traditions could serve as legitimate ethnological evidence. Heckewelder, for example, in the one instance that he did record and comment upon Indian "fables," creation stories in specific, treated the supposedly fantastical works as allegorical histories, which he believed provided insights regarding tribal origins.[15] "Fables" possessed a latent historical reality, that is,

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[14] Significantly, in republishing selections of Boudinot's work in the "Appendix" to his autobiography, William Apess, a Pequot minister, left out these Zionist arguments.

[15] In his chapter "Indian Mythology," Heckewelder recounted a creation myth about the Indians' birth inside the earth, from which they eventually emerged. He analyzed its variations, citing a Haudenosaunee account from Christopher Pyraleus, which accorded with the Lenape version but for one detail: upon emerging from the ground, the Nocharauorsul or "ground-hog, would not come out, but had remained in the ground as before." Heckewelder surmised that the "hog" in this tradition was allegorical and actually referred to a tribe which did not "emerge," or migrate, with the others to their present-day lands. He further determined that the Indians "must have considered their numbers very small, when they dwelt in the earth; perhaps, no more than one family of each tribe." For Heckewelder, historical facts about the tribes, such as their original

recoverable through analysis. That strategy was most fully developed in the work of Constantine Rafinesque, a European merchant who relocated to the United States in the early-nineteenth century and became a noted, albeit controversial, intellectual. In his *The American Nations; or, Outlines of their General History, Ancient and Modern* (1836), Rafinesque argued that "if we desire to be fully informed of a nation's history, we must not reject the fables under which the few traces that remain of its origin are concealed." "Primitive history," he wrote, was "under a veil, involved in fables; but all ancient fables have a historical base" (Rafinesque 10).[16]

Oral traditions were thus essential to Rafinesque's vision of a holistic ethnological science, one that would consider all the evidence at its disposal.[17] Many Indian nations preserved their histories, he explained, through "unwritten traditions," which were "preserved yet to this day, by frequent repetitions, being embodied in songs, hymns, maxims, tales, drawings, or even symbolic figures and signs." And those traditions were "precious for history, notwithstanding the fables, allegories, metaphors, personifications, etc., which partly conceal them or render the meaning obscure" (58). "Falling in good hands," the "historical songs, poems and tales" could "be employed usefully," he wrote

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population size or their oldest customs, could be inferred from fabulous traditions, from "myths," which were allegorical representations of real historical conditions (249-51).

[16] He was actually quoting here, firstly from Sir John Malcom and secondly from Jean Sylvain Bailly, each of whom wrote ethnological works about Asia, suggesting the pervasiveness of this thinking about "fables" at the time.

[17] He writes, "Far from following the example of many American historians, who often take a single guide for their crude compilations, or avoid the trouble to consult all the historical sources, I have taken care in my researches to employ all the possible means to reach the truth, and collect all the facts that are scattered among a crowd of writers" (35).

(59). In other words, oral traditions were indeed literary works, but their literary features were merely externalities that concealed, like a shell, historical truths, to be deciphered "as we do old inscriptions and medals." Through such analyses, Rafinesque (re)wrote, and in some cases literally *rewrote*, oral traditions as allegorical works in need of deciphering. For example, in his chapter on "The Poetical Annals and Traditions of the Hyations or Tainos of the Antilles," Rafinesque drew upon Pané's collection of Taíno oral traditions, translating them from the original Spanish (told to Pané in Taíno, of course) into English, and reconstructing them as a "succession of events" in Taíno history. Having "learn[ed] some of the language," Rafinesque confidently believed he was able "to translate and elucidate nearly all the Taíno historical names and allusions, so as to clear up the annals by original etymologies" (165). The "desultory" traditions Pané had originally recorded Rafinesque reorganized as a linear series of "events," thereby supplying them with a clear historical chronology, bringing "them into a kind of order" (162). He then read Taíno oral traditions as allegorized historical occurrences that accorded with his own temporal views, namely his belief in the key events and timelines provided in the Bible: a single act of creation six-thousand years prior, followed by a flood that covered most of the earth and the subsequent division of peoples across the globe, which he believed included the Indians' migration from Asia to the Americas.

Rafinesque applied these same basic techniques in his chapter on the "Annals and historical Traditions of the Linapis." The chapter included his "literal translation" of the "original songs" of the *Walum Olum*, a text that would continue to attract ethnological interest long after its initial publication, and which has since been determined to be a forgery. It soon caught the interest of E. G. Squier, for instance, who republished it in

1846, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it captivated Brinton, who in republishing the text yet again, confirmed (wrongly, it turned out) its authenticity (Warren 153-56). And even as late as 1991 the *Walum Olum* was still being published as an example of traditional American Indian "song."[18] With the *Walum Olum*, Rafinesque's approach to Indigenous oral traditions was, if anything, more pronounced than what we saw in his rewriting of Taíno traditions. It underscores the inventive nature of all such (re)writings, which in this case bled over into outright forgery. In the *Walum Olum* we see not merely allegories of historical events, but actual hieroglyphic symbols, or "paintings," that were accompanied by the symbolic language of "poems," which Rafinesque translated for his readers into a concise historical "record of events," a chronological list of occurrences beginning with Lenape origins and documenting their passage to the Americas, their migration to the eastern shore, as well as their political activities since the arrival of Europeans (145). Rafinesque thus aestheticized the traditions only to then historicize them as an unadorned historical record, proving monogenesis. And if he was indeed the author of the *Walum Olum*, he worked hard to make the pictographs and verses appear authentic, hence their ability to deceive experts for so many years. It was not unknown at the time that American Indians practiced a form of pictographic writing (Schoolcraft wrote about it), nor that those images acted as mnemonic aids for traditions maintained through song. Rafinesque, who had obviously read widely about American Indians and had encountered many of their oral traditions in print, created the *Walum Olum* with a clear idea of what "real" Indigenous oral traditions

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[18] See, for instance, *American Indian Literature, An Anthology*, edited by Alan R. Velie.

ought to look like and how they ought to function (for him, as historical allegories). And he (re)wrote the *Walum Olum* to support the version of history that he believed to be valid. The point here is that the same basic processes can be seen at work in any collection of Indigenous oral traditions in the period. In each case, the collectors translated and transcribed select source materials with their own beliefs of what constituted those oral traditions as authentic, as authentically Indian, and the collectors (re)wrote them to serve specific functions which were historically, culturally, and socially determined.

An Indian's History: David Cusick's *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations*

The cultural pressures to (re)write oral traditions in non-literary terms are especially evident in David Cusick's *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* (1828), the only ethnological history at the time (and for many years after its publication) to be written entirely by an American Indian and based exclusively on Indigenous oral traditions. Like his contemporaries, Cusick, in turning to oral traditions as historical records, confronted the problem of fabulation, and he (re)wrote his peoples' oral traditions in ways that altered and departed from the originals. However, and perhaps unsurprisingly, Cusick's strategy for dealing with the perceived literary-ness of oral traditions was unique for the time, revealing the disjunctions between Euro-American and Indigenous perspectives, but also showing how ethnological discourse created opportunities for contesting its own logics. In *Sketches*, Cusick can be seen resisting the Euro-American insistence on a clear separation between fable and fact, thereby reintroducing within ethnology an Indigenous perspective that merged the spiritual and material worlds. And although he worked to imbue seemingly fabulous traditions with a

concrete reality, he did so without pursuing strictly allegorical readings, without pushing beyond the accounts to their "real" referents. This strategy enabled him to eschew the question of monogenesis and construct a deep history of the Iroquois, or Haudenosaunee, which established their precedence in the territory of present-day New York.

Cusick was a physician and artist and a member of an important Tuscarora family who, like many Tuscarora displaced from their ancestral lands (in present-day North Carolina), resided within Seneca territory in New York. David's father, Nicholas Cusick, was a well-known interpreter as well as a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and throughout the nineteenth century the Cusick family (including David's brother, James) remained prominent members within the Tuscarora community near Lewiston, NY. Nonetheless, Cusick felt the task of writing a history of the Haudenosaunee to be a daunting one. In the preface to *Sketches*, he wrote,

> I have been long waiting in hopes that some of my people, who have received an English education, would have undertaken the work as to give a sketch of the Ancient History of the Six Nations; but found no one seemed to concur in the matter, after some hesitation I determined to commence the work; but found the history involved with fables; and besides, examining myself, finding so small educated that it was impossible for me to compose the work without much difficulty . . . I abandoned the idea. (3)

In addition to the obstacle posed by his lack of a formal, Western education, Cusick sensed that from the perspective of Western historiography, and surely from that of an emerging science of ethnology, "fables," unless reinterpreted as allegorical histories, undermined the evidentiary status of Haudenosaunee oral traditions, and therefore his very ability to write a Haudenosaunee history. Yet Cusick "took up a resolution to continue the work," going to great lengths in "procuring the materials, and translating it

into English," to "throw some light on the history of the original population of the country" (3).

Cusick collated and (re)wrote various Haudenosaunee oral traditions as a unified, continuous history, to which he assigned specific geographical positions within present-day Canada and New York, as well as a Western chronology that extended back over two thousand years before 1492. He thus conformed the traditions to Western expectations for historiography. But rather than filtering out or reinterpreting the Haudenosaunee oral traditions that were "involved with fables," Cusick maintained them in his text. At first, it appears that Cusick solved the issue of fabulation by merely relegating the "fables" to Part 1, which is titled, "A Tale of the Foundation of the Great Island, Now North America." Part 1describes the birth of the twins Enigorio and Enigonhaetgea, the "good mind" and "the bad mind," who together populated North America, which we are told originated on the back of a turtle that arose from the waters of the "lower world." Part II is "A *Real* Account of the Settlement of North America and their Dissensions" [emphasis mine]. And superficially, Part II appears more prosaic, more "true" than Part I, describing the creation of the "Eagwehoewe," the first people, who "resided in the north regions," some of whom encamped along the "Kanawage, now St. Lawrence," before migrating farther south (16). The account focuses primarily on the Eagwehoewe and their battles with the northern raiders the Ronnongwetowanca. It also describes the Eagwehoewe's contact with an "Emperor" of a "vast empire" to the south, with whom they too had conflicts. Similarly, Part III, the lengthiest section, recounts the "Origin of the Kingdom of the Five Nations, which was Called a Longhouse." It describes the break-up of the band whose descendants formed the original five "families" of the Haudenosaunee. And

it describes the rise of their first "king," Atotarho, and the Five Nations' efforts to defend Haudenosaunee territory from invasions, including their war campaigns against neighboring tribes.

Part I appears to be mythical, then, whereas Parts II and III are historical, with "real" events, people, and places. Part I undoubtedly represents the timeless past of creation, but it merges into the specific timelines of Parts II and III, and "fables," moreover, are not confined to Part I: the Ronnongwetowanca of Part II were a race of giants, whose attacks on the Eagwehoewe Cusick documented by recounting two oral traditions featuring specific, historical figures, one of Donhtonha, the youngest brother of a "prince," and another of a chief's attendant, named Yatatonwatea. The Eagwehoewe, Cusick speculated, "probably" vanquished the giant Ronnongwetowanca "about two thousand five hundred winters before Columbus discovered the America" (18). Shortly after the Ronnongwetowanca were defeated, the Eagwehoewe, however, were forced to flee from their towns south of Lake Ontario due to the invasion of "Big Quisquiss," a "furious animal" that knocked down homes and "made a great disturbance." Big Quisquiss was slain, only to be followed by the equally destructive "Big Elk," and after it was destroyed, the emperor of the "Golden City" to the south attacked and was likewise repulsed. Lastly, a "great horned serpent" appeared, who brought with it diseases that killed many people, before being "compelled to retire" with the "aid of thunderbolts" (19). The continuity of "mythical" actors across Parts I, II, and III, undermines any clear break between the historical and the "fantastic" in the book. Moreover, the title of Part I, the most "mythical" section of the book, establishes a continuity between the Haudenosaunee creation tradition, or *ekhwyaht*, and the known world of the early-

nineteenth century: “a Tale of the Foundation of the Great Island, now North America.” This technique establishes a one-to-one relation between the places and place names of the oral traditions, on the one hand, and their Euro-American versions, on the other hand, a technique employed throughout the text—for example, “Shaw-nay-twa-ty, i.e. beyond the Pineries, (now Hudson,).” Beyond lending the “fables” a concrete reality, Cusick’s use of Haudenosaunee and Euro-American names can be read as a decolonizing gesture. It establishes Haudenosaunee precedence in lands that had been renamed and appropriated by Euro-Americans, which resonates poignantly with *Sketches*’ numerous stories of invasions, displacements, and armed defense.

Cusick’s suggestion that the Big Quisquiss was “perhaps the Mammoth” leaves open the possibility of something like an allegorical reading of the fantastical elements in his “real” accounts, one that, in the case of Big Quisquiss, readers would have readily picked up on given the publicity around the discovery of mammoth remains in New York, including the 1801 excavation led by Charles Wilson Peale, who displayed the bones in his museum in Philadelphia. But Cusick refrains from imposing an allegorical reading on the narratives, instead presenting battles with a northern race of giants alongside a conflict with a southern empire, the latter of which, for many readers, surely would have evoked the Aztec or Maya and thus registered in literal terms. In refusing to suppress or ignore the “fables” that the oral traditions were “involved with,” Cusick may have wanted to remain faithful to the accounts he grew up hearing. Yet the arrangement and imposition of a Western timeline on the oral traditions suggests that he also wanted English-speaking readers to engage with the traditions as truthful records (according to their own assumptions regarding “truth”), as a history, as the title indicates.

Daniel Radus has argued that in writing *Sketches*, Cusick utilized the small printing press in Lockport to "establish territorial sovereignty." With removal efforts intensifying, asserting ties to lands would have been important for any Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee, but it was especially important for the Tuscarora, who had for many years lacked land titles in New York. Relying on the Oneida and then the Seneca for asylum, the Tuscarora were in a weakened position to resist speculation, taxes, and other encroachments (225). As Radus explains, Cusick's history "appeared from within a particular social and historical context wherein the advent of small-press printing coincided with the height of land speculation and its attendant resistance," creating "both the need for and the means of providing a printed history of Haudenosaunee territorial sovereignty" (226). Cusick's text also served his and his community's needs by working to create a national identity for the Haudenosaunee. According to Susan Kalter, *Sketches* departs from the Haudenosaunee's traditional reverence for animals by imposing boundaries between humans and nonhumans that the original oral traditions would have lacked (10). By representing animals as enemies, Cusick in turn represented the Five Kingdoms as unified in their defense against the animals' attacks. Through these changes, Cusick, who as a Tuscarora was the newest member of the Six Nations, created an image of a united Haudenosaunee, whose internal heterogeneity was elided while their collective efforts to defend Haudenosaunee territory were underscored repeatedly in the text. Cusick, in other words, created an "imagined community" in *Sketches*, "constructing a protective space around" the Haudenosaunee, "a space from which he [spoke] to Iroquois and non-Iroquois alike" (17-23).

Yet as both Kalter and Radus stress, Cusick did not merely "submit" Haudenosaunee oral traditions to "Western literary demands" (Kalter 26). Radus explains that Cusick was challenged with how to express Haudenosaunee thought and history through print, which had "developed in opposition to the ideals of Native historiography," namely the West's conception of authorship and authority (Radus 221). Cusick undermined that authority by rejecting his own, "insisting that the history presented in *Sketches* [was] simply one of many interpretations," a perspective that aligned closely with Haudenosaunee tradition keeping (Radus 229). I do not go as far as Kalter in arguing that Cusick submitted "Western literacy to the demands of his subject," but I do agree that the pronounced ambivalences of Cusick's text result in a de facto refusal to view Haudenosaunee oral traditions solely in Western terms—a refusal to silence, transfigure, or otherwise sever the oral traditions to achieve a "true" historical account. That ambivalence is pronounced in Cusick's resolution to the problem of fabulation. In addressing a culture in which literary speech was increasingly viewed as not belonging to the discourses of history and science, as being incompatible with truth, Cusick chose nonetheless to (re)write Haudenosaunee oral traditions as a prosaic, chronological history, presenting "fables" and the "real" alongside one another so that the "fables" become historical events within a Western timeline. Cusick, moreover, presented the oral traditions as such without engaging in the kind of exegesis practiced by other ethnological writers of the period. (Re)writing the oral traditions in these terms emphasized the authority of the traditions and not that of the writer/interpreter. More importantly, it enabled Cusick to avoid being pulled into the monogenesis debates and the question of where Indians originated (i.e., not in the United States). His focus was on

Haudenosaunee history, as told by the Haudenosaunee, without any push to uncover its "true" significance or its "real" referents. Consequently, Cusick combated the "savagism" of the period by constructing a deep history for the Haudenosaunee "kingdom," one that detailed the deeds of its "princes," "kings," and "queens," and thereby imbued the Haudenosaunee with an air of nobility. Finally, Cusick's mode of (re)writing "fables" as history sought to document and legitimize the territorial possessions of the Haudenosaunee "kingdom," through establishing the antiquity of their occupancy within New York, as well as through the very act of putting that record of occupancy into print. And in that regard, Cusick was quite successful: *Sketches* was published twice more following his death in 1840, and it was well known among ethnologists—it was excerpted by Schoolcraft, cited by figures like Brinton and Horatio Hale, and utilized by later Indigenous authors like Elias Johnson (also of the Tuscarora community outside Lewiston). Alongside the work of Hale, Johnson, and J. N. B. Hewitt, Cusick's *Sketches* stands as one of the most important nineteenth-century print accounts of Haudenosaunee oral traditions.

Indian Oral Literature

Cusick's efforts and interests in writing *Sketches* were largely obscured by subsequent authors and editors who excerpted his work, revealing much about the trajectory of the collection of oral traditions in the United States. As I explore in more detail in the next chapter, Schoolcraft's ethnological work represents a major shift in the collection of Indigenous oral traditions. He accepted, like his predecessors, that oral traditions possessed literary qualities, and in fact he argued that they were works of "oral literature." But rather than discrediting them as ethnological evidence, the oral traditions'

status as literary works validated them as such. Schoolcraft collected oral traditions *for* their fictitiousness, (re)writing them as "legends" and "poems" *and* ethnological "specimens," which he accomplished through the editorial control he exercised over his Indigenous informants and authors, including his wife, Jane. As "oral literature," oral traditions were emptied of historical significance, but at the same time they became valuable to Schoolcraft insofar as they shed light on Indian psychology, and at a moment when the "American school" of ethnology was becoming grounded in physiology, including phrenology (Stein 11). It is notable that one of the texts Schoolcraft rewrote during his career was Cusick's *Sketches*. In Schneider's terms, Schoolcraft "cited" Cusick's work (along with accounts by David's brother, James) as part of his full-length report for the State of New York, titled *Notes on the Iroquois* (1846), wherein Schoolcraft described *Sketches* as "a mass of incongruous details, published by a native." He "abbreviated" Cusick's history, removed the timeline Cusick had constructed, and discredited the abridged materials as historical records by explaining that "when we come to draw the minds of the sages and chroniclers of the Iroquois cantons, to the facts of their early history and origin, they treat us with legendary fables, and myths of gods and men, and changes and freaks in elementary matter" (38). Later in the text Schoolcraft went as far to suggest that American Indians were incapable of historical thought, having confused reality with fantasy: "If it be thought, in perusing [the traditions], that mythology and superstition mingle too freely with real events or actions, to which the mind makes no exception . . . Let it rather be considered as a proof of the authenticity of the narrative." For Schoolcraft, a sure sign of an oral tradition's inauthenticity would be finding "the Indian narrator relating a clear, consistent chain of indisputable facts and

deductions, to fill up the foreground of his history" (156). Although in the same breath he insisted that the Indian be allowed "to tell his own story in his own way," Schoolcraft's revisions and in-text analyses ensured that their stories were his.

Following Schoolcraft, the study of Indian "oral literature" would become central to the work of US ethnology and its status as a science, particularly as it professionalized in the postbellum period. For Powell and his contemporaries, Indian "myth" was seen as a primitive discursive mode, an attempt to represent reality in the language of fiction, particularly symbolism and personification, which they saw as contrasting with the objectivity and literalness of science. That contrast both proved and elucidated the processes of cultural evolution and what Powell dubbed "acculturation," which I explore in Chapter 4. Whereas the biologist studied the evolution of organic species, the ethnologist, Powell argued, studied the evolution of "superorganic" matters like philosophy and psychology, as revealed through a society's literature, oral or written (*Fifteenth* xvii). Later, as I detail in Chapter 6, Boas and his student Paul Radin became interested in turn in the "literary style" that each Indigenous tribe possessed, arguing that the individual Indian storyteller was a craftsman, an "author-raconteur," a realization that led Radin, at least, to reimagine ethnology as a humanistic practice, separate and distinct from the sciences (Boas, "Mythology" 388; Radin, *Literary* 2). And all the while, amateur ethnologists and literary authors, driven by their own agendas, but nonetheless influenced by and reliant upon the work of ethnologists, collected, studied, and (re)wrote oral traditions as short stories, children's tales, and imagist poems.

Although Euro-American conceptions of, and attitudes toward, Indigenous oral traditions have changed considerably between the late-antebellum period and today,

undergoing several broad permutations, the belief that oral traditions are works of "literature" has remained intact. Modern collections of American Indian oral tales and poetry abound, and selections of Indian oral literature frequently appear in US literary anthologies. Despite my focus on the early years of the collection of Indian oral literature, this dissertation nonetheless sheds light, therefore, on the modern-day push for anthologizing, teaching, and studying Indigenous oral traditions as Indian oral literature—that is, for treating them "seriously" as works of literary art. Proponents of this position have argued that poor translations (by men and women who did not view "translation as an art form"), combined with a lack of "critical vocabulary," led to an underappreciation of the "complexity" and "beauty" of Native oral literatures (Swann, *Coming* xxvii). In the 1960s and 70s, Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock, who each made innovations in collection and translation methods, did much to advance this view, establishing the field of "ethnopoetics." Hymes's "ethnography of communication" differed from Tedlock's approach to collection (based on tape-recordings), but the two men agreed that "Indian oral story should be transferred to the page as verse or poetry." Parker has recently explained how this move was in effect "polemical and canonizing," given that "in the social ideology of genre, verse and poetry have canonical status and even an elite class status" (*The Invention* 84-85). In the 1980s, following Hymes and Tedlock, scholars like Krupat took the next logical step by advocating for the inclusion of "the literatures of Native American peoples . . . in the canon of American literature" ("Native" 145). Because American Indians had existed for years without writing, Krupat argued, it had long been presumed (wrongly) that they were without literature, and despite the push for cultural pluralism in academia, Native oral literatures continued to be

ignored (146-47). Perhaps more than any other literary scholar, Brian Swann has worked hard to address that deficit by promoting the study of Native American "oral literature" within universities. His first collection of translated "stories, songs, oratory, and prayer," *Coming to Light*, appeared in 1994, stemming in part from the fact that he found it "frustrating," as a literature professor, "to teach Native American oral literatures" using texts that lacked proper cultural context, or whose translations were unreliable. It also stemmed from his desire to educate non-Native Americans "still ignorant of the complex achievements" of native cultures (xiii-xiv). Swann followed *Coming to Light* with two more anthologies, *Voices from Four Directions* (2004) and *Algonquian Spirit* (2005), each of which included retranslated oral traditions that had been collected in previous centuries, as well as newly transcribed works, with the goal of enabling readers to "appreciate fascinating indigenous languages and wonderful indigenous literatures." Such literatures, Swann suggested, are "intended for anyone interested in literature, in all its variations and manifestations" (xx).

Swann, like Krupat, is obviously well-informed of the history of the collection and translation of Indigenous oral traditions, including the prejudices and condescension of past Euro-American collectors, which his new collections have attempted to rectify. My intention is not to disparage those efforts, nor to dispute the artfulness or aesthetic complexity of Indigenous oral traditions, nor is it to question whether oral traditions should be read as literature in college classrooms. What I want to draw attention to, however, is the fact that the argument that Indigenous oral traditions are works of literature, serious or otherwise, and thus that American Indians are literary artists, is far from novel. Rather, Euro-Americans have been discovering, proclaiming, collecting, and

struggling to understand oral traditions as "oral literature" from the publication of Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches*, at the latest. And the political and intellectual contexts that motivated the ethnopoetics movement was, moreover, radically different from that of the nineteenth century. The debates then were not over whether American Indians had a literature(s), nor whether it ought to be studied—it was collected and studied intensively. The "science of literature" practiced by ethnologists in the late-antebellum and postbellum periods helped define ethnology as part of scientific (and not literary) discourse, and it helped make sense of the sciences and the development of the West more broadly, through the contrasts it set up between the poetic, primitive Indian and the prosaic, civilized scientist. The categorical confusion caused by Indigenous oral traditions helped generate those contrasts, as ethnologists highlighted the Indian's conflation of fact and fantasy, his inability, in other words, to properly distinguish between science and literature—this was the defining feature of Indigenous oral traditions, and that which marked the Indian and his mind as inferior.

The most recent edition of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* illustrates how that background can easily be lost, thereby limiting our understanding of the history of the collection of Indigenous oral traditions and perhaps doing a disservice to the Indigenous writers and informants of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In a clear and commendable effort to include Native literature as part of the US literary canon, the first volume of the *Norton* opens with "Stories of the Beginning of the World," a series that itself begins with the "Iroquois Creation Story," one of "the best-known instances of Native American oral literature" (31). Among the existing print versions of the story, the editors chose to include an excerpt from Cusick's *Sketches*. The editors

write that "although the story involves monsters and supernatural events, Cusick calls the work a history, because it tells the history of the Iroquois Confederacy" (32). Of interest to the editors, however, were the "monsters and supernatural events" featured in Part 1 of Cusick's text, such as the creation of America on the back of a turtle, and the birth and exploits of the brothers Enigorio and Enigonhahetgea. The "image" of the text produced in the *Norton* is, therefore, decidedly one of "myth," opening it up to literary analyses, such as how the conflict between Enigorio and Enigonhahetgea may have spoken indirectly to the conflicts Cusick witnessed between the Iroquois and white settlers (32). There are undoubtedly merits to this reading—I identify, after all, as a literary scholar, and my methods of textual analysis, as demonstrated above with Cusick's *Sketches*, are overwhelmingly in the tradition of literary studies. But we need to keep in mind that Cusick's interests were decidedly historical, not literary—a designation against which he was working in producing *Sketches*. And it is through examining the work of Indigenous authors in context, and alongside the ethnological work with which they engaged, that this dissertation seeks to reconstruct and understand such interests.

The chapters that follow likewise examine and contextualize key figures and texts in ethnology's science of literature, while trying to keep sight of the fact that created through that science, through its "contact zone" of cultures and discourses, was an extensive archive of Indigenous oral traditions, and thus opportunities for American Indians to record and tell and continue to retell their stories.

CHAPTER 2

THE MAKING OF INDIAN ORAL LITERATURE

In this chapter I focus on a shift that occurred in the antebellum period, headed by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, in which Indigenous oral traditions were no longer viewed only in terms of their value as historical records, but rather were seen as providing other kinds of important ethnological evidence. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, in the ethnological writing of the early republic there existed a noticeable anxiety surrounding the literary dimensions of Indigenous oral traditions. Those dimensions threatened the objectivity of ethnological writers who sought to illuminate the origins of American Indians. Given the divergence of literary and scientific discourses around that time, Indigenous oral traditions could hardly be both "literary" (fabulous, figurative, poetic, etc.) and historical, which is to say, true. That conviction drove Albert Gallatin, founder of the American Ethnological Society (AES), to discredit oral traditions as historical records, claiming that the Indians had "no means of preserving and transmitting the memory of past events" (6). It likewise drove David Cusick, a Tuscarora author, to initially abandon his plans for writing a history of the Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee, having "found the history involved with fables" (3). Other writers working under those same pressures, like John Heckewelder and Constantine Rafinesque, ignored or pushed past the traditions' literary qualities, creating versions of oral traditions as historical records—a function of the collection process that I am calling (re)writing, following André Lefevre's concept of editorial and translational "rewriting." From a modern perspective, these instances of (re)writing produced corrupted or inauthentic oral traditions; it is my goal, however, not simply to dismiss them on these grounds but to

more fully understand the cultural forces that influenced the collection strategies, as well as their political implications.

Schoolcraft, who in the 1820s and 30s worked as an Indian agent in the Michigan territory, before becoming one of the nation's foremost authorities on American Indians, repeatedly denied the historical value of Indigenous oral traditions on the basis that they were fundamentally works of the imagination, which previous ethnological writers like Gallatin had also done. But the fictionality of the oral traditions became, for Schoolcraft, the basis for affirming their value in new empirical terms, namely psychological ones, which set him apart from previous writers. By 1827 he had concluded that "no historical value can be found on many tribal traditions of more than three centuries standing," those being "generally expressed under symbolic forms, or clothed with allegories" (*Voyager* 63). He would later go further, discounting the reliability of post-contact oral traditions as well. The problem, as he saw it, was that "every repetition varie[d] the language at least, and it must be a very stoical people, indeed, who, in repeating their own story, do not add to the coloring, if not the number of circumstances, which serve to give pleasure or to flatter pride." John Heckewelder had referred to the oral nature of oral traditions as proof of their reliability.[1] Schoolcraft saw that same mode of record keeping as inevitably, even intentionally, transforming history into fiction, either to sublimate painful events or to supply a record of the past where there existed none: "the few favorable points would

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[1] "We know," Heckewelder explained, "that all Indians have the custom of transmitting to posterity, by a regular chain of tradition, the remarkable events which have taken place with them at any time, even often events of a trivial nature" (xxvi). The scope of recorded events and the detail with which they were transmitted over time (documenting even trivialities) testified to their accuracy. They were not vague recollections, but precise records of the past.

naturally grow by the process of repetition, out of all proportion. And fiction would often be called on, to supply lapses" (*Narrative* 92). In many of his writings, such as *Notes on the Iroquois*, Schoolcraft acknowledged a distinction, endemic to oral traditions, between "fictitious and historical" narratives, which loosely corresponded to the Anishinaabe distinction between *aadizookaan* and *dibajimowin*.[2] Yet Schoolcraft explained that "no little time is required to study, compare and arrange such parts of the matter as have claims to be considered historical, whilst those which are symbolical or fictitious, take so wide a range as hardly to justify . . . the space which they would occupy" (*Notes* 147). In other words, most of the Indians' oral traditions were "imaginative," and even those that were purportedly "historical" were so "mingled up and lost" in "allegories and fictions, types and symbols," as to leave a "gordian knot for the modern historian to untie," or at best a "mass of traditionary chaff, from which we may perhaps, winnow a few grains of wheat" (157).

And yet, rather than rejecting oral traditions as empirical evidence due to their historical unreliability, Schoolcraft collected Indigenous oral traditions for their "fictitiousness," and in effect he resolved the ethnologist's dilemma over the evidentiary status of oral traditions. That is, the issue of their historicity became irrelevant as they assumed new empirical values. Throughout his career as US Indian agent, and later as a full-time Indian scholar, Schoolcraft, with the aid of a network of Indigenous informants, most notably the Johnston family of Sault Ste. Marie, (re)wrote Indigenous oral traditions as Indian oral literature, laying the foundations for what I am identifying as ethnology's

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[2] See the previous chapter for an explanation of these narrative types.

"science of literature."[3] By "science of literature," I mean ethnology's study of oral traditions as both literary works and empirical evidence—an analysis of oral traditions' literary elements in order to reveal scientific insights and to prove and elucidate theories like monogenesis, psychic unity, evolution, or cultural diffusion. My focus in this chapter is Schoolcraft's and the Johnstons' roles in developing that science.

From appending a handful of Indian "poems" and "tales" to a travelogue in 1825, and then circulating similar works through a series of hand-written literary miscellanies, Schoolcraft went on to publish the first stand-alone collection of Indigenous oral traditions in 1839, a two-volume set titled *Algic Researches, Inquiries Respecting the Mental Characteristics of the North American Indian*. Although the follow-up volumes Schoolcraft had envisioned for *Algic Researches* (on other topics like language) never materialized, throughout the 1840s and 50s he continued to publish Indian oral literature, first for his magazine, *Oneóta; or Characteristics of the Red Race* (1845), and later for state-funded research projects that he was chosen to lead, including a census report on the Haudenosaunee of New York, *Notes on the Iroquois* (1846), and then the first national study of American Indians, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of North America* (1851-57), the latter of which the Smithsonian Institute financed, establishing Schoolcraft as the nation's leading

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[3] Of course, other antebellum writers like Rafinesque, who was pursuing symbolic and allegorical analyses of Indigenous oral traditions, were important to the foundations of this science. But more than any other author, Schoolcraft generated interest in oral traditions as oral literature, and several of his key arguments regarding the psychological import of Indian oral literature would be reiterated and further developed by later ethnologists like John Wesley Powell.

Indian expert. Crucial to Schoolcraft's success as an ethnologist was his collection of Indian oral literature, which he flaunted as a "discovery" providing new insights about the Indian—by shining a light, as he later put it, into "the dark cave of the Indian mind" (*Personal* 655). Schoolcraft considered it his lasting contribution to ethnology, and scholars have tended to agree.[4] As was the case with Heckewelder and Rafinesque, Schoolcraft, however, did not merely find and then publish faithful transcriptions of oral traditions. Firstly, he relied on the knowledge and work of many Indigenous men and women, and secondly, through the collection process, he actively took part in the (re)writing of oral traditions. Despite winning praise for his linguistic work on the Ojibwe language, and despite marrying a half-Ojibwe woman, Schoolcraft did not speak Ojibwe (or any other Indigenous language) fluently and was dependent on the translations and transcriptions of Indigenous informants and collaborators, including those of his wife and brother-in-law. Henry exercised his editorial control by revising, deleting, excerpting, and packaging the content they prepared for him to present his readers with versions of the oral traditions he desired—works of the primitive Indian imagination. As I explored in the previous chapter, Schoolcraft subjected, for one, Cusick's *Sketches of the Ancient History of the Six Nations* to such measures. Cusick was troubled by the fabulous qualities of Haudenosaunee oral traditions, but he nonetheless recorded and presented them as a cohesive, pre-Columbian "History" of the Six Nations, which he accomplished

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[4] Richard Bremer, Schoolcraft's biographer, writes, for example, that "more than anyone else," he "essentially discovered and reported the existence of Indian folklore." For Bremer, Schoolcraft's lasting contribution to the study of American Indians was not in the production of any original ideas but in "the presentation of new and authentic material," (354).

in part by imposing a detailed chronology on the traditionary events, extending back over two-thousand years. Schoolcraft utilized Cusick's work (along with accounts from David's brother, James) as part of his full-length report in *Notes*, wherein he described *Sketches* as "a mass of incongruous details, published by a native" (38). Schoolcraft discredited the text's historicity by exposing its fictionality, which Schoolcraft had in effect isolated and accentuated for his readers.

Schoolcraft was not alone, however, in (re)writing Indigenous oral traditions as Indian oral literature. He had considerable help from his wife, Jane, and her brother George. Jane, for example, recorded oral traditions, which she grew up hearing from her mother, as Romantic "tales" and "legends." But whereas Jane (re)wrote Ojibwe oral traditions as literature, to be admired as such, Henry collected those same works as ethnological evidence. Henry has been widely criticized, and for many years, for corrupting oral traditions through his sentimentality and his flair for the literary, for having, in short, stylized Indigenous oral traditions according to the literary tastes of his day. On the contrary, I argue that he and his Euro-American contemporaries desired a degenerate, uncouth (and thus authentic) Indian oral literature, which Henry supplied through his collections, in some instances by (re)writing Jane's work to distance it from Western literary forms. In doing so, he confirmed the distinctions and hierarchical oppositions between Indigenous and Western societies. And he not only shifted the value of the texts from a literary to a scientific realm, but he refocused ethnology on psychological rather than historical questions, the latter of which had preoccupied earlier authors. Instead of historical records, Schoolcraft collected fossilized mental "specimens" that, as expressions of the poetic faculty, offered insights regarding the condition and

mechanics of a savage Indian mind. As I demonstrate, this shift supported, and was supported by, the logic of removal and the expansionist needs and aspirations of the US government during the antebellum years.

Discovering Indian Oral Literature in the Michigan Territory

Schoolcraft's interest in Indigenous oral traditions as literary works was fueled by several factors—personal, professional, and cultural—which I seek to reconstruct in this chapter. In 1823, for instance, Schoolcraft's mentor, Lewis Cass—then governor of the Michigan territory, and future Secretary of State under the Jackson administration—delivered to Schoolcraft and others stationed in the West a questionnaire intended to gather systematic data on Indians living in US territories. Among the handful of headings with which Cass organized his "inquiries" were "Traditions" and "Music and Poetry." The former category included questions pertaining to topics like migrations, wars, and other "memorable events in [the Indians'] history," whereas the latter included questions like "Do they relate stories, or indulge in any work of the imagination? Have they any poetry?" (*Inquiries* 13). By the time he received the questionnaire, Schoolcraft had been living in Michigan for roughly a year and had already written to Cass about having "detected fanciful traditionary stories among the Chippewas." It remains unclear whether Schoolcraft "discovered" the existence of such works on his own, and then brought them to Cass's attention, or whether Cass first suggested that he record them if encountered. Either way, as his superior, Cass clearly agreed with and encouraged Schoolcraft's collection of Indian literary works, and neither would have had to look far to encounter associations between the Indian and the literary, which were becoming increasingly linked in the public's mind.

The early republic's heightened sense of nationalism included calls for a unique, representative literature, one utilizing the Indian and the American wilderness as its materials. And numerous authors heeded the call, from Philip Freneau and Charles Brockden Brown to, a little later, Robert Sands, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Lydia Maria Child. Scholars have written widely about this connection between the Indian, as a literary subject, and the development of a national literary tradition, arguing that US authors turned to the Indian as figure with which to distinguish their works as uniquely American, to develop themes of liberty and individualism, to construct a shared national past, and to placate the public's conscience regarding the violent dispossession on which the country was founded (Kennedy 141-43). Few subjects were as central to the nation's early literature as was the Indian. And at least one critic from the period believed Indians were not only suitably poetic as literary subjects but were in fact the nation's only true poets. In an 1815 article in the *North American Review*, Walter Channing bemoaned the lack of a national literature in the United States. Although the nation had produced talented scientists and painters, it had no notable men of "poetical merit" who could speak for the nation in its own language, in the vein of, say, Robert Burns of Scotland. The only true American literature was the "oral literature of [the] aborigines," the language and significations of which were as "rich as the soil on which [they were] nurtured" (313). By drawing attention to how the Indian was conceived not just as a subject but a producer of American literature—in this and later periods, especially among literary modernists of the twentieth century—this dissertation seeks to expand our understandings of the roles that imagined and actual Indian poets and fiction writers played in the formation of a US literary tradition.

In 1822 in his journal, Schoolcraft also used the term "oral literature" to refer to the "fanciful traditionary stories" of the Ojibwe he had been recording (*Personal* 112, 125). The emergence of this term in the first decades of the nineteenth century speaks, on the one hand, to the close association of the Indian with the literary in the United States, but also to a wider shift that was occurring in which "literature" no longer signified a body of lettered works but works that employed a specific mode of expression defined by its imaginative and symbolic or figurative characteristics, as Arnold Krupat and many others have noted ("Literature" 146; "Native" 332-33). This shift was part of an epistemic break identified by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* (1970), a rupture which coincided with (and was facilitated by) the expansion and development of the sciences (296-300). As they championed close, physical observation and description, men like Georges Cuvier admonished the use of imagination, intuition, and figurative language in the sciences, in effect relegating them to the poet (Debaene 13-14). After what Foucault called the "romantic revolt," the poet championed those same modes of acquiring and communicating knowledge, contributing to our modern association of "literature" with poetic, as opposed to scientific, or exclusively lettered, forms. In this way, the oral, *spoken* traditions of American Indians could be called "literature," not because they represented a body of *lettered* works but because they employed a poetic mode of

expression.[5] And within nineteenth-century ethnological writing, authors can be seen defining their practices as scientific, not through an outright banishment of the literary, but through an intense study of it—in the form of Indian oral literature. However, in arguing that the Indians produced literature, and that they had an essentially poetic mind, ethnologists like Schoolcraft were not necessarily praising them; rather, they were drawing attention to the fact that the Indian had confused fiction with reality. Unlike themselves, the Indian was incapable of rational, scientific thought.

Schoolcraft obviously saw no contradictions between "oral" and "literature," indicating that he accepted the modern connotations of the latter. He was, moreover, sufficiently interested in fiction and poetry to be excited by the literary qualities he perceived in the oral traditions recounted to him in Michigan. As an adolescent near Albany, New York, Schoolcraft had edited the school literary magazine and dabbled in poetry, a pastime he maintained throughout his early adulthood. Many of the early Indian "legends" that he collected he first published, in fact, in a series of hand-written miscellanies that he wrote and edited in the late 1820s, titled *The Literary Voyager; or Muzzeniegan*, and in which he included, alongside Ojibwe "legends" and songs, "many of the effusions of his younger years" (*Voyager* 84). Schoolcraft's literary predilections, moreover, were shared by his host in Sault Ste. Marie, John Johnston, securing the two

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[5] The transformation in the meaning of literature was not immediate but gradual. In 1838 Anna Jameson, for example, also published some of Jane Schoolcraft's traditional "Indian fictions," and she wrote about the existence of Indian "storytellers" who travelled from lodge to lodge amusing dwellers, but in the same text Jameson denied the existence of an Indian "literature," suggesting that for her the word signified a body of lettered works rather than merely poetic or imaginative works (99).

men's mutual respect and surely contributing to Schoolcraft's interest in Indian "oral literature." A local dignitary of sorts, Johnston was born into the Irish gentry but had immigrated to America from Belfast. He soon became wealthy and powerful through the fur trade, his success due in no small part to his marriage to the daughter of an Ojibwe chief. Schoolcraft got along well with Johnston, and between him and his Ojibwe-Irish family, Schoolcraft felt lucky to be in the company of "the best" teachers of "Indian language, customs, history, and character" (127). Johnston, moreover, was a gentleman, who evinced "by his manners and conversation and liberal sentiments that he ha[d] passed many of his years in polished and refined circles" (150). A "fine *belles lettres* scholar," Johnston, Schoolcraft wrote, possessed "great enthusiasm and romance of character, united with poetic tastes." In the Sault, far from US centers of commerce and culture, Schoolcraft saw the Johnston house as "a seat of refinement in the heart of the wilderness," not least surely because of Johnston's possession of "a choice library of standard English works." Johnston was "a man of taste, and great fondness for reading," who "amused the deep solitude of his position, during the winters, in this way, and sometimes indulged in composition" (*Oneóta* 234).[6]

As the two men bonded over a shared literary affinity, Schoolcraft, for similar reasons, took a romantic interest in Johnston's eldest daughter, Jane, whom Henry married in 1823. Nearly a decade after her untimely death in 1841, Henry described Jane as "a highly cultivated young lady, who was equally well versed in the English and Algonquin languages," and who "was placed at the head of her father's household, where

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[6] Henry later "transcribed his father-in-law's poems into a bound volume" (Parker, *The Sound* 13).

her refined, dignified manners and accomplishments attracted the notice and admiration of numerous visitors to that seat of noble hospitality" (*Personal* xl). Jane never attended school, but her father taught her to read and write and to appreciate Western classics (Bremer 95), and she was by all appearances familiar with contemporary literary trends, which in Henry's eyes would have favorably distinguished her from other women at the Sault. As Jane's and Henry's courtship developed, they exchanged lines from Shakespeare in love letters, and Henry composed poems praising Jane's "simple, modest mien."[7]

Even more than her husband, or her father, Jane too "indulged in composition," namely verse, in both English and Ojibwe. Robert Dale Parker has compared her literary achievements to those of Phillis Wheatly: "the first known American Indian literary writer, the first known Indian woman writer, by some measures the first known Indian poet, the first known poet to write poems in an Native American language, and the first known American Indian to write out traditional Indian stories (as opposed to transcribing and translating from someone else's oral delivery, which she did also)" (*The Sound* 2). It was Jane, in fact, who wrote many of the original "legends" that her husband collected and published, first in the *Voyager* (which she co-wrote with Henry) and later in *Algic Researches* (1839). Jane would have grown up hearing many of the oral traditions on which her tales were based from her mother, Ozhaguscodaywayquay, or Susan, who was "renowned for her knowledge of traditional stories and lore," much like her father,

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[7] He later included one of these poems in his miscellany *The Literary Voyager, or Muzzeneigan*, titled "The Choice Addressed to Miss J.J." (49-50). According to its editor, Philip Mason, there are similar ones in Henry's personal papers (176).

Waubojeeg, a well-known band chief from the region (*The Sound* 13). Jane's sisters, Charlotte and Anne Marie, also contributed to Henry's collections, as did especially her brother George, who worked as an interpreter and informant for Henry for many years, and who was likewise "remembered as 'a great reader'" of British poetry and the classics, having attended school for several years in Montreal (Bremer 75). Henry's early collection of Indian oral literature was thus something of a family affair, carried out by educated members of a local elite who were familiar with Western literary traditions, including then popular Romantic writers. What I would like to tease out in the following pages, however, are the differences among Henry's and the Johnstons' perspectives on the works they collected and their reasons for collecting them. These differences become most visible in the contrasts between Jane and Henry. As Jane (re)wrote Ojibwe oral traditions as Romantic legends and fables, Henry increasingly viewed the "oral literature" his wife and others (re)wrote for him within an ethnological framework, insisting that he performed the work of a scientist, and that the works he collected were objects crucial to both ethnology and the US management of Indian populations.

Because of the collaborative nature of the collecting process, combined with the editorial control Henry exercised over the texts, the perspectives and motivations of his informants and contributors can only be approached obliquely, catching glimpses where available. The essay "Character of Aboriginal Historical Tradition" exemplifies these limitations, as it likewise hints at the diversity of interests and ideas about American Indian culture and oral traditions that came to bear on Schoolcraft's collected works. Attributed to Jane's mother, the essay was included in the very first issue of the *Voyager* (1827), setting the tone for how its small collection of tales, songs, and poems were to be

read. It begins with a digression about Ozhaguscodaywayquay's childhood memories of her father, which she asked the editor (Henry) to forgive. My father "often told me," she said, "that you [white men] had a right knowledge of everything, and that you knew the truth, because you had things past and present written down in books, and were able to relate, from them, the great and noble actions of your forefathers, without variation" (*Voyager* 6). One cannot help but hearing Henry's skepticisms, however, reiterated through the voice of Ozhaguscodaywayquay:

> The stories I have heard related by old persons in my nation, cannot be so true, because they sometimes forget certain parts, and then thinking themselves obliged to fill up the vacancy by their own sensible remarks and experience, but it seems to me, much oftener by their fertile flights of imagination and if one person retains the truth, they have deviated, and so the history of my country has become almost wholly fabulous? (6)

Given that Ozhaguscodaywayquay could neither speak nor write in English, one must assume that the ascribed author, "Leelinau," which was one of Jane's pen names, refers to both Ozhaguscodaywayquay and Jane, the latter of whom would have translated and transcribed her mother's words. As with all of Henry's collected works, this makes it difficult to determine if the opinions put forth in the essay were Ozhaguscodaywayquay's, a difficulty augmented by the fact that we do not know if or where Henry may have made his own alterations to Jane's translation.

It may be that through conversations with Henry, or with her father or her husband, Ozhaguscodaywayquay began to doubt the veracity of Ojibwe oral traditions as histories, to associate "truth" with the white man's books. Or perhaps in wanting to weigh in on the oral traditions that Henry and her children had been recording, mostly from herself, she felt obliged to flatter Henry by agreeing with him that her people's stories

were mostly “flights of imagination.” The question mark which ends what otherwise reads as an affirmation of Henry’s disavowal of Ojibwe history, is curious, however. Whether intentional or not, it lends the passage a skeptical if not accusatory tone. And in leading up to that question with a memory of her father’s teachings, the speaker, Ozhaguscodaywayquay, subtly reaffirmed the validity of Indigenous oral traditions, as living memories, at the very same time that she seemed to undermine it. It is impossible to say with assurance what Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s motivations were in helping Henry and her children in their (re)writing of Ojibwe oral traditions, but what the essay alludes to are the conversations, even disagreements, that must have occurred behind the scenes among Henry and the Johnston family over the nature of Indigenous oral traditions. And one cannot help but sensing that Ozhaguscodaywayquay did not share Henry’s estimate of them. In her deference to Western culture, Ozhaguscodaywayquay implicitly highlighted the power that Henry and other Euro-Americans exercised over how Indigenous oral traditions were transferred to, and transformed into writing for white readers: “O sir,” Ozhaguscodaywayquay said, “if I could write myself . . . I think I should strive to make you acquainted with all our ancient traditions and customs without deceiving you in the least—just as I heard them from my father . . . and when I can write, I shall not forget to send you all the pretty songs and stories my mother used to teach me—to be put in your paper” (7). Her statement responds, implicitly, to the doubt that Henry had cast on the historicity of oral traditions, while also suggesting that an Indigenous author was needed to faithfully record them.

Jane Schoolcraft's Indian Legends

Whereas Ozhaguscodaywayquay appeared much more interested in recounting and recording the memorable exploits of her father than in sending Henry "the pretty songs and stories" her mother taught her as a child, Jane took a decided interest in the latter. Her (re)writing of those works was likely informed by her bicultural education, her interest in literary Romanticism, and the changing social world of the Great Lakes region. What becomes clear in reestablishing that context is that she (re)wrote her mother's traditional stories neither as histories nor as ethnological curiosities but as Ojibwe literature, of which she was clearly proud. As readers, both then and much later, encountered her work through her husband's collections, however, they criticized them for their resemblance to Western literature, demanding a less refined and thus, to them, more authentic Indian oral literature.

Robert Bieder has described how John Johnston, born into the Irish gentry, raised his children, particularly George and Jane (his two eldest), in a form of country gentility at the Sault. Although mixed-race, the Johnston children rightly viewed themselves as social elites within a racially dynamic society, which had long included French, English, Métis, Ojibwe and other Indigenous groups like the Huron. In the 1820s, that world was collapsing as new residents from New York and New England, drawn by the agency at the Sault and Fort Brady, flocked to the region. Their arrival challenged the Johnston family's political and social prominence, redefining status in the region along racial lines. The new immigrants failed to distinguish between full-blooded Indians and mixed bloods like the Johnstons, and by the 1830s, opinions toward mixed-race marriages like Henry's and Jane's, long a feature of the region, had soured, as Indians were pejoratively referred

to as “blacks” (Bieder, “Unmaking” 127-28). It was within this context of insecurity that Jane and George helped Henry (re)write Indigenous oral traditions as Indian oral literature.

As Parker argues, Jane, like her husband Henry, was a “social climber,” who put much stock in her literacy and social graces (*The Sound* 24). She was a soft-spoken woman, relatively light-skinned but with high cheekbones and dark hair and eyes that suggested her Ojibwe heredity. Fluent in French, English, and Ojibwe, she had a hard-to-place accent, wore traditional European women’s clothing, and by all accounts performed elegantly in her domestic duties when playing host to her husband’s many visitors. A member of the Ladies’ Reading Club in Mackinac, Jane composed English verse, certainly for self-expression, but also to entertain and display her talents before family, friends, and acquaintances. Most of her poems she likely wrote specifically for the *Voyager*, for which she and her family acted as co-creators. Its issues circulated among literate residents of not only Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie, but also Detroit and even New York, and perhaps other cities on the east coast (Mason xv). Locally, it is unclear who in specific received copies other than army surgeon, Zina Pitcher (who later served as mayor of Detroit and the first president of the American Medical Association). But Henry’s account of his and Jane’s social life in Sault Ste. Marie gives some indication, at least, of the dynamics of the society they inhabited and their positions within it. Among those with whom the young couple were in the habit of “exchanging sentiment” were three English families “of refinement and education . . . and the Hudson Bay house in charge of a Scotch gentleman,” as well as “the officers attached to a battalion of infantry, most of them married and having their ladies and families with them, and about a dozen

American citizens besides." Outside that small, "refined" circle were roughly three-hundred Métis residents and the even more numerous "adjacent Indian tribes," most of whom were likely illiterate (*Personal* 128).

The *Voyager*—filled with poems, acrostics, and short essays on topics like the history of glass making or ornithology—was certainly meant for individuals of "refinement and education." Distributed among a select number of Euro-Americans living in the frontier communities, it served as a sign of both their comity and their elevated class status. And many of its poems can be attributed to Jane, under the pseudonym "Rosa." Short, often melancholy compositions, they treat subjects such as "Resignation" or "Severe Pain and Sickness" in conventional English forms. Although condescending, Henry's praise for Jane's poetry suggests the pride he too felt in his wife's literary skills, writing "there is a naivetté in her productions which is often the concomitant of taste and genius . . . When to these positive recommendations of her poetic attempts, we add the limited opportunities of her early life . . . we think there is still greater cause to appreciate and admire" (84). In creating the *Voyager*, Jane and Henry amused themselves and other educated locals during the long winter evenings in northern Michigan, but they also confirmed their social standing in the territory, despite their equally "limited" educations, and despite Jane's close ties to an uneducated, poor Ojibwe populous.

Yet Jane also celebrated her Ojibwe heritage and asserted the value of Ojibwe culture by (re)writing—under the pseudonym of either "Leelinau" or her Ojibwe name, Bamewawagezhikaquay—the oral traditions with which she was raised. She translated and transcribed those traditions as Ojibwe "legends" for the enjoyment of her small

reading public, which was likely a majority white one. The very positioning of those works alongside her and her husband's English poems suggested their status as works of literature.[8] The traditional Ojibwe stories that appeared in the miscellanies, with the exception of the biographical sketches of Waubojeeg, were, furthermore, described as "legend," "fable," or "allegory," indicating how they were meant to be read. And it is likely that Jane (re)wrote her works to meet those expectations. Steven Petersheim has recently brought attention, for instance, to how Jane eschewed a "contemporary framework" for her narratives, as was common then for historical fiction, and chose instead to begin her traditional tales with lines like "there was once a woman," "Many years ago," or "Once upon a time," thus locating the works "within the legendary past of the Ojibwe people" (22). For Petersheim, those choices enabled the "stories of [Jane's] people to remain the stories of the pre-European culture she inherited from her Ojibwe ancestors." Yet it seems likely that that language was also meant to conform the tales to Euro-American readers' expectations for fables and legends. As Parker has explained,

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[8] Henry's Christmas annual *Souvenir of the Lakes* (1831) indicates as much. Wanting to participate in the latest literary fashion, Henry and Jane modelled the slim volume on the popular Christmas annuals that first appeared in the United States in 1826 (Orians 2). Its contents included original poems on topics like the moonlight at Mackinac Island, an account of a bear attack, a travel sketch by Captain Henry Whiting, a poetic "lament" from the perspective of an Ojibwe widow (likely written by Jane), and a "Wyandot Tradition" about rival lovers (also likely by Jane), the latter of which Henry would later republish in *Algic Researches*. As historian G. Harrison Orians put it, *Souvenir* offers "clear evidence that the Detroit-Maumee area had literary pride as early as 1831" (4). Part of that pride rested on the traditional "legends" of the Ojibwe that Jane (re)wrote, and which were, alongside the community's original poems and sketches, "souvenirs" of the dynamic cultural world of the Great Lakes region. Jane's poems, like her traditional tales, were from an "Ojibway Female Pen," and both were intended for the pleasure of polite readers (*Voyager* 8).

and as perhaps goes without saying, when Jane "wrote down stories she did not compose them exactly the same way as earlier storytellers" had. The stylistic variation among her works suggests, at a minimum, that with some Jane tried to adhere closely to literal translations, likely of her mother's accounts, but with others Jane may have "collated" different versions of the oral traditions she had heard growing up, putting "European models of the literary story and the folktale to the service of rendering Ojibwe oral storytelling" (*The Sound* 54-55). Even Jane's selection of which oral traditions to transcribe for the miscellanies was probably guided by their perceived resemblances to Western literary forms. Jane had a predisposition for (re)writing stories that centered on romantic or filial love, or that functioned similarly to children's "*pourquois* tales," like "The Origin of the Robin," as opposed to recounting those oral traditions that described the creation of the cosmos or the epic deeds of cultural heroes like Nanabozho, which, as Henry would later suggest in *Algic Researches*, conformed less readily to narrative expectations for works of short fiction (*The Sound* 57). Thus, Petersheim is not amiss in claiming that Jane transformed "oral Ojibwe folklore"—or as I prefer, "oral tradition"—"into written short stories" (21).

"The Origin of the Miscodeed, or the Maid of Taquimenon," which was first published in the *Voyager* in 1827, and attributed to "Leelinau," is a good example of this transformation. The sub-title alone elicits associations with Romantic literature like Walter Scott's "The Maid of Neidpath" (1806).[9] The story begins, moreover, with a

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[9] In bringing attention to such associations, I follow not just Parker's lead but that of Bethany Schneider, who has likewise situated Jane's poetry within the context of the Romantic literary movement and the popularity of British romantic poets, with which her poetry was in conversation (130).

lavish description of the young Miscodeed as she approaches womanhood: "Beauty sat upon her lips, and life and animation marked all her motions. Fourteen summers had witnessed the growth of her stature, and the unfolding of her charms, and each spring, as it came around, had beheld her, in her happy simplicity, reveling amid the wild flowers of her native valley" (122). Miscodeed's "growth" and "unfolding" in the spring, her association with wildflowers, to which she is later directly compared, and her desire to forever "live and revel in the wild beauties of [her] native valley," all prepare the reader for her magical transformation at the end of the story into the small pink and white flower known as the "spring beauty," or *Claytonia Virginica*. Although the story includes dream visions and the interpretation of birds as portents, these features—which Henry later highlighted for their religious significations—are enveloped here in the language of Romantic literature: "Beautiful valley of soft repose! There, [Miscodeed] had learned to know the sweet face of nature, and seen the river leap and laugh in foam, from the rocks, and then pursue its sylvan course through the green leafed forest" (122). The story clearly invited readers to assess it as literary art, rather than probe it for its ethnological or historical significations, which was a real possibility given that the plot hinges on the retaliation by a branch of the Dakotas, the "Mendawakantons," after an actual battle between them and the Ojibwe at the "falls of the river St. Croix," (124).

Henry too was drawn to oral traditions that possessed recognizably literary qualities, and he underscored them in his ethnological writings by excising their historical content, adding literary features, and packaging them in an editorial framework that recognized them foremost as works of the imagination. By his own admission, Henry commonly eliminated what he saw as superfluities that served only the purpose of

"whiling away" the hours during long winter nights, thus trimming narratives to resemble short fiction. He "detached" the fabulations when possible "from the original story," tossing out the (to him) irrelevant and unconnected pseudo-historical "chaff," to allow the fictions to stand properly by themselves. With the Nanabozho cycle in *Algic Researches*, for instance, he complained about the inherently fragmentary nature of the Nanabozho tales, which made them difficult to collect as a coherent series of narratives. The best he felt he could do was to gather "portions" that most "present[ed] a beginning and an end, which could hardly be said of the [other] loose and disjointed fragmentary tales" (172; vol. 1). Ironically, Henry himself therefore (re)wrote fragments of oral traditions as stand-alone stories, making them comprehensible to Euro-American readers as complete works of short fiction, meanwhile stressing their authenticity—they may have "required pruning and dressing, like wild vines in a garden," but they were nonetheless "exclusively . . . wild vines, and not pumpings up of [his] own fancy" (*Personal* 655).

In some cases, one can only guess as to how far such "pruning and dressing" were taken. George, for instance, wrote Henry in 1838 acknowledging the "defects" of the new stories he had sent him for *Algic Researches*. He explained to Henry that because the Indian informants, when asked about anything "respecting their religious ceremony," were not "prone to develop its particulars and peculiarities without caution," the works had ample "room for improvement and enlargement, particularly with those who are acquainted with the Indian character," (qtd. in Bremer 250). Shifts in voice or perspective, as well as minor changes made to the collected works across various publications indicate where Henry may have felt compelled to step in and "enlarge" the meanings he perceived in the texts and, in general, to manage how his readers would

have thought about those texts. Such is the case with "The Red Lover," a work George contributed for Henry's *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley* (1825), in the final chapter of which Henry originally titled it "Love and War." The story was published once more in 1833 in the Charleston magazine the *Southern Rose Bud*, as simply "Indian Tale," although with no other noticeable changes. Henry then revised it for *Algic Researches*, for which it lost its essay-like title, "Love and War," and assumed one more fitting a work of sentimental fiction. Along these lines, the original version began, "More than two hundred winters have passed away since the fame of Wawanosh was sounded along the shores of Lake Superior" (421). For *Algic Researches*, Henry revised the opening to read, "Many years ago there lived a warrior on the banks of Lake Superior, whose name was Wawanosh" (87; vol. 1). Although the difference may seem inconsequential, in the opening lines alone Henry had eliminated the historical specificity of the initial tale, lending the narrative a sense of timelessness more in keeping with a "legend," although not necessarily the *dibajimowin* from which the story undoubtedly derived.

"The Red Lover" goes on to describe how the esteemed chief, Wawanosh, refused to give away his daughter to her low-born lover until the "youth" had proven himself as a warrior. His pride piqued, the young lover convinces his "companions" to join him in battle against "the enemy," in which contest, however, he falls, mortally wounded by an arrow. On hearing the news of his death, Wawanosh's daughter pines away in despair and dies, and Wawanosh is left alone, filled with regret. The language of the story, and the fatal romance of the two lovers, who depart from one another with "protestations of inviolable attachment" and "vows of mutual fidelity," matches the rhetoric of sentimental

fiction of the period, as well as its sense of sexual propriety (94; vol. 1). Likewise, the beauty of Wawanosh's daughter—her "slender form, her full beaming hazel eyes, and her dark and flowing hair"—is conveyed to the reader with the help of a stanza from Lord Byron's *The Island* (1823). The stanza was taken from a scene in which the sailor-mutineers of Byron's poem encounter a "gentle savage of the wild," whose "sun-born blood suffused" her "tropic cheek" and "neck." In redeploying the lines to describe a young Ojibwe woman, Henry (or perhaps George) linked the text explicitly to popular Romantic literary works of the period, invoking the literary trope of the savage and bringing it to bear on the supposed authentic fictions of that savage.

Scholars, including Henry's immediate successors, have long been critical of how these early collecting practices produced inauthentic or corrupted versions of Indigenous oral traditions. Schoolcraft's biographer Richard Bremer wrote that Henry's "labors fell well short of modern standards of scholarship," that through his "dilettante outlook," he "distorted some of the tales beyond recognition" (252). For Parker, Henry's collecting activities amounted to little more than cultural theft, made worse by his adulteration of the stolen goods. Henry "encase[ed] the tales in genteel sensibilities," putting them "on display for the pleasure of white readers" (*The Sound* 27). In collecting Indigenous oral traditions, nineteenth-century Euro-Americans like Schoolcraft, according to the scholarly consensus, eliminated elements that they viewed as excrescences or aesthetic defects, such as repetitions or abrupt shifts in narrative, but which conveyed essential meanings in the original, oral traditions, and which possessed value as conventional features within the endemic genres (Tedlock, "Translation" 61). Such "dilettante" collectors published works, not as they were told to

them, but in conditions that satisfied their own cultural tastes. And Henry admitted as much in his journal, writing that he had intentionally "weeded out many vulgarisms" in the tales, and although he "endeavored to restore the simplicity of the original style," he nonetheless "found [it] necessary, to avoid incongruity, to break a legend in two, or cut it short off" (585).

While it is true that both Jane and Henry worked to (re)write Indigenous oral traditions in terms that made them recognizable as works of Western literature, Jane appears to have been much keener than Henry was to please the "genteel sensibilities" of readers by producing aesthetically pleasing texts. In fact, many of Henry's white contemporaries called for a less refined and thus more "authentic" Indian oral literature, which Henry attempted to deliver. In 1838 writer Anna Jameson published several of Jane's legends, which she copied during a visit to Mackinac in 1836. Afterwards, Jameson wrote to Henry offering him trade advice as he prepared *Algic Researches* for publication: "'I published,' she says, 'in my little journal, one or two legends which Mrs. Schoolcraft gave me, and they have excited very general interest. The more exactly you can (in translation) adhere to the style of the language of the Indian nations, instead of emulating a fine or correct English style—the more characteristic in all respects—the more original—the more interesting your work will be" (*Personal* 634). The letter reveals the degree to which white readers' expectations for Indianness likely influenced collectors' decisions about which oral traditions to publish and how to present them, and consequently how the literary market, the need to "interest" white readers, conflated Indian artistic originality with savagery.

Jameson anticipated the sentiments of Margaret Fuller, for one, who read both Jameson's selections of Indian legends and *Algic Researches*; of the latter, Fuller wrote, in her *Summer on the Lakes*, that it was "a valuable book, though a worse use could hardly have been made of such fine material." Clearly its contents had not "been written down exactly as they were received from the lips of the narrators . . . the phraseology in which they were expressed [was] entirely set aside, and the flimsy graces, common to the style of annuals and souvenirs, substituted for the Spartan brevity and sinewy grasp of Indian speech." Under the civilized veneer of the tales, however, an "air of [Indian] originality" was still detectable, "as we can detect the fine proportions of the Brave whom the bad taste of some white patron has arranged in frock-coat, hat, and pantaloons" (31-32). Fuller preferred Jane's works (via Jameson) to Henry's (and in actuality, many of Henry's tales were originally written by Jane), yet Jane's too possessed a "sentimental air" that was dissatisfying. "What would we give," Fuller wrote, "for a completely faithful version . . ." (32). Fuller's desire that authentic Indian oral literature, like authentic Indians, be "Spartan," "sinewy," and naked obscured the fact that Jane's stories (the composition of which Fuller attributed to Jameson) were the original literary productions of an Ojibwe woman (and were indeed originally written for "annuals and souvenirs"!).

Henry too "feared that" in "work[ing] up" the materials for publication, "the roughness, which gave them their characteristic originality and Doric truthfulness, would be smoothed and polished off to assume the shape of a sort of Indo-American series of tales; a cross between the Anglo-Saxon and the Algonquin" (*Personal* 515). Far from simply "encasing the tales in gentility," Henry and his contemporaries desired that Indian

oral literature possess a certain "roughness" that would distinguish it from that of the "Anglo-Saxon" race, a desire that was surely bound up with fears over miscegenation and racial equality in the antebellum United States. What has thus been lost in the discussions surrounding the inauthenticity of Henry's collections of oral traditions is how Jane (and her siblings) may have drawn upon Euro-American literary conventions to (re)write oral traditions in assimilative terms that nonetheless elevated the status of those traditions and, by implication, American Indian culture in the eyes of white readers. It seems significant that they did so as racism towards non-whites, in addition to calls for Indian removal from US society, increased. Fueled by a deep attachment to her Ojibwe heritage, Jane (re)wrote oral traditions she grew up hearing from her mother and other members of the Ojibwe community to positively shape how a local Euro-American reading public would view Ojibwe culture. Her tales, often centered on Ojibwe family life, showcased the beauty and morality of her peoples' world. Understanding contemporary literary tastes, which she shared, Jane (re)wrote "pretty [Ojibwe] stories and songs" that she felt Euro-American readers would find agreeable. The "charming" tales, as Anna Jameson called them, "very picturesque," were intended for fireside reading just like any other work of Western literature, such as the original English poems they first accompanied.

Indian Oral Literature as Ethnological Evidence

It is difficult to gauge Jane's level of political consciousness or her attitude toward her husband's role as an agent of US expansion, but it should be acknowledged that as literary texts, Jane's Ojibwe tales nonetheless celebrated her supposedly disappearing culture and flouted stereotypes about Indian savagery—the insistence that Indians were not, nor could become, civilized. Her husband and, after him, Cass publicly

made that very argument as justification for Indian removal: three centuries of contact with a superior civilization had produced negligible effects on the Indian. The Indian remained a savage, proving his resistance to change and his inability to integrate into US society. Henry in fact articulated these beliefs in the very same miscellany in which he praised the accomplishments of an "Ojibway female pen"—his wife's. And if *Algic Researches* failed to satisfy Fuller and others who craved a more unrefined Indian oral literature, it was not for lack of trying on Henry's part. In comparing the tales (re)written by Jane with the versions of those tales that Henry edited for *Algic Researches*, it appears that Henry at times eliminated or suppressed his wife's attempts to stylize or civilize (that is, (re)write according to Western norms) her traditional tales for Euro-American readers. He did so, I argue, to deemphasize the literary value of the texts and thereby reframe them as ethnological evidence. First published in the *Voyager* and then revised and republished in *Algic Researches*, "The Forsaken Youth" is a case in point. The story centers on two orphaned siblings' abandonment of their youngest brother in the forest. Each version of the story begins with an isolated Indian family gathered around the deathbed of the father, but with significant differences in diction, which are indicative of those to be found throughout the texts. Jane's opening is rich with imagery, rendering the landscape symbolic, premonitory even of the tragedy awaiting the reader inside the lodge: "It was a fine summer evening; the sun was scarcely an hour high, its departing rays shone through the leaves of the tall elms that skirted a little green knoll, whereon stood a solitary Indian lodge. The deep, deep silence that reigned around seemed to the dwellers in that lonely hut like the long sleep of death which was now about to close the eyes of the chief of this poor family" (88-89). For Henry, the stylized language was

apparently too similar to that of literary works with which readers would have been familiar, perhaps raising doubts as to its authenticity as a work of *Indian* oral fiction. His revised version begins (and continues throughout) rather matter-of-factly: "A solitary lodge stood on the banks of a remote lake. It was near the hours of sunset. Silence reigned within and without" (191; vol. 2). To what austere "original," one wonders, was Henry, who spoke Ojibwe limitedly, "restoring [a] simplicity of style" in this instance? Henry clearly gestured beyond his wife's (re)writing, the original *text*, to an *idea* of Indian authenticity, of an "original" version of the tale, one that obviously lacked the polish of Western literature. Henry combined the roles of ethnologist and literary critic to (re)write Jane's version of the tale into his own "authentic" Indian legend, this time with an authentic Indian title, "Sheem," and a subtitle—"The Forsaken Boy"—which lacked the Romantic resonances of Jane's "Forsaken Youth."

In addition to deemphasizing the refinement of Indian oral literature, Schoolcraft persistently added what might be called an "ethnological gaze" to the texts, which further distinguished his efforts at (re)writing Indian oral literature from Jane's. Henry's interests in Indigenous oral traditions were always closely aligned with his professional ambitions and, therefore, the interests of the US government. Cass asked him to record any stories or poetry he came across as he performed his official duties, and Henry in turn solicited materials from the Johnston family and later from other "aborigines" in the region. The professional dimensions of his collecting activities are evident even in how he first published works of Indian oral literature. Henry's *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley* (1825) documented the 1821 expedition led by Governor Cass from Detroit up to present day Minnesota and down to Chicago, where Cass negotiated a treaty

with the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Indians, defining their new, circumscribed territorial rights. The final chapter of the text Henry dedicated to "Some Observations and Translations, attesting the Existence of Imaginative Tales, and Oral Poetry among the Chippewas," where in addition to publishing samples of each (translated and transcribed by George), he speculated about the social functions of such works, namely their reinforcement of customs. The texts' appendage to a detailed account of the negotiation of territory in the Great Lakes region suggested their potential utility, on behalf of the US government, for understanding American Indian beliefs, especially the Indians' seeming obstinacy in adhering to those beliefs—a point Henry would reiterate throughout his career.

Bremer has written that Henry was "caught between" his "contradictory literary and ethnological goals" (251). As I argue, however, in Henry's collection of Indian oral literature the two roles merged and mutually reinforced one another. Along with his wife, Henry (re)wrote Indigenous oral traditions as works of Indian oral literature, but unlike Jane, Henry used those works to advance his career as an ethnologist and to help define the nascent science. After the 1840 election, he lost his post as Supervisor of Indian Affairs of the Michigan territory, a victim of the spoils system. He had never intended a career in Indian Affairs in the first place—he had in fact first won public recognition for a geological survey of mines in Missouri (1819), and he had used that recognition to lobby for a position supervising mining in the western states and territories. Senator John C. Calhoun, who as Secretary of State ran the War Department, and thus the newly formed Bureau of Indian Affairs, offered Henry the agency at Sault Ste. Marie, a far less desirable role in his eyes, not least because he had no experience with or knowledge of

Indians. But he built a life and career out of the opportunity. Always having fancied himself a man of science, Henry easily moved from his studies in minerology to investigating Indigenous languages, religions, and traditional "lore." His investigations put him in contact with powerful men like Gallatin, and they helped him gain the literary recognition Henry always desired, and which he hoped would further his political career.

Given the lack of institutional support for the sciences in the antebellum United States, finding an outlet and an audience for esoteric subjects was not easy. As Bremer explains, as early as 1825 Schoolcraft unsuccessfully devised plans for a magazine, *Indian Annals*, devoted to the study of American Indians, which he tried (again unsuccessfully) to revive in 1841 as *Algic Magazine and Annals of Indian Affairs*. Likewise, he had intended *Algic Researches* to be a series of investigations, beginning with the two volumes of Indian oral literature, which were obviously meant to capture the public's interest in the endeavor. A commercial failure, *Algic Researches* was abandoned by Harper Brothers after the second volume (Bremer 405). Yet the publishing venture was a personal success in the sense that it helped increase Schoolcraft's stature as an ethnologist and pave the way for future research projects, and at the very moment when he had lost his government post, launching him into a decade of financial insecurity. As he pivoted from Indian agent and Supervisor to a full-time Indian scholar, he lobbied to head, first a census of the Iroquois, funded by the New York state legislature, and later the Smithsonian's nation-wide study of American Indians. Schoolcraft's renown as an Indian scholar, which was tied to his work on Indian oral literature, helped secure him these positions.

Although Schoolcraft was aware of the opportunities for publishing Indian oral literature as entertainment, which is to say, for popular consumption, he collected it instead as ethnological data. One could easily imagine Henry having prepared, in collaboration with Jane and George, a purely literary collection of Indian tales, perhaps one modelled on the popular *Arabian Nights*. His ethnological work in fact gave rise to the first of these collections in the subsequent decade, when Cornelius Matthews, who had published work by such notables as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Alfred Russell Lowell, republished versions of the stories from *Algic Researches* as *The Indian Fairy-Book* (1855). Schoolcraft considered doing something along those lines in the 1830s, as he "deliberated what [he] should do with [his] materials, denoting a kind of oral literature among the Chippewas and other tribes" (*Personal* 514). He even wrote to Irving for advice on the matter. The problem was, as he put it, that the materials were "so incongruous, grotesque, and fragmentary, as to require some hand better than [his], to put them in shape" by running them through the "literary loom." That route would be pursued by William H. C. Hosmer and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, each of whom soon put Indian "legends" to verse. In producing the most popular work of US poetry in the nineteenth century, Longfellow drew directly on the Indian "myths" and "legends" that Schoolcraft had collected and published. Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* was the most accomplished example of what John O'Leary dubs "ethnographic verse," a literary movement that, much like its fictional counterparts (Cooper's Leatherstocking tales, for instance), drew upon ethnological writing regarding American Indians to describe, in verse, the colonial encounters and conflicts between Euro-Americans and Indians (266). Both major and minor poets of the period, including Philip Freneau, Robert Sands and

James Eastburn, and even Schoolcraft, participated in the literary fad. (Examples from Schoolcraft can be found, for instance, in the *Voyager*, alongside Jane's Indian legends.) My point here is that the (re)writing of oral traditions as popular literature was not only a viable option for Henry, but that there were several different routes to choose from. Yet Schoolcraft, perhaps doubting his own strengths as a literary author, elected a different strategy altogether, which was to underscore the grotesqueness, the incongruities, and thus the novelty of Indian oral literature as ethnological evidence. While he acknowledged the potential value of his collected materials as literary texts, he insisted that they be read instead as empirical objects, as "specimens" that he had "gathered," much like mineralogical or botanical ones, "among the recesses of the forest." In doing so he helped carve out an ethnological reading public and distinguish ethnology as a scientific field, one that he saw as being distinct from the popular world of literature. His collected works were "submitted as facts or materials, in the mental condition of the tribes, and not as evidences of attainment in the arts or metre and melody, which will bear to be admitted or even criticized by the side of the refined poetry of civilized nations. And above all, not as efforts to turn Indian sentiments to account, in original composition" (*Oneóta* 48).

Many readers likely disregarded Henry's appeals. A reviewer in *The Detroit Free Press*, for instance, heralded *Algic Researches* for its "rescue from oblivion of an important portion of the great world of mind," but in comparing its contents to "Grecian Mythology and the Arabian Nights Entertainments," the reviewer enticed potential buyers with an original Indian poem from the collection, a sample of the "similar beautiful thoughts and inventions" with which "the work abound[ed]" (*Personal* 654). It

was against this impulse to *enjoy* the collected materials as works of literary art that Henry labored. He asked his readers to view the tales and poems as empirical evidence, and thus to play the role of the ethnologist. Another reviewer, this time of *The Detroit Daily Advertiser*, caught Schoolcraft's drift when he wrote that the collected tales "may have less variety of construction, less beauty of imagination, less singularity of incident, than belong to oriental tales . . . But the estimate must not be comparative. They are to be regarded as the type of aboriginal mind, as the measure of intellectual power of our sons of the forest" (653). As deficient literary works, the collected materials became valuable empirical objects for the ethnologist. But as empirical objects, the collected oral literature offered evidence of a different sort than that which I examined in the previous chapter in the oral traditions of Heckewelder or Rafinesque. The ethnologist could no longer look to Indigenous oral traditions for the historical content they contained, however veiled. They could be read, however, for other kinds of empirical values. Rather than collecting historical records, and rather than collecting literary amusements, Schoolcraft collected "illustrations of the mental peculiarities of the tribes" (*Oneóta* 49). He collected literary works that contained factual, psychological depths, unknown to their creators, but which could be mined by the ethnologist-reader.

This shift from history to psychology within Schoolcraft's work on oral traditions was bound up with a larger debate within ethnology over the origins of mankind, which was reformulating the discipline as a science of racial difference. Vanita Smith has argued that advocates of monogenesis like James Cowles Pritchard, who were often religious, relied primarily on philology and history to understand the various developments of nations, and to prove humankind's common origin, explaining present-

day racial and cultural difference through migration and the effects of climate. This emphasis on history separated ethnology from the other sciences, aligning it with historiography in so far as it was concerned with not just people but *change*—nature, in its pre-Darwinian conception, was fixed, and one studied nature in the present to understand how it had always been. A new generation of polygenists, like Josiah Nott and George Gliddon, dismissed history and language as "the source for, and site of, the study of humanity," looking instead to "the perceived fixity of the physical body" to understand human difference. They turned the body into a "text" that could be read and interpreted, but its lessons were in essence ahistorical (Smith 838-40). Polygenists studied the human body of today to understand how it had always been, and thus they pulled ethnology into closer association with the natural sciences, particularly physiology, which included the new science of phrenology.

Although Schoolcraft's religiosity led him to consistently, and explicitly, support monogenesis, his work in ethnology aligned him with the methods and even conclusions of the polygenists, which is especially evident in his revaluing of oral traditions as psychological as opposed to historical data. As a body of ethnological data, Schoolcraft's collections of Indian oral literature, and his approach to analyzing their contents, took shape alongside what was arguably the most well-known (today, notorious) ethnological data of the period, Samuel George Morton's collection of human crania. A physician and professor of anatomy in Philadelphia, Morton helped for many years to run the Academy of Natural Sciences. Like Schoolcraft, he sought to develop ethnology beyond its early emphasis on philology and history. And like Schoolcraft, he did so by examining Indian psychology, but with a focus primarily on physiology, for which his training in the

natural sciences, particularly specimen collecting, had prepared him (Fabian 28). As with Schoolcraft's collection of Indian oral literature, it was Morton's collection of Indian crania that "distinguished his collecting" practices in the field and quickly made a name for himself as one of the leading US ethnologists (30). His work extended directly from the principles of phrenology, a science which postulated that mental faculties or "propensities," such as "cautiousness" and "combativeness," were localized as organs in the brain. The size of those organs—thought capable of shaping the skull—correlated with their power. Outlined first by Francis Gall, and developed by Johan Spurzheim and George Combe, phrenology initiated an era of head readings and plaster casts. Morton supplied the science with an overtly racial bent, collecting over his career 867 skulls, most of them American Indian. He provided thereby the theoretical and material foundations for what was called the "American School" of ethnology, distinguished from its European counterparts by its firmer grounding in physiology and quantitative methods. Morton, in short, approached ethnology as a science of race, and the "American School" became "synonymous with the theory of polygenesis," the belief that human races had originated separately, rather than from the same stock (Stein 11).

Morton's science of "craniometry," like that of phrenology as a whole, was profoundly materialist, focused on minutely measuring the size and shape of crania in order to identify distinct human races and to organize those races hierarchically according to their intellectual capacities—literally, their cranial capacities, determined in part by stuffing cranial orifices with cotton and then filling the skulls with seed or birdshot, which was thereafter extracted and weighed. *Crania Americana* (1839), Morton's most important work, provided "accurate delineations of the crania of more than forty Indian

nations," complete with dozens of plates and "nearly two-hundred minor illustrations" (iii). It also included an essay by Combe, written specifically for the occasion, which furnished readers with the means to "apply Phrenological rules to every skull in the series" (iv). The carefully tabulated measurements of each of the Indian cranial specimens were accompanied by corresponding measurements of thirty-nine mental faculties, from "Amativeness" to "Hope," to which Morton's collaborator, John S. Phillips, assigned precise numerical values, determined through his use of Morton's "craniometer" (262). In the appendix, Combe's essay then provided readers with a Swiss cranial specimen with which to contrast those figures, and Combe explained to readers how to assess for themselves the inferior mental faculties exhibited in the dozens of plates of Indian crania that followed. What the skulls were meant to demonstrate were clear, fundamental, and immutable racial divisions among humanity. Contrary to the beliefs of earlier philosophers such as Comte de Buffon, external racial differences like skin color were not the result of differences in climate; they were innate, extending well below the skin to the muscles, ligaments, bones, and organs hidden beneath.
As Combe explained, "Europeans and native Indians [had] lived for centuries under the influence of the same physical causes," but the former had "kept pace in their advances," while the latter had remained "stationary in savage ignorance and indolence," from which fact one could only infer that there existed fixed psychological structures in the two races, unaffected by changes in climate (273).

One is not inclined, perhaps, to think of a collection of human skulls and a collection of "legends and tales" as being in dialogue with one another, but there are many surprising similarities between Schoolcraft's and Morton's works. Published in the

same year, both *Algic Researches* and *Crania Americana* expanded the scope of ethnological collecting practices beyond lexicography, grammar, and history. Both authors presented their collections as making available new forms of empirical evidence on which to base an altogether new (psychological) assessment of the Indians, thereby redefining the science of ethnology, and supposedly placing its theories on a surer empirical footing. And much like Schoolcraft, in presenting readers with visually stunning images of human skulls, commissioned from a Philadelphia artist, Morton, as Ann Fabian explains, had to actively work against readers' tendencies to view the collected materials in aesthetic terms, evoking as they would have the paintings of "Caravaggio, Hans Holbein, Frans Hals, or the Dutch masters of the vanitas still life" (88). Morton had to insist that readers view the images objectively, which he accomplished through exposition and through incorporating drawings of his measuring apparatuses. Paired with those tools, and assigned their volumes in cubic inches, the skulls were no longer symbols of mortality, but empirical objects to be quantified and analyzed to determine their psychological values. Similarly, Schoolcraft collected materials—fiction and poetry—which readers were accustomed to assessing as literary art. That familiarity required him to implore his readers not to read the materials as amusements but as objects in which psychological facts waited to be unearthed. Although far less theoretically and methodologically precise as Morton, Schoolcraft, in explaining his findings before the "students of the Indian mind," likewise laid out before readers his literary "specimens," much like Morton's plates of human crania, so that they could then apply similar methods in reading them.

Schoolcraft's collections of Indian oral literature competed, then, with Morton's *Crania Americana*, and they should be seen as having emerged as an alternative to, perhaps even a complement of Morton's phrenological work. Schoolcraft, from whom Morton requested cranial specimens, never outright denounced his colleague's science of "craniometry," but he did underscore its limitations, writing that

> when we come, however, to apply it to the wide-spread tribes and families of the continent, as they exist, the laws of physics and mind do not appear completely to coincide; at least, there appears to be a necessity of discrimination between what may be termed the primordial measure of the intellect, and its active or expanded powers or qualities. It is from this view, that classifications of barbarous and civilized tribes, on merely physical data, appear to be untenable. (*Historical* 243; vol. 5)

According to Schoolcraft, Morton's crania were ultimately superficial, both literally and figuratively. In theory they provided evidence of a basic mental ability, but they exhibited nothing of the Indian mind in action, revealed nothing of the superstructure of the Indian's thoughts, the actual motivations behind his real-world actions. Crania provided the cast of the Indians' mental organs; Indian oral literature provided "true transcripts of Indian thought," mental fossils that embodied in text form what was otherwise ephemeral and obscure. They "open[ed] a vista into the structure of Indian mind, which was before unknown" (*Oneóta* 257).

For Schoolcraft, Indian oral literature, as a transcription of the mind, revealed a mental state as degenerative as the literature itself. The Indians' "species of wild composition" lacked "unity of theme [and] plot." Their "narration" and "description" were "imperfect, broken, or disjointed." Their images were "mere allusions, or broken description, like touches on the canvass, without being united to produce a perfect object" (43-44). "Without the art to draw, or the skill to connect," the Indians could

produce "but a shapeless mass." How "very different" their poems were "from every notion of English versification." Having "neither rhyme, nor metre to adorn it," Indian poetry was "the poetry of naked thought" (14). It revealed a mind in turn that was wild, fragmented, and unsophisticated. Their oral tales, which took the "place of books" for the Indians, were erratic "incongruities." The Nanabozho narratives were "loose and disjointed fragmentary tales," impossible to collect and "arrange . . . in order" unless "much of the thread necessary to present them in an English dress were supplied by invention, alteration, and transposition" (*Algic* 172; vol. 1). The works' "very incongruities," he wrote, "make them a picture of the Indian mind, in which incidents queer, and things diverse, follow each other, in a manner, which characterizes them as peculiar, or original" (*Oneóta* 260). In purportedly refusing to run the works through the literary "loom," Schoolcraft, of course, obscured the fact that he had (re)written oral traditions as oral literature, and that he in turn had roughened, as it were, the works his wife originally wrote, to align them with ideas about Indian savagery.

As "pictures" of the "queer" Indian mind in action, the works Schoolcraft assembled probed deeper, in theory at least, than did Morton's cranial plates and measurements, yet overall, the conclusions and political implications that stemmed from each respective dataset were in agreement, despite Schoolcraft's rejection of polygenesis: the Indian mind was inferior and seemingly unchanging, "degenerate." The only Indian literary works that Schoolcraft felt were "perfect" were the "Nursery and Cradle Songs of the Forest," which although neither as "numerous nor attractive" as the "rich nursery stores of more refined life," nonetheless were nearly "analogous" to familiar English nursery rhymes (*Oneóta* 212). The close correspondence between the two forms

suggested to Schoolcraft that such "primitive elements admit of no progress, but are perfect in themselves." By implication, the Indians, although possessing the capacity for invention, were stagnant, stuck in a primitive, childish mental condition.

Schoolcraft's Indian oral literature, as ethnological evidence, easily supported, therefore, the removal legislation carried out beginning in the 1830s under the supervision of Cass, who by then had resigned as Governor of the Michigan territory to become Secretary of War. As Bremer notes, throughout his career Schoolcraft stuck close to Cass ideologically, despite Schoolcraft's religiosity and his support for missionary efforts. And the influence probably ran both ways, with Cass using Schoolcraft to gather factual fodder to wage his political battles. Beginning in 1827, for instance, Cass wrote a series of articles for the *North American Review* in which he provided overviews of Euro-Indian relations, culminating in his endorsement of Indian removal west of the Mississippi (*Science* 152). "During two centuries," Cass argued, the Indians had been exposed to "our improvements" and "our superiority" but had failed to advance in their "moral qualities." They appeared to lack a certain "principle," "inherent in human nature," towards "progressive improvement." They stuck obstinately to the same mode of life practiced by their ancestors, and in that they proved themselves no different than "the bear, and deer, and buffalo of [their] own forests." The Indians, as woodland creatures, were "destined to disappear with the forests . . ." ("Indian" 391). A plan for "preserving them from further decline and eventual extinction," removal was not only a logical conclusion, but supposedly a benevolent one as well (408). Two months prior to Cass's essay, Schoolcraft wrote an article for the *Voyager*, titled "The Unchangeable Character of the Indian Mind." It likewise argued that the Indian's "primeval character" remained

"essentially unchanged," despite centuries of exposure to Western society and its "precepts." No alterations had been "wrought" in "the native constitution of his mind," which due to some (unspecified) "principle" had resisted "intellectual culture." The Indians, moreover, were "doomed to extinguishment" through living in proximity with Western civilization and its agricultural practices (107-11). Schoolcraft claimed more information was needed before settling the "momentous" question of removal, but the writing on the wall was clear, and his collection of Indian oral literature over the next two decades testified to that mental resistance.

For Morton and his followers, the Indian's skull, its physical capacity, placed seemingly natural and fixed limits on the power of his intellect. For Schoolcraft, the Indian's stories and songs were likewise what kept him trapped in a degenerative condition. In a reversal of the widely held assumption that changes in subsistence preceded changes in a people's morals and customs, Schoolcraft argued that one's beliefs determined one's social practices (Bieder, *Science* 176; 191-92). Literature not only revealed beliefs but reinforced them, and as such it was the "principle" that kept progress and civilization at bay among the Indians. The very queerness and vulgarity of Indian oral literature would have suggested to Schoolcraft its ill effects on the Indians, a perspective that speaks to his indebtedness to early-republic thinking regarding literature, specifically the period's anxieties over the dangers and immorality of fiction, as embodied in the sentimental novel (Mulford xx-xxvii; Nienkamp and Collins xiii-xvii). Good fiction, it was believed, should inculcate moral behavior, and thereby shape a virtuous citizenry. In this respect, Indian oral literature failed. "Wherever Indian sentiment is expressed," Schoolcraft explained, "there is a tendency to the pensive—the

reminiscent." The Indian, he argued, was a "man of reminiscences, rather than anticipations." So greatly was his "tendency of reflection . . . directed towards the past," that Schoolcraft doubted "whether hope is an ingredient of the Indian mind." In their domestic domains, they "soften[ed] into feeling and sentiment" and regaled themselves with story and song, their minds "surrounded by fears of evil, and despondency." Their literary productions dwelled in the past, lamenting their peoples' plight. "If poetry is ever destined to be developed in such minds," Schoolcraft mused, "it must be of the complaining and plaintive, or the desponding cast" (*Historical* 327; vol. 3). The "prospect of civilization and mental exaltation [had been] held up before [the Indian] . . . by teachers and philanthropists for more than two centuries; but there ha[d] been nothing in them to arouse and inspire him to press onward in the career of prospective civilization and refinement," no moral "spring to present and future exertions" (*Algic* xxxviii; vol. 1). Instead, the Indian took solace "in allusions to the past," speaking of a "Golden Age," and pining away. Whereas Morton and his aid, Phillips, relied on a "craniometer" to quantify the strength of Indians' faculty for "Hope," Schoolcraft engaged in literary analysis to the same end, to determine why they refused the advancements the white man offered.

Indian oral literature was also problematic, for Schoolcraft, in that it encouraged superstitious thinking. The minds of Indian auditors became, like the tales and songs they listened to, "spirit ridden." The same "literary machinery" that served as material for Indian imaginative productions became, according to Schoolcraft, "intellectual fetters" under which "the whole mind" of the Indian was "bowed down," its "volitions" circumscribed and bound "as effectually as with the hooks of steel which pierce a

Hoodoo's flesh" (*Oneóta* 211). The crux of the problem was that the Indians accepted the imaginative elements of their oral literature as fact and not fiction, so that the world that the Indian came to inhabit psychologically was "poetic," an argument that postbellum ethnologists would develop in the extreme. Indians imbued their surroundings with the animism of their oral literature, Schoolcraft believed. They saw the world as pervaded with spirits, in which animals reasoned and dreams and natural phenomena became portents from the spirit world, dictating actions on the hunt or the movements of warriors:

> Making no sort of distinction themselves, between the symbolic and the historical, they have left no distinctions to mark the true from the false . . . have wholly confounded the possible with the impossible, the natural with the supernatural . . . seeing some things mysterious and wonderful, he believes all things mysterious and wonderful; and he is afloat, without shore or compass, on the wildest sea of superstition and necromancy. He sees a god in every phenomenon, and fears a sorcerer in every enemy. (*Notes* 263)

Under the right influences, the Indian, Schoolcraft argued, behaved rationally, practically. But when he retired "from the council-house to his native woods," where he could hear "the wild murmur of nature around him," the Indian subsided "into that state of domestic repose, nonchalance and indolence which [were] so characteristic of the Indian life." It was there, under the "domestic" influence of oral traditions that "the aboriginal state" assumed "its most poetic garb": "With the open heavens continually before him, his thoughts and dreams are of the spirit-world; and as a social being in his wigwam, he aims to illustrate life, in every aspect by appeals to the wonderful and the mysterious" (*Historical* 247; vol. 5). Under these poetic influences, the Indian rejected rationality, rejected Western life, making it essential to remove him from them.

The Indian's fatal flaw, in short, was his poetic faculty. Instead of celebrating Indigenous cultures, the literary works that Schoolcraft collected as evidence of the Indian's mental operations bolstered efforts to remove American Indians from both their ancestral lands and white society. On the one hand, Schoolcraft consistently argued that nothing provided stronger evidence of Indian "intellect" than their capacity for literary invention. As Schoolcraft confessed in a journal entry in 1824, two years into his appointment as Indian agent, he "had always heard the Indian spoken of as" a bloody savage. To "find him a man capable of feelings and affections . . . responsive to the ties of social life, was amazing," the "acme" of which surprise came when he found the Indian "whiling away a part of the tedium of his long winter evenings in relating tales and legends for the amusement of the lodge circle" (196). In other words, nothing was more human than telling and listening to stories or singing songs. And yet, more than just evidence of the Indian's humanity, of his basic intellect and capacity for "reclamation," Indian oral literature was, for Schoolcraft, the very obstacle to that reclamation.

Schoolcraft was a central figure in the study of American Indians in the late-antebellum period. His writings provided ideological support for removal, and his success as a government-funded ethnologist likely depended on that support. It is difficult to say, therefore, whether his work significantly influenced the overall course of removal in any one direction or merely reflected its main tenets, but it without a doubt left a mark on the collection of Indigenous oral traditions, the science of ethnology, and US literature. Schoolcraft's writings, firstly, contributed numerous materials to a growing archive of Indigenous oral traditions, but they also generated public interest in those traditions, among ethnologists and laypeople alike, including Indigenous authors like George

Copway, which I examine in the next chapter. That interest was sustained throughout the postbellum period, in part through the popularity of Longfellow's poem *Song of Hiawatha*, and in part through the ethnological work of men like E. G. Squier, Daniel G. Brinton, and John Wesley Powell, each of whom extended and refined Schoolcraft's science of literature, which I consider more fully in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

REWRITING SCHOOLCRAFT: INDIAN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY IN THE AGE OF REMOVAL

In this chapter I explore how and why Indigenous authors of the late-antebellum and postbellum periods took up the pen as ethnologists, pushing back against the emerging consensus that Indigenous oral traditions were principally literary works. I focus on three authors—George Copway, William Whipple Warren, and Elias Johnson—who in producing ethnological studies of their respective tribes and nations challenged the expertise of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, arguably the foremost ethnologist in the country at the time. In his path from Indian agent of the Michigan territory to one of the nation's leading scholars of the American Indians, Schoolcraft published oral traditions recounted, translated, and transcribed by numerous Indigenous persons, including his wife, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft; his brother-in-law, George Johnston; his mother-in-law, Ozhaguscodaywayquay, or Susan Johnston; and other well-known residents of northern Michigan, where Henry was stationed. Henry believed oral traditions were fundamentally fictitious, as opposed to historical, and he excerpted, revised, and presented them to readers as such. As I argued in the previous chapter, he helped rewrite Indigenous oral traditions as Indian oral literature, a process I am calling "(re)writing," given that many of the source traditions were originally maintained orally. Yet Schoolcraft asked readers to engage with that oral literature, not as amusements, but as "specimens" crucial to the nascent science of ethnology. The literary works (poems, legends, myths) he published in *Algic Researches* (1839) and later studies offered "pictures" of a primitive Indian mind, revealing it to be unchanging, fragmented, and deranged, like the works themselves. The

Indian's mind, which had confused fiction with reality, was flawed, according to Schoolcraft, in so far as it was "poetic," inhibiting his acceptance of Western advancements. Within his native haunts, the Indian, Schoolcraft believed, abandoned reality and rationality; his thoughts turned to the "spirit world," representing life through "appeals to the wonderful and the mysterious" (*Historical* 247; vol. 5).

The oral traditions that Schoolcraft collected as Indian oral literature justified, therefore, the logic of removal, which, in short, viewed Indians as incompatible with white society. Advocates of Indian removal, such as Schoolcraft's mentor, Lewis Cass (Secretary of State under the Jackson administration), argued that forcing American Indians from their lands would not only save them from inevitable destruction at the hands of encroaching white settlers, but potentially act as a catalyst for their social advancement by separating them from regressive influences. The "priests and soothsayers" who regaled listeners with their "oral fictions," kept the Indians "in a state of mental bondage," using myths to reinforce religious beliefs and traditional ways of life. The literature was marked, moreover, by "a spirit of reminiscence," filling the Indian with nostalgia, as opposed to "any spring to present or future actions." The Indian "pined away," refusing "to open his eyes on the prospect of civilization and mental exaltation held up before him, as one to whom the scene is new or attractive." He had "chosen emphatically to re-embrace his woods, his wigwam, and his canoe" (*Algic*, vol. 1, 51).

Schoolcraft laid the foundations for what I am calling ethnology's "science of literature," subsequently extended and refined by people like Daniel G. Brinton and John Wesley Powell. Schoolcraft's efforts to collect and publish Indigenous oral traditions as both oral literature and ethnological data, combined with the interest those efforts

generated among the public, also prompted, however, a handful of Indigenous men in the late-antebellum and postbellum periods to write their own ethnological studies of the American Indian. Their work, although idiosyncratic, was uniform in its opposition to the aims, methodologies, and conclusions of Schoolcraft's science of Indian oral literature. Grounding their research in Indigenous oral traditions, these men moved from informant (in some cases for Schoolcraft) to author and ethnologist. They contested Schoolcraft's belief that oral traditions lacked historical value, harkening back to writers like John Heckewelder and David Cusick. Not only did these men present an image of Indigenous oral tradition as archival record (history, deed, constitution, map, etc.), but they often (and sometimes explicitly) corrected Schoolcraft's ethnological work, playing editor to Schoolcraft and asserting their expertise in the languages, societies, and histories of their own peoples. By connecting Indigenous oral traditions indelibly to American geographies, these writers utilized ethnological discourse and Euro-Americans' interest in oral literature to secure tribal records and combat removal efforts.

In 1825 David Cusick, of the Tuscarora community outside Lewiston, NY, became the first Indigenous person in the United States to write a history of American Indians based closely (in Cusick's case, entirely) on oral traditions.[1] A little over two-decades later, following Schoolcraft's major studies, Copway, Peter Jones, and Warren (all Ojibwe) wrote ethnological histories of the Ojibwe. Their writings were part of what

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[1] A few years later, William Apess, a preacher of Pequot descent, likewise utilized Indigenous oral traditions as part of an ethnological "Appendix" to his autobiography, although in Apess's case the traditions were repurposed from previously published ethnological studies, namely Elias Boudinot's *A Star in the West* (1816), which also had recycled previously published content.

some scholars have called a nineteenth-century American Indian (or even specifically, Ojibwe) Renaissance (Penner 78-81). In the postbellum years, Peter Dooyentate Clarke (Wyandot) and Johnson (Tuscarora) wrote similar works, albeit the last of their kind, as professionalization efforts accelerated. In this chapter, I examine texts by Copway, Warren, and Johnson, whom I chose, firstly, because they directly addressed Schoolcraft's writings in their own studies; secondly, although their goals were similar, their writing strategies were diverse, suggesting the range of discursive options available at the time within ethnology.[2] Their writings, however, were not derivative of Schoolcraft's—Schoolcraft's studies, and indeed the entire ethnological project in the United States, depended on the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, even though their labor was often obscured, and even though their stories were retold through Western epistemologies. Rather, given the popular nature of ethnological study in the mid-nineteenth century, Schoolcraft's and other Euro-Americans' ethnological writings signaled a chance for Indigenous peoples with access to Western education (typically through a mission) to exercise control over the representation of American Indians and the collection of Indigenous oral traditions. They cited, challenged, reprinted, repurposed, and edited Euro-American texts, writing what Mary Louise Pratt has called "autoethnographies," works in which the colonized "describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them," appropriating and remaking the

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[2] Clarke's work is especially interesting, in part because so little has been written about him, and in part because he collected and translated numerous Indigenous traditions as historical sources, and he described wampum belts as physical archives of Wyandot history, which he drew upon as an Indigenous historian. In that sense, he produced very similar work to the Indigenous authors I look at in this chapter. Unfortunately, I do not have room to consider that work here.

genres and terms of the colonizing culture in the process. Ethnological discourse, especially the collection of Indian oral literature, became a "contact zone": a "social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (34-35).

Few in number, and subsequently ignored by most historians of anthropology, these Indigenous authors were nonetheless known, read, and cited by prominent ethnologists of the period, including Squier, Schoolcraft, and Brinton. In examining their work, I seek to understand how American Indians themselves thought about and responded to the ethnological study of Indians and their oral traditions, but also to underscore their historical importance to the science of ethnology—not just as subjects, nor as informants, but as ethnologists. In that regard, I am building on the recent work of Britt Russert, who has reassessed antebellum race science by exploring how it "created opportunities for African Americans both to criticize racist science and to mobilize scientific knowledge in anti-slavery activism and adjoining forms of struggle" (4). The Indian-authored texts explored below should be considered what Russert calls "counter-sciences," oppositional works of science that existed in the same, popular print networks as those that they contested. By examining what are lamentably understudied texts, I also aim to contribute to our understanding of the history of American Indian letters, in part by identifying a prominent strain of it (one that stood in many respects distinct from the autobiographical tradition), and in part by filling in gaps in the existing scholarship. For instance, it has long been assumed that Johnson drew heavily from Cusick's *Sketches* for one of his chapters, but that he was nonetheless the sole author of *Legends, Traditions, and Laws of the Iroquois or Six Nations, and History of the Tuscarora Indians* (1881);

however, as I demonstrate, much of the text is a composite of two earlier sources, *The Iroquois; or, The Bright Side of Indian Character* (1855) by Susan Cummings Johnson (or "Minnie Myrtle") and *Notes on the Iroquois* (1846) by Schoolcraft. Yet rather than merely plagiarizing these sources, Johnson can be seen as editing and repurposing them, particularly *Notes on the Iroquois*, in which Schoolcraft himself had done the same to Cusick's *Sketches*. Johnson, in effect, rewrote *Notes*, just as Schoolcraft had rewritten *Sketches*, reclaiming cultural authority and sovereignty as a member of the Six Nations. By tracking even minor revisions and elisions these authors made, I aim to bring to light the complex, politically significant overlay of Euro-American and Indigenous voices within the (re)writing process. The significance of Indigenous ethnological writing, and the authors' intentions in producing it, I argue, can only be fully grasped through such a close analysis of their intertextual and contextual relationships with other ethnologically-oriented works from the period.

Rewriting Schoolcraft as Ethnographic Verse

Johnson was not the only person to rewrite Schoolcraft's work, however. Without question, the most popular author of the period to do so was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who in his epic *Song of Hiawatha* (1855) set versions of the "Indian legends and tales" from *Algic Researches* to a rhythmic, trochaic tetrameter that quickly became ingrained in the public consciousness. In the first months of its publication alone, copies of *Hiawatha* sold in Boston in the tens of thousands; it would go on to be recited by children in classrooms across the country, performed in theaters, and translated into numerous languages. *Hiawatha* made Longfellow, according to some scholars, the first US "literary celebrity" (Nurmi 244; Lockard 110). Unsurprisingly, a mountain of

scholarship exists on Longfellow, and on *Hiawatha* in specific. In discussing the poem at the outset of this chapter, I do not intend to significantly rethink the central arguments that scholars have already made about the text, but to identify some of the finer points of its relationship to Schoolcraft's ethnological writings, so as to better understand the coordination between literary and ethnological discourses, and more than anything else to establish a context for better understanding the diverging paths taken by contemporaneous Indigenous authors in their own rewritings of Schoolcraft's work. I underscore, moreover, how both real and imagined Indian authors influenced not just ethnology, but mainstream US literature.

Hiawatha tells of the birth, adventures, and departure of the eponymous hero, an amalgamated figure whom Longfellow named after an historical, sixteenth-century Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) personage, yet based mostly on the Anishinaabe trickster figure Nanabozho, and thoroughly colored with his own imagination. In writing *Hiawatha*, Longfellow used several popular ethnological sources, including John Heckewelder's *History*, but he was most indebted to Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches*, from which he gathered the bulk of his materials for the poem's characters and major episodes.[3] As I noted in the previous chapter, Schoolcraft collected materials for *Algic Researches* from a variety of Indigenous sources, including his wife, Jane, and her

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[3] For example, Hiawatha's wrestling match with "Mondamin," whose body he buries, transforming it into corn. The story on which this episode is based comes from the first volume of *Algic Researches*, where it is titled "Mon-Dau-Min; Or, The Origin of the Corn. An Odjibwa Tale." The story is neither about Hiawatha nor Nanabozho, however, but a "poor Indian" named Wunzh, who has trouble procuring food for his family. During a period of fasting, a young man appears, sent by the Great Spirit, and who wrestles Wunzh, leading to his knowledge of corn.

brother George. In some cases, these Indigenous sources had already (re)written the oral materials to better reflect modern, Western assumptions about literature. Such was the case with Jane, for instance, who as Robert Dale Parker and Bethany Schneider have noted was deeply influenced by Romanticism. Henry, as I argued, in turn revised Jane's "legends" for his own ends, downplaying the fact that they were heavily mediated, while further abridging materials to meet expectations for works of short fiction, and even de-stylizing Jane's stories to meet his reading public's expectations for a primitive Indian oral literature. Longfellow made further changes to this already deeply layered body of oral traditions, revising and rearranging the disparate materials from Schoolcraft's collections as a single narrative around his now utterly ahistorical hero, Hiawatha.

Longfellow's epic ends with the arrival of Europeans, at which point Hiawatha leaves the Indians of North America to their care and fulfills his destiny by transforming into the Northwest Wind. Rightfully, much critical attention has been paid to the poem's entanglement in "nineteenth-century colonizing culture" and US race politics (O'Leary 269; Roylance 450). Many of these criticisms rest on the poem's ending, which includes not only Hiawatha's magical transformation and departure, but his "vision" of the fate awaiting the peoples he leaves behind:

> '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 their 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 nation scattered,
> All forgetful of my counsels,
> Weakened, warring with each other:
> Saw the remnants of our people
> Sweeping westward, wild and woful,
> Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
> Like the withered leaves of Autumn!’ (272).

John O’Leary summarizes the views of many scholars when he says that “Hiawatha’s function is the same as that of his more violent brothers: to disappear . . . Indigenes, and indigenous societies, it seems, have no place in the colonial world; they can function only as a base on which settler society is subsequently built” (270). For Longfellow, the image of fragmented, warring tribes served as a handy warning to a divided nation teetering on the edge of Civil War (Nurmi 245). Against the centrifugal forces of slavery and expansionism, he imagined a united nation of Euro-Americans that would succeed where the continent’s former inhabitants had failed. Hiawatha, moreover, leaves the child-like Indians in the hands of the newly arrived “Black-Robe chief” and his coterie; he implores his people to “Listen to their words of wisdom, / Listen to the truth they tell you, / For the Master of Life has sent them / From the land of light and morning!” (278). As Joe Lockard explains, the poem “provided an explanatory narrative for a transcontinental transition from aboriginal inhabitation to white racial dominance, from darkness to light . . . from abased to ennobled consciousness” (114). According to the logic of the text, the twilight of the Indian and the dawn of the Euro-American marked the end of intellectual darkness and the beginning of truth and progress in North America.

In presenting readers with this narrative, Longfellow echoed numerous other popular writers of the antebellum period, such as novelist James Fenimore Cooper, who similarly portrayed the Indian in sympathetic terms, and even acknowledged colonial injustices, but nonetheless stressed the inevitability of the Indian's disappearance from the American landscape, affirming in the process the superiority of Western civilization. Euro-American authors took to short fiction, novels, plays, and poetry to represent the Indian as a tragic figure, and to forge a national identity through his symbolic potential. *Hiawatha* was, moreover, the culmination of what O'Leary calls "ethnographic verse," a short-lived genre developed in the United States by Philip Freneau, Robert Sands and James Eastburn, Lydia Sigourney, Captain Henry Whiting, Alfred Street, and even Schoolcraft himself. As these men and women set colonial encounters with the Indian to verse, they blended scientific and literary discourses, relying on the accounts of ethnological writers like John Heckewelder to accurately represent Indian society and culture (O'Leary 266). Longfellow was, therefore, far from novel in drawing upon either the Indian or ethnological studies for poetic materials, but he was somewhat unique among writers of ethnographic verse in utilizing "a body Native American myths (mainly Ojibway) for literary purposes" (O'Leary 268). Whereas other authors had drawn upon historical events and figures for their materials—e.g., the seventeenth-century Wampanoag chief Metacomet, or King Philip—Longfellow turned to Indian oral literature for his, drawing (unknowingly) upon the work of actual Indigenous authors like George Johnston and Jane Schoolcraft (whose work had been rewritten by Henry), but also constructing an imagined Indian poet within *Hiawatha*, named Nawadaha, a "sweet singer" whose poems derived from the landscape itself, and in whose poetic tradition

Longfellow implicitly placed himself, as a "repeater" of Nawadaha's songs. Like the European arrivals in his poem, Longfellow supplanted Nawadaha as America's bard.

Longfellow may have been inspired to utilize Indian oral literature, however, by William H. C. Hosmer, a now largely forgotten poet from the Finger Lakes region of New York, whom O'Leary overlooks in his study. Hosmer, who grew up surrounded by "relics" of the Haudenosaunee, began his literary career writing a drama about Tecumseh (1830), and in 1844 he wrote *Yonnondio, or the Warriors of Genesee*, based on the 1687 campaigns of the Marquis de Denonville, as part of the "Beaver Wars," a characteristic example of O'Leary's ethnographic verse. But in 1850, Hosmer took the genre in a new direction. He drew upon the "legendary" Haudenosaunee stories he purportedly grew up hearing, as well as ones he solicited from Ely S. Parker, or Donehogawa, a Seneca chief, to write *Legends of the Seneca*, a collection of poems he dedicated to critic Rufus Griswold. Hosmer explained that he had "striven to retain the true outlines of legend and mythological tale, while clothing the rude original in the drapery of English verse" (v). The Indian, he wrote, was not a "dull, prosaic being," but a poetic one. Hosmer thus echoed the dominant views that had emerged earlier that century within ethnological writing, upon which he and other ethnographic poets relied—for example, that of Albert Gallatin and Heckewelder, who each wrote of the Indian's predilection for the fabulous and the metaphorical. Whereas Gallatin and Heckewelder had looked down upon that predilection, Hosmer celebrated it as the basis for a national literature, and in (re)writing the Indian's oral traditions as oral literature he participated in the new collecting strategy initiated by Schoolcraft, yet as a poet rather than as an ethnologist. The Indian's metaphorical language, heroic deeds, "roving character," and the "mysteries of his

origins," made him the "highest conceivable object for artistic use—the very centre of poetical attraction," Hosmer wrote (viii). But more than anything else, what made the Indian so poetic was his "mythology": the "imagination of the Indian," Hosmer wrote, "influenced by the grandeur of the natural scenery around him, has given an airy populace to the woods and waters. Sprites that ripen corn and fruit, and bring dew to the fainting flowers, like the fairies of British romance, 'dance their ringlets to the whistling wind'" (ix). They may have been "rude," but these imaginative works could, and indeed "must," serve as "ingredients in a national literature—threads in the web-work of our poetical creations" (xi).

Schoolcraft also sensed this potential. He claimed that his collected works were authentic products of the Indian imagination and not "pumpings of [his] own fancy," and that as such they should be read as scientific objects. But he was fully aware of the possibility of feeding those objects "through the literary loom," as he put it. In his ethnological miscellany, *Oneota; or, Characteristics of the Red Race* (1845), Schoolcraft, for example, wrote an essay titled "A Prospective American Literature, Superinduced upon Indian Mythology," in which he explained that "his collection of the historical and imaginative traditions of the Indian tribes . . . might, herein, be at the same time the . . . germs of a future mythology, which, in the hands of our poets, and novelists, and fictitious writers, might admit of being formed and moulded to the purposes, of a purely vernacular literature" (246). "Public taste," he mused, was ripe for the endeavor.

Longfellow knew Schoolcraft and Hosmer and had read their respective work. Whether following Schoolcraft's or Hosmer's lead, or both, (or whether he hit upon the idea himself) he soon wrote a national epic based on the "Indian Mythology" and

"legends" that Schoolcraft had collected. And in writing it, he paralleled both Schoolcraft and Hosmer in representing American Indians as a people in possession of poetry but not history. Those parallels suggest the close collaboration between literature and ethnology at the time, the mutual exchanges and lines of influence, and the discourses' indebtedness to one another, as it likewise reveals how the explicit celebration of the Indian's poetic abilities could nonetheless be used to support colonial agendas. Schoolcraft had argued that the Indians, "under a kind of self-reproach, to reflect that they had indeed no history," called upon their imagination "to supply the lapses" (*Notes* 34). This imagined absence of Indigenous history exemplifies what James M. Blaut has called "Eurocentric diffusionism": Europeans and Euro-Americans imagining an intellectual emptiness among the peoples living in the periphery of Western societies, which complemented an imagined territorial emptiness, waiting to be filled (15). Schoolcraft created an intellectual "lapse" by characterizing Indigenous history as fiction, writing that oral tradition was "more celebrated for preserving its fables than its facts . . ." (*Historical*; vol. 1, 13). He perceived a sharp contrast between the savage Indian mind, which was fundamentally poetic, and the prosaic, scientific mind of the Euro-American. The inability of the "Indian narrator" to relate "a clear, consistent chain of indisputable facts and deductions to fill up the foreground of his history" was "proof" of the Indian narrative's "authenticity" (*Notes* 156). In transforming the trickster Nanabozho into the benevolent figure of Hiawatha, and in collating various Indigenous oral traditions into a single epic with a chronological chain of events, Longfellow supplied the "English dress"

needed to smooth over the supposed "incongruities" of Schoolcraft's oral traditions.[4] And in narrating the pre-Columbian history of North America as a series of miraculous episodes, ending with the arrival of Europeans and the advent of American history (also science and "truth"), Longfellow represented the Indian as an essentially legendary figure of the nation's mythical past. Longfellow's Indian was a natural poet: his "songs so wild and wayward" were inspired from the land, from "the rushing of great rivers, / With their frequent repetitions, And their wild reverberations" (141). Hiawatha is the bearer of medicine, agriculture, and even hieroglyphic writing, but his life is narrated as "a tale of wonder," a "strange adventure," like those recounted in *Hiawatha* itself by Iagoo, "the great boaster, He the marvellous story-teller," who loves to share his "pleasant stories, / His immeasurable falsehoods" (210-11). Longfellow's Indian, like Schoolcraft's, told fictions, not truth, and it was this characteristic which distinguished him from white people.

Indigenous Authors Rewriting Schoolcraft, the Case of George Copway

By mid-century, a picture was thus emerging, developed through both ethnological and literary discourses (and a blend of the two), which saw the Indian as a poetic, romantic figure, whose history (if it could be called that) was the stuff of legend and mystery. The Indigenous authors who wrote ethnological works challenged that picture. For one, George Copway, or Gaagigegaabaw, labored to demonstrate that in their

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[4] Schoolcraft complained of the "loose and disjointed [and] fragmentary" Nanabozho tales, writing that "the chain of narration which connects them is broken or vague," that Nanabozho appears suddenly and randomly, sometimes with the "voice of a thunder-clap" and sometimes with the "softness of feminine supplication," and that "scarcely any two persons agree in all the minor circumstances of the story."

body of oral traditions, American Indians, and the Ojibwe in specific, possessed a true history. Copway knew both Schoolcraft and Longfellow personally, as well ethnologist E. G. Squier and other well-known men and women of the period. Copway's meteoric rise from a self-described "child in the forest" near southern Ontario to a man of international renown (and his subsequent fall into alcoholism, penury, and obscurity) has been the subject of a growing number of scholars. Attention has been paid mostly, however, to his autobiography, *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh* (1847), which was widely read upon its publication, and which helped launch Copway into a period of stardom. But of interest in this chapter is his autoethnography, *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway People* (1850). Given its extensive use of Ojibwe oral traditions, it represents a major collection of Indigenous oral traditions from the period, one that competed and contrasted with Schoolcraft's writings (and in turn Longfellow's rewritings of them).

Born in 1818, Copway belonged to a band of Mississauga Ojibwe living near Rice Lake in southern Ontario. The Credit River Methodist mission was established there in 1820, and when George was a child, his mother converted. On her deathbed a few years later, she implored her children to follow suit. After joining the church, learning English, and demonstrating a desire for missionary work, young George was sent to Minnesota, where he was elevated from interpreter to preacher. In exchange for his evangelism among the Dakota (amid armed conflicts between them and the Ojibwe), Copway received two years of instruction at a manual labor school, after which he headed back east. Upon his return, he met his future wife, a British born, middle-class white woman named Elizabeth Howell, who was a friend of the wife of Reverend Peter Jones, or

Kahkewaquonaby, of the Credit River mission. Together, George and Elizabeth planned a life devoted to missionary work, but those plans were soon disrupted by charges of embezzlement against George, resulting in his banishment from the mission (Smith 23-33).

The couple relocated to New York City, where they worked to recover George's prospects. George began to lecture on the condition of the Indian, appealing to an interest among east coast liberals in both Indian life and benevolent causes. And with the aid of his wife (who was a poet and essayist), he wrote a memoir, for which he secured a publisher in Philadelphia. The book became an instant success (reissued six times in 1847 alone), solidifying his fame, enabling him to travel abroad, and putting him in contact with people like Washington Irving, Francis Parkman, Longfellow, Cooper, and Schoolcraft (Smith 37-38). Copway sought to piggyback off the success of *The Life* through several other publishing ventures, including a short-lived weekly, *Copway's American Indian*; a travelogue, *Running Sketches of Men and Places, in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Scotland* (1850); and a reissue of his memoir with a collection of his speeches and letters (1851). By 1850, his name carried enough currency that Julius Taylor Clark asked Copway to publish Clark's poem *The Ojibway Conquest* as Copway's own, a work of ethnographic verse based on the Dakota-Ojibwe wars (O'Leary 268).

As part of this publishing flurry, Copway also wrote his ethnological history of the Ojibwe, *Traditional History*. He clearly understood Euro-American tastes, literary or otherwise, as he surely also understood the circumscribed opportunities that the nineteenth-century literary marketplace provided him as an Indian. That he utilized his

literary recognition by writing *Traditional History* speaks, firstly, to the popular nature of ethnological writing in this period, the publication of which did not require a university or professional affiliation, or other credentials one might imagine; secondly, it speaks to Copway's familiarity with the emerging science and its interest in the American Indian, as well as with his own importance to it as an informational resource. In New York, as his popularity grew, men like Schoolcraft and Squier solicited him for aid in their ethnological investigations, prying him for his knowledge of the Ojibwe language and Ojibwe oral traditions, which he readily supplied. Squier, for example, who would soon become famous for his work on Indian mounds, relied extensively on Copway for two articles that he wrote in 1848 for the *American Review*.[5] Copway was thus immersed in the concerns and interests of antebellum ethnological science: its desire to uncover the "mysterious origins" of the Indians, to document and theorize Indian society within the paradigm of progress, and to salvage what it could of that society before it supposedly disappeared, including its oral traditions. But he decided to do more than just aid white ethnologists. By the time he wrote *The Life*, Copway already had considered visiting "his people in the far west" to "learn the rest of their traditions" and settle the question of their origins (89). Oral traditions, he explained, handed down from father to son, "were sacred" and closely guarded, meaning that "one half of [them] were not known by the white people, no matter how far their researches may have extended." As an educated

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[5] One of them included the traditions "Manabozo and the Great Serpent" and "The Transformation of the Crow," as "verbally related" by Copway. Squier analyzed the symbolism in these and other traditions, developing a theory of religious evolution that led to his second book, *Serpent Symbol* (1851). In the other article, Squier republished portions of Constantine Rafinesque's *Walum Olum*, the authenticity of which he first asked Copway to judge (and which Copway did, despite his not speaking Lenape).

Ojibwe, self-styled a "chief," Copway believed he was the person best positioned to unlock the mysteries of his nation's oral traditions. Apparently unfamiliar with Cusick's work, he set out to write the "first volume of Indian history written by an Indian" (*Traditional* 9).

Traditional History, which recorded the history of a nation "passing away," reflected many of the central assumptions and features of US ethnological discourse. For one, the structure of its chapters resembled works like Heckewelder's *Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations (1819)* in its divisions, treating separately topics like geography, hunting, games, wars, language, government, and religion. *Traditional History* also resembled other ethnological texts of the period in its use of primary and secondary sources, quoting from seventeenth-century trade records, as well as from writings by Cass, Schoolcraft, Edward D. Neill of the Minnesota Historical Society, and the like, which created a detailed, somewhat esoteric portrait of the Ojibwe, including arguments about the Indian's prospects for becoming "civilized." In writing *Traditional History*, Copway, in other words, took up the pen as an ethnologist and positioned his work squarely within the emerging tradition of US ethnological writing. But he also did so as an Ojibwe, utilizing his Indigenous knowledge of landscapes, ecologies, customs, and histories, which he foregrounded in the text, through for example his consistent use of Ojibwe place names. As Cathy Rex argues, Copway "meld[ed] Ojibwe knowledge and 'scholarship' with Euramerican science and classificatory practice without hybridizing the two," producing in effect "Ojibwe science," (20). He helped create "a new capacity for Indianness: the Indian as the expert about and ethnographer of the Indian" (21). Copway's inclusion of a chapter on Ojibwe "legends"

likewise suggests he was well aware of the public interest in Indian oral literature, as he was also with the general sense that the Indian was as a "poetic" figure. But it was not poetry in which Copway was ultimately concerned. *Traditional History* is distinguished through its ample use of Ojibwe oral traditions as historical sources, as implied by the title alone. "The history of the Ojibways," Copway explained in the preface, "is treasured up in traditionary lore. It has been passed down from age to age on the tide of song; for there is much poetry in the narrative of the old sage as he dispenses his facts and fancies to the listening group that throng around him" (9). Yes, the traditions were poetic, but they were also embedded with Ojibwe history, with "facts" and not just "fancies."

According to Copway, the chiefs who maintained their people's oral traditions were "the repositories of the histories of their ancestors" (22). Their memories served as tribal archives. The Ojibwe, Copway explained, carefully maintained pictographic records written on "bark and board plates," which a select few knew about and preserved underground, unearthing them every fifteen years to examine them and replace them as needed, as well as to transmit the meanings of the symbols to a new generation (90). Most people, Copway wrote, were unaware of these practices given the religious significance of the tablets and the traditions they recorded and the secrecy of the rituals of preservation; most of his "brethren" even did not know about the Ojibwe "depositories," which numbered ten in total, he claimed. Although the preservation of the tablets had been "neglected" in recent years, they had for centuries worked as mnemonic aids for the

chiefs' oral traditions, and in that way, the Ojibwe had preserved their tribal histories.[6] Copway, therefore, positioned himself as an expert on these oral and written records and on Ojibwe history in general. And as Shelley Hulan writes, "Copway steadfastly affirms, against every convention of Eurocentric historiography, Ojibwa oral tradition as valid history" (202). Phrases like "According to ancient tradition" and "tradition informs us" serve almost as refrains in the book, validating Copway's work as a historian. He explained that there were "rules to follow by which to determine whether [the traditions] are true or false," rules that "governed" him in his own "researches." "The first" of these rules, he wrote, "is to inquire particularly into the leading points of every tradition narrated. The second is to notice whether the traditions are approved by the oldest chiefs and wise men. Such are most likely to be true, and if places or persons are mentioned, additional clue is given to their origin and proof obtained of their truth or falsity" (22). Establishing his ability to distinguish true from false oral traditions—as a uniquely informed researcher—Copway proceeded to narrate the "true" history of the Ojibwe's migration to the Great Lakes, their wars with the Dakota, their trade with the French, the origins of the Odawa, and other important chapters in Ojibwe history—all from the perspective of the Ojibwe. The oral traditions, then, perform the work of citations in the book, corroborating Copway's accounts. Bethany Schneider, for one, has drawn attention to how the citation of Indigenous knowledge within Western writing often leads to the distortion and erasure of Indigenous voices, as they are placed in service of "conquest

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[6] Ethnologists like Schoolcraft were well aware of these writing practices and had described them in their works--most famously, Constantine Rafinesque reproduced such pictographic symbols in his *Walum Olum*. They were not, as far as I can tell, aware of these details surrounding the plates' preservation, however.

fantasies" ("Modest" 66). Copway, as we will see, reversed that process, citing both Indigenous and Euro-American knowledge in service of a decolonizing agenda.

In the ninth chapter, however, Copway turned from citing oral traditions as historical sources to transcribing five of them as Ojibwe "legends." Copway acknowledged that many "fanciful stories" had been collected previously by Schoolcraft; it was thus not his "purpose to unnecessarily extend this work with a large number of these," but merely to "narrate a few, in order to give . . . some idea of the manner in which [his] people amuse themselves in their wigwams . . ." (69). In doing so, Copway explicitly situated his small collection of legends within the framework already established by Schoolcraft. Copway offered, that is, a few more instances of the Indian oral literature one could encounter already in *Algic Researches*. But everything in the text up until that point works against Schoolcraft's understanding of Indigenous oral traditions (which Copway claimed white researchers would never fully comprehend). As Hulan argues, "Copway waits until the ninth chapter to recount Ojibwa myths and legends," having devoted "most of the previous eight to explanations of Ojibwa customs, foodways, and military exploits" through the recounting of oral traditions, so that by the time they do "finally appear, Ojibwa myths and legends are thus embedded in an idea of tradition that incorporates and yet extends well beyond them" (198). The idea of Ojibwe oral traditions as "amusing" or "fanciful"—as literary works—was thus complicated at the outset by the first half of the book, in which oral traditions function as citations, as "textual" evidence in Copway's autoethnography.

These complications continue throughout the chapter and those that follow it. The version of Indigenous oral tradition with which Copway presented readers in *Traditional*

History was distinct from Schoolcraft's in that it was, for one, thoroughly historical, but in a way that challenged Western expectations for the historical, remaining more closely tied to Indigenous concepts and epistemologies. And in that sense, it stood apart also from earlier works such as Heckewelder's *Account*, which also collected Indigenous oral traditions as historical records, but which did so by (re)writing those traditions to make them resemble prosaic, historical accounts. In contrast, oral traditions within Copway's book are at one and the same time historical *and* poetic, or literary. Immediately prior to the first "legend," Copway explained that there are three "distinct classes" of Ojibwe oral traditions, which he translated as "the Amusing, the Historical, and the Moral." One class was told during the autumn, another during the winter, and the third in the spring. Interestingly, in Chapter 9, Copway wrote that he had "time and space to give specimens of [only] the second of these," the historical (97). And yet the five narratives that follow appear to be distinct generically, which is underscored by the different sub-titles Copway assigned them: "Legend First: The Star and the Lily," is a *pourquois*-type tale explaining the origin of the white lily; "Legend Second: Historical—The Long Chase," focuses on a conflict between the Iroquois and the Ojibwe; "Legend Third: The Thunder's Nest," is a story about giant birds that once terrorized the Ojibwe; Legend Fourth: The Two Cousins," describes the maturation of two boys, one of whom is transformed into an echo; and "An Historical Tale: the Effects of Liquor," recounts an alcohol-induced conflict between two families that lived near Mackinac. Obviously, two of the stories were "historical" in ways different from the other three. In the chapter preface, Copway implies that "historical" oral traditions were the ones recounted during winter months, suggesting they were *aadizookaanan*, sacred traditions, which were recounted only in

winter, while the snow covered the ground. Yet the two "historical" legends that Copway transcribes more closely resemble *dibaajimowinan*—everyday stories about the remembered past (Wilmott 33)—than they do *aadizookaanan*. And in that case, Copway's "rules" for verifying "true" stories may be for identifying *dibaajimowinan*, which would be recognizable through their references to individuals, places, or memorable events in the history of a tribe or clan.[7]

It is possible, then, that there are multiple versions of "historical" at work in *Traditional History*, Western and Indigenous; or that Copway constructed new categories that simply break down when applied to the tales. Whatever the case, Western expectations for the historical are troubled and questioned by the small collection of "legends," as they are by Copway's recourse to Ojibwe oral traditions throughout the text. A good example is when Copway sets out to describe the practice of fasting in the twelfth chapter, titled "The Religious Belief." In attempting to explain the custom of fasting to his white readers, Copway, in characteristic fashion, turns to oral tradition, writing, "I cannot better pourtray the influence of dreams upon the Indian's mind, than by

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[7] "The Long Chase," for instance, centers on a young girl's discovery of Haudenosaunee spies. The spies and the Crane and Buffalo warriors who chase after them offer up competing prayers to the gods, which are alternatively answered, raising and in turn lowering fog over Lake Superior. The Haudenosaunee, however, are finally captured and sentenced to die at the stake; one is released, which angers the "god of war," who from that point forward hurls "thunderbolts" at the spot. Despite these "fanciful" elements, "The Long Chase" refers to a real historical conflict between the Ojibwe and Haudenosaunee. The sacrifice, moreover, supposedly occurred on the island of Sha-gah-wah-mik, or La Pointe, and it is said, according to the tradition, that the grave of the young girl who discovered the spies is the greenest of those that can now be seen in the hamlet there (108). In these ways, Copway connected the "legend" to the "real," to the present moment, and thus situated it within an historical timeline.

relating a story of an Indian damsel, who according to the custom of fasting, determined to do so in a remarkable romantic spot, near Grand Island" (105). From the outset, then, the story elicits associations with Romantic literature, and it certainly recalls the legend of "The Two Cousins" from Chapter 9, which begins with an old woman advising the two young boys in her care that to become great hunters they needed to fast. Like the boys, the "Indian damsel" in the tale from Chapter 12 enters a period of fasting to gain the knowledge and good graces of spirits. While fasting, she is visited in her dreams by a young warrior who presents her with four possible gifts: furs, feathers, animals, or knowledge of wildflowers. She chooses a knowledge of wildflowers so that she can "relieve [her] nation's sufferings, and prolong the lives of the aged…" (108). After a series of similarly miraculous visions, the girl returns to her village to tell a crowd of friends and family how she secured the "favour of the gods." It is at this point in the narrative, however, that Copway interrupts what otherwise reads as a "fanciful story" by putting it in contact with historical reality: "Since that time," he says, "I have seen that girl but once. In the year 1842, while sailing along Lake Superior, on its southern shore, I came" upon her and "listened with deep interest to her relation of the dreams of her childhood." He supplied her then with meat and cloth "in payment for those early impressions she had made upon [his] mind, leading [him] to believe that the noble deeds of man are those, and those only, which are performed for the good of others; and that virtue will be alike rewarded in the future, whether it be found and cherished in pagan lands or in Christian temples" (112). As it ends, the story no longer reads as a "legend" about an "Indian damsel," but as a remembered event in the life of an Ojibwe woman,

Shah-won-a-qua, whom Copway met in his travels. And far from revealing the secrets of Indigenous religious belief, it illustrates a lesson in the universality of human virtue.

Western distinctions between literature and history, or between fiction and truth, thus consistently fall apart in the text. One other important way in which the "legends" defy those distinctions is by acting as maps and deeds. Copway's oral traditions described migrations, including that of the Mississauga of Rice Lake, and they described the consequences of wars and important battles, and in that sense, they dated and legitimized the occupancy of certain territories. In some cases, they even recorded the actual apportionment of lands. In Chapter 2, for example, there is a section titled "Distribution of Land," which begins, "I have heard a tradition related to the effect that a general council was once held at some point above the Falls of St. Anthony." It was at this council that the Ojibwe received their name, a reference (according to Copway) to the peculiar shoe that they wore at the council; it was also at this council that the lands surrounding Red, Sandy, and Leach Lakes were distributed to the Ojibwe, lands they occupied still (22). But more than recording that distribution, Copway's oral traditions recorded events that had been inscribed in the land itself. Alongside the "depositories" of pictographic tablets, the land acted for Copway as a third archive validating the oral traditions maintained in the chiefs' mental "repositories." Copway, for instance, described in Chapter 5, titled "Their Wars With the Sioux," how "Several years ago, while strolling by the Chippeway river, with one of the most intelligent Indian chiefs, whose name was 'Moose Tail,' he pointed out to me in his own graphic language the conflicts that had occurred upon them." Copway "counted twenty-nine battle-grounds on the shores of the Menomenee river" alone, and he claimed that the "border of the St.

Croix contain[ed] more, and the upper Mississippi [could] furnish traditional records of battles at every mile of its course" (45). Ojibwe land recorded oral traditions, and the traditions recorded the land, providing spatial and temporal maps of tribal history.

"Every point of land, every bay of water has its legendary story to tell," Copway wrote (14). Superficially, this statement echoes that of Hosmer, who described how the Indian had "given an airy populace to the woods and waters"; it also sounds a lot like Longfellow, who wrote at the start of *Hiawatha*, "Should you ask me, whence these stories? / Whence these legends and traditions . . . I should tell you, / From the forests and the prairies, / From the great lakes of the Northland, / From the land of the Ojibways" (141). But for Hosmer, the stories attached to western New York were ghost stories, as the Indians themselves were ghosts, bones and artifacts occasionally unearthed by the plow. And despite its opening lines, *Hiawatha* worked to detach oral traditions from any specific geography, as Tom Nurmi argues. Indigenous languages and traditions are deeply connected to place, a characteristic Nurmi calls "toponymic." According to Margaret Noodin one of the defining features of Anishinaabe storytelling is its merger of "what we now call history, geography, and literature to talk about a community's relationship with a place" (175). That connection is "effaced" in *Hiawatha*, however, as tribal names are altered, rearranged, or dropped altogether, and as the specific landscapes of the Great Lakes region are replaced with a generic one, "a flat surface on which to write" the history of Western dominance (Nurmi 248). "The landscape" of *Hiawatha*, Nurmi explains, "is read through Western syntax and written in a linear narrative arc to draw attention away from the material contours of the landscape and the historical markers of Ojibwe culture."

Gerald Vizenor, in *Manifest Manners* (1994), spoke to this decoupling of land and oral tradition when he argued that "natural scenes with 'no histories" are part of a "literature of dominance"—"tribal names and stories are real histories," he wrote, "not discoveries" (10). Schoolcraft, who claimed he had "discovered" Indian oral literature, understood the intimate connection between land and oral tradition, writing for example in *Notes on the Iroquois* that the "old sages" of the Haudenosaunee, "affirm that they originated in the territorial area of western New York," perhaps to "put forth an undisputed title to the country they occupied." He undermined that "title," however, by disparaging the Haudenosaunee oral traditions as fictions, effectively erasing New York of its Indigenous past. With the oral traditions of the Ojibwe, Copway resisted that erasure by linking land, legend, and history for his readers. The book begins, after all, with a chapter titled "Their Country," which itself begins by asserting that "the extent of territory occupied by the Ojibway nation, is the largest of any Indian possessions of which there is any definite knowledge," a "possession" which Copway proceeds to describe in detailed and glowing terms (1). The "definite knowledge" of this possession is established in part through records of French traders, in part through Copway's personal experiences traversing it, but also through the "many stories" that clung to the region's rocks, waters, and trees. Copway imaginatively repopulated the shores of Lake Huron, for instance, with scenes from the "most severe battles between the Chippeways and the Iroquois" (6). And he described the stories "told of monsters who are said to inhabit" its deep waters, to which the Ojibwe attributed the "cause of the flowing of the water in the channel of the Manettoo Islands on the coast" (4). Copway offered scientific explanations for the rise and fall of water in this channel (and identified Schoolcraft's as the most

plausible), but by citing the Ojibwe oral traditions, he established a precedence of Ojibwe occupation in the area and demonstrated how oral traditions both recorded and explained the land they inhabited, that they were much more than "pleasant stories." Lake Superior, he wrote, was "the most remarkable of all lakes, not merely on account of its size, but on account of . . . the almost innumerable traditions related of it and its borders. Every point of land, every bay of water has its legendary story to tell, and it is this that renders Lake Superior superior to all others in point of interest" (6-7). The "towering cliffs that border the lake" were "connected with many traditionary stories . . . the heroes of many romances loiter[ed] upon their sides" (8). And the "Thunder Mountains" to its northwest were likewise named for the Thunder Birds that had inhabited them from time immemorial. For readers, the "curious legend" about these birds that Copway included in Chapter 9 would have recalled and further memorialized these earlier descriptions of the Ojibwe's most ancient and important "possession."

Significantly, Copway set out to write the "first volume of Indian history written by an Indian" in the context of removal. Although public debate on the issue had peaked in the United States in the 1830s amid the conflicts between the Cherokee Nation and the state of Georgia, efforts to remove the Ojibwe and their long-time adversaries the Dakota were just ramping up farther west. Copway had witnessed the 1842 treaty at La Pointe, for example, at which the Ojibwe surrendered prized fishing waters in present-day Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan (Smith 38-39). It appeared a matter of time until the Ojibwe would be forced from the region. As a Mississauga, he knew as much from personal experience. For years, the Canadian government had pressured his band to relocate. In fact, the Mississauga near Credit River were there in the first place

because a series of government land sales had reduced their territory, resulting in several relocations. Under the leadership of Peter Jones, they successfully resisted efforts in the 1830s to remove them to the small, barren island of Manitoulin. But in 1847, unable to secure a title to their lands at Credit River, the Mississauga living there were forced to leave for good. They took refuge among the Oneida of the Six Nations, who, unlike the Mississauga, possessed titles to their lands, and who gifted a portion of it to the Mississauga in recompense for a similar favor paid to them years before (Smith 36). Copway, therefore, would have acutely understood the importance of ensuring territorial "possession," and he used *Traditional History* as an opportunity to tie the Ojibwe nation to the northwestern landscape in the public's mind, but also to advocate his plans for creating a separate, autonomous Indian state for the tribes of that region, to be situated in the territory between Nebraska and Minnesota, with the Sioux and Missouri Rivers as its southern and eastern boundaries (roughly 18,000 square miles in total) (Smith 37). He argued that unless ownership of Indigenous lands were legally secured, removal would continue into perpetuity; the federal government would never be satisfied with its possessions, and wherever they went the Indians would be molested by white settlers (168-75). Copway's plan, which was based on a similar proposal by James Duane Doty in 1842 (rejected by the Senate), attracted the interest of a few politicians, but it failed to gain traction, despite capitulating to the basic logic of removal—Copway argued that a drastic reduction of territory would speed up the Indians' transition to an agricultural society (Smith 39). The plan lost support in part because Copway, strapped for cash and slipping into alcoholism, was losing many of his new friends and supporters in New York. His novelty as an Indian intellectual had waned. Donald Smith argues that

following the deaths of three of his children, and an accumulation of debt, with no clear financial prospects, Copway's mental health deteriorated. Elizabeth finally left him in 1858, after which he disappears briefly from public records, resurfacing as a recruiter for the Union Army (unlawfully signing up Ojibwe in Canada) and later as a healer in Michigan, where he died in 1868.

Copway has been criticized for what some scholars view as an easy willingness to perform and peddle stereotypes of the Indian, combined with a heavy dose of egotism. He named his proposed northwestern state, "Kahgega," after himself; he frequently claimed he was an Indian "chief," even though he had been banished from his band for embezzlement; and he named one of his daughters Pocahontas, the other Minnehaha, after Longfellow's poem, which Copway purportedly loved. He was a complex figure to say the least, and certainly a product of the times—as Robert Penner argues, Copway and other American Indians who entered public life in the 1840s and 50s were seriously "hamstrung" by racism. Success depended on "commodification and cos-play." They could join the Euro-American public, but only "as relics of an outmoded, prehistoric savagery" (85). And yet, as much as Copway may have conformed to the racist expectations of his audiences, he also challenged them, as we can see from *Traditional History*. He could have assembled a collection of "fanciful stories" for white readers to amuse themselves—he could have played the role of Iagoo, the "great boaster," who regaled his listeners with "immeasurable falsehoods." Copway chose instead to write an ethnological history of the Ojibwe, and in doing so he combatted the prevailing view, advanced by Schoolcraft—at the time, the foremost expert on the Ojibwe—that Indians

were without history, incapable even of producing it because their minds were deranged, addicted to the marvelous. *Traditional History* stood as a repudiation of all that.

William Whipple Warren

One of the sources Copway cited in *Traditional History* was an 1849 article from the *Minnesota Pioneer*, sketching the general history of the Ojibwe. The article was part of a series written by William Whipple Warren, a capable and ambitious twenty-four-year-old of Ojibwe, French, and English ancestry. Warren, who descended from prominent families on all three ancestral sides, and who would soon become a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, worked at the time as an interpreter for trader Henry M. Rice. Shortly after employing Warren in 1849, Rice received a questionnaire from the US Indian Department that included a staggering 350 questions pertaining to the population, languages, history, religion, and cultural practices of the Indians inhabiting the territory. The questionnaire was part of a national study recently approved by Congress and headed by none other than Schoolcraft. Rice passed on the questionnaire to Warren, who readily accepted the duties of answering it (Schenk 46). To Warren's surprise, Rice sent the early results of his research to the *Pioneer*. Fueled in part by the positive public response to the articles, Warren expanded and revised his work and in 1850 submitted it to Indian agent Jonathan Fletcher, who forwarded it to Schoolcraft, who in turn included it in the second volume of his *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (1852). While Schoolcraft was busy preparing the first volume of *Historical*, Warren was solicited to write similar histories, first by the territorial governor for his annual report, and later by the editor of the newspaper the *Minnesota Democrat*.

Warren's work for the latter—"A Brief History of the Ojibwe"—appeared in seven installments in 1851. It provided the foundation for *History of the Ojibway People, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements,* which he finished in 1853, although it was not published until 1885 (Schenk 70). Unfamiliar with the histories of either Cusick or Copway, Warren too set out to write the "first work written from purely Indian sources" (26).

Much more than *Traditional History*, Warren's autoethnography challenged Schoolcraft's authority as an expert on the Indians, the Ojibwe in particular, while nonetheless utilizing many conventions of ethnological discourse. In several ways, the book echoes Schoolcraft's writings, and it certainly pays obeisance to Schoolcraft as the nation's foremost Indian scholar. In fact, Warren wrote him in 1849 to offer his services as a "quarter breed" fluent in Ojibwe. In the letter, Warren praised Schoolcraft's "literary works" respecting his "relatives the Ojibways" and requested copies of *Algic Researches,* which were difficult to obtain out west (Schenk 55). Warren also followed Schoolcraft in using the term "Algic," a neologism of Schoolcraft's that combined *Alleghany* and *Atlantic* to describe eastern Indians of mostly Algonquian stock. Like other ethnologists, Warren too wrote of the need to "save [Indian] traditions from oblivion." And he argued, like Schoolcraft, that knowledge of the Indian remained limited to "his exterior"; by researching their oral traditions, Warren promised to probe deeper and "fathom the motives and true character of these anomalous people" (24), despite the fact that oral traditions were "so obscure and unnatural that nothing approximating to certainty [could] be drawn from them" (55). Indigenous history past five-hundred years, he wrote, lay "buried in darkness and mystery" (57).

Yet Warren argued, and sought to demonstrate through his analyses, that oral traditions *were* truthful records, and that even in the most "obscure" of these there existed facts on which to base reasonable "surmises" about Ojibwe history, pending that one had the cultural expertise to understand them. It is difficult to say what exactly Warren thought about Schoolcraft, but in reading *History* as a final answer to the Indian Department's queries, one cannot help sensing that Warren was bemused if not irritated by people like Schoolcraft and his predecessors—prejudiced men who lacked the requisite linguistic and cultural knowledge to make claims about Indians, but who nonetheless stood as gatekeepers of sorts within the ethnological community. Warren responded to them with irony, crediting their work while he set upon correcting it. As someone who had spent his life "among the wild Indians, even beyond what may be termed the frontiers of civilization," Warren could not "wield the pen of an Irving or a Schoolcraft," he admitted, but his work, which was based "purely" on Indian sources, was nonetheless a "work of truth" (26). Warren, who descended from a powerful French-Ojibwe trading family on his mother's side, and from one of the oldest families of New England (who had arrived on the *Mayflower*) on the other side, was more than competent with a pen. His mother, Madeleine Cadotte, was the daughter of Waubojeeg, which oddly enough made Warren the cousin of Schoolcraft's late wife, Jane. Madeleine raised William speaking Ojibwe as his first language, but he was fluent in English and had been formally educated, first at La Pointe, then Mackinac, and later in New York, while in the care of his grandfather, Lyman Warren. William, in denying his writerly abilities, may have been acting humble before his reading public, but he was also quietly noting his cultural expertise as a man of high Ojibwe descent.

Warren underscored that expertise repeatedly in the text, usually with the same ironic tones. Regarding the speculations that swirled around Ojibwe origins, Warren wrote,

> Ever having lived in the wilderness, even beyond what is known as the western frontiers of white immigration, where books are scarce and difficult to be procured, I have never had the coveted opportunity and advantage of reading the opinions of the various eminent authors who have written on this subject, to compare with them the crude impressions which have gradually, and I may say naturally, obtained possession in my own mind**,** during my whole life, which I have passed in a close connection of residence and blood with different sections of the Ojibway tribe. (55)

While many whites possessed a knowledge that he lacked, i.e., books (and to which he truly had access), they in turn lacked his "crude" knowledge obtained over a lifetime. Warren noted that his opinions "clashed" with "the received opinions of more learned writers," but all he could do was to record them, as "a person in language, thoughts, beliefs, and blood, partly an Indian" (55). He preferred, as he put it, the accounts of the "more aged and intelligent men of the Ojibways," over the "conflicting opinions" of men who had "casually passed through the country" (178).

Warren explicitly corrected Schoolcraft on several points, including the meaning and etymology of *Ojibwe*. Warren quoted from Schoolcraft, who had explained in *Algic Researches* that the Ojibwe "call themselves Od-jib-wag, which is the plural of Od-jib-wa—a term which appears to denote a peculiarity in their voice or manner of utterance." Schoolcraft was referring to the way the word purportedly forced the mouth to pucker in pronouncing it. In addition to correcting Schoolcraft's spelling, Warren explained that he, "through his knowledge of the language, [was] constrained to differ" with Schoolcraft as to the meaning of the word, "for the reason that there is not the slightest

perceivable pucker or 'drawing up,' in their manner of utterance, as the word O-jib would indicate" (35-36). Warren proposed instead a new etymology and meaning: "to roast until puckered," as it was "well authenticated by [Ojibwe] traditions," as well as by "the writings of their early white discoverers," that before their acquisition of firearms the Ojibwe routinely captured and tortured their enemies by fire. They were "roasters," the origin of which practice was recorded in an oral tradition from their wars with the Meskwaki (or Fox). Similarly, regarding the meaning of *Anishinaabeg,* Warren wrote that Schoolcraft, "who has apparently studied this language, and has written respecting this people more than any other writer, and whose works as a whole, deserve the standard authority which is given to them by the literary world," had nonetheless "made the unaccountable mistake of giving as the meaning of this important name, 'Common people'" (56). Its true meaning, Warren explained, was "spontaneous people." Surely the fault for such a grave mistranslation was not to be placed on Schoolcraft, but on his "imperfect interpreters,"—this exoneration, of course, drew attention to Schoolcraft's shaky understanding of the language. "In no respect," Warren wrote, "can An-ish-in-aub-ag be twisted so as to include any portion of a word meaning 'common.'" (56).

In fact, it was because they viewed themselves as having been created spontaneously that Ojibwe origins lay "buried in darkness and obscurity." And it was here that Warren launched his most forceful challenge to Schoolcraft's work, questioning his and other ethnologists' understanding of Ojibwe oral traditions, particularly their sacred ones. Warren explained how the Jesuits had arrived with their "new beliefs" and "new tales," and that the Ojibwe combined Christian narratives with their "own more crude and mythological ideas," making it difficult to parse "original" from foreign.

It "requires a most intimate acquaintance with them as a people," Warren argued, "and individually with their old story tellers, also with their language, beliefs, and customs, to procure their real beliefs and to analyze the tales they seldom refuse to tell, and separate the Indian or original from those portions which they have borrowed or imbibed from the whites" (57). Having grown up amid the Ojibwe, with a knowledge of both the Bible and Ojibwe lodge stories, Warren was better qualified than most to make those distinctions. But Warren also recognized his limitations as part-white, occupying an insider-outsider position in the Ojibwe community. He wrote, for example, that the "grand rite of Me-da-we-win," or the medicine lodge, "and the beliefs incorporated therein, are not yet fully understood by the whites. This important custom is still shrouded in mystery, even to my own eyes, though I have taken much pains to inquire, and made use of every advantage, possessed by speaking their language perfectly, [and] being related to them . . . yet I frankly acknowledge that I stand as yet, as it were, on the threshold of the Me-da-we lodge" (66). Still, he had learned more than "any other person who has written on the subject, not excepting a great and standard author, who, to the surprise of many who know the Ojibways well, has boldly asserted in one of his works that he has been regularly initiated into the mysteries of this rite, and is a member of the Me-da-we Society . . . an assertion hard to believe in the Indian country" (66). Although Schoolcraft never claimed to be a "member" of the society, Warren surely had him in mind: in the first volume of *Historical* (1851), Schoolcraft described how he had "observed the exhibitions of the Medawin" in 1820 and then again in his agency offices in 1822 "under the secrecy of closed doors, with every means of both correct interpretation and of recording the result" (361). Schoolcraft claimed he had an "exact facsimile" made of the

wooden tablet used in the ceremony, which he reproduced, along with translations of the "chants." Warren, like the Ojibwe men whom he apparently told about it, must have also shaken his head "in incredulity" at Schoolcraft's pretentions.

In Volume 1 of *Historical*, Schoolcraft also argued that the Indians lacked "any power of mind or hand, to denote their early wars and dynasties." There was "nothing, in their oral narrations of ancient epochs, to bind together or give consistency to even this incongruous mass of wild hyperboles and crudities." Attempting, "by the slender thread of their oral traditions, to pick up and re-unite the broken chain of history, by which they were anciently connected with the old world, their sachems endeavor to fix attention by some striking allegory or incongruous fiction," which sounded to "ears of sober truth, like attempts at weaving a rope of sand" (13). Warren suggested instead that it was Schoolcraft who was ill-equipped to understand the "allegories." The histories that the chiefs shared with Warren may have been "vague" and "figurative," but through "close inquiry and study," he felt he had "discovered," for example, "that the Ojibways ha[d] attained to their present geographical position, nearly in the centre of the North American continent, from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, about the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River" (77). His discovery stemmed from his own attendance at a "Me-da-we-gaun," or "Grand Medicine Lodge," in which a "novice" was at the time being "initiated into the mysteries of the Me-da-we society"—Warren had to observe from the entrance, as only members could enter the lodge. He felt he "partially understood" the "meaning and objects of their strange ceremonies," though certainly he "watched, and listened with a far deeper interest than could be felt in the mind of a mere casual observer," someone "unacquainted with the objects of the rites" or the language, and "who, in his greater

wisdom, deems it but the unmeaning mummery and superstitious rites of an ignorant race, buried in heathenish darkness" (77-78). Warren explained how he struggled to understand the language of the ritual, which was highly "obscure," and thus difficult to translate. Nor did he fully comprehend its "objects." The old priest in charge spoke of a long-ago time when their "forefathers" lived "on the great salt water toward the rising sun," and the "great Megis (sea-shell) showed itself," rising from the water and reflecting the rays of the sun and giving warmth and light to the "Anish-in-aub-ag." It then sank, disappearing for some time, and resurfacing on the "great river which drains the waters of the Great Lakes," before sinking and disappearing again, resurfacing on the shores "of the first great lake," where it disappeared yet again, resulting in more death among the Anishinaabeg. When the Megis finally arose and shined its light, it healed the people and floated to "Mo-ning-wun-a-kaun-ing (La Pointe Island)," where it remained and continued to shine upon the Ojibwe. While performing this oral tradition, the speaker held in his hands a shell, an emblem of the "great Megis." Warren, rather than dismissing it all as "mummery," was "anxious to learn the true meaning of this allegory," and so he inquired at the lodge of the old priest, offering him tobacco. The priest condescended to explain the significance of his "Me-da-we harangue," describing again, but in less "obscure" terms, how the Anishinaabeg lived many years ago by the ocean, where they became plagued by sickness. The Great Spirit, acting through "Man-ab-o-sho," had taught them the sacred rites of the medicine lodge to restore their health. Later, as they moved westward along the river, they tore down the lodge and did not erect it again until they were "near where Mo-ne-aung (Montreal) now stands." They continued in this way, tearing down and rebuilding the lodge until they reached La Pointe, where they remained.

It was "only through such religious and genuine traditions" that the "fact" of Anishinaabe migration was "to be ascertained," since most Ojibwe, who were uninitiated in the "Me-da-we," claimed that the Ojibwe came from La Pointe—it was this "spot on which the Ojibway tribe first grew" (78-80). Moreover, an uninformed observer of the performance would not have understood the allegorical significance of the shell (as the lodge and its medicinal rites) and thus would have readily dismissed it as fable or "superstition," rather than a physical record of migrations and religious practice. In analyzing the oral tradition and shell as an allegorical record, Warren rejected Schoolcraft's superficial assessments of Indigenous oral traditions, but he also went far beyond ethnological writers like Constantine Rafinesque, whose allegorical readings were also superficial. Whereas Rafinesque believed he was unlocking the true meanings hidden in oral traditions, Warren deferred to the knowledge of the men who maintained them, laboring to understand their meanings from the perspective of the Ojibwe historians and archivists.

It was not just with the Ojibwe's sacred traditions that Warren contested Schoolcraft's and other ethnologists' knowledge, however. He also offered a radically different take on their "oral historic traditions," which although not "minute history," nonetheless provided "certain" records of the past five-hundred years (76). Warren was fully cognizant of the challenges oral traditions posed to him in his attempt to write a Western history of the Ojibwe. As he explained in his 1850 letter to Fletcher, the oral traditions, descending from generation to generation, "naturally lose in truth and correctness," and each version "differs materially." When Warren first asked chiefs for "information," they would begin by describing the "greatness" of their ancestors and

"end off in a mess of nonsense of events happening within" recent memory. One account would be repudiated in turn by another chief, who would likewise boast of the greatness of his ancestors (Schenck 67). These difficulties initially discouraged Warren, but he had a breakthrough when he heard an account of the first French settlement at La Pointe, which had ended in tragedy over a century and a half before. The remains of that settlement were still visible, suggesting the accuracy and longevity of the oral tradition, and so Warren decided to reapply himself. Through his work as an interpreter, he gained the confidence of local chiefs, and he was beginning to understand how to question them; he held a council at his home in 1847 in which he expressed the importance of sharing and recording their histories, and it was there that the chiefs told him that he was now one of them, and, moreover, that he was now mature enough to learn the oral traditions, which they had intentionally withheld from him. In this way, Warren "discovered among the Pillagers and Mississippi Ojibways a new fund of information," (68).

Much like Copway, Warren drew upon these oral traditions to narrate Ojibwe wars and migrations, the physical evidence of which remained visible in the landscape itself. And he demonstrated how an allegory could be, to those who understood it, history. The context of their telling was thus important. For example, it was at a council between the Ojibwe and the US government (perhaps the treaty of 1842), that Warren heard the oral tradition recounted of how the Crane gave the Loon his ability to speak. At the council, US representatives wanted to know which clan claimed the title of "hereditary chief" of La Pointe. Kechewashkeenh, the "head of the Loon Totem clan," noted for his oratorical powers, stood up and delivered an "eloquent harangue . . . claiming for the Loon family the first place and chieftainship among the Ojibways."

Afterward, Tugwaugaunay, the "head chief of the Crane family," a "modest," quiet man, in turn stood, pointed to the sky, and began to describe how the "Great Spirit once made a bird," the Crane, and how it arrived at the Great Lakes, where it chose its resting place "overlooking Boweting (Sault Ste. Marie)." Satisfied, the Crane cried out, and the Bear, Catfish, Loon, and Moose gathered at his call. A town was built, and the Crane "presided over all." The Crane one day heard the musical voice of the Loon, however, and appointed him to be his "voice in Council." Thus, the Loon "became first in council, but he who made him chief" was the Crane (88). The Ojibwe listening understood the meaning of the speech perfectly well: the Crane clan, or "Uj-e-jauk," were, according to tradition, the largest and oldest of the Ojibwe families, the first to have arrived at La Pointe. The powerful Loon clan claimed "hereditary first chieftainship in the tribe," but were unable to "substantiate their pretentions further back than their first intercourse with the old French discoverers and traders," who had appointed some of them as chiefs with "flags and medals." The "allegory of the Cranes" served as much older evidence that the Cranes held hereditary title of La Pointe. It could not be "controverted."[8]

Without that context, the oral tradition was a mere fable, a *pourquois* tale, fanciful and pretty, albeit historically meaningless. Instead, Warren offered as "historical fact" oral traditions that "at the same time" answered as "specimen[s] of the mythological character of [Ojibwe] tales" (91), blurring, as Copway had similarly done, Western

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[8] The allegory, Warren explains, was in fact further substantiated by a copper plate the Crane clan maintained, recording in hieroglyphics the "number of generations of the family who ha[d] passed away since they first pitched their lodges at Shaug-a-waum-ik-ong and took possession of the adjacent country" (89). In 1842 Warren's father had been shown this family record, which marked (and thus preceded) the arrival of Europeans.

distinctions between fiction and history. Warren in fact reversed the conventional wisdom surrounding oral traditions and written records, describing the former as "accurate and detailed accounts," whereas the latter were the phantasms of wild "adventurers" and febrile Jesuit priests, filled with "many gross mistakes and exaggerations" and "only tolerated and . . . made matters of history, because no other source of information has ever been opened to the public" (114). If modern-day historians like George Bancroft wanted to tell one-sided histories using such questionable sources, Warren asserted his right to do the same, viewing Ojibwe accounts as "true and perfectly reliable" (113).

By relying so thoroughly on Indigenous sources, Warren made significant and lasting contributions to Euro-Americans' knowledge of the Ojibwe, the most significant of which was surely the insight he provided regarding the importance of clan structure—a feature he realized had been overlooked by previous students of the Anishinaabeg (43). Historians of ethnology and anthropology often point to the work of Squier and especially of Lewis Henry Morgan as a turning point in the science, signaling the rise of more serious investigations grounded in rigorous field work, objectivity, and in general a more holistic understanding of Indigenous cultures (Krupat 63; Pearce 129). Morgan's *The League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* (1851), for example, has been widely praised (then and now) for illuminating (with the aid of Ely S. Parker and other members of the Six Nations, of course) previously misunderstood aspects of Haudenosaunee culture, namely by looking at them through the framework of the Iroquois kinship system. Warren's *History* was equally as groundbreaking as *The League*, if not more so, as it radically challenged the existing assumptions and opinions regarding the Anishinaabeg, as well as Indigenous oral traditions more generally. It anticipated the

rigor of postbellum era ethnology, but it was distinguished from those later works in that it was written by a man of Ojibwe descent who utilized Ojibwe knowledge exclusively.

Warren too wrote his *History* in the context of removal, in which he played a direct role. Although he assisted in the sale of Ojibwe land, he did so because he believed removal was inevitable, and because he wanted to avoid the starvation and bloodshed that he felt would certainly occur if it were bungled. In 1851, working as a government "conductor," Warren labored to unify the Ojibwe of the Minnesota territory to improve their bargaining power (Schenk 127). His plans for a unified Ojibwe nation, like Copway's, fell through, however, as Warren failed to convince chiefs to follow his lead, and as the new Indian agent cast doubt on his allegiance, leading to a public row in the newspapers (134). The Ojibwe became fragmented, spread across several reservations in the Midwest, which is still the case today, a principle one being the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, where Warren's family eventually relocated.

In 1852 Warren ran once again for a seat in the Minnesota House—he had won in 1850 but resigned in protest over gerrymandering. He lost the 1852 election, by all accounts cheated of votes and denied a hearing in court. Following these setbacks, and with his health declining (he was in fact dying of tuberculosis), Warren turned his energies to completing *History*. He saw the book as a tool for shifting public narratives surrounding American Indians. Writing to a country that venerated pioneer life, Warren wrote a history characterizing the Ojibwe (who were then being expelled from their lands) as "pioneers." They had arrived in the region first as a small band of hunters, who braved starvation and deadly attacks from wild enemies, and from the endurance of those few hardy explorers, a thriving village of over a thousand people emerged at Lac Courte

Oreilles, which was still strong at the time Warren wrote, and from which the modern Ojibwe nation had expanded (191).[9] Warren travelled to New York City in 1853 to find a publisher for *History*, meanwhile envisioning similar works with which he would follow it, including an Indian biography utilizing only Indian sources, as well as a collection of Nanabozho oral traditions, what he described as the "Indian Bible." Too weak to make a house call, he wrote to Schoolcraft asking for publishing advice, as well as for a copy of his latest book, which, as Warren wryly noted, he had, after all, helped him write. The letter was probably a polite request for a publishing contact. Schoolcraft wrote him a brief letter in reply, wishing him luck and expressing his confidence that he would find a publisher—Warren did not, nor did he have another opportunity, as he died in Chicago on the return trip. Thankfully, neither Warren's work nor his talents had gone unnoticed; his manuscript was preserved and finally published in 1885 by the Minnesota Historical Society, after which it came under the radar of men like Brinton.

Warren was a remarkable figure, shockingly understudied to this day. The obstacles that he, as part-Ojibwe, encountered in his work, politics, and brief career as an author testify to the racism of the period, and certainly to the imbalances between white and Indigenous voices within ethnological discourse. His work found publication back east only as an appendage to Schoolcraft's. But Warren's writings also bring to light the opportunities that ethnology presented to literate Indigenous men, enabling them to act as

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[9] Throughout the book Warren initiates similar reversals, complicating the savage-civilized binary of Indians and Europeans—were Ojibwe priests, he asked, so different from the mesmerists and spiritualists who enthralled crowded lecture halls back east (27)? Were polygenists, with all their books and learning, truly more enlightened, less "confused" than the savage in the wilderness who, in the absence of divine revelation, long ago deduced that his people were autochthonous (59)?

authorities over themselves and their peoples, and to speak back, as it were, within a field of study that had developed as part and parcel of US colonizing culture. Warren wrote an Ojibwe history that permanently recorded numerous Ojibwe oral traditions, and which countered Schoolcraft's image of the deranged, superstitious, history-less Indian with that of the Indian ethnologist and historian, whose job it was to correct the confused beliefs of Euro-Americans.

Elias Johnson

If Warren's contributions to ethnology have been overlooked, Elias Johnson's have been somewhat misunderstood. Younger than either Warren or Copway, Johnson wrote *Legends, Traditions, and Laws of the Iroquois, or Six Nations, and History of the Tuscarora Indians* (1881) nearly three decades after Copway and Warren wrote their respective histories.[10] Johnson, or Towernakee, was, moreover, Tuscarora (of the Wolf tribe), a member of the Six Nations, and thus not of Ojibwe descent, all of which makes him appear an odd fit for this chapter. But *Legends* represents an extension of the ethnological debates and issues of the antebellum period, which is evident in the fact that Johnson wrote *Legends* in direct response to three antebellum ethnological texts: Cusick's *Sketches* (1825), Schoolcraft's *Notes* (1846), and Anna Cummings Johnson's (Minnie Myrtle's) *The Iroquois; Or, The Bright Side of Indian Character* (1855). Noted

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[10] Johnson's exact age is unclear. *Legends* includes excerpts from the diary of Mary Thayer, a mission schoolteacher who helped convert Elias and his brother James. In an 1852 entry she appears to refer to him and his brother as "young persons," though it is unclear whether that might mean children, adolescents, or young adults. A conservative estimate would, I think, put him at eighteen years-old in 1852, making him at least nine years younger than Warren and fourteen years younger than Copway. An obituary in 1904 for Johnson's wife, Julia Ann, stated that she was survived by her husband.

by eminent postbellum ethnologists like Brinton, Albert Gatschet, and JP Maclean, *Legends* was also one of the last lay works of ethnology of its kind. It was published just as efforts to professionalize the field were accelerating, namely through the formation of ethnological journals, such as the very one in which Maclean wrote a review of *Legends*, *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal: A Quarterly Devoted to Early American History, Ethnology, and Archaeology* (1878); but also, through the organization of research institutions like the Bureau of Ethnology (1879), which pooled federal resources to fund specialization and full-time study. Johnson's book—written by a chief with a mission education, based on local Indigenous sources, and published through the small printing press of nearby Lockport (the same one that published Cusick's *Sketches*)—closed out an era of ethnological writing, while signaling that the struggles of antebellum Indigenous communities persisted into the postbellum years.

Legends has received some scholarly interest in the past two decades, most notably from Philip H. Round, who discusses Johnson and his work in *Removable Type: Histories of the Book in Indian Country, 1663-1880* (2010).[11] Round examines Johnson in the context of republican printing practices, specifically unauthorized reprintings. Reprintings of Indian texts, according to Round, were yet another form of Indigenous appropriation by non-Indigenous "cultural entrepreneurs." Round calls Johnson's book "a classic example of autoethnography in print" in so far as it re-appropriated Haudenosaunee history by emphasizing Indigenous over non-Indigenous sources (*Removable* 190). Johnson "highlights his differences from cultural entrepreneurs like

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[11] The most recent article on Johnson is David Martinez's "Neither Chief Nor Medicine Men."

Schoolcraft," Round argues, by "primarily emphasiz[ing] Native-produced works," drawing upon "childhood storytelling experiences and input from contemporary tribal elders like John Mt. Pleasant" to compile "a comparative historiography that read non-Native 'Indian history' against 'our Legends and Traditions'" (192). Johnson also relied heavily on Cusick's *Sketches*. Round notes, for example, the "material continuity" of the two works through their shared printing press, and he describes Johnson's excerpting of *Sketches* (with "edits") as "paraphrasing," a form of "retelling" in keeping with Indigenous oral practices. My own research builds on, rather than challenges, Round's assessments by showing, for one, how the text was far more re-appropriative than Round and other scholars have realized.

In a 2011 article, lamenting the dearth of textual criticism on early Indigenous books, Round begins with a quote from the opening line of *Legends*, "What, another Indian Book?," which Round understandably attributes to Johnson (119). Ironically enough (and to Round's point), the words were originally written, not by Elias Johnson, but by Anna Cummings Johnson, known more popularly as Minnie Myrtle, a contemporary and literary competitor of Fanny Fern (Sarah Payson Willis), who in the early 1850s left off writing poems and sketches for papers like *The New York Daily Times* to research and write a book about the Haudenosaunee. Myrtle's possible reasons for doing so are worth exploring to understand where and why Johnson both utilized and deviated from her work. For one, Myrtle likely recognized the success of the Indian as literary material and thus sensed a financial opportunity, which is suggested by the numerous quotes she includes from writers like Street and Hosmer, who were also capitalizing on the public's Indian fascination. Additionally, Morgan's *The League of the*

Iroquois (1851), which she also cited, appears to have piqued her interest in both Haudenosaunee society and ethnological writing. Myrtle was probably also encouraged to pursue the project by Col. Thomas L. McKenney, a former Secretary of State and a friend of Myrtle's, who had also written a study of the Indians and even published a handful of Indian "legends." Myrtle shared McKenney's liberal sympathy for the Indian, and she appears to have been motivated in part to write about the Haudenosaunee for ideological reasons, viewing the project as a benevolent cause—in the book she takes repeated aim at Euro-American biases, arguing in favor of the civilizing potential of the Indian, and chastising Euro-Americans for their historical mistreatment of the Indians. Along these lines, Myrtle appears to have been truly affected by her stay among the Seneca at the Cattaraugus Reservation, where she lived for several months with Reverend Asher Wright and his wife, Laura.[12] During that time, Myrtle met numerous leaders of the community, including Ely and Nic Parker, Maris B. Pierce (Ha-dya-no-doh), chief Nathaniel T. Strong (Hon-Non-De-Uh), and John Hudson (Sha-dye-no-wah), the latter of whom adopted Myrtle into the Bear clan and gave her a Seneca name, later confirmed in council: Gui-ee-wa-zay, meaning "'one who has a new style,'" or 'tells new things'" (18). In addition to the work of people like Morgan, Schoolcraft, and McKenney, Myrtle cited these and other Seneca leaders as important resources ("friends and helpers") for her study, which she had originally planned as a biography of chief Red Jacket, but which

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[12] The Wrights had been at the Buffalo Reservation and had publicly opposed the infamous sell-off to the Ogden Land Company in 1845, after which the couple followed the Seneca to Cattaraugus. Thus, Myrtle would have been apprised of these injustices committed against of the Seneca, and the continued threats to their territorial sovereignty, which included a duplicitous endeavor in 1846-47 to organize a party of Haudenosaunee to remove to Indian country out west.

grew into a comprehensive look at Haudenosaunee society, combined with a series of biographical sketches of men like Red Jacket and Cornplanter (17). In doing so, Myrtle challenged her readers' commitments to what Roy Harvey Pearce later called "savagism." She compared, for example, the structure of the "longhouse" to the federation of the United States, as she likewise compared Christians' belief in witches to the animism of the Indians, undermining her Christian readers' pretensions to enlightened superiority. The "stories of ghosts and hobgoblins" she had heard as a child, and which had been "related [to her] in perfect good faith," she wrote, "are not less ridiculous or more indicative of heathen blindness than those which I hear in the wigwam. The fables, fairy tales, and rural sports of our Saxon ancestors have never been recorded as evidence of their inferiority, or as very heinous misdemeanors. Their descendants have felt it to be a duty to honor them, and have clothed their customs in the garb of fascination." It was prejudice that celebrated Saxon "fairy tales" and saw Indian ones, in turn, as evidence of inferiority. Indian "mythology, if nothing else," she wrote, proved the Indians "were destitute of neither genius nor poetry. They were heathens and pagans, but not savages . . ." (65-66).

By offering readers examples of Iroquois "Poetry" and "Legendary Literature"—the focus of chapters five and six, respectively—Myrtle continued to challenge the logic of savagism in these terms.[13] If heard in the original language, the works possessed "a richness and beauty, only rivalled on Grecian plains and among Celtic bards"

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[13] Myrtle presumably did not speak any of the Haudenosaunee languages. She does not cite sources for these works, and so she may have heard them translated by the Wrights, the Parker brothers, John Hudson, or any of the other Indigenous persons she mentions in her introduction.

(105). Myrtle reinforced these literary ties by comparing the works to not only Saxon fairy tales and Mother Goose stories, but the work of English poets like Michael Drayton. "'The Midsummer Night's Dream' of Shakspeare [sic], or Spenser's 'Fairy Queen,' have not been the less admired because they were utterly improbable," Myrtle argued, surely alluding to Schoolcraft and others who had ridiculed Indian oral literature for its fictionality. Perhaps she could not "relate any thing so beautiful in the way of Indian fairy stories, but those which [she did] relate, and hundreds which have never been related, are exceedingly beautiful in their own metaphorical language," a beauty, moreover, that white readers could never fully appreciate, unaware as they were of the myriad associations that the legends undoubtedly evoked for the Indian. She almost "falter[ed] in attempting to convey any idea of their imaginative creations, in English" (121); nonetheless, she hoped to one day devote a full volume to the subject, which would perhaps "be considered not entirely unworthy a place beside the fairy castles of Merrie England, Scotia's sylvan temples, and the grottos of Italian nymphs" (134). It was through such associations that Myrtle worked to elevate the status of Indian culture, whose literary productions she claimed were equal to the greatest of old Europe. Myrtle's book thus entered the ranks alongside Schoolcraft's works. But it rejected Schoolcraft's assessments of Indian society and psychology as inferior, even republishing a poem that Schoolcraft originally collected, but now as evidence of Indian "genius."

The Iroquois reflected a decidedly liberal strain of white US commentary on the Indian, initiated by Washington Irving's 1819 essay "Traits of Indian Character," which Myrtle quotes at length. As a reviewer for *The Knickerbocker* noted, her book was a weapon in the public battle over readers' hearts and minds regarding the Indian question:

"with an eye quick to discern, and a heart alive to the wrongs inflicted on the Indians, [Myrtle] has thrown a shield between the red and the white man, which must for ever protect the former from the prejudices which, by false lights, have been thrown upon his character" (408). Myrtle's accusatory rhetoric, her blunt challenges to Euro-Americans' assurance in Western superiority, clearly appealed to Johnson, who lifted whole chapters from the book.[14] In one sense, the minor changes that Johnson made to those chapters were necessary to obscure the fact that he did not write them. A characteristic example comes from the first chapter (in both texts), describing the Indian's habitation: "Because their system not being like ours ["the white people's" in Johnston's version], it does not follow that it was not a system. We [You] might have looked into the wigwam or lodge and thought everything in confusion, while to the occupants, there was a place for everything, and everything in its place" (Johnson 18;

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[14] Myrtle died shortly after *The Iroquois* was published, which may explain why Johnson's reprinting of it went unnoticed in his own time. Johnson may have met Myrtle during her stay at Cattaraugus—Elias and his brother, who grew up near Lewiston, attended school there in the early 1850s, and as converts they would have known the Wrights. Johnson, moreover, who became a leader in the Tuscarora community of nearby Lewiston, would have moved in the same circles as many Seneca leaders, especially through the communities' joint participation in the temperance movement. In short, there were numerous opportunities for him to learn about Myrtle or to come across her text. The exact date of Myrtle's death is unclear, however. The book was published in 1855 and reviews refer to her as still alive at that point; several articles were published under her penname in 1856 as well. But her writings disappeared after that. A notice in the *New York Daily Times* for singer Sidney Dyer referred to a "requiem" that he wrote for Myrtle, but the article also says that "the only Minnie Myrtle known to us and the public is still, we are happy to say, alive and—writing." Does that mean that Cummings Johnson was still alive, or that someone else was writing under her penname? At any rate, she is not to be confused with Theresa Dyer, who later used the penname "Minnie Myrtle" in the postbellum years. Her work, however, was not exactly forgotten over the years—Pearce cited it in a footnote in *Savagism and Civilization*, and as recently as 2019 an article by Edward C. McInnis discussed Myrtle and *The Iroquois*. It seems that Johnson's and Myrtle's books were just never considered in the same context.

Myrtle 30). Nearly everything in the chapter is the same except for the pronouns, which from a modern-day perspective suggests a simple case of plagiarism. Round has made it clear, however, that unauthorized reprinting was a common antebellum practice, one that in the case of Indian authored texts threatened cultural sovereignty through appropriation (173). On the one hand, then, Johnson was engaging in a standard print practice of the period by reprinting Myrtle's work, but his reprinting in effect reasserted cultural sovereignty, as Round also argues (192). In considering that Myrtle utilized Haudenosaunee sources for her work—in some cases people whom Johnson may have known personally—the altered pronouns resonate powerfully as an act of intellectual reappropriation. Johnson likely would have viewed the information and opinions in Myrtle's book as originally Haudenosaunee and thus fair game to be redeployed for purposes that in some respects ran parallel to Myrtle's, but in others significantly deviated from them.

Those differences become apparent in the changes Johnson made to Myrtle's text. Most conspicuous is his elimination of the bulk of Myrtle's legends and poems. For a book with "Legends" as the first word in the title, it comes as somewhat of a surprise that by far most of Johnson's text is devoted not to legends but to the social and legal histories of the Six Nations, up to Johnson's present day. Johnson altogether eliminated Myrtle's chapter on music and poetry, as he did the numerous literary allusions that Myrtle wove into her chapters. And while Myrtle's chapter on "Legendary Literature" does appear in Johnson's text (with the title shortened to "Legendary"), it does so only at the very end of the book, after more than two-hundred pages of historical content. Moreover, the chapter itself is significantly abridged. Of Myrtle's eleven "legends" in her sixth chapter, Johnson

republished two, the "Medicine Legends." Johnson also eliminated Myrtle's many comparisons between Indian and Western literature—for example, the supposed similarities between Jupiter and He-no, the "Thunderer." Likewise, in republishing Myrtle's transcription of the "Adventures of the Hunter Ho-Cha-Gah," Johnson cut Myrtle's prefatory comments explaining how the work reminded her of an account by Anaxagoras, in which the ancient philosopher described "'speaking trees, pigmies, phoenixes, satyrs and dragons,' and many other things equally marvellous," that he encountered in his travels (115). Finally, Johnson cut lines from a Drayton poem that Myrtle inserted in the middle of the narrative, of which the story apparently had reminded her. Myrtle, in making these literary allusions, in stressing the beauty of Haudenosaunee legends, wanted to suggest parity between Indian and European cultures. In eliminating most of those allusions, Johnson may have been working to conceal the fact that he pulled from Myrtle's text, but it seems more plausible (or at least equally as plausible) that those allusions, despite Myrtle's good intentions, ran counter to his purposes in writing *Legends*: to construct a true history of the Haudenosaunee, ancient and modern, which included the history of the Tuscarora, and which secured a print record of Tuscarora titles to land. Portions of Myrtle's text were useful for Johnson in that endeavor, whereas her emphasis on Indian imagination and artistic beauty evidently were not. Johnson's "edits" rechanneled the reader's focus elsewhere.

The first "legend" in Myrtle's chapter on "Legendary Literature," for instance, describes the origin of the Seneca in a mountain by Canandaigua Lake—a story Myrtle claimed was as "marvelous" as the origin of Remus and Romulus, as "credible as many of the stories concerning the early history of the heroes of ancient history and fable,

which are thought worth recording by every author who writes of Greece and Rome, and are read by every child with wonder" (108). It seems significant that Johnson did recount a version of this "legend" in his book, but he did so as part of his chapter titled "Creation," which describes the early history of the Six Nations. And it is in the "Creation" chapter that Johnson first significantly departed from Myrtle's text by "paraphrasing," as Round calls it, Cusick's *Sketches*. The chapter, however, is really a composite of Cusick's work and Schoolcraft's rewriting of it in *Notes*, with alterations and a few notable additions made by Johnson, such as the oral tradition of Hiawatha and his importance in creating the League of Five Nations. That Johnson was drawing from Schoolcraft is clear from some of the diction he used, which is absent from Cusick's version.[15] Johnson, however, also clearly adhered to Cusick's version of the oral traditions in his text, which he chose to follow more closely at times than Schoolcraft's rewriting of it—the decision to narrate the oral traditions in "Creation" as a single

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[15] Cusick began "Part 1" of *Sketches* by explaining that "Among the ancients there were two worlds in existence. The lower world was in a great darkness;—the possession of the great monster; but the upper world was inhabited by mankind; and there was a woman conceived and would have the twin born." Schoolcraft, paraphrasing Cusick's text, wrote that "the act of [Iroquois] transference or reproduction is concentrated in the idea of a female, who began to descend into the lower world, which is depicted as a region of darkness, waters and monsters." Johnson in turn wrote, "The Tuscarora tradition opens with the notion that there were originally two worlds, or regions of space, that is an upper and lower world. The upper world was inhabited by beings resembling the human race. And the lower world by monsters, moving on the surface and in the waters, which is in darkness. When the human species were transferred below, and the lower sphere was about to be rendered fit for their residence; the act of their transferrance [sic] is by these ideas, that a female who began to descend into the lower world, which is a region of darkness, waters, and monsters . . ." (40). Notably, Johnson labels the tradition as specifically "Tuscarora," a designation paralleled by small changes he made elsewhere in the chapter to the Indigenous names of locations and actors, sometimes clarifying the meaning of a name. But his exposition in the above passage, which uses the words "transferred" and "transferrance" is obviously from Schoolcraft.

history, for example, represented a significant departure from Schoolcraft's fragmented accounts (Schoolcraft treated the origin of each nation separately) and a restoration of the unified structure Cusick had lent the oral traditions in *Sketches*.

But what Johnson removed from *Notes* is just as important as what he included. As with Myrtle's text, Johnson cut lengthy prefatory and postscript commentaries with which Schoolcraft had enveloped Cusick's oral traditions, some of which noted similarities between the traditions and Western analogues, but most of which disparaged the traditions as wild fantasies.[16] In *Notes*, Schoolcraft explained that the Indians claimed, falsely, to have originated from the lands they inhabited. They lacked the ability to fix dates to their histories and invented fables to supply the "lapse"—unsurprisingly, Schoolcraft had eliminated the tentative chronology that Cusick had developed in *Sketches*. Johnson in turn cut Schoolcraft's exposition and jumped ahead to "The earliest tradition that we have of the Iroquois," recounting an oral tradition about the Ongwhaonwa, an ancient people who according to the tradition once lived in the St. Lawrence River valley. Johnson, through his sampling of Schoolcraft, thus worked to revalidate Haudenosaunee history as history.

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[16] He writes, "This piece of ingenuity [the tradition of creation], or philosophy of the Indian mind, much of which is pure allegory, under which truths are hid, stands in the remote vista of Iroquois tradition, and it seemed necessary to notice it, in preparing to take up their more sober traditions. It is picked out of a mass of incongruous details, published by a native, which only serve peradvaenture to denote its genuineness, for divested of absurdity, in the original, we should not ascribe much antiquity to it, or be prone to attribute it to an ignorant, superstitious, pagan people, living in all their earlier times without arts, letters or civilization. Futile as it is, it will be found veritable philosophy, compared with most of the earlier theories of the renowned nations of antiquity."

That effort comes into sharper focus in the text as Johnson recounts Tuscarora history, for which he made several significant contributions to the print record of Haudenosaunee history, as opposed to editing and repurposing others' texts. Firstly, unlike Schoolcraft or Cusick, Johnson included the ancient oral traditions of the Tuscarora as part of the Haudenosaunee creation traditions, which he retold based on his own knowledge and sources, signifying a strong historical continuity between the Five Nations and the sixth, the Tuscarora. The chapter "Tuscarora," which follows "Creation," proceeds by documenting the tribes' modern history, focusing on the events that led to the Tuscarora being initiated into the League of Five Nations. Johnson began the chapter by pulling from James Cusick's brief history of the Tuscarora, which James (David's brother) prepared for Schoolcraft in a letter in 1845, and which Schoolcraft appended to *Notes*. Yet Johnson quickly left behind both James's and Schoolcraft's accounts by narrating a third history, one that contradicted colonial records regarding the dissolution of the Tuscarora in North Carolina and their subsequent exodus to New York. Schoolcraft had described the Tuscarora as a violent tribe, which, made "haughty" by their "numbers, bravery and success," had invaded the Carolinas to "subjugate and break down their neighbors." They believed, he wrote, that they could in turn treat the newly arrived European colonists the same. Schoolcraft, like James Cusick, speculated that the Tuscarora may have been the "very people who had exterminated the colony left on Roanoke" by Sir Walter Raleigh (65). At any rate, in 1711, "jealous of the encroaching settlements" along the Neuse River, the Tuscarora executed the surveyor-general of Carolina, John Lawson, and then attempted, unprovoked, to exterminate the colonists of present-day North Carolina. This attack resulted in a retaliatory campaign and several

years of warfare, which eventually broke the Tuscarora and induced many of them to flee their lands and take asylum among their relatives in New York.

Against this account, Johnson described how the Tuscarora "had many years of enjoyment and peaceful possession of their domain." They lived in six thriving towns and were peacefully confederated with six other Indian nations. Moreover, they were not "jealous" of, but angered by the colonists' encroachments. The Tuscarora, Johnson explained,

> were required to surrender larger and larger portions of their domain, and at last, the removal of families from the neighborhood of their long cherished memories of the graves of their ancestors, to the more distant and less valuable tracts of land . . . Their hunters were shot down like so many beasts, at the edge of the settlement, killed in their wigwams, their young females' chastity violated, and many other things might be related, which their tradition shows. (63-64)

Johnson both pitted Tuscarora oral tradition against Euro-American histories *and* utilized colonial records to validate the oral traditions. He acknowledged, for instance, that Tuscarora oral tradition admitted to "having captured Lawson and his party, and executed some of them to death on account of their encroachments upon their domain," but he argued that oral tradition also denied their having participated in the massacre of 1711. Retaliation against the colonists for their encroachments was discussed in a council of chiefs and warriors, who acknowledged their right to defense, but who nonetheless "cautioned their young men that they should not take any part whatever in the action." A "few of the rash and reckless [Tuscarora] warriors" may have participated "in the disorder," but several other nations were involved, the main instigators of which were the "Corees, Mattamuskeets, and Bear River Indians." It had been wrongly assumed that they were Tuscarora or acted on Tuscarora orders (62).

Additionally, Tuscarora oral tradition stated that prior to the massacre of 1711 there was a small party of white men wearing wide-brimmed hats and long black coats who visited the Indian nations in the region and advised them that the whites who were encroaching on their lands were "merely squatters," and that they could be expelled without retaliation from the English. There was, according to Johnson, always a mystery around the identity of those men, who had helped foment the attack, and he suspected that they were disguised as Quakers, seeking to draw the Indians into an internal feud among the colonists. "To corroborate" this oral tradition and his suspicions, Johnson quoted from a letter to Lord Craven in 1711, as well as from an account in Francois-Xavier Martin's *The History of North Carolina* (1829). These records pertain to Cary's Rebellion (1708-11), which erupted in part over frictions between Quakers and Episcopalians in the region. Edward Hyde arrived and defeated Thomas Carey's forces to become governor. Carey had had the support of the Quakers and, according to Martin's *History*, Carey's "counsel," Edward Porter, "endeavored by great rewards" to bring the Tuscarora into alliance and "cut off" Hyde's men in the region (63). Oral tradition, along with these records, proved, according to Johnson, that the Tuscarora never "had any intention" of massacring the colonists, but were induced to enter a colonial dispute that was subsequently used as justification for waging war against them. The Tuscarora denied an active hand in the massacre, and they "petitioned, remonstrated and supplicated for peace," but they met only "violence and insult."

"I suppose to the critical reader, and to the people generally, my writing," Johnson reflected, "will appear to them fictitious, because of their first impression, which has been taught them by many historians." Those historians, however, gave "only one side of the

story, and [had] avoided, as much as possible, to give the history of the wrongs done to the Tuscaroras," although they were "very scrupulous to preserve the history of the capture of Lawson, his execution and of the massacre, which they allege to have been committed by the Tuscaroras, and are styled by many as being inimical, haughty, jealous, warlike bloodhounds, blood thirsty and scarcely to be human" (64). Johnson did not mention Schoolcraft here, but the intertextuality of their works clearly indicates that he was one of the principal "historians" Johnson had in mind. Regarding the effects of the conflict, the accounts were true—the Tuscarora were "crushed as a nation, their domain snatched from them, driven into the cold world, [but] not a word ha[d] been written by historians, or the Tuscaroras themselves, to vindicate their cause." And to that end, Johnson explained, "I have ventured to write their history as I have received it, and think it to be true" (65). Johnson, in effect, countered the histories of Euro-Americans with the histories of the Tuscarora to exonerate their character and justify their past actions, but also to record in print the painful route by which his people came to live first among the Oneida and then among the Seneca. In 1715, they were initiated as the sixth nation of the League; they remained, however, as essentially guests among the Seneca, the borders of whose territory Johnson proceeded to define. He quoted from a treaty between the United States and the Six Nations to validate those borders and the fact that the Tuscarora resided within them, and he then described a 1797 dispute that arose when the Seneca ceded land that included the Tuscarora Reservation. Following the dispute, the purchaser, Robert Morris, donated 1280 acres to the Tuscarora, and the Seneca in turn granted them an additional 640 acres, which on September 22, 1810 was "entered and put on file the Niagara County Clerk's office, on page 56; and was again put on file in the Niagara

County Clerk's Office, Lockport, in book of deeds 151, page 168, March 13, 1879." By leasing some of their remaining lands in North Carolina to the US government, the Tuscarora expanded their land holdings in New York by another 4329 acres, so that they were "once more at peace and in possession of lands which they could call their own" (77). By detailing these transactions, and by precisely citing their print records, Johnson's *Legends* merged the Tuscarora archive of oral traditions with print archives (colonial, legal, and fiscal) to establish a clear and valid history by which they came into possession of their lands.[17]

Much of Johnson's text, then, engaged indirectly with Schoolcraft, utilizing selections of his work at the same time that it repudiated his version of Tuscarora history and his dismissal of Haudenosaunee oral tradition as fabulous, a move that mirrored (and reversed) Schoolcraft's own paraphrasing of Cusick's history to delegitimize its historicity. Johnson did cite Schoolcraft once in the book, however—in the very last chapter, concerning a mystery over a mass grave near the Tuscarora settlement in New York. Schoolcraft, in *Notes*, had asked whether any antiquarian could "inform us, if possible, why these bones were placed here? To what tribe do they belong? When did such a massacre occur?" (233). "On account of the questions," Johnson wrote, "I propose to give a tradition, (which the Tuscaroras have preserved) to give the

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[17] Johnson also provides a record of the disastrous and duplicitous effort in 1846-47 to remove a company of Haudenosaunee to western lands. Johnson described that effort, of which Nic Cusick was a part, and the efforts in turn to raise funds to return the men and women who had left and who had starved and suffered from a lack of resources. Although Johnson was writing three decades after these efforts, he clearly wanted to preserve a print record of the wrongdoings, at the same time that he bolstered records of Tuscarora land titles.

antiquarians and critics a question to solve." The oral tradition told of a community of Indians who had lived near the spot, and who were visited by a group of men claiming to be missionaries. They convinced the Indians to help them build a house of worship. After it was completed, the Indians were told to gather inside to collect their annuities, and once all of them were there, a company of soldiers appeared and barred the doors, after which they burned the structure to the ground, killing everyone inside. "The Tuscaroras who preserve this tradition," Johnson wrote, "are located in the vicinity in which this mound of bones were found. All historians are very cautious to leave out or omit from the pages of their history, any circumstance in the nature of the above tradition." And with those words Johnson abruptly ended his book, the final note of which was distrust toward Euro-American accounts, paired with a defiant affirmation of oral tradition as valid history, as a record of colonial aggressions, told from an Indigenous perspective.

The three Indigenous authors examined in this chapter, in their own unique ways, sought to affirm Indigenous oral traditions as true histories. Amid the politics of removal and its aftermath, they resisted the emerging consensus, developed by Schoolcraft and furthered by writers like Hosmer, Longfellow, and Minnie Myrtle; that oral traditions were literary works, the products of Indian imagination: legends, myths, fables, fairy tales. In refutation of Schoolcraft's claims that the Indian was incapable of writing "a clear, consistent chain of indisputable facts and deductions," they wrote ethnological histories of the Indian that exposed Schoolcraft's errors, or otherwise contested his knowledge of the American Indian. Copway blurred the line between legend and history, mapping through story the contours of the Ojibwe nation's territorial "possessions"; Warren likewise recorded allegorical histories that characterized the Ojibwe as the

original pioneers of the northwest; and Johnson, through his editorial work, excerpted and spliced ethnological writings with print records and oral traditions, retelling (and reclaiming) Haudenosaunee history through the eyes of the Tuscarora. As literate Indigenous men, and as leaders within their respective communities, they capitalized on the popularity of ethnological writing and the US public's interest in the Indian and his oral literature to secure a record of their peoples' oral traditions in print, which often meant securing, simultaneously, a record of their ties and claims to territory.

CHAPTER 4

THE "PROFESSIONAL MYTHOLOGIST"

In this chapter I consider how ethnology's science of Indian oral literature developed and expanded in the postbellum period under the rubric of evolutionary theory. I focus on the efforts of Daniel Garrison Brinton and John Wesley Powell to formulate and promote a "science of mythology." I examine the importance of the Indian and Indian oral literature, as objects of study, to conceptions of science, broadly speaking, and ethnology in specific—as a supposedly autonomous scientific discipline. Ethnology's study of Indian oral literature as myths, I argue, helped define the discipline as a scientific practice by constructing a distinction, through acts of (re)writing, between science and myth as two opposite, discursive ends of the evolutionary process. It represents the apogee of a decades-long effort in the West to distinguish literary from scientific discourse, a distinction that postbellum US ethnologists established through an intensive study of that distinction itself, via one of their chief pieces of evidence, Indian myths. Primitives, according to the "professional mythologist," expressed the world subjectively, through the nebulous language of symbol, metaphor, personification, and imagination. The Euro-American ethnologist, at the other end of the evolutionary spectrum, purportedly described the world as it really was—objectively, literally. As the science professionalized (and as part of its professionalization), men like Powell defined their discipline as part of the sciences but also, and nonetheless, independent from them in so far as ethnologists studied "superorganic" subjects, foremost among which was Indian oral literature.

As with the modes of (re)writing that preceded it, this one closely reflected and supported the political climate of the period. US-Indian relations had moved beyond the era of removal to one of forced assimilation and "acculturation." Ethnologists' belief that American Indians were, evolutionarily, a child-like race, still inhabiting a psychological world of make-believe, meshed easily with the federal government's paternalistic policies. I argue that ethnology within this context presented a narrowed range of opportunities for Indigenous "counter-sciences," as Indigenous ethnologists joined government payrolls and wrote to esoteric readerships steeped in theories of cultural evolution and diffusion. Within the intellectual and professional legacy established by men like Brinton and Powell, Indigenous intellectuals continued to participate in the work of ethnology as ethnologists, but the studies they produced largely adhered to colonialist assumptions about cultural progress and the superiority of Western society. One of these men was Arthur C. Parker. Like his Euro-American predecessors and colleagues, Parker collected Haudenosaunee oral traditions as simultaneously literary works and scientific objects, and he utilized those traditions to validate himself as an ethnological scientist. In examining his collections and career, I show how it was still possible within the field of ethnology—and specifically through the (re)writing of Indigenous oral traditions—to produce what Britt Russert has called "counter-sciences," but the line that one was forced to walk in doing so had become increasingly thin.

The Professional Ethnologist and Primitive Literature

In the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the early-twentieth century, ethnology in the United States, like many other sciences, underwent a period of swift and deliberate professionalization, to which historians such as George W. Stocking, Jr. have

since pointed as the beginnings of modern US anthropology ("The Founding" 10-14). Through an expanding and increasingly coordinated constellation of research institutions and publishing outlets, including museums, academic societies, university departments, and journals; ethnology transitioned from a predominantly avocational pursuit, open to anyone who could write and find a publisher, to one conducted by career researchers studying specialized fields. Men and women used these new research channels to find common ground regarding the scope, aims, and methods of ethnology, which by the second decade of the twentieth century all but required a PhD to work or teach in the discipline. Perhaps no one at the time embodied the professionalizing ethos more than Franz Boas, whose name has since become synonymous with the founding of US anthropology, in no small part thanks to Stocking's work on the subject ("Founding" 1). Immediately prior to Boas's professional ascent, however, there were three main centers that drove the transformation, each headed by a leading figure in the field, the so-called "fathers" of US anthropology: Frederick W. Putnam of Cambridge, Brinton of Philadelphia, and Powell of Washington D.C. (Baker 394-95). Each of these men came to ethnology with training in a scientific discipline other than ethnology but nonetheless became a leader and innovator in ethnological research, and either trained future ethnologists or helped create institutions that contributed to their training.[1] Putnam, who

[1] Putnam worked first in natural history. He published mainly on ornithology and marine life prior to transitioning to archaeological research. Brinton went to medical school at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, served as a surgeon during the Civil War, and later ran a private medical practice, meanwhile editing medical journals. Powell studied natural history, mostly geology, and he conducted several federally funded surveys of western territories before taking over as director of the Bureau of Ethnology.

for three decades worked as director of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, certainly left his mark on the discipline. In the late 1860s, after having studied natural history under Louis Agassiz, Putnam began leading excavations of American Indian physical remains and artifacts, what he often called "relics." He became widely celebrated for his work on the mounds of the Mississippi River Valley, helping develop the "'wedding-cake' method of excavating mounds and sites, whereby slice by slice the whole mass is cut through, examined, and replaced" (Peabody 305-06). And Putnam's annual reports for the Peabody record numerous digs carried out across the country, which produced some of the nation's most significant material ethnological collections.[2]

For better or worse, when most people think of early US anthropology what likely comes to mind is the kind of physical anthropology carried out by Putnam and his colleagues, whose unearthing of Indigenous bodies and funerary objects has received deserved scrutiny in the wake of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990).[3] What one is far less likely to imagine, however, when thinking back to those early years of US anthropology, is the eight-volume *Library of Aboriginal American Literature* that Brinton edited beginning in 1882, or his several book-length studies of the symbolism and tropes of American Indian mythology, his specialty being those of

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[2] Including the annual reports and his work in natural history, Putnam's bibliography includes over four-hundred titles, spanning fifty years; most of the ethnological publications pertain to archaeological findings (Mead 601-27).

[3] The passage of which has led museums, such as the Peabody itself, to reassess their holdings and, when possible, to return human remains and manufactures ("Lost and Found" 137-38, 146).

Central America. Nor is one likely to imagine Powell's and his researchers' extensive study of North American Indian "story lore," their "transliteration" of the "myths," "poems," and "folk-lore" of Indigenous tribes and nations across the United States, including the Zuni, Cherokee, Osage, Dakota, Haudenosaunee, and numerous others. Although their study of Indian oral literature distinguished them from Putnam, who remained focused on material research, Brinton and Powell nonetheless stood alongside Putnam at the center of the postbellum ethnological world in the United States. In addition to publishing articles and reviews in almost all major US scholarly outlets of the period, Brinton held the post of Professor of Ethnology and Archaeology at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia (ANSP), where he delivered public lectures on the exciting new science. He also served as the second president of the American Folklore Society (AFS), whose *Journal of American Folklore* (*JAF*) was a major outlet for ethnological research, particularly on American Indians (Chamberlain 219-25). And even though he did not teach any actual classes, Brinton was nonetheless the first person in the United States to hold a university professorship in anthropology (at the University of Pennsylvania) (Darnell 50-60). Similarly, when he was elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences (AAAS), Brinton was elevated to that role from his former post as vice-president of the new "Anthropological Section," a sure sign of the science's rising prestige. The president of the section at the time was Powell, who directed the US Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) and its team of ethnologists for two decades (1879-99), leading the national effort to fund ethnological research, and jumpstarting careers like Boas's. Meanwhile, Powell served as president of the

Anthropological Society of Washington, for which he edited the *American Anthropologist*, the discipline's flagship journal.

In this chapter I closely examine Brinton's and Powell's (and the BAE's) respective work in ethnology, which centered overwhelmingly on Indian oral literature, what they most often called "mythology." I focus on Brinton's scholarship, editorial work, and lectures, in conjunction with the annual reports of the BAE during Powell's tenure, the latter of which included the research of field workers as well as several key essays by Powell that outlined the scope and aims of ethnology.[4] One of my goals is to reconstruct a dominant yet surprisingly understudied scientific tradition that took flight as ethnology professionalized, to show how central the collection and study of Indigenous oral traditions (as Indian oral literature) was to the development of ethnology and its understanding of itself as a science, as well as its overlaps with the larger socio-political concerns of the era. "Closer to very self, to thought and being," Brinton argued, "are the connected expressions of men in their own tongues. The monuments of a nation's literature are more correct mirrors of its mind than any merely material objects" (*Aboriginal Authors* 59). Although more interested in architecture and artifacts than Brinton ever was, Powell and his researchers nonetheless agreed with him on this point.

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[4] I am aware that I am ignoring much ethnological work done on Indigenous oral traditions at the end of the nineteenth century which occurred both within and without institutional channels, such as Charles Leland's *Algonquin Legends of New England* (1884) or, a little later, Mary Alicia Owen's *Folk-lore of the Musquakie Indians of North America* (1904), not to mention the many authors who published and wrote about oral traditions in the *JAF*. Brinton and Powell were simply two of the most prolific and prominent ethnologists of the period, and their work, which often reflected on ethnology as a science, is essential for understanding how the study of Indigenous oral traditions professionalized at the turn of the century.

Erminnie A. Smith, one of Powell's first researchers at the BAE, wrote of the Haudenosaunee that their "principal monuments" were "their myths and folk-lore," which she believed were "fast crumbling away" through contact with Euro-Americans, giving an urgency to their collection, what is now commonly known as "salvage" ethnology (*Second* 51). Smith, Powell, and others at the BAE like Frank Hamilton Cushing saw myths as analogous to the "literature of civilization," and thus as crucial evidence for understanding supposedly disappearing Indigenous cultures (*Second* xxix).

Through their published studies of Indian oral literature, Powell and Brinton defined and promoted what they conceived of as a "science of mythology," a field of study that had been, lamentably, undervalued, they claimed. "Mythology, since it began to receive a scientific handling at all, has been treated as a subordinate branch of history or of ethnology," Brinton wrote, a trend which he sought, through his work, to reverse (*Religious* iii). Powell likewise was pressured by the director of the Smithsonian to focus on the collection of material artifacts (to expand museum holdings), but Powell succeeded in maintaining autonomy in his management of the BAE, directing researchers to focus instead on compiling data pertaining to languages and cultural practices (Woodbury 286), at the heart of which stood tribal mythology. Although Powell encouraged research in all branches of ethnology, mythology's neglect spelled unique opportunities, a view he undoubtedly impressed on his researchers. North America presented a "magnificent field of study" for the mythologist, he wrote, a "vast region of thought" that had been "explored only by a few adventurous travelers in the world of science" (*First* 38). And unlike those early "travelers," who had but "traced the outlines" of Indian mythology (and thus, the Indian mind), Powell's team at the BAE applied an

"objective or scientific method" to thoroughly "survey" this intellectual landscape (*First* 82). They did not, Powell argued, impose their religious or political biases on the collected materials, as men like Elias Boudinot (the congressman) had done. Rather, the men and women at the BAE sought to "collect and collate [mythology's] phenomena simply as it is stated and understood by the people to whom it belongs." Of course, the versions of Indigenous oral traditions they produced were also biased, but by formulating mythology's study in this way, and carrying it out through institutional channels, Powell attempted to remove the ethnological collection and study of Indigenous oral traditions from the reaches of the layperson.[5] And his efforts led to the collection of Indigenous oral traditions on a scale never seen. People such as Smith, Cushing, J. N. B. Hewitt, Albert S. Gatschett, James Mooney, and Maltida Coxe Stevenson travelled and resided among Indigenous communities across the United States; with the help of countless (cited and uncited) Indigenous informants, they "transliterated" thousands of oral traditions, which they later circulated in books, articles, and BAE annual reports (Woodbury 287).

In addition to providing analysis of the myths and folklore they collected, Powell and the men and women at the BAE had thus set about creating what they viewed as an archive of raw, reliable data intended to serve ethnologists for future study. Brinton too collected and published works of Indian oral literature with the explicit goal of making them available for other men and women within the discipline. Unlike Powell, however, Brinton was a one-man show, which his bibliographic methods reflected. That is, Brinton

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[5] Powell's public battles with Joel Chandler Harris, author of the popular Uncle Remus folk tales, are illustrative of his attempts to claim intellectual priority over the study of mythology and folklore, and to treat the narratives as a scientific and not a literary subject (Evans 54, 75-76).

mostly relied on the field work of other scholars—travelers and antiquarians like Abbe E. Charles Brasseur, who in the mid-nineteenth century located several important colonial manuscripts in Central America. Upon Brasseur's death, Brinton came into possession of those manuscripts, which he then translated and published as part of his *Library*. He was the definition of an arm-chair scientist, whose research was often conducted in his own personal study. But his output was still remarkable. Brinton read voraciously, translating and publishing records from the early years of Spanish colonialism.[6] He also republished, in his *Library*, studies by contemporary ethnologists such as Horatio Hale and Gatschett, exposing their work to wider audiences. And yet, despite not conducting field work, and despite always maintaining a slightly more popular orientation than Powell did, in terms of audience, Brinton too claimed Indigenous oral traditions as the special province of the "professional mythologist."[7] His republication, for instance, of Hale's *The Iroquois Book*

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[6] Brinton's aversion to field work stemmed from complications from a sun stroke he suffered at a battle in Chattanooga during the Civil War, in which he served as a surgeon for the Union Army. Even before the war, however, Brinton's first ethnological work, *Notes on the Florida Peninsula*, suggests his emphasis on, and expertise in, bibliographic research (Darnell 21-24).

[7] Brinton outlined the scope and aims of both the "science" and the "philosophy" of mythology. The "primitive form" of myths—primitive "notions" about nature and man—were susceptible to change. They might be blended with facts in tribal history or elaborated by "poetic fancy," and as "a product of creative thought, existing in words only," the meanings of myths were susceptible of changing. The "prevailing temperament of a nation, its psychology, [gave] a strong color to its mythical conceptions, and imprint[ed] upon them the national peculiarities" (*Religious* 158). The "student of mythology" had to weigh these different factors when assessing a myth. His "object [was] accomplished," Brinton wrote, "when he [could] point out the causal relation between the various features of a myth and these governing agencies" (158). The "philosophy of myth," in turn, entailed the comparative study of myths' formal "unities," ignoring "national peculiarities." Both the "science" and "philosophy" of myth, however, were undertaken by the "professional mythologist," and mythology, as an object of study, properly belonged to the ethnologist

of Rites alongside the work of BAE researchers like Gatschett effectively located the disparate collecting activities of his and other postbellum ethnologists within a connected, identifiable field of study, one that at last gave "aboriginal literature" the serious, scientific consideration Brinton felt it deserved.[8]

Cultural Evolution and Indian Oral Literature

Brinton and Powell worked, therefore, to establish the collection and study of Indian oral literature as a formal scientific field within ethnology, one carried out by professionals. But their analyses and (re)writings of Indian myths within the framework of evolution also functioned to authenticate and define ethnology in general as a legitimate science, as I aim to demonstrate below. In the previous chapter, I considered how in the late-antebellum and postbellum periods a handful of Indigenous men such as William Whipple Warren and George Copway wrote ethnological studies that challenged the emerging consensus that Indigenous oral traditions were principally literary works—and, therefore, the notion that American Indians were without history. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, as I have argued, did much to advance the opposite view, as he (re)wrote—

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that is, solicited, edited, revised, and published—Indigenous oral traditions as "tales," "legends," "fables," "myths," and "poems," what he sometimes collectively referred to as "Indian oral literature." Schoolcraft claimed that although these works of Indian oral literature were mostly fictional and thus ahistorical, they nonetheless possessed ethnological, not literary value. In this way, he attempted to characterize his activities as "scientific," as distinct from popular literary pursuits and interests, such as the ethnographic verse of Phillip Freneau or William H. C. Hosmer. As ethnological evidence, the "specimens" of oral literature Schoolcraft gathered shed light on a previously obscure Indian mind, revealing it to be wild, deranged, and degenerative, just like the literature it produced.

Brinton and Powell explicitly rejected Schoolcraft's conclusions, and they described his methods as unscientific.[9] And yet Brinton and Powell nonetheless agreed with Schoolcraft that Indigenous oral traditions were not valuable as historical records. Brinton referred to the "so-called historical literature" of American Indians, for instance, and in his study of American "hero-myths," he argued that scholars once and for all needed to stop treating "American hero-gods" such as Hiawatha of the Haudenosaunee as

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[9] Powell complained that few of the oral traditions that past collectors had preserved were "free from blunder or perversion" (*First* xxix). Most antebellum ethnological writers had relied on interpreters, and "the disposition to poetize or color with European sentiment was often apparent, even when distortion in support of favorite theories did not destroy the spirit and real significance of the original" (xxx). Schoolcraft's collections in specific, Powell lamented, were interspersed throughout with his "turbid speculations" (39). Brinton went as far to call him a "man of deficient education and narrow prejudices, pompous in style, and inaccurate in statements," (*Myths* 40). Schoolcraft's *magnum opus—Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*—Brinton wrote, was a "great disappointment," a "monument of American extravagance and superficiality."

if they had been real "chiefs of tribes at some undetermined epoch, and [to abandon] the effort to trace the migrations and affiliations of nations by similarities in such stories," (as Boas later would). Powell too spoke of tales "purporting" to be historical, what he called "miraculous history" (*First* 43). By far, it was the "miraculous" aspects of oral traditions in which he and his researchers were interested. For the professional mythologist, however, Indigenous oral traditions may have been empty of history in the conventional sense, but that did not make them, in turn, "empty fictions," nor altogether empty of a new kind of history—that of evolution (*Myths* 3). In the late-antebellum period, polygenists like Josiah Nott, George Gliddon, and Samuel George Morton had worked to reformulate ethnology in the United States as a science of racial difference, eschewing historical concerns (migrations, wars, language development, etc.) in favor of physiological ones, which, as part of nature, were ahistorical, unchanging—at least, they were believed to be so prior to the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (Seth 838-40). As I have argued, Schoolcraft's Indian psychology, which approached Indian oral literature as mental fossils, reflected and participated in that ahistorical reformulation. For Powell and Brinton, in turn, oral traditions' real value lay, just as they had for Schoolcraft, in what they revealed, as works of the imagination, about human psychology. But from their respective positions of disciplinary authority, Brinton and Powell promoted the collection of Indigenous oral traditions within the theoretical framework of cultural evolution, and in that sense, they not only expanded but revised Schoolcraft's science of Indian oral literature. Indian myths did not record tribal histories, but in the post-Darwinian world they could be coaxed to speak about the history of human evolution.

Moreover, whereas Schoolcraft was content with indiscriminately using terms like "fable," "legend," "tale," and "myth" to refer to the oral traditions he collected, both Brinton and Powell tried to define their terms. For the most part, in describing Indigenous oral traditions, Brinton and Powell abandoned the use of "fable," "fairy tale," and "legend," and in their place used "myth," or sometimes "folklore" or "folktale," the latter of which they understood as having devolved from mythology. Postbellum ethnologists may have disagreed on the fine points when it came to the "science of mythology," but they shared many of the same basic assumptions and methods.[10] Brinton and Powell, for instance, agreed that myth was one of the oldest discursive modes, through which all peoples had at some point maintained their core beliefs. And despite citing the modern literary accomplishments of men like Elias Boudinot (Gallegina Uwati, editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*) or William Apess (a Pequot preacher and essayist), it was Indian myth, the earliest form of "Aboriginal American literature," in which Brinton was primarily interested—the focus of his most important ethnological works. Likewise, Powell and his researchers collected the myths of North American Indian tribes. Every tribe, Powell explained in his "Sketch of Mythology" (published in the first annual report of the BAE), maintains a "great body of story lore." "The whole body of myths current in a tribe is the sum total of their lore," he wrote, "their philosophy, their miraculous history, their authority for their governmental institutions, their social

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[10] In *Aboriginal Authors and their Productions* (1883), Brinton, for instance, described seven discursive types of "Aboriginal literature," including "primitive" oral forms like myth, and modern written ones such as religious tracts, or what he called "didactic" literature. These divisions suggest that his conception of "literature" was broader than that of Powell, who described mythology as being *like* literature, thus drawing a line between it and modern texts.

institutions, their habits and customs," in short, "their unwritten bible" (*First* 43). For Powell, mythology was analogous to literature within civilized societies, in the Arnoldian sense of the "best that is known and thought in the world." As such, myth was equivalent to "savage and barbaric philosophy," and he even described his and his researchers' work at the BAE as the collection and study of "North American philosophies," what he later called "sophiology," one of five overlapping areas of human activity investigated by the ethnologist (38). "Mythology is primitive philosophy," Powell argued—"explanations" of the universe and of existence, albeit told through symbols and personification, and through narratives pertaining, for example, to the deeds of fictional cultural heroes like Hiawatha (81). Brinton similarly defined myths as "the idea of God expressed in symbol, figure, and narrative" (*Myth* 43); and again as "theories" about "unknown" powers in the universe (*Religious* 162). Myths, he wrote, were "made up from the notions which man gains of the manifestations of force in external nature, in their supposed relations to himself" (157). Oral traditions, as myths, were, according to these men, a kind of primitive natural history, told and maintained through the form of fiction and song.

What Brinton and Powell theorized through their respective scientific investigations of myth was the evolution of human discourse, from a fundamentally literary mode of expression (i.e., symbolic, personified, imaginative, subjective) to a scientific one (precise, literal, objective,)—it was a movement from savage to civilized.[11]

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[11] The idea was not entirely original. In his *Positive Philosophy*, for instance, Auguste Comte outlined a similar theory to explain the development of science, believing that civilization moved from a theological to a metaphysical to finally a "positive" age. Whereas the metaphysical age was poetic and prone to imaginative speculation, the positive, scientific age remained tethered to objective facts, valuing observation over imagination. After Comte, E. B. Tylor proposed a "science of mythology" that sought to

Brinton understood myth to be the first important stage in the "intellectual history of our species," a history that he depicted as a prolonged, progressive struggle "toward a clearer utterance," (*Myths* iii, 43). Narrative, in the form of myth, was the earliest form of human discourse, and thus "the most abundant" in "primitive literature," representing the "first efforts of the imagination . . . the depicting of fictitious occurrences . . ." (*Aboriginal American* 19). Like science, mythology was "based on belief in order," but it was fundamentally different from science in that it recognized "volition as an efficient cause of order," and in that it drew upon nature for its symbols, personifying the natural world to express its beliefs (*Religious* 162). As people gained knowledge of the material world, myths lost their meanings, morphing into children's fairy tales (160). Originally, they had represented sincere explanations of nature. Every religion is but a "philosophy," Brinton wrote, a search for the truth—myths were simply peoples' first attempts at articulating those truths, "transitory expressions of the religious sentiment, which in enlightened lands [humankind] has already outgrown and should lay aside" (195-96).

Brinton believed the "laws" of this discursive, intellectual movement from mythology to science could be themselves studied scientifically (*Religious* iii-iv), and Powell agreed. In ethnology, Powell was a disciple of Lewis Henry Morgan, who in *Ancient Society* (1877) had put forward a three-stage theory of cultural and psychological

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reconstruct the "myth-making stage of the human mind," which he described as essentially childlike. The "civilized European may contrast his own stiff orderly prosaic thought," Tylor wrote "with the wild shifting poetry and legend of the old myth-maker" (276). The poetic mind was primitive. Brinton and Powell and other US ethnologists articulated very similar ideas around the same time. My intention, however, is not to establish the provenance of these concepts, but to explore how and why they were developed and applied within the socio-political context of the United States.

evolution, from savagery to barbarism to civilization. Each stage was marked by the development of certain cultural practices, such as the development of pottery, agriculture, writing, and the like. For Morgan, each stage of culture led inevitably to the next, suggesting the psychic unity of man: living in the same conditions, confronted with the same problems, people arrived at the same basic mechanical and institutional solutions. Powell organized research at the BAE under this paradigm, but he also sought to refine Morgan's theory by broadening its focus to include the evolution of ideas. And primitive ideas were best understood, he believed, by collecting and studying myths, the fossil records of primitive peoples' beliefs ("From Savagery" 174).[12] The study of Indian myths, therefore, was directly linked to the central objective of the BAE to define the movement from savagery to civilization. And when it came to "philosophy," or the "opinions" of man, Powell believed, like Brinton, that it was a movement that took people ever "nearer" to "truth" (*First* 20).[13] He argued that the "analogic" reasoning of

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[12] In his annual address to the Anthropological Society in 1885, Powell explained that "In some of Morgan's works he connects the evolution of institutions with the development of arts, but to an imperfect degree, and without explaining their interdependence. He also, at different times, hints at the relation of linguistic development to arts; but he considers mythology to be too vague to afford valuable data for this purpose. The scheme here presented differs from Morgan's in placing the epoch of demarcation between Savagery and Barbarism later on in the course of human culture; and it is proposed to characterize the stages, not by arts [i.e., pottery, weapons, and other material productions] alone, but by all the fundamental activities of man" (174). Powell went on to praise Lester Ward's work on the four stages of society, but he likewise felt that Ward had placed undue emphasis on institutions. By elevating the study of mythology, Powell was not ignoring material, social, or physiological research, but attempting what he saw as a more holistic science of ethnology.

[13] Powell posited that there were "two grand stages" of philosophy: mythology, or primitive philosophy, and science, the philosophy of civilization. Powell further broke down "mythologic" philosophy into four progressive stages: "hecastotheism" (animism),

primitive peoples led inevitably to mythology, to stories of "grand personification" and "poetic imagery," a belief that his researchers set about validating through their collections of Indigenous oral traditions. Over time, Powell believed, myths transformed, or "decayed," through a contest of ideas—a "survival of the fittest" among arts, institutions, and opinions—"into folk-lore, the absurd ghost and demon stories of old crones and the childish tales of the nursery" ("From Barbarism" 101). Within a scientific culture, folklore, for Powell, represented the intellectual "relics" of a people's mythologic past, as society transitioned into a scientific age. They were "vestigial opinions."[14] And the science of myth and folklore, for Powell, revealed the persistence of "vestigial opinions" in the modern age.

The doxa of evolution and evolutionary progress was, therefore, crucial to both practice and theory when it came to the science of mythology. The decay of nature myths into mere fiction, into stories told for "amusement," for instance, was, somewhat counter-intuitively, a sign of intellectual progress. Story, or what Powell sometimes called "romance," evolved from simple "beast fables" to "power myths" personifying nature; from there, story-telling moved on to tales of alchemical transformations, and lastly to novels—"fictitious histories in a series of events where causes conspire to produce effects that have an intellectual and emotional interest," a "transmutation brought by science upon the characteristics of romance." In the scientific age, "tales are no longer

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"zootheism" (beast worship), "physitheism" (nature worship), and "psychotheism" (the personification and deification of "mental, moral and social characteristics") (*First* 30).

[14] In Tylor's terms, they were cultural "survivals," a term that had far more currency than Powell's "vestigial opinions." Tylor described how the myth-making mind was still alive in the stories of witches and werewolves that were told throughout Europe.

told to be believed," Powell wrote, "but are told to teach lessons." Poetry, which he described as "romance with rhythm," had undergone the same basic transformation within western societies as people transitioned from primarily analogic to "homologic" reasoning.[15] In its final transformation, in the modern era, poetry became "tropic," which is to say that the elements of personification and allegory remained, but they were "legitimate only as metaphors and constitute[d] only a poetical method of expression through which the wisdom of science may be expressed in such manner as to impress it deeply upon the heart." For Powell, modern literary discourse itself was, then, a relic of civilized man's primitive beginnings. But for the civilized storytellers and their audiences, personification was merely personification, allegory merely allegory; for the primitive, they were literal—they were fiction confused with fact. The "essence" of all modern poetry and fiction was "savage philosophy," Powell argued, but it depicted that philosophy as a falsehood, to entertain, and to instill the lessons of civilized culture.

Brinton's and Powell's divisions of "savage" and "civilized" along the axis of poetic-scientific were part and parcel of a broad shift in the West that increasingly understood science and scientific discourse through its fundamental oppositions to literature and literary discourse. Numerous scholars have studied this development, most notably Michel Foucault, who in *The Order of Things* (1970) described how scientists of the early-nineteenth century desired to "neutralize, and as it were polish, scientific

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[15] Poetry began, Powell argued, as simple chants personifying nature (a process of labelling its elements as either good or bad). It progressed from there to a stage of "similitude," in which invisible powers and forces were personified based on their perceived resemblances to animals and other natural elements. And from there it entered an age of allegory, with its earthly substitutions and transformations (e.g., Medieval literature).

language to the point at which, stripped of all its singularity, purified of all its accidents and alien elements . . . it could become the exact reflection, the perfect double, the unmisted mirror of a non-verbal knowledge." Science, they believed, was exact, objective, and its language should and could reflect material reality. This "positivist dream of a language keeping strictly to the level of what is known" contributed significantly to our modern understandings of literature as not scientific: that is, as symbolic, ambiguous, subjective, imaginative, untrue, etc. (296-300). As positivists like Georges Cuvier and Auguste Comte disparaged these discursive features, they were in turn championed by the Romantics and associated more firmly than ever with poetry and fiction. That had not always been the case. Before "the romantics thematized the poet's battle against the scholar and before the word 'literature' changed its meaning, many advocated a broad understanding of literature that would encompass all forms of knowledge, excluding only the mathematical and physical sciences" (Debaene 13-14). Gradually, over the course of the nineteenth century, that broad conception of "literature" bifurcated, however, resulting in the common-sense understanding that literature and science were two distinct, supposedly antithetical discursive modes.

Ethnology was not immune to this schism, which, according to scholars, remained in place into the twentieth century, when ethnological and literary discourses increasingly "converged"—for example, in the ethnographic novels of anthropologists like Zora Neale Hurston, the travel writings of Claude Levi Strauss, or the poststructuralist anthropological work of Clifford Geertz (Krupat 59-63; Debaene 8). Yet rather than distancing itself from literature and literary discourse, as has been widely assumed, US ethnology during these years can be seen clinging to it (in the form of Indian oral

literature) with increasing tenacity, pursing the literary and its opposition to science as one of ethnology's foremost scientific subjects. Ethnology's status as a science was arguably never as secure as that of physiology, botany, or zoology, what collectively came to be known as "biology." And in that sense, ethnology's concerns with matters that had come to be viewed as existing outside the purview of science (art, fiction, poetry) all but demanded that ethnologists defend and clarify their claims to being scientists, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2 with Schoolcraft. One would expect postbellum ethnologists to have done so by emphasizing subjects of clear scientific import, like human physiology, and in the early 1870s E. G. Squier, for one, did attempt to officially reorganize ethnology in the United States according to the French model of "anthropology" then being promoted by Paul Broca, which adhered closely to physical research methods like archaeology and craniology (Bieder and Tax 15-16). Squier's efforts were not successful, however, and in the 1880s and 90s the BAE doubled down, claiming all uniquely human activities as being within its own special field of scientific investigation. Powell and his ethnologists made a science of "the evolution of the humanities" ("From Savagery" 196).[16] For Powell, the ethnologist studied evolution, much like biologists did, but their subjects were "primarily and in every essential respect superorganic," and in that respect ethnology was "clearly set apart from biology as from all other sciences" (*Fifteenth* xviii). As Powell handed over the reins of the BAE to William J. McGee, he set about formalizing this distinction. Man was organic, but the

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[16] Brinton appears to have embraced a more holistic version of anthropology, closer to that of Broca, but he nonetheless saw literature as being equally if not more important to the science of man than the study of human physiology, as he believed that physical and cultural evolution acted in tandem (*Hero-Myths* 205-06; *Races and Peoples* 39-47).

study of his physiology beyond the division of "three, four, or five races" afforded "little or no aid in defining and classifying tribes," so that it was "best to study both primitive and civilized peoples as superorganic groups." Powell called this study of superorganic characteristics "demology" or "demonomy," which he formed from the Greek roots for "people," "discourse," and "law." Like many of Powell's neologisms, the terms did not stick, but his use of them is telling. Ethnology investigated man's "demotic" rather than "biotic" characteristics: his arts, industries, institutions, language, and opinions. The collection and study of American Indian myths—as spoken, fictional records of a tribe's beliefs—intersected with all these branches of study, and thus as scientific evidence it helped distinguish the work of the ethnologist from the biologist.

Powell's and his researchers' study of American Indian mythology as a primitive, literary form of philosophy reveals how the bifurcation of literary and scientific discourses in the nineteenth century was closely bound up with definitions of the primitive, a fact which has not been adequately acknowledged in the scholarship on the subject. Ethnologists' study of Indian myth can be seen as a way of reassuring themselves that their staple activities—collecting, classifying, defining, theorizing the "laws" of intellectual evolution—indeed constituted a science, through their manifest oppositions to primitive man's version of science, his poetic, confused, mythologic philosophies. In other words, ethnology's science of mythology was an activity aimed at defining itself (i.e., science) and Western culture in opposition to its object of study—the Indian and his myths. Coxe Stevenson, who succeeded Cushing in studying the Zuni, put it succinctly: "Civilized man's conceptions of the universe are altogether different from those of primitive man. The former understands natural phenomena through analysis and

correlation; the latter accounts for them by analogy. Civilized man lives in a world of reality; primitive man in a world of mysticism and symbolism" (*Twenty-First* 21). The Indian mind was poetic, the ethnologist believed. It reasoned through analogies, the conclusions of which it expressed inevitably through symbolism and personification. As Cushing explained, "unacquainted as he [the Zuni] is with rational explanations of things he sees, he is given, as has been the race [humans] throughout all time, to symbolic interpretation and mystic expression thereof, as even today are those who deal with the domain of the purely speculative. It follows that his organizations are symbolic; that his actions within these organizations are also symbolic" (*Thirteenth* 376). Schoolcraft had arrived at the same basic conclusions, but Brinton, Powell, and BAE researchers refined and further supported them through ever-increasing theoretical complexity and a vast catalogue of oral traditions.

The conflation of modernity and progress with science and objectivity was common in the second half of the nineteenth century, and certainly not confined to ethnology. For instance, as a rhetorical strategy, ethnology's attempt at definition by way of negation paralleled that of US literary realism, a movement which ran roughly contemporaneously to the ethnological work I am tracking in this chapter. As scholars of US literature have long noted, works of literary realism have a tendency of critiquing, within themselves, Romantic art forms and Romantic thought, as a way of defining themselves as everything they purportedly were not: symbolic, fantastical, moralistic—in short, untrue. This "antiromanticism," which included the lampooning of authors like Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper, was famously called "negative realism" by critic Edwin H. Cady, who described "the realist's joyous game of shooting down

romantic balloons" (326-27). Writers like William Dean Howells responded to the age's veneration of science and secularism by promoting and writing fiction that claimed to be objective, like science. This new, objective literature captured the "scientific spirit" by including, Howells touted, nothing but what was "solid and positive" (2). It was, in hindsight, perhaps most "scientific" through its denigration of discursive features viewed as "literary," a similarity which I note only because it speaks to a broader cultural understanding in which modernity and progress were becoming synonymous with the rejection of Romantic thought—a reminder that Powell and Brinton and their work were part of the same cultural matrix as Howells and Twain and realist fiction, that these figures shared many of the same basic assumptions about Western society and responded to the same basic concerns. And like many realist authors, postbellum US ethnologists rejected Romantic thought by obsessively representing and commenting upon it, although in their case in the form of Indian myths. Powell, for example, described the mythologic mind as "error," a state of "confusion," in which animate and inanimate were misrecognized—presumably, the very opposite of his own, which obsessively sought new classifications, new divisions with which to carry out the investigative work of ethnology. Like Brinton, he conceived of the intellectual evolution of humans as an epic struggle between the confused mythologies of the savage and the "truth" of the scientist. Whereas science was marked by a desire for greater "discernment" and exactitude in expression, myths relied on "the uncertain use of words," on the amplification of meanings. It was a contest, moreover, between the subjective, or the imaginary, and the objective, the real. The "savage sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels the imaginings of his own mind," whereas the scientist, or "civilized philosopher," classifies the world through "essential

affinitives," what Powell called "homologic reasoning" (*First* 21). Put more simply, Powell argued that the primitive mind understood the world primarily through perceived (though false) associations among phenomena, which it represented figuratively, in the form of symbols, for instance. The scientific mind, in contrast, sought to understand the observable qualities of an individual object in isolation. Analogic reasoning, Powell argued, led to the invention of more myths, more fictions, more lies; homologic reasoning, on the other hand, led to truth ("From Savagery" 196).

Indian mythology, as ethnological evidence, supported these beliefs, but more to the point, the very process of transcribing and translating Indigenous oral traditions enacted and underscored the distinctions between the scientific Euro-American ethnologist and the poetic Indian mythologist, as Powell's researchers attempted to circumvent the obstacle of their own "civilized understanding" and "put savage thoughts into civilized language" (*First* 23). In the introduction to *Zuñi Creation Myths* in the BAE's *Thirteenth Annual Report* (1896), for example, Cushing described Zuni belief—as maintained in their "lore"—as a "science of appearances," an irrational but beautiful "philosophy of analogies" in which the natural world is interpreted, represented, and acted out symbolically (376). By way of example, he told how the Zuni had carefully observed the physical characteristics of corn, their most important food source:

> The Zuni has observed that the corn plant is jointed; that its leaves spring from these joints not regularly, but spirally; that stripped of the leaves the stalk is found to be indented, not regularly at opposite sides, but also spirally; that the matured plant is characterized, as no other plant is, by two sets of seeds, the ears of corn springing out from it two-thirds down and the tassels of seeds, sometimes earlets, at the top; also that these tassels resemble the seed-spikes of the spring-grass or pigeon-grass; that the leaves themselves while like broad blades of grass are fluted like plumes, and that amongst the ears of corn ever and anon are found

> bunches of soot; and, finally, that the colors of the corn are as the colors of the world—seven in number. (376)

This brief yet minute physical description of corn was essentially an interpretive distillation of a creation myth Cushing prepared for the collection, titled "The Generation of the Seed of Seeds, or the Origin of Corn," the lengthiest of the oral traditions in *Zuñi Creation Myths*. After providing the above description, Cushing suggested that in examining the story, the reader will soon be able to see "to what extent [the Zuni] has legendized these characteristics [of corn]," and "thus account[ed] for them" by creating a kind of mythical "natural philosophy of the corn and its origin." Cushing thus first presented the myth in scientific terms, condensing the fictional narrative into a short, material description, which is accentuated by the fact that on the very next page he gives the reader a taste of the "legendizing" to come:

> Nothing in this world or universe having occurred by accident—so it seems to the Zuni mind,—but everything having been started by a personal agency or supernal, he immediately begins to see in these characteristics of the corn plant the traces of the actions of the peoples in his myths of the olden time. Lo! Men lived on grass seeds at first, but, as related in the course of the legends which follow, there came a time when, by the potencies of the gods and the magic of his own priests or shamans, man modified the food of first men into the food men's children. It needed only a youth and a maiden, continent and pure, to grasp at opposite sides and successively the blades of grass planted with plumes of supplication, and walking or dancing around them, holding them firmly to draw them upward until they had rapidly grown to the tallness of themselves, then to embrace them together. Behold! The grasses were jointed where grasped four times or six according to their tallness; yea, and marked with the thumb-marks of those who grasped them; twisted by their grasp while circling around them and leaved with plume-like blades and tasseled with grass-like spikes at the tops . . . (377)

Cushing (re)wrote two versions of the story side-by-side, one scientific and the other mythologic. As with the other oral traditions in the collection, he peppers in plenty of antiquated exclamations—Lo! Behold! Yea!—and references to "youths" and "maidens"

and the like to help convey the fictionality of the latter, presenting the story in a recognizably poetic (i.e., Romantic) language, a point for which Cushing has long been criticized (Tedlock, "Style" 117-18). Cushing all but admitted to doing so, however, explaining how in transliterating portions of Zuni songs he had tried to "reproduce as nearly as possible" the "faultless blank verse meter" of the originals, and to "tax to the uttermost [his] power of expression in rendering the meanings of them . . ." Cushing's "poetization" of Zuni oral traditions, what Dennis Tedlock called his "embroideries," is obvious to most modern readers, but the logic driving Cushing's desire to translate and thereby capture the poetic, imaginative qualities of the myths may be less obvious. In striving to reproduce the beauty of Zuni poems, Cushing said that he did not have "to depart very far from 'scientific' accuracy, even in the linguistic sense" (374). Taxing one's powers of poetic expression, of course, does not seem very "scientific." Yet in waxing eloquent, Cushing seems to have felt that he was understanding and authentically representing Zuni psychology, which, he believed, viewed the world through a literary lens. Capturing that psychology through translation was thus an inherently scientific activity. As is evident from the two juxtaposed versions of the Zuni "natural philosophy" of corn—one in the civilized language of science, one in the primitive language of myth—Cushing underscored the figurative elements of the myths to underscore how they nonetheless spoke, in their own confused ways, about the objective world, prompting readers to step inside the mind of the primitive, as it were, and contrast, in this case, the Zuni science of appearances with ethnology's science of reality. It was a transformation, then, of fiction back into reality and vice versa.

Brinton worked to very similar ends, doggedly searching for the "real meanings" contained in American Indian myths, a "truth" of which the tellers of the myths themselves were no longer cognizant, having over time forgotten the referents of the myths' symbols and accepted them as literal. It was up to the mythologist to reconstruct their original significations. For instance, in his *The Myths of the New World* (1868), Brinton conducted a reading of the Algonquin oral traditions of Nanabozho, in many of which the *manito* assumes the form of Michabo, the "Great Rabbit." The first of these that Brinton included was an Odawa creation tradition, in which Michabo, aboard a raft on a vast ocean, creates the world from a speck of mud, populates it, and invents the arts, lending him the nickname "Master of Life." Brinton said he subjected the narrative to "linguistic analysis" to see whether the "unpromising ore [did] not yield the pure gold of genuine mythology." At first glance, the story seemed meaningless, Brinton explained, a mere fiction, but through a closer examination of its language and symbolism, "it is clearly capable of another and very different interpretation . . . which discloses at once the origin and the secret meaning of the whole story of Michabo, in the light of which it appears no longer the incoherent fable of savages, but a true myth, instinct with nature, pregnant with matter . . ." (165). Brinton based his analysis on the Anishinaabe word for rabbit, *wabos*, the root of which is related to "*wabi*, he sees, *waban*, the east, the Orient, *wabish*, white, *bidaban* (*bid-waban*), the dawn, *wában*, daylight, *wasseia*, the light, and many others." The "real meaning" of Michabo was thus "Great Light, the Mighty Seer, the Orient, the Dawn--which . . . all distinctly refer to the one original idea, the Bringer of Light and Sight, of knowledge and life." This lost, hidden significance, Brinton speculated, was likely tied to the hare's tendency to change color in winter to

white, a symbol of light. Brinton continued this line of thought by citing oral traditions that associated Michabo with the east, the perceivable source of light and thus life. The importance of the cardinal points to primitive peoples had led Michabo to be further associated, according to Brinton, with the winds, accounting for his appearance in stories of "celestial warfare of the air currents," in which Michabo battles, for example, his father, the Western wind. This particular oral tradition (of Michabo's battle against his father), which had been popularized by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*, was, at its heart, a battle of light and dark, as Michabo is the "God of Light" and the West is not only the direction in which the sun sets but the source of dark clouds and gloom. Working backwards—through the Indian's faulty, analogic association of words and symbols—refining the oral traditions down to their forgotten bases, like masses of "ore," Brinton was left with the "real" idea, or "notion," of the origin of light and life. It was a meaning that, once removed of its narrative particularities, was "precisely the same" as that found in Aryan mythology in "Dyaus," the god of "sky and light." Brinton had discovered a "world-wide truth" long "veiled under a thin garb of fancy," a "variation" of the story every race has told (168). Whereas the primitive Indian told a myth, a fiction, however, the ethnologist reconstructed its reality. It was through such analyses that Brinton and other ethnologists practiced their own brand of "antiromanticism," constructing an image of primitive discourse and thought that stood in direct contrast to their own enlightenment.

The Science of Mythology and the Politics of Assimilation

The comparative study of myths proved humans' psychic unity, but at the same time it demonstrated the uneven evolutionary development of the races. It validated the

superiority of the Euro-American and the stagnation of the Indian, while also testifying to the Indian's capacity for "acculturation," a term coined by Powell. Methodologically, the professional ethnologist's analysis resembled that of Constantine Rafinesque and others who viewed oral traditions as allegorical histories, fictional shells that contained within them historical truths. As I have argued, antebellum ethnological writers did not so much reveal but imbue oral traditions with these truths, such as their belief in the common, divine origin of humankind. Postbellum ethnologists likewise imbued oral traditions with their own truths, although ones that were shaped by and served the needs of a new era in which evolutionary theory dominated scientific thought, and the politics of removal had been replaced by a drive towards assimilation.

Brinton maintained throughout his career, for instance, that myths (and thus the minds that produced them) were "everywhere different, yet everywhere the same" (*Notes* 125).[17] He identified three "great cycles of myths," for example, "which recur with

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[17] Brinton was directly influenced by E. G. Squier, who had found the "religious conceptions of America [and] those of the old world," as embodied in their mythologies, to be "essentially the same" (*Serpent* 193). Lamentably, I did not have room in this chapter (or this dissertation) to fully examine the work of Squier, but he was a key, transitional figure between Schoolcraft and the postbellum ethnologists. In his second book, *Serpent Symbol* (1851), he articulated a theory of religious evolution that was essentially a theory of the evolution of human discourse from its oral, symbolic beginnings. In the absence of writing, or "forms of expression capable of conveying abstract ideas," a symbolic system was "necessary" and "afterwards continued, when in the advanced stage of the human mind the previous necessity no longer existed . . ." (19). That is, early peoples recorded their ideas and beliefs (arrived at through "induction") in symbolic forms, for mnemonic purposes, and this symbolic mode of expression, as well as the actual symbols themselves, persisted discursively once a people had arrived at more advanced, precise means of expressing and recording thought. The need for a symbolic system existed among "all early nations; and as the result of that uniformity of mental and moral constitution, and of physical circumstances . . . their symbols possessed a like uniformity." He reduced all mythologies to a form of sun worship and the idea of natural recurrence, what he called the "doctrine of the reciprocal

strangely similar physiognomies in all continents and among all races" (163-64): Epochs of Nature, Paradise Lost but to be Regained, and the Hierarchy of the Gods.[18] Powell and his researchers likewise discovered the same basic animistic "beast fables" and "power myths" in the myths of the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia. Cushing felt confident that his studies among the Zuni had significance for "the history of man the world over," no matter how "strange" the Zuni's "apparently local customs and institutions and lore" (377). And James Mooney, in his work on Cherokee myths, wrote that "one of the chief purposes of ethnologic study is to trace the development of human thought under varying conditions of race and environment, the result showing always that primitive man is essentially the same in every part of the world," which he proceeded to demonstrate by arranging and explicating Cherokee myths according to Powell's stages of romance. These ethnologists believed that beneath all myths' external differences lay the same basic ideas and techniques for expressing them.

This insistence on psychological unity suggests a degree of racial equity, but it was always undercut by the stratification of culture along an evolutionary path of progress. People everywhere were the same, yes, but not at the same moment in time. As Powell explained, it was "a long way from savagery to civilization," and the steps along

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principal." Squier's work was thus theoretically and methodologically very close to Brinton's, despite Brinton's explicit rejection of his work.

[18] "Epochs of Nature" referred to the creation narratives that told of the world's "beginning, its convulsions and its ending" (164). They offered "a theory to account for the existing order of nature" (172). Likewise, as civilizations grew, and with them the experience of human suffering, people were driven to invent stories of a lost Golden Age, an Eden, to be recovered at some later date. These stories, according to Brinton, merged with the myths of Epochs of Nature, as did stories of the Hierarchy of the Gods, which accounted for such things as good and evil.

that path varied, the "chief variation" being "the fact that all races have not made progress to the same extent. Some tribes are yet savages; other tribes are yet barbarians; and some peoples have attained civilization" ("From Savagery" 191). Brinton, for example, poured encomiums upon the "vigorous intellects of the Aztecs," and he applauded the complexity, imaginativeness, and beauty of Aboriginal American literature, from the oral poems of the Eskimo to the colonial dramas of Meso-America. The literature of the American Indians was equal to anything produced by his own Aryan ancestors, Brinton insisted. But in the process, he also confirmed that the Indian remained culturally and intellectually in a child-like state. It was a back-handed compliment, in other words. The "seemingly confused and puerile fables of the native Americans," he assured readers "are fully as worthy the attention of the student of human nature as the more poetic narratives of the Veda or the Edda. The red man felt out after God with like childish gropings as his white brother in Central Asia" (*Hero-Myths* 205). The difference was that the Indian's "white brother" had long-since matured, having embraced a scientific worldview, thus abandoning the land of make-believe. Powell likewise compared racial evolution to the movement from childhood to adulthood: "That individuals grow, that the child grows to be a man, the colt a horse, the scion a tree, is easily recognized . . . But that races grow—races of men, races of animals, races of plants, races or groups of worlds—is a very late discovery, and yet all of us do not grasp so great a thought" (*First* 22). In "tracing back the threads of [mythology's] historical development the student should expect," Powell reasoned, "to find it more simple and childlike in every stage of his progress," (82). His researchers reiterated and demonstrated this tautology through their collections. Smith explained how the

Haudenosaunee, living in a "child-like state," and "impressed by the awful and incomprehensible power of Thunder," had, like almost every other race throughout history, been inspired to deify the natural phenomenon" in their mythological lore (51-52). Similarly, Cushing described how the Zuni symbolically reenacted their myths, which were themselves symbolic interpretations of natural phenomena: like "a child at play on the floor finds sticks all-sufficient for the personages of his play-drama, chairs for his houses, and lines of the floor for the rivers that none but his eyes can see, so does the primitive man regard the mute, but to him personified, appliances of his dance and the actions thereof, other than they seem to us" (*Thirteenth* 376). The primitive Indian, according to ethnological consensus, still lived in a world of make-believe.

Through its infantilization of American Indians, the science of mythology validated, therefore, the assimilationist policies of the period by providing their theoretical and evidentiary underpinnings.[19] On a federal level, the period of allotment and assimilation officially began in 1887 with the passage of the General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, as it is more generally known. It lasted until 1934, when the Indian Reorganization Act, or Wheeler-Howard Act, brought the policies to an end. Much like allotment itself, assimilation had long been part of the national conversations surrounding the "Indian problem," but separation and isolation were the main courses of action during the antebellum period (Hoxie xvii). Under pressure from reformers and speculators,

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[19] Such infantilization was not new, of course. From the early years of colonization, Europeans had been representing Indigenous peoples of the Americas as childlike—and thus in need of spiritual salvation (Mauro 5-6)—but the sentiment was rationalized as scientific truth in the postbellum period as it became enveloped in the language of evolutionary theory.

lawmakers in the 1870s and 80s abandoned the strategies of repulsion and segregation and promoted incorporation, both economic and cultural. Proponents of the new strategy argued that a massive reduction in tribal territory, paired with private ownership of the land, citizenship status, and incentives to undergo other forms of cultural assimilation (like education), would once and for all sever tribal ties and thereby save the Indian from extinction.[20] The evolutionary thinking that influenced Brinton and Powell (and which both men further developed) provided significant ideological support for the changes in postbellum Indian policy, as the nation entered a new, more secular age. As Emily Greenwald explains, the "new policy of Indian assimilation rested in part on ideas about social evolution that coalesced between the 1850s and 1870s," namely the belief that "all societies went through a process of evolution from savagery to civilization." Based on "their own scientific, artistic, and geographic development," Euro-Americans concluded that "that history was progressive, culminating in a society like theirs . . . But policymakers and humanitarians believed they could usher Indians through the stages of social evolution in speedy fashion. The assimilation policy was designed to accomplish that goal" (94-95). According to Frederick Hoxie, the "scientific defense of Indian assimilation" waged by ethnologists like Powell was "crucial" for establishing a "context

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[20] In the 1860s and 70s, following the military defeat of several western tribes and their encirclement by a "rising tide" of Euro-American "farmers, miners and entrepreneurs," calls for assimilation became more urgent (Hoxie xviii). The perceivable economic plight of many American Indians, their rapidly declining populations, combined with the obvious failures of the reservation system to "civilize" tribes, fueled calls for reform (10). But there was also an unstated yet undeniable economic motivation behind those calls, as allotment would (and did) open millions of acres of land to white speculators (14-15). Although the policies did not appreciably impact mortality rates, they did result, as intended, in millions of acres of Indigenous lands transferring to white ownership (Hacker and Haines 13, 30-31).

within which politicians and reformers would act," even though the "impact of anthropologists on Indian policy making was cumulative and indirect," (20, 28). That is, although Powell and other ethnologists were consulted by lawmakers on matters of Indian affairs, it is difficult to trace a direct line between BAE research and the passage and enactment of the Dawes Act. Yet US ethnology's study of American Indians clearly bolstered the efforts of reformers, lawmakers, and other supporters of assimilation by reinforcing their assurance that the Indians were in a low stage of cultural evolution and could be programmatically lifted from it to that of civilization.

Ostensibly, ethnology's study of Indian mythology also elucidated the complex process of "acculturation." Between the Dawes Act, which required Indian agents distributing allotments to distinguish "real" Indians from non-Indians, and later the Burke Act, which required agents to assess intellectual competency and thus American Indians' levels of cultural assimilation, questions were swirling around the point at which an Indian was no longer an Indian, an Indian no longer a savage, and what exactly signified that transition. These questions were bound up with similar ones then being asked about the hundreds of thousands of immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe, Russia, and Japan, as well as the approximately eight million African Americans living in not just the US South, but the rapidly expanding northeastern and midwestern cities. And there were a variety of answers, from racial formalists and eugenicists, whose work culminated in the infamous "one-drop" laws of the South, to culturalists like Powell. The external signs of civilization could prove unreliable, especially in the case of American Indians. Hundreds of years of racial mixing rendered skin color or other physiological markers deceiving, and even supposedly isolated, primitive communities, such as those in the

southwest, had adopted Western styles of dress, housing, and farming, and spoke European languages fluently. Mythology, however, revealed that the Indian could appear civilized to the eye but nonetheless remain a primitive intellectually. Mooney, for example, in his *Myths of the Cherokee*, probed beyond institutions, clothing, and subsistence to locate the Indian's "heart," which lay hidden and fortified in his oral traditions, where it was untouched and uninfluenced by modernity. Mooney recorded most of the oral traditions in *Myths of the Cherokee* between 1887-90 among the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living in southwestern North Carolina.[21] Unlike many of the Cherokees who had lived in Georgia, the Eastern Band did not remove west of the Mississippi, and they had gained a reputation as being more conservative than the rest of the Cherokee nation, which Mooney characterized as, on the whole, progressive, so much so that "it might seem at first thought that the Cherokee, with their civilized code of laws, their national press, their schools and seminaries, are so far advanced along the white man's road as to offer but little inducement for ethnologic study" (*Nineteenth* 11). There was little, in other words, to distinguish the Cherokee from the white, civilized man. But deep in the Carolina mountains, "far away from the main-traveled road of modern progress, the Cherokee priest still treasures the legends and repeats the mystic rituals handed down from his ancestors," Mooney wrote. It was true that even among the Eastern band there had been "a change indeed in dress and outward seeming," as

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[21] Through several seasons of field work, Mooney forged relationships with a handful of important, aged band members, such as Ayunini, or Swimmer, who had been educated as a "priest, doctor, and keeper of tradition"; chief Nimrod Jarret Smith, or Tsaladihi; and John Ax, or Itagunahi, among many others who were, in varying degrees, sources of Cherokee "lore" for Mooney (*Nineteenth* 236-37).

evidenced by the photograph Mooney included of Nimrod Smith—a handsome, well-dressed, western-educated band chief, who was also a Freemason, and who had served as First Sergeant in the Civil War for the Confederate Army (178). But what Mooney discovered in the myths preserved among the old men and women in western North Carolina, and even among the young "half-breeds," was that "the heart of the Indian was still his own" (12). Contact with the white race had produced "very little impression" on the Cherokees' mythology (239).

Cushing arrived at similar conclusions through his study of Zuni mythology, what he also referred to as Zuni "faith." The casual observer, he suggested, upon witnessing the Zuni's adoption and adaptation of Western economic and architectural practices, would assume that the Zuni had changed significantly from the days of pre-contact. However, Zuni faith, over the course of three-hundred and fifty years, Cushing argued, had been like "a drop of oil in water, surrounded and touched at every point, yet in no place penetrated or changed inwardly by the flood of alien belief that descended upon it"

> . . . of necessity [the Zuni] adjusts other beliefs and opinions to his own, but never his own beliefs and opinions to others; and even his usages are almost never changed in spirit, however much so in externals, until all else in his life is changed. Thus, he is slow to adopt from alien peoples any but material suggestions, these even, strictly according as they suit his ways of life; and whatever he does adopt, or rather absorb and assimilate, from the culture and lore of another people, neither distorts nor obscures his native culture, neither discolors nor displaces his original lore (*Twelfth* 339).

In other words, although the external, visible life of the Indians might change, their core beliefs and mode of thought, as reflected and maintained in their myths, might remain the same as they ever were. This explanation of the mechanics of acculturation essentially mirrored the ethnologist's analysis of the myths themselves, which pushed beyond

narrative particularities to find always the same primitive ideas hidden beneath the myths' symbols, personifications, and figures of speech, what Brinton called the "garb of fancy." The work never led, however, to any substantive program for facilitating the Indian's acculturation, nor any attempts to assess an actual Indigenous person's degree of assimilation, as one might imagine. As Katherine Ellinghaus has demonstrated, the practical, day-to-day assessment of Indian authenticity and competency carried out by agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was dictated overwhelmingly by blood quantum, which had no connection to anthropology and its interests in the complexities of culture (xvii). The ties between the BAE's analysis of acculturation and the policies of assimilation were much more nebulous. Viewed in retrospect, the science of mythology was an obsessive hunt for (and production of) the primitive in the modern world, the only apparent function of which was to reaffirm the continued incompetency of modern-day Indians, and thereby further define the hierarchical differences between primitivity and civilization.

As Brinton's and Powell's careers came to end, Boas exercised increased control over the discipline, taking it in slightly different directions. In 1899 he was appointed head of the new anthropological department at Columbia University and thus the nation's first doctoral program in anthropology. In the same year, he renewed the American Ethnological Society, originally founded by Albert Gallatin, and in 1901 he helped found the American Anthropological Association. Six years later, he was elected president of the AAA, for which he also assumed editorial control of the *American Anthropologist*, and in 1908 he likewise took control of the AFS and its journal. Through these and similar networks, Boas led ethnology, now "anthropology," away from cultural evolution,

as historians, following the work of Stocking, have long acknowledged. As that happened, ethnologists began to focus less on the literary dimensions of oral traditions and more on their physical movements between "culture groups," establishing the laws of diffusion. The sharpness and immediacy of that break should not be overstated, however. As Stocking himself reminded readers, Boas was a "transitional figure" ("Culture Concept" 879). In *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911), for instance, Boas revealed an understanding of acculturation that closely resembled that of Powell's and Cushing's. And more recently, scholars such as Christopher Teuton, Margaret Bruchac, and Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman have all brought attention to how Boas's collecting practices were rooted in a desire to demonstrate and perform the division between primitivity and modernity, as they were likewise rooted in the assumption that primitive cultures were destined to disappear (Teuton 169-71; Bruchac, *Savage Kin* 28, 44; Wickwire 2). But it is true that Boas and his closest adherents for the most part stopped appealing to evolutionary models to understand human culture, focusing instead on cultural diffusion, or dissemination. But as Arthur C. Parker's work testifies, which I explore below, cultural evolutionary theory, and its application to Indian oral literature, remained a dominant force within ethnology well past Powell's and Brinton's heydays.

"Counter-Science" and the Professional Indian Ethnologist

The professionalization of ethnology at the turn of the twentieth century by no means led to the exclusion of people of Indigenous descent, barring their participation in the discipline as ethnologists, as opposed to simply informants. The work of Powell, Brinton, Putnam, and Boas certainly made ethnology, as a writing practice, less accessible to the layperson, but it also provided many opportunities for Indigenous

intellectuals who came after them to work and publish in the field. For example, Arthur C. Parker (Seneca), William Jones (Fox, or Meskwaki), Francis La Flesche (Omaha-Ponca), and J. N. B. Hewitt (Tuscarora) all found employment as full-time ethnologists for various institutions. They worked alongside, often in close collaboration with, Putnam, Powell, and Boas, as well as the new class of mostly Boas-trained ethnologists like Alice Fletcher, Mark Harrington, and Frank Speck. Yet these Indigenous ethnologists overwhelmingly adhered to the new standards of ethnological science, particularly when it came to the collection of Indigenous oral traditions. My goal here is not to argue that they were assimilationist, that they had bought in, as it were, to a Euro-American perspective of the Indian. Rather, as I close out this chapter, I want to explore the extent to which being an Indigenous ethnologist in this period—and being taken seriously as such, not to mention finding employment—required, as it undoubtedly did for Euro-American ethnologists, that one adopted the discipline's central methods and theoretical assumptions. In other words, to what extent did ethnology's science of Indian mythology allow for Indigenous "counter-sciences"? In considering the case of Arthur C. Parker, we can see how embracing evolutionary theory required severe concessions to US society's racist views of the Indian, but it also enabled him to question the superiority of Western science as an endpoint of cultural evolution, as it likewise helped him imagine a future in which American Indians would flourish as a race.

I examined in the previous chapter how writers like Copway and Warren, in taking up the pen as ethnologists, conformed, out of necessity, to many of the discursive conventions of ethnological writing, but at the same time they explored novel approaches to the collection of oral traditions that both implicitly and explicitly rejected ethnology's

key assumptions about those traditions and the Indian in general. Unlike in the antebellum period, however, ethnologists at the turn of the twentieth century were, for the most part, no longer writing to a broad readership. They wrote almost exclusively to trained ethnologists through academic publications like the *JAF* or BAE reports, and in the case of Hewitt, La Flesche, and Jones, they worked directly underneath men like Powell, McGee, and Boas, which meant that to succeed as an ethnologist required a much greater degree of conformity than that to which earlier Indigenous authors had been subjected. Perhaps more so than any other "mythologist" employed by the BAE, Hewitt, for instance, in collecting Haudenosaunee oral traditions, fully espoused the scientific terminology and concepts outlined by Powell, even after Powell had died. Hewitt asserted that "the attempts of a primitive people to give in the form of a narrative the origins and to expound the causes of things, the sum of which constitutes their philosophy, assume in time the form of cosmologic legends or myths." In other words, primitive peoples expressed their observations of the world through the vehicle of fiction, the significances of which, even among the storytellers, were lost over time, as the Indians confused fiction with fact. The Haudenosaunee "wise men," Hewitt wrote, expressed their people's "sophiology" (a Powellean term) in partly modernized languages, and thus their oral traditions "conveyed the modern thought of the people," but Hewitt nonetheless mined that material for primitive "survivals" and "past planes of thought" (134). In some cases, the "older forms and concepts, the ancient dogmas" had been "displaced or changed by accultural influences and by a more definite knowledge of nature acquired through a wider experience, a closer observation, and a more discriminating interpretation and apprehension of environing phenomena" (136). The survival of the fittest among ideas

was actively occurring, that is, among the Haudenosaunee, as a scientific worldview slowly replaced a mythical one. The disappearance of that primitive psychology drove Hewitt to preserve "the cosmology of peoples still largely dominated by the thoughts peculiar to the cultural stage of imputative and self-centered reasoning" (134). Hewitt, like many of his Euro-American colleagues, searched for and recorded primitive thought, which he equated with literary expression, and directly contrasted with the "definite knowledge" of Western science.

Parker was a rival of Hewitt's. Like Hewitt, he was part European and part Haudenosaunee, although Seneca, not Tuscarora. Parker was born on the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York. He was the great-nephew of Ely S. Parker, a Seneca chief who had worked as an informant for Henry Lewis Morgan and Schoolcraft, a fact which contributed to Arthur's desire to pursue a career in ethnology. Parker's father wanted Arthur to join the seminary, but his meeting of Putnam at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, while in high school, convinced Arthur to abandon those plans and follow in the footsteps of Ely and Morgan, desiring throughout his career to "out-Morgan Morgan," as he later put it (Porter 23-25, 73). Parker first assisted Mark Harrington on summer digs in 1903-04 for the Peabody Museum (52). His work for the Peabody, and the connections he made through it, landed him a temporary position as fieldworker for the New York State Library and State Museum in Albany, which in turn enabled him to secure a full-time position as archaeologist for the State Museum in 1907, where he worked until 1924, helping found and direct the Society of American Indians (SAI) in the meantime. In 1924 he became director of the Rochester Municipal Museum, a post he held until his retirement in 1946 (57-66, 165). In addition to his work managing

the museums and their displays, he published widely on Haudenosaunee culture, including articles and several full-length collections of their myths and folklore.

From a modern-day perspective, Parker's career as a professional ethnologist makes him a controversial figure. As Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh has noted, Parker, along with Harrington, excavated Indigenous remains near Cattaraugus, indifferent to the locals' pleas to stop the work. In Parker's mind, digging up and removing Indian bodies furthered scientific knowledge, which he saw as a "fundamental moral good" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 18). Throughout his career, Parker, moreover, was fully committed to Indian assimilation and adhered to the model of cultural evolution espoused by Powell and BAE researchers, which was a direct extension of Morgan's work in the previous century. That thinking led him to publicly support some unsavory positions, including eugenics. In a 1920 article titled "The New York Indian Complex," for example, Parker argued, like Mooney and Cushing before him, that the Indians had been "whitemanized" externally but not internally, not psychologically, which Parker felt was a result of their clinging to "tribalism." "Indians must move upward in the scale of progress," he wrote, "as must every race that is to survive" (12). He believed "the law of nature is that the unfit shall be weeded out to make room for the energetic and competent," and thus he saw Indian citizenship and the dissolution of the reservation system, and its system of annuities, as finally enabling social Darwinism to weed out the weak among American Indians (20).

Yet Parker's attraction to evolutionary thinking and his application of it to the study of Haudenosaunee culture, as well as his use of it in US-Indian politics, was nuanced, and is worth understanding in so far as it shows how an Indigenous ethnologist

could be limited by the racist scientific thought of the period, but also was able to subtly manipulate that thought as a tool for advocacy and critique. That ambivalence becomes clear in his editorial work for Harriet Maxwell Converse's *Myths and Legends of the New York State Iroquois* (1908). Converse's father, Thomas Maxwell, was a congressman in New York who was adopted into the Wolf clan of the Seneca. Converse grew up apart from that context, pursuing a career in New York City as an essayist and poet, but as an adult, she met Ely Parker and was apparently inspired to give up her literary career and study, like Susan Cummings Johnson before her, the Haudenosaunee, which even led to her adoption into a family of the Snipe clan (*Myths* 17). Converse wrote articles about Haudenosaunee culture and "lore" for newspapers and donated a collection of "relics" to both the State Museum and the Peabody (26-27). She also hosted a kind of ethnological "salon" in her home for a group of young ethnologists working at the time for Putnam, which included Speck, Harrington, and Parker (Porter 48). When she died (1903), Converse was working on a collection of Iroquois myths, which she had gathered during her nearly two decades of study among the Haudenosaunee. Upon her death, the state purchased her papers, and in 1907 Parker, at the outset of his career in ethnology, prepared her collected myths for publication (71).

Parker edited and arranged the various materials, and he wrote both a biography of Converse and an introduction for the collection. Converse was a poet, who was drawn to the beauty of oral traditions as works of oral literature, and in her preface, she explained how she had "endeavored to adhere to the poetical metaphor" of the Seneca, from whom the "legends" derived. Parker, in his much lengthier introduction, made sure to underscore the scientific value of the collection, however. He explained that the myths

constituted a primitive "philosophy of things," a Seneca "science and religion." "Viewed in the light of exact science," which is to say modern science, "these primitive philosophies become mythologies." "A myth may appear to us," Parker wrote, "puerile and without any basis in logic, it may appear as a worthless fancy or a child's tale and yet a deeper study of the myth reveals within it the beginning of physics, philosophy and theology." The primitive mind, that is, unaware of the "real cause of the phenomenon of mind or matter," had hypothesized about the world through "the form of myths," personifying and deifying the unknown causes of effects that it observed. And these myths became "so ingrained in the minds of their believers" that they were "not easily supplanted" by "more rational systems" of thought (7). Parker thus reiterated the dominant views of the professional mythologist as a framework within which to understand the oral traditions that Converse had collected, one that Converse may not have imposed given the opportunity. In Parker's hands, Iroquois myths and legends became ethnological data proving the laws of cultural evolution.

Yet Parker also pushed that logic further and thereby quietly unsettled the positions of "primitive" and "civilized" within the evolutionary model of cultural progress. Specifically, he challenged the idea that because the beliefs embodied in the myths represented a primitive stage of culture, they were in any way unsophisticated. "In reviewing the myths of the ancients or of modern primitive men we may sometimes wonder," Parker wrote, "how any large body of rational men could hold as sacred truths such fictions as we may regard unworthy of serious consideration." Such an attitude of disdain (toward the "fictional" beliefs of primitives) was only possible out of ignorance of the fact that the human mind passed through "varying grades of culture," in which they

were exposed to widely different "stimuli," lending them different "viewpoints," "capacities," and "associations." Human beings were the products of the times and stages of culture they inhabited. On the one hand, an acceptance of this fact called for a more sympathetic appreciation of the complexity of "primitive" thought. "Myths were originally theories adduced from the best information at hand," Parker argued, "tentative" hypotheses, because "one must believe something." For their own time periods, Indian myths were the most advanced, enlightened thought available. Assimilation to modern thought, which was the product of millennia of evolution, was difficult and would never be immediate, meaning modern-day Indians could not be begrudged for clinging to beliefs that were in contradiction to current ones. On the other hand, this evolutionary perspective enabled Parker to look far beyond the present day, to "five centuries hence," when "there is little doubt" that man

> will find plenty to laugh at, if he feels so disposed, when he reads the annals of our times and gets an insight of our customs and beliefs, some of which he may term myths. While he may appreciate our achievements he will certainly deny our claim to enlightenment and choose to bestow it upon himself. There can be no true enlightenment, and the age of fable will not cease to be, until the laws which govern all phenomena are known to men. Until then men must theorize. (8)

Powell and Brinton and their followers had viewed Western science as the endpoint of cultural evolution, and myth as its beginning, its infancy. Brinton argued that the Indians were well advanced along the path of evolutionary progress when Europeans arrived and halted it forever, dooming them to extinction.[22] Powell believed they were destined to

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[22] For Brinton, the Indians' unique path to civilization had been "violently broken" by European colonialism and its "forcible imposition" of Christianity. "When [the Indian's] course was interrupted, he was pursuing the same path toward the discovery of truth" as Europeans, but the attempt to force-feed European culture to him had led to a regression. "The moral and religious life is a growth," Brinton explained, "and the brash

assimilate, but he also understood assimilation as an overwhelming of savagery by civilization. He recognized that primitive thought forms ("superstitions") existed among even supposedly modern white men and women, and he saw his work at the BAE, and in folklore studies in specific, as an effort to purge primitive thought from civilization, to bring about a utopian age of intellectual and racial homogeneity.[23] White civilization was, for Powell and Brinton, the endpoint of cultural evolution. Parker instead imagined a distant future in which modern-day science would likewise become "myth," or "fable." From this perspective, "enlightenment" and "truth" were temporally relative, unstable terms. In the absence of absolute knowledge, humans could only theorize. And one's condescension toward "unenlightened" peoples' theories revealed their own ignorance.

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wood of ancient date cannot be grafted on the green stem" (*Hero-Myths*). The Indian never did and never would advance beyond a primitive stage of culture—and thus Brinton's celebration of the literary achievements of American Indians was always a eulogy.

[23] Powell dismissed biology as a major factor in human evolution, questioning the very existence of different races, which he felt had long been in the process of blending and thus losing relevance as a guide for human classification. In the United States, the American Indian, like the African, had steadily been "bleached" through racial mixing with whites, and humanity was well on its way to "pristine homogeneity" ("From Savagery" 194)—for Powell, racial mixing made dark peoples lighter, not the other way around. Similarly, the science of folklore was, for Powell, a "science of superstition." Its study revealed that "vestigial," mythologic thinking and beliefs persisted not just among the "ignorant" masses; they could be discovered "domiciled in many parlors . . . paraded on many platforms . . . worshipped in many temples . . . they lurk even in scientific halls and appear in scientific publications and are taught by scientific men." "There is much folklore in this world," Powell wrote, "and sometimes it may be found in strange company" (cxciv). The vestiges of the primitive, in other words, lurked within modern men and women in the form of analogic (i.e., poetic or literary) thought processes and beliefs, the purging of which Powell championed. Powell thus envisioned a homogenous society in which the African American and the American Indian had been "bleached" physically and culturally, and in which the modern Euro-American had been purged of the vestiges of the primitive mind.

Following this argument, Parker shifted attention away from the oral traditions' meanings as primitive science and refocused it on their significance as literary works of art. What I want to underscore here is how claiming that oral traditions were literary works had implications that were historically and contextually determined. For David Cusick, as I explored in Chapter 1, the labelling of oral traditions as fictions threatened their authority as historical records. Decades later, in the context of the science of mythology, which viewed oral traditions as primitive theories of natural phenomena, such labelling could possess critical dimensions. Parker proposed a distinction between "myths" and "legends," for instance, the latter of which were "wonder stories told for the amusement of those who hear them," and which were "recognized as ingenious creations of imagination" (9). There was another class of stories that Parker called "traditions," differing from "legends in that they pretend to be and often are the relations of actual occurrences." Neither class were attempts to hypothesize the "nature of things." "Traditions" were the "histories of the peasantry and the tribes that have no system of writing," and "legends" were essentially art for art's sake, pure entertainment—a direct contradiction of the model of narrative evolution outlined by Powell. Parker began his introduction by first affirming and then casting doubt on the evolutionary paradigm in which oral traditions were commonly conceptualized, and which conflated literary discourse with primitivity. This enabled him to institute new terms for understanding oral traditions, ones that drew attention to their literary craftsmanship in positive ways. The literariness of the "legends," that is, no longer merely signified their antithesis to scientific discourse; rather, it registered the Indians' artistic sophistication. "The Iroquois were a people," Parker wrote, "who loved to weave language in fine metaphor and

delicate allusion and possessed a language singularly adapted for this purpose. They were unconscious poets, and some of their tales seem to have been chanted in blank verse, the rhythm and swing of the meter in their estimation giving an added delight to the story." In telling the legends to the "white men," the poets "seldom revealed" this "delicate word-weave," Parker argued (10). Poor translation also "robbed" the legends of their "intended charm and grace," resulting in the common assumption that they were "puerile and without pertinency," whereas they were actually "strong and full of meaning" when told in the original "vernacular." Parker directly contested, therefore, Brinton's and Powell's characterizations of oral traditions as childish science. "Exact translation" was well and good for "the student of languages," but "no idea of the native beauty is preserved in such translations, which are often inelegant and difficult to read and understand" (11-12). On the other hand, many dilletantes had tried "recasting primitive ideas in their own thought molds," eliminating original elements of the legends and thereby producing altogether modern, white ones. Parker, perhaps following Converse's lead, sought something in between the two, proposing that the translator "assimilate the ideas of the myth tale as he hears it," and "become imbued with the spirit of its characters, and, shutting out from his mind all thought of his own culture, and momentarily transforming himself into the culture of the myth teller, record his impressions as he recalls the story" (12). The goal of this mode of translation was to "produce the same emotions in the mind of civilized man which is produced in the primitive mind, which entertains the myth without destroying the native style or warping the facts of the narrative." Superficially, this approach resembles that of Cushing, who through his (re)writing of Zuni myths placed himself and the reader in the mind of the

primitive to understand the way in which the latter symbolically viewed the natural world. But Parker proposed inhabiting the mind of the primitive to experience the emotional, aesthetic effects of the legends, not to contrast their representations with that of science—"if in the vernacular the ideas convey tragic, mysterious, or horrifying impressions, and the style is vigorous, metaphorical or poetic, the transcriber employs every consistent art to reproduce the same elements . . ." (13). In lieu of the childish natural philosophies collected by the professional mythologists, Parker called for a restoration of adult, complex Indian oral literature.[24]

Parker, however, would later walk back the radicalness of some of the claims he made in *Myths and Legends*. Early in his career at the State Museum he had proposed a collection of the Seneca myths and legends that he had gathered during his expeditions with Harrington, but the project was turned down by the museum's director (Fenton xv). In the 1920s, as Parker absented himself from his leadership duties at the SAI and began to look for a career outside the State Museum, he also began working on *Seneca Myths and Folk Tales*, which was finally published in 1923. In the introduction to *Seneca Myths*, Parker reiterated several of the arguments he made years earlier in *Myths and Legends*, such as that there were three common approaches to translation: one literal (and

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[24] Parker's arguments were novel at the time, anticipating the work of literary modernists like Mary Hunter Austin, Alice Corbin Henderson, Eda Lou Walton, and Harriet Monroe, whose work I examine in full in the final chapter of this dissertation. These poets, critics, and amateur ethnologists also contested the professional ethnologist's "scientific" approach to translating and understanding Indian oral literature, which they saw as proto-modernist poetry. Their motivations were quite distinct from Parker's, however, which I do not have the space here to explore. Suffice it to say that whereas Parker questioned ethnology's interpretation of oral traditions (as primitive philosophy) to rethink the terms of primitivity and civilization, the collection strategies of these other authors largely reinforced their standard meanings.

"awkward"), one poetic (and inauthentic), and a third one that stood somewhere in between the two, and which he adopted, attempting to "enter into the life of the [Seneca] in a sympathetic way" and capture the literature's "soul," its "personality," and to "awaken in the mind of his reader sensations similar to those aroused in the mind of the Indian auditor" (xxiv-xxv). Yet Parker insisted, like Schoolcraft and other ethnologists before him, that he did "not offer a series of tales that can be judged by present day literary standards." They were not "for the mere entertainment of general readers . . ." "The value of this collection is not a literary one but a scientific one," Parker wrote. It was for the "professional anthropologist and historian" who "will study these tales for their ethnological significance, and use them in making comparisons with similar collections from other tribes and stocks" (xxiii). They were intended to shed light on the processes of both cultural diffusion and evolution, revealing "certain mental traits and tendencies." Parker cautioned "enlightened minds" not to "be arrogant" in their judgment of the material, but to see instead "the attempts of a race still in childhood to give play to imagination and to explain by symbols what it otherwise could not express" (xxiv). Gone were the arguments that Western science would one day too become fictional, and in its place were many of the standard tropes of the science of mythology.

Much of the introduction to *Seneca Myths* is devoted, on the one hand, to distancing Parker's work from lay collectors of Indian poetry and "children's fables," and on the other hand, to critiquing the literal, phonetic translations of Hewitt in specific. In the previous two decades, collections of Indian tales for children had flooded the literary market, including ones by Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or Zitkala-Ša, and Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, both of whom Parker knew well through the SAI. Parker

acknowledged the value of such collections, but he was also careful that his work be perceived as a contribution to ethnology and not literature, and he especially distinguished it from the collections of the "poets," like Mary Hunter Austin, whose translations—which "buried the personality of the folk tale . . . in petals of roses" (xxv)—had appeared in magazines like *McClure's* and *Poetry* and had even been featured in literary anthologies. While this popular collection and consumption of Indian oral literature—the focus of my next chapter—was occurring outside the channels of standard ethnological publications, Parker's scientific credentials were questioned within it, namely by Hewitt. For the sake of space, I cannot fully explore the tensions between the two men here, but they saw each other as rivals, and competed with one another to become the first to publish on certain topics, including Haudenosaunee oral traditions (Fenton xiv; Porter 88). One of these topics was the Haudenosaunee "Constitution," versions of which Parker gathered—in the form of "legends" and "traditions"—from Seth Newhouse and other "chiefs of the Six Nations council" and published through the State Museum Bulletin in 1916. Hewitt, who was working on a similar project at the time, issued a scathing critique of Parker's work in the *American Anthropologist* in 1917, accusing Parker of having made numerous errors and utilizing questionable sources, to which Parker responded in a follow-up article in 1918, critiquing Hewitt in turn for his "clumsy, stilted" literal translations of oral traditions (although not necessarily denying Hewitt's charges) (121). Interestingly, according to Joy Porter, Parker's "desire to present the Iroquois as a special, superior group with a proto-American constitutional governing structure" prompted scrutiny of its provenance among the ethnological community (85). Essentially, in *The Constitution of the Five Nations* Parker had too overtly undermined

the idea that the Iroquois were primitives, which made the materials seem inauthentic and politically motivated, rather than objective. I am not so concerned here with the accuracy of Parker's *The Constitution* as I am with the backlash it prompted in the scientific community, and the notable absence of such efforts to overtly trouble the categories of primitive and civilized in *Seneca Myths*, which was Parker's next major ethnological publication.

In the introduction to *Seneca Myths*, Parker extended his critique of Hewitt from the 1918 article, defending his own scientific credibility by attacking that of Hewitt's. And in that regard, Parker's use of Indigenous oral traditions to validate himself as an ethnologist, and his practices as scientific, was in keeping with a long-standing tradition dating back to Schoolcraft, at the latest. The collection still possessed certain critical aspects, but in much more subdued tones than those found in *Myths and Legends*. These aspects are most visible, however, in the introductory section titled "Fundamental Factors in Seneca Folk-Lore," which served as a catalogue of Seneca literary characters, devices, and themes. It also contained a rich, detailed sketch of a traditional Seneca village, intended to establish an "atmosphere in which the Legends were told." Aiding the reader in his "assimilation" of the original ideas and emotions of the stories, Parker imaginatively described a village from the late-eighteenth century: the games that were played, the delicious foods that were eaten, the conversations and debates that took place, the peoples' style of dress and housing, and, of course, the after-dinner scenes in which excited young children gathered around the storyteller, to be "lifted to the fairylands of pure imagination" (55). Parker constructed a kind of museum display, then, as a prelude to the legends. Although essentially a work of fiction, Parker's sketch was a scientific

tool in that it aimed to accurately recreate the original effects of the legends, much like Cushing's translations of Zuni tales. But more to the point, the sketch humanized and familiarized the Seneca through their way of life, especially their love of story, collapsing the differences between the civilized reader and the primitive subjects, rather than erecting firm distinctions between the two.[25]

In "Fundamental Factors," Parker described the "legends," moreover, as stimulation for the mind and the imagination, not necessarily as primitive science. He positioned them alongside the village's discussions about the (at the time) new religion of Handsome Lake, as "food" for the brain. In the old days, "the minds of the people [were] hungry and demand[ed] a feeding even upon husks," and thus they turned to the storyteller to kindle their imaginations and give "the hungry mind and yearning soul wings upon which it may fly away from a real earth to the land of 'IwishIcould'" (54). In Parker's representation of them, Seneca oral traditions were not poetic interpretations of the material world, a confusion of fiction and reality; they were an imaginative escape from it, and a source of hope, implying its functions were no different in kind from those of modern fiction. In depicting the Seneca as self-consciously telling and listening to legends as fictions, not fact, Parker once more rejected the evolutionary model of discourse that he had explicitly invoked in the introduction. These contradictions do not

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[25] Joy Porter explains that Parker's ethnological work was grounded in the museum and always done with the lay public in mind (166). The same argument can be made of his collections of oral traditions, which he positioned as foremost ethnological, but likely wanted to be accessible to the general public as well, unlike the materials published, for example, through the *JAF*. On the one hand, an imagined lay readership may account for Parker's flexibility, relative to Hewitt's, in his characterization of Seneca myths and "legends"; it likewise may account, however, for his need to distinguish his work from that of Bonnin's or Eastman's as scientific.

speak to any confusion per se on Parker's end, but to the nearly impossible demands placed on him, as a Seneca ethnologist, to view his own culture through a lens that insisted on that culture's inferiority.

Parker continued in "Fundamental Factors" by fast-forwarding to the present day, writing that "there is a different order of things." "The power of the Seneca," he explained, "has gone, and the pale invader has taken over all the land . . . Still the Seneca has not relinquished his hold entirely; in various bands he still lives in tribal estate. But how different is the Seneca today! His life is that of the surrounding white man, in an economic sense." There was not much now "to distinguish him" from the white man, culturally, except for his "rites and ceremonies" and "folktales," which remained "unaltered," marking "him as aboriginal" still (55). Again, the difference between this representation and that of Cushing or Mooney is nuanced but significant. On the one hand, it acknowledged the violence and theft of colonialism, but it also demanded that the Indian have what Parker called in "Indian Complex" the "right" to move upward and progress intellectually, to evolve and flourish in the modern age, as the white man had been allowed to move "upward and away from his cruder life in the age of the Druids" (12). Cushing and Mooney were interested in locating and salvaging, or preserving, the primitive in written form, and their analyses of acculturation demonstrated the ways in which oral traditions acted as a bulwark against civilization. Parker, in contrast, wanted to transform the Indian into a modern race. He rejected efforts to preserve the Indian as in a "menagerie or museum," in which they were to "slumber to extinction" (12). And in *Seneca Myths* he underscored the universal human need for intellectual "sustenance," arguing in effect that the Indians of the present day were allowed to have a modern

material existence, but they were being starved mentally, fed on the brain food of centuries past. It was not their oral traditions, that is, that were keeping the Indians stuck in the past, but a larger social structure which denied them full participation as citizens. This view was central to Parker's advocacy of Indian citizenship and franchise, the main platforms of the SAI. Through the SAI and its *American Indian Magazine* (AIM), which Parker edited, Parker and Bonnin and other Indigenous intellectuals projected a new, modern image of the Indian. Parker envisioned a future of Indian schools and colleges staffed by Indians, for example, which would develop a new Indian literature, such as that which he and Bonnin had been writing for AIM and other magazines of the period (Porter 113).

Parker thus consistently looked backward to look forward, beyond the present day. And evolutionary theory provided the rhetorical and conceptual tools for him to do that work. Parker, according to William N. Fenton, was always self-conscious of his standing as a scientist, given that he lacked a degree, unlike many of his contemporaries (xx). Parker's colleagues Harrington and Speck had early on become students of Boas, and Harrington had even introduced Parker to him, encouraging him to study under Boas at Columbia. Parker, for reasons that can only be surmised, opted not to pursue a PhD in anthropology and began full-time museum and fieldwork after his apprenticeship at the Peabody. Porter speculates that that decision could have been prompted by a financial need to hurry along his career, but she also notes that Boas and his approach to ethnology represented a rejection of Morgan's (and after him, the Powelleans') evolutionism, which Parker surely would have sensed (55). As odd and problematic as it seems from our perspective today, Parker may have chosen the path he did to verify cultural evolutionary

theory, which aligned with his assimilationist beliefs and his advocacy for Indian political rights and thus an Indian future. Yet he did not accept evolutionary theory or its conclusions about oral traditions without criticism. Parker certainly relied on the arguments of the professional mythologists who came before him to secure his standing as a scientist, but he also worked, in subtle ways, to revise mainstream understandings of primitivity, civilization, oral traditions, and scientific knowledge. In the following chapter, I consider how and why his associates Bonnin and Eastman eschewed careers in ethnology and opted instead to record oral traditions as children's literature, avoiding some of the conflicting demands Parker faced. Notably, that too is the route Parker would soon take with his collection *Skunny Wundy* (1926), a series of Seneca "tales" he prepared especially for children. In the introduction, Parker explained that he had grown up listening, in his grandfather's house, to the tales of men like Cornplanter, and had "filled many pages with notes and in later years wrote books about Indian stories for students to read" (12). *Skunny Wundy* was different in that it was not for the ethnologist to study, but for boys and girls to enjoy, which seemed more in keeping with their original purpose. "After all," Parker wrote, "these tales are for boys and girls. It is a shame to hide them away."

CHAPTER 5

THE SAVAGE CHILD AND THE INDIAN CHILDREN'S STORY

My focus in this chapter is the popularization of the collection of Indigenous oral traditions in the first decades of the twentieth century. I examine one strain of that popularization, which was the Indian children's story, a genre that emerged in the wake of ethnology's professionalization, and which in many ways was a result of it. In the previous chapter I explored, for example, how ethnologists of the late-nineteenth century infantilized American Indians through the collection and study of their oral traditions, or "myths," as most ethnologists came to call them. People like Daniel Garrison Brinton, professor of Ethnology and Archaeology at University of Pennsylvania, and John Wesley Powell, director of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), viewed myth as a primitive mode of thought and expression that had, like other aspects of human culture, evolved along a progressive path toward that of civilization, which is to say Western science. According to Brinton, Powell, and many other "professional mythologists," American Indians, as a primitive race, had turned first to the language of fiction to represent their realities, employing symbolism, personification, narrative, and fabulation to describe and explain the natural world and humanity's place within it. According to ethnologists, the Indian mind inherently saw the world through a poetic lens (subjective, imaginative, and "analogic" as Powell put it), unlike civilized man who saw it through a scientific one (objective, literal, "homologic"). For every myth there was a kernel of truth buried within it, an observation about the material world which the "professional mythologist" could recover by carefully analyzing and retracing the associations of the Indian mind; the Indians themselves, on the other hand, in their supposed mental

simplicity, had over time confused fiction with reality, accepting as truth the most far-fetched stories maintained by their communities, and viewing metaphors and symbols as literal, not figurative. Ethnologists such as Frank Hamilton Cushing, James Mooney, and Edward Sapir argued that although present-day Indians might possess the external signs of civilization—clothes, housing, modern technologies—they nonetheless remained primitive, and thus child-like, in so far as they inhabited a psychological world of make-believe.[1]

The idea that the Indian was child-like was certainly not new to Euro-Americans, who had been describing the Indian in paternalistic terms from the beginning of colonization, but during the postbellum era this common-sense knowledge was rationalized through cultural evolutionary theory, and it was increasingly documented through the (re)writing of oral traditions as Indian myths and folklore. By the turn of the twentieth century, such research led Euro-Americans to begin to consider how the white child was in turn, like the Indian, a primitive. In this chapter, I demonstrate how such beliefs led to US educational programs grounded in learning through both nature and story (often both), especially myth, as it was assumed that the child, like the primitive, possessed a “myth-making” mind (Austin, *Basket* v). As a result, a market for Indian stories for children emerged, through which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors

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[1] Sapir, for example, in *Wishram Texts and Wasco Tales and Myths* (1909), wrote of one of his informants, a man named Louis Simpson, that “superficially, Louis is a convert to the ways of the whites ; in other words, he is a "civilized" Indian, lives in a frame house, raises and sells wheat and hay, is dressed in white man's clothes, is theoretically a Methodist. Judging by the contents of his mind, however, he is to all intents and purposes an unadulterated Indian. He implicitly believes in the truth of all the myths he narrated, no matter how puerile or ribald they might seem” (xii).

(re)wrote oral traditions as children's stories, often literally rewriting ones previously recorded by professional ethnologists working for the BAE. The (re)writing of oral traditions as children's stories created new opportunities for Indigenous authors to reach wide audiences through print, as I argue in this chapter. In particular, I examine the writings of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, known best by her pen name, Zitkala-Ša, and Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, two central figures among the "red progressives"—Indigenous men and women from across the United States who devoted themselves to reforming US Indian policy in the first decades of the twentieth century. I trace how and why (and to what effect) Bonnin and especially Eastman eschewed, at the outset of their careers, ethnological writing and its version of oral traditions, opting instead to record oral traditions as children's literature. (Re)writing oral traditions as children's stories would have made logical sense to both Bonnin and Eastman, who in their autobiographical works explained how they themselves had been educated as children through Dakota oral traditions.[2] But the (re)writing of Indigenous oral traditions as children's literature, and the beliefs about childhood and primitivity that underpinned it, also extended directly from ethnology and its science of mythology. As I argue, that intellectual heritage required Bonnin and Eastman to capitulate to certain racist assumptions about Indians and their oral traditions, despite writing well outside the purview of professional ethnological science. But in doing so, Bonnin and Eastman targeted the Euro-American public on a scale, and in ways, not possible through standard

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[2] In "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," for instance, Bonnin reflected fondly on the "old legends" that she longed to hear every evening after dinner (71). And Eastman repeatedly described how Indian "legends" had provided the "foundation" of his "early education" (*Indian Legends* ix).

ethnological publication-channels, seeking to revise both the popular image of the Indian and ethnologists' arguments about oral traditions, as well as to subtly critique US colonialism, all through the seemingly innocuous form of children's stories.

The Savage Child

First, I want to further establish the intellectual and cultural climate in which a version of Indigenous oral tradition as children's literature was able to emerge as a popular literary form. Philip Deloria has provided a sweeping analysis of that context in his *Playing Indian* (1999), exploring how "antimodernists" reimagined and performed "Indianness" (i.e., the primitive) as a tool with which to critique the modern age. What I intend to further tease out, however, is the role played in that process by Indian myths. G. Stanley Hall, the first president of the American Psychological Association, essentially launched the modern field of child psychology with his *Adolescence: its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (1904). In it he laid out a recapitulation theory of human maturation in which the child represented the lowest stage of man's evolution. Men like Powell had used the growth of a child as a metaphor with which to describe the evolution of human races; Hall's work brought the metaphor full circle, using the model of racial evolution to explain individual human growth. Aged nine to twelve, the child had reached a "perfected stage of race-maturity," Hall wrote, such as that demanded by warm climates, where the requirements of survival supposedly had not taxed the human mind. The child was an adult savage, in other words, who during puberty, when the "flood gates of heredity are thrown open again," was "driven from his paradise" and placed on an ascent into civilization/adulthood (vol. 2, 70-71). Hall believed that it was essential, moreover,

for everyone to pass through each stage of human evolutionary growth, without repression, to fully develop as a healthy adult. Inhibiting the natural predilections and impulses of either childhood or adolescence could result in psychic imbalances. The goal of education was, therefore, to develop every individual's mental capacities to their fullest, so as to encourage a natural progression into the next evolutionary stage. And during childhood, the savage stage, parents and teachers simply needed to step back and allow "mother nature" to educate the child (vol. 2, 71).

Hall was far from alone in believing that nature was the child's best teacher, even if his reasons were somewhat abstruse. The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed an explosion of interest in the outdoors, what Ralph Lutz has called a "major environmental awakening" (4). Encouraged by lowered transportation costs, the bicycle, and photography; thousands of people turned to "camping, hiking, butterfly collecting, bird watching, and . . . a host of other outdoor activities" (16). At the same time, "nature study became a mandatory part of the school curriculum. It grew into a major educational reform movement, the first to combine educational theory with an interest in the natural environment" (30). As part of that effort, the YMCA and other organizations offered "Fresh Air Camps" for the urban poor; meanwhile, after-school nature clubs like the Agassiz Association proliferated (16). Increasingly, Euro-Americans saw the wilderness as the ideal classroom, and mother nature as the ideal teacher for white US children, beliefs which were tethered to the conviction that the child was like the primitive and thus needed to be educated like one.

This notion that children developed best through the outdoors was also closely linked, however, to the idea that story, particularly myth, was a highly appropriate

medium for childhood education. Nature writer Ernest Thompson Seton, for instance, founded the Woodcraft Indians in 1901. It was a forerunner of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), which Seton also co-founded in 1910. In his guidebook for the Woodcraft Indians, *The Red Book; or, How to Play Indian: Directions for Organizing a Tribe of Boy Indians* (1903), Seton explained that the purpose of the organization was to teach boys the "study and pleasures of Woodcraft" by camping and living "in the woods just as the Indians did." Seton's "woodcraft" authority rested in part on his status as the most prolific and well-known writer of a new genre of "realistic animal stories" for children (perhaps even more well-known than one of its other famous progenitors, Jack London) (Lutz 32). Through his stories, Seton taught his young, mostly male readers about the remarkable habits of North America's wildlife. And for a slightly younger audience, Seton published a collection of *pourquois*-style stories titled *Woodland Tales* (1905), which were directly inspired by (often a fast-and-loose assemblage of) Indigenous oral traditions and cultural figures, such as Nanabozho. In *Woodland Tales*, children could encounter "mother earth" and the sun personified as "Maka Ina" and "El Sol," and for some stories Seton even included dance and song instructions so that children at home or on camping trips could, with the help of adults, perform myths like "The Animal Dance of Nana-bo-jou."[3] Both in the woods and in books, and often in both, white children were

[3] The myth was based on an actual Anishinabek oral tradition, although Seton's sources are unclear.

encouraged to "play Indian" to express their inner primitivity and (counterintuitively) thereby become well-adjusted, civilized adults.[4]

The overlap between US ethnology's study of Indian myths and this emerging consensus around childhood education becomes especially evident when we consider a book like *The Child: A Study in Evolution of Man* (1900) by Alexander F. Chamberlain. Chamberlain was the first person to obtain a PhD in anthropology in the United States; taught by Franz Boas at Clark University, he went on to work closely with Brinton and to edit the *Journal of American Folklore* (*JAF*). He was very much at the center of the study of Indian myth and folklore, and it was very easy and natural for him to turn his attention away from the primitive Indian and his myths and begin investigating the primitive child.[5] "The mind of the child and the mind of the savage . . . present many interesting parallels of a general sort," Chamberlain wrote, certain "modes of thought and of thought expression," among which were ". . . love of analogy and symbolism, use and products of the imagination, love of nature and the world of plant and animal life, poetry and story-telling, myth-making, personification and other primal arts . . ." (456-57). In *The Child*, Chamberlain surveyed a wide range of contemporary research on children to better

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[4] In his follow-up guide for the Woodcraft Indians, *The Book of Woodcraft* (1912), Seton included a chapter on stories for "boy Indians" to recount as they sat around the campfire, where men, he wrote, seemed to shed their "modern form and poise, and hark back to the primitive" (5). These stories included, among others, an "Indian prayer" collected by "ethnomusicologist" Natalie Curtis, Omaha "proverbs" from anthropologists Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, and even information about the Dakota Ghost Dance, taken from James Mooney's BAE report on the subject--Seton repurposed these materials as educational stories and songs for young boys.

[5] Chamberlain would have known Hall at Clark University, which also may explain his interest in what the child revealed about human evolution.

understand the primitive-child connection, providing insight into how Euro-Americans in the United States at the time understood childhood psychology. The principal at the State Normal School in Worcester, Massachusetts argued, for example, that "the world of law and order and systematic endeavor [was] too tough for [the child's] assimilation," and that "it must first be softened into myth and make-believe by the solvent juices of fancy, which the glands of his little mind fortunately pour out in abundance" (24). Along these lines, Chamberlain cited studies testing how stories could be used to instruct children and gauge their aptitudes, and even one study that encouraged children to invent stories orally, however they saw fit, without interruption, the characteristics of which (the "omission of the apparent and the inevitable"), Chamberlain observed, "belong also to the earliest forms of story-telling in the race," the very same that could be found "in the myths of savage and barbarous peoples" (343-346). Story, particularly myth, was one of the most suitable methods for teaching children because children naturally tended to think and represent the world around them in mythical terms—that is, through the language of fiction and poetry, just as primitive peoples did.

Indian Children's Stories

Amid this research, a vibrant literary market emerged for both nature stories and Indian stories for children; often the two were combined. They were part of what Elizabeth Hutchinson has called "the Indian craze" of the early-twentieth century (3). Hutchinson uses the term to describe the period's obsession with—its veneration, imitation, and appropriation of—Indian art forms, especially among US modernist painters, but the term easily accommodates a similar, coterminous obsession with Indian literary arts. In children's literature in specific, nature stories and sketches were informed

by Indigenous oral traditions, or in some cases the latter were embedded within them, as they were in William J. Long's *Ways of Wood Folk* (1899), *Wilderness Ways* (1900), and *Beasts of the Field* (1901). Through his nature sketches, Long came to be "highly regarded by the public as [a] naturalist . . . and widely read by school children" (Sumner 41). A Congregationalist minister, Long was not a professional naturalist, but he spent much of his life exploring the wildernesses of Maine and New Brunswick, often accompanied by his Indian guide, "Simmo" (likely of the Maliseet), with whom he made a study of wildlife. In his sketches, or "studies" of animals, Long often referred to "Indian" woodcraft knowledge, as well as to Indian names (his works typically included glossaries of Indian terms—again, likely Maliseet), and occasionally to specific Indian "legends" that pertained to the animals being described in a particular sketch, legends which Long had "heard by the writer before the camp-fire, in the heart of the wilderness" (*Beasts* viii).[6] Legends like "Meeko, The Mischief-Maker" (about the red squirrel) were integrated along with Long's observations, as they provided "excellent commentary upon [animals'] character" (3). Although Long's books were not presented as collections of Indian myths outright, they nonetheless drew their authority as educational materials in part by their proximity to American Indians and their oral traditions. And thus, the books helped to connect children imaginatively with the primitive.

In at least one case, oral traditions were even used as a basis for a children's novel—Herbert Quick's *In The Fairyland of America: a Tale of the Pukwudjies* (1901).

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[6] For example, in "Upweekis the Shadow" in *Wilderness Ways* Long summarizes Simmo's story about "Upweekis the lynx" and Clote Scarpe, a trickster figure akin to Nanabozho.

But most often authors edited collections of stand-alone Indian stories, collating material from a variety of ethnological sources. The first of such collections, and the only one for several decades, appeared much earlier, however: Cornelius Mathews's *The Indian Fairy Book*, first published in 1856. Mathews was an antebellum editor and critic, best known today for his involvement in the "Young America" literary movement (helping writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne get published), and in the *Fairy Book* he explained how he had "adapted" the "primitive" versions of Indian tales found in Henry Schoolcraft's writings. Mathews had lengthened or abridged the narratives as needed to "bring to the surface . . . the latent or obscured beauty and interest of the story," features away from which Schoolcraft had explicitly directed his own readers, insisting that their value was not "literary" but scientific. Mathews's collection, then, which was republished three more times (1868, 1877, 1916), shared many features with later collections of Indian stories for children—to satisfy the tastes of modern Euro-American readers, he rewrote already (re)written oral traditions as "fairy stories" designed for children, utilizing Western literary conventions to do so by, for example, sanitizing violent and sexual content.[7] Unlike later editors, however, Mathews openly admitted to having improved the original, "primitive" materials, rather than stressing the authenticity of the tales in his collection. And whereas Mathews underscored the "beauty" and novelty of the stories for their own sake, explaining their purpose as being to "soothe and entertain," and to

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[7] In the "Toad-Woman," for instance, Mathews eliminated the scene in which the central character murders Toad-Woman's sons and impales their heads on stakes, explaining instead that the boy's dog blew his "strong breath" in their faces and "put out their life" (95).

"refresh" tired imaginations, the new collections of Indian stories were didactic, intended primarily as educational tools.

In 1901, for instance, Mary Catherine Judd, a high school principal from Minneapolis, MN, edited two collections of myths: *Classic Myths Retold*, which included Norse, Greek, German, and Finish myths; and *Wigwam Stories Told by North American Indians*, which republished materials from ethnologists like Schoolcraft and Brinton, as well as from the annual reports of the BAE. In *Classic Myths*, Judd explained that "the book was originally prepared as an aid in Nature study . . . by reading these myths the child will gain in interest and sympathy for the life of beast, bird, and tree; he will learn to recognize those constellations which have been as friends to wise men of many ages," and thus "see more quickly the true, the good, and the beautiful in the world about him." A similar intent—to use narrative to connect children to the latent beauty of nature—informed *Wigwam Stories*, as Chamberlain himself noted in a review, describing the book as "well suited" for "supplementary reading in the schools," and commending Judd for her "judicious" selections (214). "The stories," Judd explained, "are interesting in showing how alive is all Nature to those who live nearest to her. The Indian still seems to understand with the heart of a poet the voices of trees, stones, and brooks" (219). In an age of mass urbanization and heavy industry, the Euro-American child, it was believed, could reconnect to nature through the Indians' myths, in part because like the Indian, the child possessed the "heart of a poet." It was not simply the case, then, that the myths in these newer collections were not valued for their beauty—as they were, for example, in Mathews' collection—but that as literary art the Indian tales were believed to offer an alternative to science as a way of understanding nature, one that was particularly well-

suited for children. Long, for instance, dedicated *Beasts of the Field* to "the teachers of America, who are striving to make Nature Study more vital and attractive by revealing a vast realm of Nature outside the realm of Science, and a world of ideas above and beyond the world of facts," (vii). The Indians, through their myths, provided a knowledge of nature premised in beauty and the imagination, rather than strict objectivity—an opposition that essentially recapitulated that which had been constructed by ethnologists between primitive myth and civilized science.

Mary Austin's *The Basket Woman*

In undergoing a supposedly Indian education through the consumption of Indian myths, the Euro-American child was "playing Indian," a US tradition that Deloria has traced from the Boston Tea Party to the hippie communes of the 1960s and 70s. Each generation of Euro-Americans in the United States, Deloria argues, has performed new versions of "Indianness" to explore, challenge, and construct US identity. In specific, then, the twentieth-century collections of Indian children's stories need to be seen as part of the fin de siècle cultural phenomenon historian T. J. Jackson Lears has dubbed "antimodernism": a widespread "recoil from an 'overcivilized' modern existence to more intense forms of physical or spiritual experience supposedly embodied in medieval or Oriental cultures . . ." (xv), or in this case, American Indian ones. According to Lears, middle- and upper-class Euro-Americans at the turn of the century felt "cut off from 'real life'" and in "need of moral and cultural regeneration," which they pursued through a wide range of practices that were intended to reconnect them to what they imagined to be a simpler way of life, lost amid the era's technological advancements and social dislocations. The version(s) of "Indianness" developed in this period, and Euro-

Americans' enactment of it through various forms of "play," registered anxieties over the "displacements of modernity" and the "angst that accompanied the crowded cities and assembly lines" (Deloria 98-99, 101). The "antimodern nature study" offered by Seton and other public figures of the period provided a means for bourgeois Euro-Americans to "gain access to the authentic," (115). But like all expressions of antimodernism, this version of Indian play was a "complex blend of accommodation and protest," rather than mere escapism (Lears xv). In other words, antimodernist Indian play worked in service of modernity; Seton's Woodcraft boy or girl, for example, became an "Indian-child in order eventually to become a clerk, banker, broker, or housewife and mother" (Deloria 115). Similarly, the child was educated through Indian myths to provide a (savage) foundation for an adult, civilized worldview.

Deloria argues that this modernist version of "playing Indian" sought to "to preserve the integrity of the boundaries that marked exterior and authentic Indians, while gaining access to organic Indian purity in order to make it one's own," to possess it (115). The collections of Indian stories intended as school primers did so, I argue, by reinforcing the "vanishing Indian" motif, and by primitivizing the Indian through a celebration of his naturally poetic mindset. The collections also tended to position white children as heirs to the US landscape, ritualized through their consumption of Indian stories. In this regard, Mary Hunter Austin's *The Basket Woman: A Book of Fanciful Tales for Children* (1904) is worth looking closely at, if only to better understand the texts with which Bonnin and Eastman conversed and competed. Austin is known today almost exclusively for her book on the southwest, *The Land of Little Rain* (1902), and thus for her contributions to early US nature writing. Compared to *The Land*, *The Basket Woman*, Austin's second

book, has received far less critical attention, despite serving as a better indication of where Austin's literary interests were headed in the coming decades.[8] The collection is essentially a short-story cycle set in and around the Owens Valley region of California, where Austin was living while she wrote it. Many of the stories feature a homesteader's son named Alan, who befriends an unnamed "Indian woman" from the nearby "campodie," where Alan's father occasionally hired Indians for odd jobs. But the collection is held together more by its setting than by a focus on any one character; many of the stories do not feature Alan, and some of the stories hardly feature human actors. Among this loose assemblage of "myths," Austin distinguished "three sorts." "One third" were supposedly "direct transcriptions from Indian myths current in the campodies of the west" (vi). Austin is unclear about her sources, but she may indeed have recorded "myths" like "The Coyote-Spirit and the Weaving Woman" or "Ná Ÿang-Wit'e, The First Rabbit Drive" herself. According to her biographer, Austin spent a lot of time in Owens Valley at the Bishop Paiute "campoody," where she befriended a healer named Tinnemaha and often listened to oral traditions and observed rituals (Goodman 36-40).[9] Yet Austin also explained in the preface of *The Basket Woman* that "in preparing this volume of western myths for school use the object has been not so much to provide

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[8] The bulk of her literary efforts in the coming years were focused on collecting, theorizing, and producing Indian poetry.

[9] As a teenager, moreover, Austin grew up next to the Sebastian (or Tejon) Indian Reservation, where she "dedicated herself to understanding the customs (and to a lesser extent the languages) of California Indians," preferring to learn "from first-hand observation" rather than through books (Goodman 11). Austin especially enjoyed listening to the stories that people like her friend Kern River Jim (of the Yokuts) had to tell.

authentic Indian Folk-tales, as to present certain aspects of nature as they appear in the myth-making mood, that is to say, in the form of strongest appeal to the child mind" (iii). She positioned her collection, then, outside ethnology, and consequently not beholden to its demands for linguistic or cultural accuracy. Yet in denying ethnological authenticity (phonetic transcriptions and literal translations, gathered through years of field work), Austin redefined Indian authenticity as a particular way of looking at the world, making it in theory more easily replicable in text form, as well as widely accessible to everyday readers. Ironically, that redefinition was made possible in the first place by ethnologists like Brinton, who had argued that all primitive myths were essentially the same underneath their narrative particularities—that what defined them was their fantastical mode of representing reality.[10]

Although not prepared as a collection of "authentic Indian Folk-tales" for, say, the BAE, Austin's "myths" were also not intended for entertainment only, as were Mathews "fairy stories." Myth, Austin argued, was not simply "something invented and added to the imaginative life"; it was "in fact, the root and branch of man's normal intimacy with nature," playing a critical role in helping children to attach emotionally to their landscapes. Intuitively, the child, like the Indian, saw nature as animistic, Austin explained, a perspective that, if nurtured, could establish a sympathy with and knowledge of nature, and thus a foundation for more mature nature study later in life. "There is a period in the life of every child," Austin wrote, "when almost the only road to the understanding is the one blazed out by the myth-making spirit, kept open to the larger

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[10] See the previous chapter for details about Brinton's work and arguments.

significance of things long after he is apprised that the thunder did not originate in the smithy of the gods." But like Hall, she argued that any attempt to "hasten" "myth making [was] likely to prove as disastrous as helping young puppies through their nine days' blindness by forcibly opening their eyes" (v). Children were too young to perceive nature through the "exactitudes" of science; they had to first learn as the primitive did, through myth (ix).

The Basket Woman was meant to replicate and induce the "myth-making" mindset for the child, freeing Austin to invent and not just "transcribe" Indian myths. Whatever the degree to which Austin may have (re)written her "transcribed" myths in the collection (that is, adapted them from the original oral materials to teach and entertain white children), the second type of myth in *The Basket Woman* includes what are undoubtedly pure literary inventions, even though Austin insisted that her readers not think of the stories as "in any sense 'made up,'" or credit them to her as the author. Austin, in other words, believed that the myths of this second type were equally as "authentic" as the "transcribed" myths in the collection. For Austin, authenticity, therefore, had nothing to do with the myth's origins or with linguistic fidelity, but rather with a perspective, one that the white child-reader could in turn inhabit by reading them. According to Austin, she wrote this second class of stories upon certain suggestions that came to her from looking at the world through a mythical "attitude of mind" (vi), the implication being that they really belonged not to her but to the Indian, whose perspective she had channeled. For instance, "The Crooked Fir" personifies a sapling and its growth into adulthood, teaching a lesson about nature and nurture, in specific how the genetic make-up of a tree interacts with the elements of its environment to shape that tree over

time. The story "was suggested to me," Austin wrote, "in the humorous comment of my Indian guide on the forks of Kings River, the first time my attention was caught by the uniform curve of the trunks, and he explained it to me" (vi). Presumably, her guide's "humorous" explanation was not itself an established oral tradition or even a story per se, but it nonetheless conveyed to Austin a mythical or poetic way of thinking about nature that she then developed into a personification tale. That way of thinking was, firstly, childish, and it was childish in so far as it was literary, or poetic. For both the Indian and the child, however, fiction (in this case, personification) was presumed to be real, revealing the degree to which Austin's theoretical understanding of myth was indebted to postbellum ethnologists: "to the primitive mind," Austin explained, "nearly the whole process of nature presents itself in mythical terms. It is not that the Indian imagines the tree having sentience—he simply isn't able to imagine its not having it." As a literary artist herself—a poet, short-story writer, and essayist—Austin believed she was able to temporarily assume this mythical mindset to generate an Indian-style story, weaving together the literary and the scientific, and thus atavistically "playing Indian" herself.

Austin is somewhat vague about the characteristics of the third set of myths in the collection, but they appear to be ones based on historical figures from the region, whom Austin had either met or heard of. With all three myth-types, however, what was essential for Austin was that the myth "insinuate" itself naturally "in the child's mind," without its meanings being forcibly "pulled up," so that the child might take "possession" of it. The child, in other words, needed to enjoy reading or listening to the myths. And beyond the specific ecological lessons that the tales imparted, the most important effect of the tales, according to Austin, was that they "extend the background" of the myths for the child—

that is, that they connect directly to real local environments. This "extension" could only be accomplished by myths native to the Americas. The "so-called Classic Myths" of ancient Greece, like those collected by Judd, failed "to effect anything beyond their mere story interest in modern life." For US children they were unacceptable; the "value of a myth," Austin argued, "is directly in proportion as its background is common and accessible . . . the better [the child] can visualize the objects mythically treated, the better they serve their purpose of rendering personal the influences of nature and sustaining him in that happy sense of the community of life and interests in the Wild" (x). Euro-American children, therefore, were meant to read Indian myths not only to cultivate a sympathetic relationship with the outdoors in general, but to attach themselves emotionally to specific localities—children's "possession" of myths coincided with their possession of their environments.

As Euro-American children adopted the Indian mode of education and consumed Indian myths, psychologically they encountered the primitive and the natural landscape, but in doing so the child-reader, at least according to the logic of Austin's stories, also supplanted the Indian from that landscape. The boy Alan, as a stand-in for the reader, models this movement within the collection itself, as he becomes increasingly interested in the Basket Woman's stories. In the "Fire Bringer," for instance, the narrator tells us that the eponymous story was Alan's favorite, that he used to make "a game of it to play with little Indian boys of the campoodie," and that "he heard it so often and thought of it so much that at last it seemed to him that he had been part of the story himself" (109-110). At night, dreaming of the story, Alan proceeds to imaginatively undergo a racial transformation, becoming the Indian boy in the story: "He knew, too, that he was Alan,

and yet it seemed, without seeming strange, that he was the boy of the story who was afterward to be called the Fire Bringer. The skin of his body was dark and shining, with straight, black locks cropped at his shoulders, and he wore no clothing but a scrap of deerskin belted with a wisp of bark" (111). When Alan awakens from the dream-story, which describes the origin of fire, he is once again white, at home watching his father cooking at the fireside, symbolically connecting him and his family to the Indians' mythical past. Alan's racial transformation was replicated quite literally, as Deloria explains, by thousands of boys and girls across the United States who came home from BSA, Campfire Girl, and Woodcraft camps with "healthy" tans, "imitat[ing] and appropriat[ing] the Other viscerally through the medium of their bodies" (Deloria 120).[11] That imitation was even easier to accomplish at the psychological level, through (re)written myths, especially for Austin, who offered readers Indian authenticity reduced to an attitude of mind. Superficially, Alan's transformation, his "playing Indian," places him (and by proxy, the reader) in sympathy with a racialized Other, as a way to understand and come to terms with the Indian, with the Indian's history and perspective, but this role play, which relies on the image of a generic western Indian (without tribal specification), serves more to authenticate Alan's identity and his sense of security within his environment than it does to educate him about any actual Indians.[12] And the sense,

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[11] Similarly, in Seton's *Two Little Savages*, the main character Yan, in his effort to become an Indian by doing "everything as an Indian would," "lay for hours with the sun beating on his face to correct his colour to standard," and "rolled up his sleeves to the shoulder and exposed them to the full glare of the sun," as a "remedy" to his milky white complexion (62-63).

[12] Only in the last story, "Mahala Joe," are actual Indigenous tribes named, including Paiute and Shoshone. Presumably, the contemporary "Indians" in the rest of the stories are Paiute.

within *The Basket Woman*, that Alan becomes heir to the southwestern landscape formerly inhabited by the Indian is reinforced by the "vanishing Indian" motif—a belief that was nearly universal in the collections of Indian children's stories, as it was in most writings about the Indian at this time. In the very first story, Alan is appalled by the Indians' living conditions at the campoodie: "living in low, foul huts; their clothes were also dirty, and they sat about on the ground, fat and good-natured . . . it was all very disappointing." His father explains that "Indians are not at all now what they were once," to which Alan bluntly responds, "I do not like Indians the way they are now" (6). The Basket Woman's tales subsequently show Alan the "Indians as they used to be," providing a kind of time travel for both Alan and the child-reader, transporting them to a lost, Indian Golden Age prior to European contact (8). Although Alan's mother believes Indians are "better off as they are now," Alan "was not to be convinced," and he learns from the Basket Woman about how her "people, which were great, have dwindled away" (24). This debate between Alan's real and surrogate mothers works to critique not just modernity but Europeans' colonization of the Americas as a whole.[13] That critique is tempered, however, by yet another story of the Indians "as they used to be," this time a dark tale about the invasion of a neighboring tribe, describing the Indians' subsequent starvation and forced exodus from their lands. Alan finally comes around to his mother's opinion that the "Indians are a great deal better off as they are now" (30). In effect, Alan recognizes that in the past the Indians were also subjected to harsh conditions, from

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[13] Austin was an outspoken critic of the reservation system and the Indian Bureau, which aligned her politically with Eastman and many other members of the Society of American Indians.

which they were at least now somewhat protected, even if they were only a shadow of their former selves. One could read Alan's realization of this darker, unromantic side of the Indians' past as a justification for Alan's and his family's modern-day displacement of the Indians. But regardless of which perspective Alan (or the reader) adopts, the lasting impression from the debate is one of a degraded and vanishing Indian presence in the southwest. In the story, Alan's Indian education through myth, his becoming Indian, effectively ritualizes and legitimates his inheritance of that emptied region.

Gertrude Bonnin's Dakota Legends: Critiquing Colonialism

One of the first publishing companies to sell Indian myths as educational materials was Ginn and Company out of Boston, a textbook publisher founded in 1867. During its first three decades, Ginn and Co. expanded in tandem with the adoption of compulsory schooling in states outside of New England, becoming by the end of the nineteenth century one of the largest textbook publishers in the country, the influence of which reached across the United States (Shapiro 22-28). It was the first company to publish William J. Long's collections of sketches, which, as I already have noted, were widely read at the time. Perhaps encouraged by the success of Long's books, the company then published Judd's *Wigwam Stories*, in the same year that it published Long's *Beasts of the Field*. Also in that same year, 1901, Ginn and Co. published *Old Indian Legends* by Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or as she is known by her pen name, Zitkala-Ša. *Old Indian Legends*, the materials for which Bonnin gathered from "old Dakota story-tellers" and later translated into English, was thus part of a series of Indian-themed texts issued by Ginn and Co., although it was the only one to have been written by an Indigenous person. Both Judd's *Wigwam Stories* and *Old Indian Legends* were

illustrated by the Winnebago artist Angel De Cora, and in reviews in magazines like *The Ladies' Home Journal*, the two works were compared with one another and suggested to parents (along with books by Long, Seton, and Eastman) as "excellent" reading for children (Scovil 36). *Old Indian Legends*, like Eastman's early writing, needs to be understood, therefore, within the context of this budding literary market, as one of a cluster of texts for children that would have been viewed by the public as "Indian." On the one hand, *Old Indian Legends* was surely enabled by the "Indian craze" and the pervasive, racist assumptions about childhood and primitivity examined above, but the book was also unique in subtle yet important ways—in its representation of the Indian and his legends, and especially in its use of the genre to critique colonial behavior. In emphasizing these aspects of Bonnin's writing, my analysis builds on the scholarly reevaluation of "red progressives" in recent years. Rather than simply labelling writers like Bonnin, Eastman, and Arthur C. Parker as "assimilationist," historians such as Kiara M. Vigil have highlighted "the historically contingent strategies they used to engage in Indianness discourse," in some cases "transforming" that discourse through their engagement with it (14, 75). "For any of these Native intellectuals to have a voice in changing Indian political affairs and American cultural formations," Vigil argues, "they needed to be legible as Indian people, which often meant working within fraught permutations of Indianness" (20). As Gale P. Coskan-Johnson notes, "it should not be surprising that [their] resistance was often couched in rhetorics that were possible and effective from within their historical moment." Writers like Bonnin and Eastman "often engaged in the contemporary, racialized, assimilationist, and progressivist rhetoric of their day, and yet close reading often reveals not their victimization by this discourse but

rather complexity and deep, ongoing, active commitments to resisting the oppression of their peoples by the U.S. government." (111).[14] My analysis extends and elucidates these arguments by focusing on how Boninn and Eastman entered public discourse as children's authors.

Bonnin was born on the Yankton Sioux reservation in South Dakota in 1876, and she was raised there by her mother until the age of eight, when she was sent to a Quaker boarding school in Indiana (Davidson and Norris xv-xvi). She began her career as a writer while at Earlham College, publishing poems and articles for the school paper (xvi). Afterward, from 1897-99, Bonnin taught at General Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Upon leaving Carlisle, she began writing legends and autobiographical stories for magazines like *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*; *Old Indian Legends*, her first book, soon followed. According to Vigil, Bonnin "left teaching to try her hand at music and writing, with the hope of circulating her work to a wide range of audiences," and in Boston she found advocates like Joseph Edgar Chamberlain, who "wrote to the editors of the *Atlantic Monthly*, urging them to publish Bonnin's pieces" (178). These early works quickly won her recognition as a writer and as a voice for American Indians, and Ginn and Co. may have even sought out Bonnin for *Old Indian Legends*, since, as Vigil argues, her "autobiographical essays and folktales fit neatly into Ginn's ideology of education" (184). However her book deal came about, it is

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[14] Similarly, Thomas Constantine Maroukis has recently argued that "the assertion that the SAI and many of its members, especially its leaders, were assimilationists, as some have claimed in the past, is no longer tenable. It is clear from modern scholarship, particularly the recent biographies of SAI members and the research for this study, that they were determined to maintain and preserve an Indian identity" (207).

easy to imagine that in being contracted to assemble a collection of Dakota legends for children, Bonnin rightly sensed an opportunity to reach a broad reading public and potentially reshape popular images of the Indian.

Bonnin's collection resembles Judd's, as it does other Indian educational materials in circulation at the time, beyond its mere presentation of Indigenous oral traditions as children's literature. In the preface, for instance, Bonnin wrote,

> These legends are *relics of our country's once virgin soil*. These and many others are the tales the little black-haired aborigine loved so much to hear beside the night fire.
>
> For him the personified elements and other spirits played in a vast world right around the center fire of the wigwam.
>
> Iktomi, the snare weaver, Iya, the Eater, and Old Double-Face are *not wholly fanciful creatures*. There were other worlds of legendary folk for the young aborigine, such as 'The Star-Men of the Sky,' 'The Thunder Birds Blinking Zigzag Lighting,' and 'The Mysterious Spirits of Trees and Flowers.' (5; emphasis mine)

From the start, then, Bonnin employed the nearly omnipresent motif of the vanishing Indian, situating the Indians and their "legends" as "relics" within the distant, undeveloped ("virgin") past. Moreover, Bonnin explained that in that distant past, the "little black-haired aborigine," sitting around the campfire at night, had viewed the fantastical elements and characters of the legends as real, as "not wholly fanciful," thus echoing the arguments of ethnologists from Schoolcraft to Brinton and Powell.[15] Moreover, in today's United States, these "old legends of America," Bonnin wrote, "belong [now] quite as much to the blue-eyed little patriot as to the black-haired

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[15] Animism for Judd, for instance, served as a clear sign of primitivity: "all people, no matter how wild, believe in God; but the wilder the people, the more gods they believe in . . . The red man seemed to believe every stone, every bush, and almost every animal had its manitous or spirit" (219).

aborigine" (5). They had become part of the US child's cultural inheritance, in other words, an argument that Austin would also soon be making in *The Basket Woman*. And much like Austin, Bonnin located the authenticity of her tales in their "spirit" or "character," in the unique perspective they offered to the white child-reader. Although Bonnin grew up hearing similar oral traditions on the Yankton Sioux reservation, for *Old Indian Legends* she interviewed "elders in the Dakota community," recording oral traditions first in Dakota and later translating them into English. On the one hand, her description of this collection method authenticated the legends' Indianness: heard from "old Dakota story-tellers" who told them "under an open sky, nestling close to the earth," the legends were, Bonnin assured readers, truly Indian. In collecting the legends, she had discovered, as she put it, that each version of a tale tended to vary "much in little incidents," but rather than undermining the authenticity of the stories, the variation helped her identify the "original character of the tale," which she believed she had preserved in her English renditions. However much Bonnin herself may have altered the stories' "little incidents," it was this ineffable "character," the "native spirit" of the legends—"transplanted" into the English language "root and all" (5)—that mattered most in terms of their authenticity.

But it is where Bonnin locates the legends' "native spirit," and the kinds of lessons that they impart which distinguishes her collection from Judd's or Austin's. Ruth Spack has previously drawn attention to the subversive qualities of the stories in *Old Indian Legends*, arguing, for example, that through translation Bonnin "softened the language and content" of stories to present a positive image of the Indian and eliminate "the possibility of being translated back" by her reading public as a savage—which may

be the case, especially since in contemporary collections, the Indian, no matter how celebrated for his poetry, was depicted as a primitive. For instance, Long's guide Simmo plays Friday to Long's Robinson Crusoe, muttering in broken English and eating and sleeping profusely.[16] Against such racist representations, Bonnin created more complex, positive portraits of Indianness. But her effort to "soften" the content of her legends did not necessarily distinguish her collection from that of other writers, who, dating back to Mathews, felt the need to sanitize Indigenous oral traditions for Euro-American children.

Spack also argues, however, that by translating Dakota legends into English, Bonnin was using "English to promote Dakota ways of knowing," showing Dakota culture to be "profoundly moral," a reversal of the function of missionary texts, which had for centuries translated Western systems of morality (i.e., Christianity) from European languages into Indigenous ones, on the assumption that Indigenous peoples lacked moral systems (47-48). Bonnin essentially did the opposite, and I agree with Spack on this point, although situating that "promotion" (of a Dakota morality) in relation to texts like Austin's or Judd's, rather than to missionary texts, reveals much more about how Bonnin carefully navigated a literary field that both enabled her work and was a target of its critique. The "native spirit" that defined Bonnin's legends was not, like Austin's myths, a mythical mindset, a tendency to view nature in poetic, fantastical terms. From an educational standpoint, the legends did not function to inculcate a

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[16] For instance, Long writes, "When I asked what Hukweem says when he cries—for all cries of the wilderness have their interpretation—Simmo answered: 'Wy, he say two ting. First he say, Where are you? O where are you? Dass what you call-um his laugh, like he crazy. Denn, wen nobody answer, he say, O I so sorry, so sorry! Ooooo-eee! like woman lost in woods. An' dass his tother cry.'" (*Wilderness* 134-35).

sympathy for nature, to reveal its latent beauty, or to teach lessons about natural history. Given the pervasiveness of such framing statements in other similar works at the time, the absence of them alone in *Old Indian Legends* is a clear indication that its purpose was different, and that it rejected the hierarchical binary between Western science and Indian myth. The lessons of Bonnin's legends really are not even about nature per se, but about relationships among people, about "brotherhood" across races. After stating that the legends "belong" to the little white patriot, Bonnin continued by writing,

> And when [the readers] are grown tall like the wise grown-ups may they not lack interest in a further study of Indian folklore, a study which so strongly suggests our *near kinship with the rest of humanity* and points a steady finger toward the great *brotherhood of mankind*, and by which one is so forcibly impressed with the possible earnestness of life *as seen through the teepee door*! If it be true that much lies 'in the eye of the beholder,' then in the American aborigine as in any other race, sincerity of belief, though it were based upon *mere optical illusion*, demans a little respect. (6; emphasis mine)

Bonnin suggested, therefore, that the "native spirit" of the legends was indeed an Indian perspective, as Austin would later argue. Bonnin's collected legends were, according to her, defined by the way in which they looked at the world—through the "teepee door." Yet the stories that follow, all addressed to the "little reader," center overwhelmingly on greed, gluttony, selfishness, and rapine. Treated in an unmistakably critical light, those themes resonate poignantly with the political and economic situations faced by many American Indians at the time, whose resources had been systematically stripped during the preceding half-century, first through removal and the reservation system, and then because of the Dawes Severalty Act. Left to the so-called protection of Indian Bureau agents, and harassed by land speculators and encroaching homesteaders, many American Indians at the turn of the century believed there was no end to Euro-Americans' greed,

nor to the lengths they would go to satiate it. Bonnin experienced that greed firsthand on the Yankton reservation, where "white robbers" and "white beggars," as her mother called them, had swarmed the area to stake out land claims; meanwhile, her family and kin were left without any legal recourse to make complaints ("An Indian Teacher" 109-10). Whatever original significations Bonnin's "legends" had within the context of Dakota society, Bonnin obviously intended them (through translation, but also through the very selection of those specific oral traditions) to mean something for her "little [white] readers." And the lessons that stand out most clearly in the stories—by no means childish—are critiques of immoral, often violent acts committed by one "tribe" of animals against another—or similarly, immoral acts committed by Iktomi, the trickster, against his various animal neighbors.

In "Iktomi and the Muskrat," for example, Iktomi violates "the customs of the plains people," first by refusing to share his meal with a hungry muskrat, and then by trying to trick the muskrat out of sharing it with him, for which Iktomi is subsequently punished (16). The "customs" dictating that Iktomi share his meal likely extended from, on the one hand, the Dakota kinship system known as *tiyospaye*, which Spack has argued is at the heart of the moral system articulated in *Old Indian Legends*.[17] *Tiyospaya* was the building block of traditional Dakota society, a socio-moral system that expected members of a tribal clan to share resources and contribute to their community in numerous ways,

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[17] Stories like "The Toad and the Woman," for instance, stress the importance of family and kinship. That particular story, in which an infant son is stolen from, and then reunited with, his family, speaks in interesting ways to Bonnin's account of being taken away from her mother by missionaries. Part of "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," that account was published in the Atlantic in 1900, a year before *Old Indian Legends*.

out of kinship obligations (Ella C. Deloria 33). Closely related to *tiyospaye* is the Dakota concept of *mitakuye oyasin*, which refers to the interconnectedness of all living things. The phrase is still often used in prayers to mean "for all my relations" (Kidwell et al. 50). In this case, "relations," however, refers not only to immediate and extended family but to the tribe and the nation as whole. According to Clara Sue Kidwell et al., the phrase extends even to "all the nations of Two-Leggeds in the world and, in the ever-expanding circle, all the nations other than Two-Leggeds--the Four-Leggeds, the Wingeds, and all the Living-Moving Things of the Earth," so that a better translation would be "for all the above me and below me and around me things" (51). Bonnin stressed this interrelatedness, and the respect which it demanded, among the members of the "two-legged" tribes, despite the predominance of animal characters in her stories. *Mitakuye oyasin* can be seen, therefore, as having provided a moral foundation from which Bonnin taught her "little reader" about the importance of treating members of another human "tribe" (that is, nation or race) justly.

"The Badger and the Bear," which is a kind of invasion story, is a good example of this lesson. In the story, a family of badgers offers food and shelter to a hungry, sick bear, who upon regaining his health and strength, forcibly, and remorselessly, removes the badgers from their home, moving in his own family in their stead. Consequently, the badgers, who now have no shelter and no way of obtaining food, starve in the cold. Like Iktomi, the father bear in the story has abused the "customs of the plains people" by taking advantage of the hospitality he initially received from the badgers, and for that he is ultimately punished. Rather than offering insight into the behavior of actual badgers or bears, the story very clearly makes a moral argument about the treatment of people by

other people, a fact reinforced in the original text by De Cora's illustrations—for instance, following a description of the badger family broiling venison over a bed of coals, there was a full-page illustration of an Indian woman in a teepee, surrounded by her family, also cooking food over a fire. Thus, in a sense, Bonnin needed to be taken at her word when she stated in the preface that the actors in her stories were "not wholly fanciful creatures." Similarly, her suggestion that the beliefs of the Dakota people, although "sincere," were "based upon mere optical illusion" assumes new significance considering the stories' lessons. At first glance, that is, the preface appears to be a concession to ethnologists and popular writers who argued that the Indians, through their mythology, had confused fiction with fact—believing, childishly, that metaphors, symbols, and personified elements were literal. Bonnin's legends prove to be "illusory" in a different sense, relying on allegory to erase the line between animal and human, fiction and reality, sometimes in quite subtle ways.

Both Bonnin and Eastman, for example, wrote versions of the "Badger and the Bear," each of which refers to an ugly cub in the bear family, who, much like the badger family, is mistreated by his bear relatives. Bonnin included an extra detail in her version, however, which is absent from Eastman's—the hair of the ugly cub "was dry and dingy," resembling "kinky wool." Always laughed at by his brothers, this ugly cub with kinky, wool-like hair "could not help being himself . . . could not change the differences between himself and his brothers." And because of his mistreatment, the cub is unable to laugh, like his brothers, at the plight of the badgers, opting instead to sneak them food from his family's scraps. It does not seem a stretch, to me, to imagine that Bonnin was using the ugly cub to speak indirectly about the condition of African Americans in the

United States, and thus drawing parallels between the injustices faced by African Americans and those faced by American Indians—an acknowledgement that they shared a common oppressor and a common struggle. And even in the absence of such a specific interpretation, the "Badger and the Bear," like other stories in Bonnin's collection, instills a powerful anticolonial lesson regarding the exploitation of those who are different and weaker than oneself, a lesson that at the time spoke to the mistreatment of poor, disenfranchised, minority groups across the United States and around the world.

This anticolonial critique, conveyed in this case indirectly to children through the vehicle of Indian "legends," became much more explicit in Bonnin's later writings, especially once she took over editorial duties for *American Indian Magazine* (*AIM*), which was the publishing arm of the Society of American Indians (SAI). In articles in *AIM*, for instance, Bonnin connected the political struggles of American Indians to those faced by all "small peoples of the earth," whose "rights" the larger nations had failed to recognize. In an editorial in 1919, Bonnin used the Paris Peace Conference as an opportunity to elaborate on these views, challenging those Americans who would support the rights of small nations abroad to show the same support for oppressed Indigenous nations at home. The very fact that the "small nations and remnants of nations" had finally been "granted the right of self determination" and were sitting down at the "Peace Table" alongside "their great allies" was an auspicious sign for "little peoples" everywhere. The struggles of these "little peoples" were universal, Bonnin argued. Although "man-made laws and aims" might artificially divide "human interests into domestic and international affairs," leaders could not ignore the "eternal fact that humanity is essentially one undivided, closely intertwined fabric . . ." (91). The "two-

leggeds," to use Kidwell's term, represented one great brotherhood in Bonnin's eyes, so that the "universal cry for freedom from injustice" was in reality "the voice of a multitude united by afflictions" (92). Bonnin finished the editorial by noting that labor organizers, "Women of the world," the Japanese, and the "Black man of America," among others, were all seeking representation at the conference, begging the question of who would represent the American Indians—the same Indians who had sent their young men to fight and die in the Great War, and yet were denied citizenship at home.

Bonnin, like other prominent members of the SAI, was politically and rhetorically savvy, and as scholars today have recognized, she was able to "navigate a fine line that divided but also linked her criticism of American culture with her celebration of it" (Vigil 167). Bonnin made appeals to patriotic sentiment and other dominant ideas and values, including the "Indian craze" and its primitivism, to forward her own arguments and political agendas. The Paris Peace Conference provided her an excellent occasion to advocate for American Indian citizenship, which was at the forefront of the SAI's goals, but her arguments were not merely opportunistic, not merely rhetorical. In relation to Bonnin's (re)writing of Dakota legends at the outset of her career, her editorial, which she wrote while acting as the mouthpiece of the SAI, reveals the consistency of her thought and moral perspective, a deep-seeded and sincere Dakota belief in human brotherhood and the rights and respect that such kinship entailed.

Charles Eastman's Dakota Stories: From Science to Moral Philosophy

Bonnin's belief in the "fact" of human brotherhood was shared by Eastman, or Ohiyesa, a fellow Dakota, who served as president of the SAI while Bonnin edited *AIM*. And like Bonnin, Eastman began his prolific two-decade-plus writing career as an author

of children's literature. Eastman's first book, *Indian Boyhood* (1902), was a recollection of his childhood, focused on his traditional education as a Dakota. He soon followed it with *Red Hunters and the Animal People* (1904), a collection of animal short stories in the vein of Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* (1898) and London's novel *The Call of the Wild* (1903). Eastman then published two collections of "Sioux folk tales" for children, *Old Indian Days* (1907) and *Wigwam Evenings* (1909); these in turn were followed by a book on Indian religion, *The Soul of an Indian* (1911), as well as a guide for the BSA and Camp Fire Girls, groups that he co-founded along with Seton. Eastman's final two books assessed American Indians' past, present, and future in the United States, *The Indian To-day* (1915) and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916). Before becoming, as Robert Warrior has called him, "the most influential American Indian writer of his time" (237), Eastman trained as a physician, however, and briefly pursued a career in medicine. When that career faltered, he experimented even more briefly with ethnological writing, but like Bonnin he was quickly drawn into the world of popular literature and launched into the national spotlight in part by the strength of the new market for authentic Indian stories for children, to which his writings were explicitly tailored. For example, Charles's wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, who was a poet and novelist herself, and who edited Charles's writings, described the "folk tales" Charles (re)wrote for *Wigwam Evenings* as "the unwritten school-book of the wilderness . . . gathered together for the children of to-day." (Re)written for the children of "an alien race," the stories had been adapted to (selected, abbreviated, and altered for) "the demands of the American school and fireside." They were suitable, Elaine wrote, for reading aloud by the fire to any child aged five and upwards; alternatively, they could be

read in the classroom by children aged nine to eleven. But like Bonnin's legends, Eastman's stories often taught explicitly moral lessons which were intended to prepare young readers for leading an ethical life, rather than inculcating a love of nature or, even further from their purpose, advancing white children along an evolutionary path by supposedly placing them in contact with the primitive (in the form of the fictional Indian, but also in the form of a primitive, "mythical mindset"). As Smoky Day, the narrator of *Wigwam Evenings*, put it, the "old stories . . . teach the way of life" (5), and the Euro-American child-reader, like Smoky Day's imaginary Indian auditors, was asked to "remember" that the each of the characters of the stories "really represents a man, and the special weakness of each should remind us to inquire of our own weakness" (34). To that end, each tale contained a pointed lesson, implicit in the original oral traditions, which taught white children, for example, not to "keep two faces," one for strangers and another for those at home. "We must not only remember and repeat" the old legends, Smoky Day stressed, "but we must consider and follow their teachings, for it is so that these legends that have come down to us from the old time are kept alive by each new generation" (234-35). And that speaks to Eastman's larger goals in (re)writing Dakota oral traditions: to imbue modern US culture with the philosophy, the "spirit," of the American Indian, and thereby reshape US society. A sharp critic of early-twentieth century US capitalism, Eastman relied on Indian philosophical teachings, embedded in Dakota oral traditions, as a counterbalance to the intense materialism, individualism, and competitiveness of the age. The "School of Savagery," he explained in *Indian Scout Talks* (1914), "is no haphazard thing, but a system of education" capable of preparing the child for "civilized life," namely by instilling a sense of duty and friendship and thus a love that extended

beyond self (188). “Let us have more of this spirit of the American Indian,” Eastman wrote, “to leaven the brilliant selfishness of our modern civilization!” (190). Like Bonnin, he sought to capture the “native spirit” in his writing and impress it upon his “little readers.”

However, I want to explore the differences and not just the similarities between Eastman’s and Bonnin’s approaches to (re)writing oral traditions, as they suggest the range of discursive options and rhetorical strategies that opened up, at the turn of the twentieth century, to an Indian writer committed to reform and to an Indian future in the United States. Specifically, I will be tracking Eastman’s early attempts to (re)write oral traditions as a body of scientific knowledge, and how that led ultimately to his emphasis on their moral-philosophical dimensions.

Eastman was a Santee Dakota, whose immediate family was broken apart by the Dakota War of 1862. He was raised by his grandmother and uncle in Canada for fifteen years, at which point he was reunited with his brothers and his father, who for years had been presumed dead. Ohiyesa, under pressure from his father to adopt a Euro-American lifestyle, was sent to a mission school along with his brother, and he and his family adopted the surname Eastman, after Charles’s grandfather, illustrator Seth Eastman. Following his early success in school, Charles attended Beloit and Knox colleges and finally Dartmouth, where he became a minor celebrity. After Dartmouth, Eastman studied medicine in Boston and finally returned to Dakota territory to work as a physician, which is where he met his wife, Elaine Goodale, who had arrived there to open a reservation school. Together the couple relocated to St. Paul, Minnesota, and Eastman opened a medical practice while Elaine assumed the main duties of child-rearing. According to

Elaine's biographer, David Sargent, Charles's failure to support his family through his medical practice "gave him the time for what would eventually become his primary occupation—writing."

Elaine, "impressed with the stories of his boyhood" that Charles recounted orally for their young daughter, Dora, encouraged her husband to write them down and submit them for publication, and in 1893-94 they appeared in a six-part series in *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*, a magazine in which Elaine had previously had success publishing her poems (Sargent 58). These childhood recollections, including tales Eastman grew up hearing from Smoky Day, a Santee storyteller, formed the nucleus that became *Indian Boyhood*, Eastman's first major literary success. However, around the same time that he was describing his Indian childhood for the young readers of *St. Nicholas*, Eastman wrote two essays of an ethnological nature, "A midsummer Feast of the Santee Sioux," published in the *Christian Union*, and "The Sioux Mythology," published in *Popular Science Monthly* (*PSM*). The latter is especially interesting as it demonstrates Eastman's familiarity with ethnology's science of Indian myth and folklore, as well as his experimentation with writing about Indians and oral traditions as an ethnologist. In the article, Eastman explained that "the tendency of the uncivilized and untutored mind is to recognize the Deity through some visible medium," meaning nature (88). "Freed from the burdensome theories of science and theology," the inherently logical mind of the Indian sensed a "power behind every natural force," and was thus "impressed powerfully by God's omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence," which he articulated through his myths (88). Eastman, as Parker later would, essentially recapitulated the beliefs of men like Brinton and Powell, who had insisted on the psychic

unity of humankind as well as the primitive's natural tendency to represent his sincere but puerile ideas about nature and God in animistic terms, through the language of fiction. Eastman had clearly read Brinton's or Powell's work on mythology or work like it—men such as Franz Boas, Horatio Hale, and William J. McGee (of the BAE) all routinely published in *PSM*, for instance, and earlier that year (1893), a lengthy review of US folklore studies appeared in *PSM*, underscoring the richness of Indian myth and folklore in the United States. And in the very same issue of *PSM* in which "Sioux Mythology" appeared, James Sully published an article on child psychology and myth, comparing the child's mind to primitive systems of thought. My point here is that Eastman would have been well-aware of ethnology's views of both the Indian and his oral traditions. Moreover, Eastman was undoubtedly aware of the opportunities that ethnology presented him, as a Western educated American Indian, to write as an authority about his culture—just as ethnological study had for people like George Copway, and as it soon would for Parker, Eastman's contemporary.

But Eastman, who lacked the advanced professional training that would soon become a requirement in the field, ultimately chose to write about Indians "from the human, not the ethnological standpoint," as he put it in *Soul of the Indian*.[18] That decision was not so much a result of a lack of education, however, as it was a willful rejection of ethnology's perspective of him and his culture, which, as I hope to demonstrate, was

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[18] Without professional training, Eastman could only really ever work as an informant, perhaps a collaborator. And indeed he was commissioned by George Gustav Heye and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania to "purchase rare curios and ethnological specimens," including two birch bark canoes, but also "some very old stories" (*From the Deep* 166; Martinez 74).

evident in Eastman's development of the children's Indian story. Nonetheless, Eastman's rejection of the "ethnological standpoint" did not mean that he was able to escape the logic of primitivism. As Christopher J. Pexa argues, through his writing and public appearances, Eastman often "reproduced the colonial binaries of savage/civilized, nature/culture" (653). In the first issue of "Recollections of the Wild Life" in *St. Nicholas*, for instance, Eastman celebrated the Indian mode of education over the modern, Western one, writing that "the children of uncivilized nations . . . hear very little from their parents that can be called instruction, what they receive coming direct from Nature—the greatest schoolmistress of all" (129). At the start of *Indian Boyhood*, Eastman similarly claimed that "those remnants which now dwell upon the reservations present only a sort of tableau—a fictitious copy of the past," of the "thrilling wild life" that he had experienced in his youth, but which was now forever gone. Eastman, in other words, gave his readers what they desired—an idealized image of the lost primitive, an Indian child of nature. But whereas Bonnin's Dakota legends gestured only superficially to the notion that Indian stories could reconnect white children to nature and to the primitive, Eastman fully developed that logic, manipulating it, however, to his own ends. Deloria has argued that such acts of "mimicry," in this case of white expectations for Indianness, indicate "how little cultural capital Indian people possessed at the time," even when that mimicry sought to "redefine" those expectations (126). While that may be true, I do not agree that Eastman was merely, or primarily "miming Indianness back at Americans." Rather, his invocation of familiar concepts like the vanishing Indian, and his use of popular genres like the Indian children's story in essence sanctioned his efforts to record Dakota oral traditions and thereby bring an Indigenous perspective before the

general public, a perspective that directly contradicted the concepts and genres that enabled it in the first place. That is especially evident in *Red Hunters*, a book that needs to be read not only in the context of the (then) new literary field of children's Indian stories, but that of the "nature fakers" debate which erupted in connection with it.

Lutz explains that in the 1890s "a new kind of nature writing" appeared, "the 'realistic' wild animal story," precedents for which included Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894) as well as Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877) (32). Seton was, according to Lutz, the first and best known of the authors of this new kind of fiction, and his adventurous animal tales fueled the "public's appetite for wild animal stories," to which writers like London responded (35). The "debate" over this new genre broke out in 1903 when naturalist John Burroughs' article "Real and Sham Natural History" was published in the *Atlantic*. Burroughs decried the recent onslaught of nature-books "written to meet a fancied popular demand," and he called out Long and Seton in particular, charging them both with producing "sham" natural history. In their works "the line between fact and fiction is repeatedly crossed," Burroughs chaffed; not only that, but "a deliberate attempt is made to induce the reader to cross, too, and to work such a spell upon him that he shall not know that he has crossed and is in the land of make-believe" (300). As David Sumner explains, fiction itself was fine for Burroughs, but not when it passed itself off as fact (41). In specific, Burroughs disputed the idea, advanced in the "nature faker" stories, that animals taught survival behaviors to their young, as opposed to acting on instinct. For Burroughs, it was anthropomorphizing at its worst. Seton, for instance, had argued that "we and the beasts are kin. Man has nothing that the animals have not at least a vestige of, the animals have nothing that man does not in some degree

share." Meanwhile, Long spoke of the fox's "education" in "fox ways," and argued that the beaver's building habits were "primarily a matter of instinct," yet not "blind" instinct; some dams displayed "wonderful skill," and while "building is instinctive, skillful building was the result of practice and experience," he concluded (94-95). The vitriol of Burroughs's criticisms led to a spirited defense from Long, and it drew in outside commentators, including President Theodore Roosevelt, who wrote to Burroughs in support of his views. On the other side of the debate, Long argued, and his readers surely agreed, that science and the interpretation of nature were not the same thing, the latter being literary and philosophical, the subject of "poets and prophets and thinkers," not scientists (qtd. in Sumner 42). In contrast to the generalizations of scientists, which saw animals in the abstract and in the collective, the careful observation of individual animals revealed, Long argued, that many of them did in fact model and reinforce certain behaviors for their young, even if they already possessed an instinctual predisposition for those behaviors.

I am not especially interested here in the veracity of either side's claims; rather, I want to examine how the debate carried certain implications for how Indigenous oral traditions were understood. Lutz frames the nature-fakers debate as a "conflict between science and sentiment as methods of understanding and appreciating the lives of the creatures of field, forest, and our own backyard," a kind of renewed battle between Romantics and positivists (3). And although it was certainly that, the debate also echoes in fascinating ways ethnologists' discussions of Indian myths, through which Indians had supposedly confused fiction and fact. Moreover, the idea, championed by Long (as it was also by Judd and Austin and others), that there was an alternative, poetic approach to

understanding the natural world was closely associated with the Indian and his myths, as I have already demonstrated. Indian children's stories were at the heart of the nature-writing phenomenon. The links, therefore, connecting this new story-form and ethnology and the "Indian craze," the Indian myth in particular, have not been adequately acknowledged. But those connections, and the implications of the nature-fakers debate, undoubtedly stood out to Eastman, who modeled *Red Hunters* directly on Long's sketches and Seton's stories, with which reviewers frequently compared *Red Hunters*. The debate between Burroughs and the "nature fakers" over whether animals acted on pure instinct or taught certain behaviors to their young provided an entry point into the discussion for Eastman, who used that debate to revise the image of the Indian as a wild animal, as he also used it to refute the notion that oral traditions were primitive attempts at natural history.

Whereas ethnologists claimed that Indian myth was a primitive version of science, an early attempt by man to represent (subjectively and inaccurately) the natural world, Eastman argued that the oral traditions with which he had grown up were "science," as he put it in *Indian Boyhood.* His uncle, Eastman explained, who "with education . . . might have been a Darwin or an Agassiz," used to "catechize" him about his observations of the natural world. That education, as Eastman described it, was intimately connected to Dakota oral traditions, both the "myths or fairy stories" as well as the ones about historical people and events, which Eastman and other young Dakota "scholars" were expected to memorize. Some of these oral traditions taught tribal or family history, or they helped young Dakotas to identify members of other regional tribes (by the feathers they wore, for instance), or they instilled important survival lessons, such as the danger of

the hoot of an owl, which was "commonly imitated by Indian scouts when on the war-path." Oral traditions also conveyed ecological knowledge: as Eastman later explained in the introduction to Elaine's *Indian Legends Retold* (1919), "the first Indian legends, repeated by the fireside to children, deal with the animals humanized, their gifts and their weaknesses, in such a way as to be a lesson to the young" (vii). Hunting songs introduced children to the various animals, which they soon learned to classify into their respective "tribes," and the hunting adventures of family members, such as the ones Eastman's uncle told him, described for young Dakota boys the habits of wildlife so that they too might one day become successful hunters. Oral tradition, as Eastman presented it, was, in short, an important source of knowledge for the Dakotas and not simply make-believe. This depiction of oral traditions as a practical and essential body of knowledge revised (and contradicted) his earlier claims that Indian children did not learn through formal instruction but through their "schoolmistress," mother nature; it is indicative, as such, of how Eastman appealed to prevailing colonial structures of thought and then proceeded to systematically undermine them.

In *Red Hunters*, Eastman transformed his Dakota education, including the oral traditions he grew up hearing, into short, "realistic" stories about animals. On the one hand, the stories were informed by a core belief that the animals were the Indians' "brothers," as taught to the Dakota youth through their "legends." According to the Dakota, Eastman explained, all creatures, humans included, derived from the same source, the "Great Mystery," which was proven by the fact that animals, like humans, obeyed the "laws" of life; they thus deserved respect and "homage," even when killed (v-vi). Like Bonnin, then, Eastman's stories were informed by *tiyospaye* and *mitakuye*

oyasin, as Pexa has also argued (654). Moreover, the details of the individual stories in *Red Hunters* were based on "the common experiences and observations" of living Indians; the "main incidents," Eastman explained, even when seemingly "unusual" or "incredible to the white man," were "actually current among the Sioux and deemed by them worthy of belief." The stories in *Red Hunters* took inspiration, therefore, from "myths," the stories of the timeless past—and in some cases included "fables, songs, and superstitious fancies"—but they also pulled from oral traditions about "real" historical events. Eastman gives his stories a historical setting, sometime "before 1870," when game was plenty and the "Red men" still lived the life Eastman "knew as a boy" (viii); geographically, the stories are all set in the "great Northwest" homeland of the Sioux, in present day North and South Dakota and in Minnesota, and they refer to "familiar features" of that region. In this way, Eastman established the verisimilitude of his animal stories for his readers, but he also made them "true" from the perspective of Dakota oral traditions, which, like those of many other American Indians, were divided into two broad categories: sacred stories set in a timeless past and "true" stories set in specific historical moments and places and featuring historical men and women.

The collection reads like a short-story cycle, with each story focusing on a specific animal and relating an event or series of adventures in the "life story" of that animal, who may have previously appeared in the periphery of a tale, or who sometimes makes an appearance later in the collection. In the process, the stories teach the "customs" of the particular "tribe" to which an animal belongs, making them not just entertaining but educational, much like Long's sketches. The first story in the collection, for example, "The Great Cat's Nursery," focuses on Igmutanka, the mountain lion. It

follows a mother lion in her efforts to secure her kittens food and to protect them from the "wild men" hunting in the region. Like other stories in *Red Hunters*, "The Great Cat's Nursery" uses third-person narration to describe events from the perspective of the featured animal, in this case, Igmu, whose hunting and reproductive habits, as well as her enemies, fears, needs, etc., the reader learns about through the narrative. Igmu, for instance, wounded by an arrow, applies "all the remedies known to her family," first rolling on the ground and "licking the wound thoroughly," then rubbing it against pine pitch, which she also then licks off her fur (12). Similarly, on retrieving her half-eaten kill from Mato, the bear, Igmu leaves the "polluted" meat, unable to "break the custom of her people" by consuming what had been partially eaten by another animal (18). Igmutanka "custom" also dictated that she not "re-enter the home from which she had been forced to flee," but instead find another shelter (20-21). "Custom," like "law," thus serves in the collection as a stand-in for instinct, as the stories teach readers about the unique habits of American wildlife, such as the symbiotic relationship between prairie dogs and rattlesnakes, or the buffalo's defense strategies against the wolf.

Eastman's approach to (re)writing oral traditions as "realistic" animal stories is comparable in some ways, therefore, to what I examined in the previous chapter in the work of ethnologists like Cushing or Brinton, who through the analysis of myths (re)wrote them in the language of science, revealing the "real" observations about nature at their cores. But Eastman's strategy is unique. Like "custom," for example, "tribe" and "nation" become stands-in in the collection for "species," and "medicine," which is defined at one point as "magic," refers to the worldly strengths or capabilities of each "tribe," as opposed to something supernatural. Hootay, the grizzly bear, for instance,

possesses "good war-medicine" as well as "root-medicine," knowing what to eat and where to find it when he is weak (160). By establishing parity between a scientific concept like "instinct" and "custom," the latter of which in this case (although in English) is obviously meant to signify the Dakota concept for "instinct," Eastman suggested that oral traditions were legitimate works of natural history, not poetic interpretations (distortions) of nature, the hidden reality of which needed to be unearthed by ethnologists through symbolic analysis. Eastman makes that argument implicitly in "The Dance of the Little People," for example, which depicts Indian children learning about the "ways" of the field mice, or "little folk," through a legend told to them by Padanee, their "savage school-teacher" (53). Through such distancing—setting a Dakota "legend" within a realistic story, itself within a collection of realistic animal stories—Eastman situated oral traditions as the foundation for the naturalistic knowledge in the collection, showing Dakota stories to be, although fanciful, always already edifying in regard to the ecology of the region.

Eastman also blurred the line, however, between instinct and thought, indicating that his conception of "instinct" in *Red Hunters* was more complex than the usual one meaning an automated, inherited response. Igmu, for instance, "remembering" her "cached deer," sets out to retrieve her kill; on the way she becomes distracted by fresh deer-tracks, which, "with *the instinct* of a hunter, she paused to examine, half inclined to follow them, but *a second thought* apparently impelled her to hurry on to her cache" (15; emphasis mine). "Instinct" in *Red Hunters* is closely related, therefore, to "thought," and vice versa. The animals in Eastman's stories are certainly instinctual, but they also possess intent, agency, revealing the "human side of animal life," as one reviewer put it.

For example, Eastman, in a clear allusion to Long's work, described how beavers, the "river people," teach their "valuable experience" of dam building to their "immediate family," a knowledge which not all beavers possess equally (177). Just as Long had argued, the ability to skillfully build a dam was inherited through experience and modeling rather than just blood. Described outright as "people," many of the animals in Eastman's stories construct dwellings, "towns" even, and raise their children side-by-side with the "Red hunters," suggesting an equivalence between animals and Indians. In one sense, then, Eastman represented Indians as "wild," as yet another animal living within the natural landscape, but by underscoring the "human side" to animal life, he also undermined conventional notions of wildness. As Pexa argues, the insistence on "essential differences between human beings and animals" functions as "an analogue to categories of race by which Euro-Americans historically viewed indigenous peoples as savage, less than human," a view which the collection deconstructs. It is not simply the case that "wild" for Eastman carried a positive rather than a negative connotation, as it did for many Euro-Americans obsessed with Indianness; rather, "wild," and by association "primitive," signified something much more sophisticated than previously imagined.

Eastman thereby complicated standard understandings of animism as well. According to ethnologists like Powell, the attribution of soul or agency to the natural world derived from an "analogic," subjective mental state, in which primitive people ascribed (wrongly) their own human characteristics to the world around them. Such thinking, Powell believed, was the very foundation of myth, the stories of "grand personification," and it was the antithesis of science, which sought to understand the

world objectively, identifying objects' "essential" qualities (101). Eastman's stories imply that the Indian's tendency to see the world through "analogic" relationships, and to personify nature, had in fact a scientific basis. In "The River People," for example, Eastman described how the "wild Indians" believed that the beavers recited, like themselves, "legends to their children and grandchildren" in the "long winter nights," thereby passing on their experiences to their young. For Eastman, the Indians' anthropomorphizing of the beavers was not the expression of a poetic imagination, but simply a recognition of how beavers engaged in complex, partially learned behaviors, which were comparable to those of humans. Regarding the beavers, Eastman wrote, "there are certain traits and instincts that are very strong in family and tribe, because they refer to conditions that never change," but there are "some things [that] do not remain in the blood," that need to be taught and reinforced. Animism was valid, scientifically, in other words, because animals could be shown to possess agency and inherited knowledge. Eastman had effectively repurposed the debate over animal instinct versus education, and Long's arguments in specific, to lend them new resonances in relation to ethnology's assumptions pertaining to Indians and their oral traditions.

This blurred line between animals and people culminates in a discussion among a group of Indian hunters in the closing chapter. As the men debate whether animals have the ability to speak, reason, and educate, they refer as evidence to the "traditions of the old hunters as they have been handed down from [their] fathers," as well as to what they themselves "have seen and know" to be true (225). One man argues that animals act on pure instinct—"the fawn hides because it is its nature to hide, not because the mother has instructed it" (228)—whereas the others cite instances of "teaching" among animals, as

with people, noting how "even a baby who has no mother after a while forgets to take the breast when one is offered to him" (235). "It is teaching that keeps man truly man and keeps up the habits and practices of his ancestors. It is even so with the animals," who "depend for their proper skill and development upon the mother influence, encouragement and warning, the example constantly set before them which leads them to emulate and even surpass their elders" (236). According to the hunters, oral traditions were what made the Indians "people" and not savages, as those traditions taught them to recognize "the rights" of other, four-legged and winged "people," and thus how to act as "good" people within a shared environment. And there are several references in the collection to "bad people," like the buffalo, who fail "to respect the laws and customs of any other nation," inconsiderately trampling their homes and habitats (182). In representing a pre-colonial, "complex network of nations whose boundaries were continually made, transgressed, and reasserted," Eastman, Pexa argues, advocated "kinship practices that were quite literally outlawed under federal Indian law" (656). *Red Hunters*, Pexa writes, "recognizes multiple national centers—indeed, a vast field of nations made up of human and animal collectives . . ." (665). This vision of a pluralistic society based in kinship stood in stark contrast to that of the United States—expansionist, racist, hegemonic—which the stories allude to implicitly and explicitly.

In "A Founder of Ten Towns," for example, Eastman described how the prairie dog, that "true pioneer," continually exhausts its resources and is forced to move and rebuild. In the story, the prairie dog Pezpeza's final town is located next to a Dakota burial ground, which, as the town becomes a city, Pezpeza's descendants desecrate, resulting (justifiably, it is implied) in retaliation from the Red Men, who destroy the

prairie dog colony (140-41). In light of such characterizations, the "wild man" appears much more civilized than the "paleface," who "want[ed] the whole world for himself," ignoring, like the prairie dog, the rights of other people around him (245). The "paleface" lacked adequate (Indian) education, that is, which the stories themselves were intended to correct. In addition, then, to revising the meaning of "wild," Eastman also inverted the positions of Indians and Euro-Americans within the binary of savage-civilized, as he would later do even more explicitly, employing terms like the "barbarians of civilization" to refer to white people (*The Indian* 106). And it is this characteristic that fundamentally distinguishes *Red Hunters* from Long's and Seton's writings. The nature fakers' arguments regarding the humanity of animals, and the interest in those arguments generated among the general public, certainly provided a foundation for Eastman to challenge the assumption, put forward by ethnologists, that oral traditions were fictional and thus un-scientific, or unreal. But the anticolonial messages in his stories also refuted the lessons of the nature fakers, Seton in particular.

Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known* was incredibly popular at the time Eastman was writing, and according to Lutz, the first story of the collection, "Lobo, The King of Currumpaw"—about a hard-to-kill wolf that Seton himself was supposedly contracted to trap—quickly "became a classic" of the genre (35). Lobo, as Seton describes him, was an actual wolf, the "gigantic leader of a remarkable pack of gray wolves, that had ravaged the Currumpaw Valley for a number of years." "All the shepherds and ranchmen there knew him well," Seton wrote, "and wherever he appeared with his trusty band, terror reigned supreme among the cattle, and wrath and despair among their owners." The story's plot revolves around the ranchers' unsuccessful attempts to kill the "Grand old

outlaw," whom Seton respects, but who nonetheless must be extinguished for civilization to flourish in the New Mexico valley. The parallels between Lobo and the Indian, at least within the public imagination, would have been as obvious then as they are now, and they would have certainly been obvious to someone like Eastman, whose mission it was to transform the popular image of the Indian. It is highly significant, then, that *Red Hunters* included the story "On Wolf Mountain," about a pack of wolves who are harassed and "driven away from their den" by the "paleface in the Big Horn valley" (24). The story entirely reverses the logic of "Lobo" by writing from the perspective of the wolves, whom the Dakota viewed as their brothers. From the standpoint of the wolves, they were not the ravagers; rather, the white men of the valley "had no right to encroach upon their hunting-grounds" (24). The "hair-faced man" had arrived suddenly among them and laid "waste [to] the forests and [torn] up the very earth about his dwelling, while his creatures devoured the herbage of the plain" (29). Unlike the "man with hair on his face," the Red Man, Eastman explained, lived side-by-side with the "wolf people," "their brothers," and in turn the wolves "regarded [them] with toleration" (29). Later in the collection, in "Hootay of the Little Rosebud," Eastman even described how Indians and wolves relied on one another for hunting, with the wolf leading the Indian to game, and the Indian in turn leaving meat for the wolf. Their relationship, although not entirely friendly, was reciprocal and respectful, despite their being from different "tribes." And in this way, Eastman positioned the white settlers' behavior as not just unnatural, but uncivilized, according to Dakota ethics. Readers in turn were meant to sympathize with the wolves in the story as they launched a war against the interlopers (30). Importantly, that war was

not just in "defence of [the wolf's] country, the home of his race," but "that of the Red man" as well.

Whereas Eastman's criticisms and revisions of ethnology's representation of Indigenous oral traditions play out in subtle ways in the text, the moral, anticolonial arguments of *Red Hunters* were explicit and quite poignant, even (or especially) when one considers that the book's intended audience was children. And it was the moral-philosophical dimensions of Indigenous oral traditions that Eastman would choose to emphasize in later texts, as he largely abandoned the effort to reveal to readers the scientific validity of Dakota oral traditions. "Upon [oral tradition's] hoary wisdom of proverb and fable, its mystic and legendary lore thus sacredly preserved and transmitted from father to son, was based in large part our customs and philosophy," he wrote (*The Soul*). It is ultimately impossible to know why Eastman took this route. Deloria has argued that "playing Indian" before the public could easily backfire and "reaffirm" negative stereotypes "for a stubborn white audience, making Indianness an even more powerful construct and creating a circular, reinforcing catch-22 of meaning that would prove difficult to circumvent" (126). It may be that emphasizing the scientific basis of oral traditions too closely resembled the arguments of ethnologists like Cushing or Brinton, or perhaps it simply did not adequately address the needs of American Indians at that moment in time. In stressing the moral lessons of Indigenous oral traditions, Eastman was able not only to create a respectful image of Indians, but to forcefully attack US society's treatment of the Indian. Rather than highlighting the scientific legitimacy of Dakota oral traditions, Eastman began critiquing the supposed infallibility of Western science and its superiority over other systems of knowledge, placing oral traditions (as

philosophy) in hierarchical opposition to it. He thus fell back on the binary of myth-science created by men like Powell and Brinton, but he inverted the hierarchy of the terms. In the first place, Eastman argued, "American Indian myths and hero stories" were equally "as credible as those of the Hebrews of old," but even "science has not explained everything," and when confronted with the great mysteries of life, "our attitude," he wrote, "cannot be very unlike that of the natural philosopher [the Indian], who beholds with awe the Divine in all creation." Indian "philosophy" succeeded, moreover, where "the scientific doctrine of man's descent" had failed to "increase the white man's respect for . . . our humbler kin." It offered a better model, in other words, for how to live in the modern world, and especially for how to treat other "people," including non-humans.

The Indian's "Holy Book," a "mingling of history, poetry, and prophecy, of precept and folklore," was, as a system of moral philosophy, not only equally as valid as Christianity, Eastman argued, but more Christian than modern "Christian civilization," which Eastman claimed did not even exist as such. Reduced to "its lowest terms," Western civilization was, he wrote, "a system of life based upon trade," and it was thus antithetical to the teachings of early Christianity. In the United States, he wrote, "the dollar is the measure of value, and might spells right" (*From the Deep* 195). In lieu of a capitalist system of valuation, oral traditions had instilled in him and other Dakota children the belief that "the love of possessions is a weakness to be overcome": "if a child is inclined to be grasping, or to cling to any of his little possessions, legends are related to him," Eastman explained, "telling of the contempt and disgrace falling upon the ungenerous and mean man" (*The Soul*). Eastman, therefore, also reversed the trajectory of his path from the "woods to civilization," presenting it as a downward slide from

Indian civilization to white barbarism. Under the veneer of modern civilization's "material and intellectual splendor" lurked the true "primitive savagery and cruelty," where "lust [held] sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded" (*From the Deep* 194). But rather than simply lamenting the loss of this old Indian way of life, Eastman (re)wrote the Indian's "philosophy" in his collections of children's stories and in his various other books on the Indian, attempting to remake US society through the cultural influence of his writings. The Indian's philosophy, as maintained and expressed through oral traditions, were the greatest "gift" that the "original American" offered his nation, Eastman wrote (*The Indian* 164-65). The Indian's "greatest worth is spiritual and philosophical," the "tacit influence" of which was beginning to be felt on this "mad," "self-seeking world" (165). Eastman was, like Bonnin and Parker and other members of the SAI, without a doubt a proponent of Indian assimilation, but as many scholars have noted in recent years, that did not mean that he was not also a critic of US assimilation (Deloria 122; Vigil 46; Coskan-Johnson 111). Eastman's understanding of assimilation was complex and did not entail an eradication of Indianness. He did not, as General Pratt infamously proposed, want to "kill the Indian and save the man." As Eastman explained, "the old building had to be pulled down, foundations and all, and replaced by the new," but the new, modern Indian was to be built from "the same timber" (*The Indian* 63). "The material in [the Indian] and the method of his reconstruction have made him what he is," Eastman wrote, and he had thereby "defied all the theories of the ethnologists," by being both Indian and modern (106). Similar to how he imagined the modern Indian being remade from Indian materials, Eastman attempted to use Indian philosophical materials to rebuild US culture. Taking advantage of the "Indian craze" of the period and its racist

assumptions surrounding childhood psychology, Eastman (re)wrote Dakota oral traditions, clothing "them with flesh and blood," not caring to "pile up more dry bones" as the ethnologists had, to be stored away in the repository of the BAE (*The Soul*). The Indian "bones," as it were, were still there in his writings, but by giving his oral traditions new "flesh," Eastman sought to reach a broad readership and create a more tolerant, respectful nation, one in which even "little people" could live and contribute meaningfully as citizens, as American "kin." The Indian, Eastman wrote, "will live, not only in the splendor of his past, the poetry of his legends and his art, not only in the interfusion of his blood with yours, and his faithful adherence to the new ideals of American citizenship, but in, the living thought of the nation" (177-78).

It is difficult to assess the long-term cultural impacts of either Indian children's stories in general or Bonnin's and Eastman's works in specific, which were republished and widely read in the first few decades of the twentieth century, including in actual classrooms (Davidson and Norris xii). It may be the case, as Deloria suggests, that the nuanced subversiveness of writers like Eastman or Bonnin was drowned out by the other images of the Indian that circulated as part of the "Indian craze." Nonetheless, Indian children's stories may be said to have cultivated a broad public sympathy for the Indian that Indigenous authors and artists were able to use, at a minimum, to their economic advantage; moreover, the stories provided Eastman and Bonnin a literary spotlight with which to critique US-Indian relations and to exercise some measure of control over the popular representation of the Indian. In hindsight, what is more certain regarding the legacy of the genre of the Indian children's story is that it contributed to the dislocation of oral traditions, as scientific objects, from the discursive realm of ethnology—through

their association with modern short stories and poetry—and thus to the (still current) view that oral traditions are works of fiction and poetry, the value of which is principally literary, or artistic, and not scientific. In this respect, the Indian children's story movement was aided by a second, nearly coterminous popularization of oral traditions, driven in this case by US literary modernists—the focus of the final chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 6

INDIGENOUS ORAL TRADITION AS LITERARY ART

In this final chapter, I consider how in the first decades of the twentieth century a handful of writers, editors, and critics associated with US literary modernism openly contested ethnology's authority over Indigenous oral traditions. Poets like Mary Hunter Austin, Alice Corbin Henderson, Constance Lindsay Skinner, and Eda Lou Walton criticized ethnologists' collection methods, especially their use of literal translation, developing instead a form of translation they called "interpretation." Through their "interpretations" of Indian "songs," combined with their various critical writings on "primitive literature," these literary figures (re)wrote oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry. Their Indian poems were not, they argued, "a contribution to anthropology," but to "English verse." Presented "as an art, rather than as an ethnological curiosity," primitive poetry was meant to inspire and "enrich" modern US poetry (Walton viii; Henderson 41). And arguably, it did just that. The writers' "interpretations" were featured in a special issue of *Poetry* magazine in 1917, for instance, a publication which has been widely recognized as an important vehicle for US literary modernism, specifically avant-garde poetry (Newcomb 6). And their collected works drew reviews from preeminent men and women working within the US literary field, including T. S. Eliot, Louis Untermeyer, Lewis Mumford, Mark Van Doren, and Muna Lee.[1] In (re)writing oral

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[1] Their responses were mixed. Eliot, for example, reviewing George W. Cronyn's *The Path on The Rainbow* for *The Athenaeum* in October of 1919, wrote ironically about "the romantic Chippaway burst[ing] into the drawing-room," and "pressing upon us [his tribe's] claims to distinction in art and literature." Yet the modern poet, Eliot believed, nonetheless had something "to learn from the savage," and he argued that "the lays of the Dimbovitza or the Arapajos are a more profitable study and a more dignified

traditions as free-verse imagist poems, the "interpreters" positioned Indigenous oral traditions within a uniquely American literary tradition, one that included, for instance, Walt Whitman, Steven Crane, and Carl Sandburg, whom Austin and others admired for the Indianness of their poetry.[2] The literary modernists publicly celebrated the Indian as an accomplished, natural poet, and they believed their work was finally helping to "discard" the "cigar-store-Indian impression of the Indian," as perpetuated in the previous century by writers like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ("Poetry" 46). And in Austin's case, her collection work dovetailed with arguments she made over the reform of US-Indian relations. But the literary modernists' rewriting of oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry effectively emptied the traditions of any meaning beyond their formal qualities. "Indian Poetry," Henderson wrote, "is seldom self-conscious . . . It gives the naked image, or symbol, which is itself the emotional stimulus" (*Red Earth* 57). By focusing on the poems' formal qualities, the literary modernists advocated and authenticated modern US literary forms, and thus their own identities as American authors. This work was in sharp contrast to the contemporaneous writings of Indigenous

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performance than 'Aurora Leigh'" (1036). Untermeyer also reviewed Cronyn's collection for *The Dial* earlier that year, taking Cronyn to task for a lack of ethnological rigor in assembling and presenting the materials. "As an ethnic document this anthology is of indubitable value," Untermeryer wrote, but "as a contribution to creative Americana it may grow to have importance" (240). Like Eliot, he sensed that Indian poetry, when done right, possessed value for US *belle lettres*.

[2] In a review of Cronyn's collection, published in *Poetry* in 1917, Henderson reflected, for instance, that "Stephen Crane would have qualified as an Indian poet, and in the Mid-American Chants of Sherwood Anderson one finds almost precisely the mood of the songs accompanying the green corn dances of the pueblo Indians" (42).

authors like Charles Eastman, or Ohiyesa, who, as I explored in the previous chapter, (re)wrote oral traditions to emphasize their moral-philosophical dimensions.

It has long been assumed that at the same time that this group of poets and critics were laboring to liberate oral traditions from the grip of the ethnologists, the Boasian anthropologists were actively denying or deemphasizing the literary qualities of oral traditions. In contrast, I demonstrate how Boas and especially his student Paul Radin had begun to pursue methods of literary analysis, similarly arguing that oral traditions were works of literary craftsmanship, products of both their culture and the "genius" of the individual "author-raconteurs" who performed them. For Radin, the reassessment of oral traditions as literary, and not scientific objects led to a reassessment of the broader aims of ethnology, which he envisioned as cultural historicism, not a scientific discipline. Viewed together, these collecting practices, and the arguments that extended from them, have many resemblances to those of the ethnopoetics movement of the second half of the twentieth century, initiated by Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes, to which I draw attention to underscore, on the one hand, how Austin, Henderson, and even Boas helped dislocate oral traditions from the scientific field of ethnology, relocating them within that of literary studies. On the other hand, those resemblances reveal the complex, historically and politically contingent processes by which we have inherited the modern assumption that Indigenous oral traditions are valuable (or should be valued) principally as works of literary art.

Literary Modernists and Primitive Poetry

Over half a century earlier, Henry Schoolcraft had collected "specimens" of Indian "poetry," describing the chants and songs of Indigenous peoples as the "poetry of

naked thought," a "species of wild composition" that was "imperfect" and undeveloped, unlike English versification (*Oneota* 14). After Schoolcraft, Daniel Garrison Brinton also collected the poetry of Mesoamerica, praising, for instance, the "melodious Nahuatl tongue," which had "lent itself readily to poetic composition" (*Aboriginal* 50). But within the ethnological study of Indian oral literature, poetry had for the most part taken a back seat to prose narrative forms—to Indian "legends" and "myths"—which was partly a consequence of a Western perspective, since even the narrative-based oral traditions called "myths" were originally performed orally (like poetry), typically utilized a figurative language not found in everyday speech, and often included chanting and musical accompaniment. Tedlock, in fact, would later argue that all oral traditions be translated and recorded as poetry (e.g., in lines and stanzas), not prose ("Learning" 725). Similarly, literary modernists in some cases republished previously collected "myths" as examples of Indian poetry—as George W. Cronyn did with Brinton's *The Walum Olum*, which was understood at the time to be an "epic" recounting the history of the Lenape people. Most commonly, however, the literary modernists focused on the parts of oral traditions that to them most resembled Western poetry, excising "songs" as stand-alone works of poetry, or pulling from the new collections of Indian songs by "ethnomusicologists" like Natalie Curtis Burlin, in which that excision had already been done for them. This group of literary modernists, most of whom either lived in the US Southwest or had resided there, were thus the first to intensively collect and study Indigenous oral traditions as Indian poetry. And alongside the Indian-children's-story

movement, their work represented the first major popularization of Indian oral literature since Longfellow's *Hiawatha* and the short-lived genre of "ethnographic verse."[3]

Proto-modernist Indian poetry was high-brow literature for adults, making it ultimately unclear to me whether it was a development from or against the Indian-children's-story genre, but either way the two forms of literary primitivism were closely related (temporally, conceptually, and even functionally), as demonstrated by the fact that Austin was a central figure in both movements. Early in the first decade of the twentieth century, Austin turned from (re)writing oral traditions as "myths" for children to (re)writing them as imagistic verse—a primary literary occupation of hers for the next two decades. And in many ways Austin's work on Indian poetry is representative of the field, as she helped pioneer it through magazines like *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, and *Poetry*. She also published a major collection of Indian poetry, *The American Rhythm* (1923), and had an active hand in the creation of two other important anthology's of Indian poetry from the period, Cronyn's *The Path on the Rainbow* (1918) and Nellie Barnes's *American Indian Love Lyrics and Other Verse* (1925), for both of which Austin wrote introductions. Given Austin's importance and representativeness, I focus on her work frequently in this chapter, although I also look at that of her contemporaries.

As with Indian children's stories, the (re)writing of oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry was a manifestation of what Elizabeth Hutchinson has called the

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[3] See Chapter 3 for more information on the "ethnographic verse" movement, as identified and described by John O'Leary; The modernists realized that "the average reader," as Walton put it, would never actually look through "the bureau reports of the anthropological papers" in which the traditions had been originally published ("American-Indian Studies" 53).

"Indian craze" of the early-twentieth century, a "widespread passion for collecting Native American art," in which modernism, primitivism, and US-Indian relations intersected (3). Hutchinson's focus is on the visual arts, but her analysis can be easily (and productively) extended to the literary arts to reveal how writers and critics constructed a version of primitive Indian oral literature which they held up as a guide for modernist poets pursuing supposedly authentic American literary forms. Hutchinson explains how painters like Arthur Wesley Dow repurposed Native craft objects, including textiles and pottery, that had been originally collected by the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), recirculating them in "deculturated" forms within the "spheres of the art world," where they became "free for artistic appropriation" (117-18). "Non-Indian artists, critics, and curators celebrated indigenous art as a means of shifting the focus of the art world to the formalist concerns they found inherently modern" (128-29). Likewise, poets "interpreted" oral traditions collected in BAE annual reports and republished the new versions in literary anthologies, in which editors drew attention to the formal (metrical, imagistic, etc.) characteristics of Indian poetry, at the expense of tribal history, religion, or morality.

With both the Indian-children's-story and the Indian-craft movements, however, Indigenous writers and artists like Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša) and Angel De Cora were prominent participants. They used the public's fascination over Indian art forms to pursue, as Hutchinson argues, "financial stability [and] leadership in their own communities" and, as I have argued, to reshape the popular image of American Indians as living members of the modern world, thereby undermining the logic of the very "Indian craze" that fueled their work in the first place. In contrast to this polyvocalism and

ambivalence, the (re)writing of oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry was dominated by Euro-Americans; it was also highly appropriative and nationalistic in function. As such, it complicates efforts by Hutchinson and, more recently, on the literary side, Ben Etherington to reexamine the transformative aspects of primitivism in early-twentieth century arts. Etherington has argued, for instance, that the desire to "manifest" and "become" the primitive through literature, what he calls "emphatic primitivism," should be viewed as a desire to exit the colonial, "capitalist world-system" (33). My analysis shows that "primitivizing acts of writing" just as easily supported that system, suggesting that what is needed is a more nuanced understanding of the differences among various "primitivist" art forms and how and why they lent themselves to critical applications in differing degrees.

Austin's early "translations" of Indian poetry culminated in the 1917 special issue of *Poetry*, which included essays by its editors Harriet Monroe and Carl Sandburg, in addition to contributions by Austin and Henderson (also an editor), many of which reappeared in later collections, including *American Rhythm*, *The Path*, and Henderson's *Red Earth* (1920). In Monroe's "editorial comment" on "aboriginal poetry," she explained that the poems in the issue were "not translations, but interpretations: they use subjects and rhythms drawn from aboriginal life and song," an argument that would be repeated by Austin and Walton in their collections. "Interpretation" served as a way for the literary modernists to distinguish and esteem their collecting practices over those of the ethnologists. Monroe's "interpreters," however, relied heavily on ethnologists' labor, rewriting materials published in BAE annual reports or in the monographs of their preferred ethnologists, such as Burlin. Sometimes the alterations the "interpreters" made

were minimal, whereas at other times they were substantial. Cronyn, for instance, who was a poet and fiction writer, and who later became involved in the Federal Writers Project, took many liberties "interpreting" the work of ethnologists like Boas. In a footnote to "An Eskimo Ballad," a poem from *The Path*, Cronyn claimed that it had been "based on a literal translation" (189). Boas, however, had merely given a description of a tradition "handed down in old song," describing the "substance" of the plot (Boas 585); from this prose summary, Cronyn invented an English "ballad."[4] Elsewhere, Cronyn's alterations were minor, but nonetheless significant, as in his republication of Brinton's version of *The Walum Olum*, for which Cronyn trimmed language and rearranged content and lines, presumably to produce more aesthetically-pleasing effects.

Despite their reliance on the BAE's reports and other ethnological publications, the literary modernists nonetheless did not shy from denigrating ethnology, which can be understood as an attempt to validate and define the new attitude toward literature, poetry in specific, being advanced through publications like *Poetry*. They criticized ethnological approaches to collecting and translating oral traditions, arguing that what was needed was an artistic (i.e., poetic) rather than a scientific perspective to adequately assess the materials. As many scholars have noted, Monroe's magazine did much to resuscitate the public attitude toward poetry during these years, explicitly privileging poetry over prose forms of writing (Newcomb 20; Brinkman 24-25). And her and other poets' attacks on

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[4] Similarly, with "Summer Song," Cronyn apparently used Boas's glossary of "Eskimo Words" to create a free translation of a song that Boas had published in the original language only. I am not equipped to analyze what liberties Cronyn may have taken in making that translation, but it seems safe to assume that it was indeed highly "interpretative," given his lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge of Inuit peoples.

ethnological collection and translation out to be understood as part of this broader campaign. Two decades earlier, John Wesley Powell, in an effort to distinguish ethnology from biology, had claimed the study of cultural productions, especially Indian myth, as the rightful scientific territory of the ethnologist, who studied the "evolution of the humanities" ("From Savagery" 196). Now, a group of modernist poets turned to those same materials to define and authenticate their own practices, attempting to wrest Indigenous oral traditions from the purview of ethnology and thereby validate poetry, and art in general, as an epistemology. According to these poets, the ethnological study of oral tradition was inadequate. Monroe credited "white investigators" for helping to preserve the disappearing work of the "tribal poets," making their "interpretation" in *Poetry* possible (251). However, there were "two methods of approach to this literature," Monroe wrote, "that of science and that of art," the latter of which, of course, she and her coterie at *Poetry* favored (252). As Walton later argued, the anthropological approach to collecting oral traditions had failed "to hold much interest or aesthetic appeal for the English reader," and as such it failed, unlike literary "interpretations," to provide a true "understanding of Indian life and literature," (vii-viii). Or as Henderson put it in her editorial comment in *Poetry*, "very little consideration has been given to Indian poetry as poetry. The Ethnologists, who might have done good service in this respect, have overlooked the literary significance of the Indian songs" (256). Some "artists" had been employed in the research of science, such as Frank Hamilton Cushing, and they had been able to "uncover whatever beauty [they found] with reverence and without violence." But in general, Monroe argued, few ethnologists had done much to "perpetuate" the "poetry and music of the redskins," burying their oral literature within "those massive tomes

which entomb the annual reports of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology" (253).[5] The poet-artists, as the most psychologically akin to the Indian poets, the most in "sympathy with their ideas" (274), were supposedly best positioned to translate/interpret and appreciate their oral traditions. As Eliot wrote in his review of *The Path*, "the artist is, in an impersonal sense, the most conscious of men; he is therefore the most and the least civilized and civilizable; he is the most competent to understand both civilized and primitive . . . and the most able of men to learn from the savage" (1036). As a window into the primitive mind, an artistic approach revealed what science could not. The poet, as Austin argued, was uniquely capable of "venturing beyond" the ethnologists' "findings on ground where nobody but a poet could have ventured at all" (*Rhythm* 65). And the literary magazine and anthology were, moreover, the most ideal mediums in which to present those "findings." These arguments clearly challenged the hierarchy ethnologists had set up between themselves, as scientists, and the Indian primitives, as poets. But as I argue, it left intact (and reinforced) the hierarchical opposition between primitive and civilized, reconfiguring it as one between primitive Indian poets and modern white ones.

Austin also used the term "re-expression," as Walton likewise used the term "re-creation," to describe their new, poetic mode of translation, but the idea was, overall, consistent. In *American Rhythm,* Austin explained how she would "saturate" herself "in the poem, in the life that produced it and the environment that cradled that life, so that when the point of crystallization is reached," she would "give forth a poem which bears .

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[5] Sandburg, for instance, lamented the fact that anthropologist Frances Densmore's *Chippewa Music* (1913) lay in a state of "more or less innocuous desuetude," which Sandburg credited to its publication through the BAE (254).

. . a genetic resemblance to the Amerind song that was [her] point of contact" (37-38). Austin denied that she was a translator in any traditional sense of the word, but she explained how she had lived among the Indians of the southwest, had "lapped" them up in search of material for a novel, and how she had made a study of their relationship to the land, which she knew intimately. As with her Indian myths in *The Basket Woman*, Austin believed that she was able to identify the essence or spirit of Indian poems and "re-express" that spirit in English free-verse form. With her children's myths, however, Austin had identified the essence of Indian mythology as an "attitude of mind," a way of interpreting nature through the language of literature, especially personification. As she (re)wrote oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry, Austin inverted that relationship, arguing that the essential qualities of the poems were the visible effects of nature, of the southwestern landscape in specific, on the poems' formal aspects.

This shift to focusing on form enabled Austin and other interpreters of Indigenous oral tradition to articulate a "poetic expression of the American spirit" that united the continent's earliest poetry with the "new poetry" then being championed by Monroe and others through *Poetry* and anthologies like *The New Poetry* (1918) (*Rhythm* 41). Henderson explained, for example, that "in my brief Indian Songs I have taken the Indian key-note—which is often not more than a phrase, a single image, with variations of musical inflection and repetition—and expanded it very slightly. The Indian song often means more than it says; it is *content to grove the image and not to talk about it--it is not 'journalistic'*'" ("Editorial" 256; emphasis mine). Like other "interpreters" of Indian poetry, Henderson thus retroactively imposed modernist standards for poetry on her collected materials—through the deliberate alteration of those materials, yes, but also

through her editorial comments and through the very republication of those materials within an avant-garde literary magazine. As Bartholemew Brinkman has argued, *Poetry*, like other similar magazines of the period, turned the poem "into an aesthetic object for contemplation, both through an aesthetic discourse that compared the poem to the art object and through the placement of the individual poem on the page, framed by a border of white space" (22). Indian poetry was packaged in this same manner, not just within the 1917 issue of *Poetry*, but within all the various literary collections that followed it. By presenting readers with isolated "poem-objects," publications like *Poetry*, Brinkman argues, stressed the physicality of its poems and their similarity to works of the visual arts, elevating form over both content and context, which found its "ultimate expression in the showcasing of Imagism" (28-30). The oral traditions "interpreted" by modernist poets were similarly emptied of meaning and value at a conceptual level, as "interpreters" drew attention to the poems' minimalism and to their formal effects through concrete imagery. Austin explained that it was "not the words which [were] potent" in the poems, but the "states of mind evoked" in their singing (*The Path* xxi).[6] Poetry, according to imagists like T. E. Hulme or Ezra Pound (also an editor at *Poetry*), was a "visual concrete" language, which sought to describe reality with an accuracy that was simply incapable of being achieved through prose (Hulme 134). Ironically, then, whereas ethnologists had argued that Indian myth was a fictional distortion of reality, modernist

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[6] Untermeryer, for one, criticized Cronyn for this decontextualization, as he also drew attention to the difficulties and inaccuracies of translation (240). Similarly, Eliot expressed concern that the interpreters had substituted their understanding of "beauty" for that of the Indians, the latter of which he was more interested in (1036).

poets argued (implicitly, at least) that Indian poetry, as imagistic, was a truer representation of the world than that offered through discursive forms like science.

As poets who had, they claimed, immersed themselves in the lives of the Indians, Austin and others believed their interpretations "escaped the exactitudes of the ethnologist as the life of the flower escapes between the presses of the herbalist" (*Rhythm* 41). Superficially, this position resembles that of Eastman, who, as he put it, did not care, like the ethnologists, to "pile up more dry bones," seeking instead to give "flesh and blood" to Dakota oral traditions. It needs to be stressed, however, that the dismantling of the ideological motif of the "vanishing Indian" was far from the minds of most of the literary modernists considered here, who were interested in Indian poetry in so far as it could further their own literary agendas. Sandburg wryly noted that "suspicion arises definitely that the Red Man and his children committed direct plagiarisms on the modern imagists and vorticists," providing as proof "specimens" such as the Chippewa "Love Charm Song" collected by Frances Densmore: "What are you saying to me? / I am arrayed like the roses, / And beautiful as they" (255). Republished in the context of a magazine like *Poetry*, stripped of its ethnological packaging and re-enveloped in that of modern poetics, the song became an example of primitive imagism, connecting the practitioners of the "new poetry" to an ancient American tradition. In her introduction to Cronyn's collection, Austin similarly wrote that the reader "will be struck at once with the extraordinary likeness between much of this native product and the recent work of the Imagists, vers librists, and other literary fashionables" (xvi). It perhaps goes without saying at this point that Austin and other interpreters constructed that similarity through the act of (re)writing. In *American Rhythm*, Austin explained, for example, that "the extra

syllabication" in Indian songs "served no purpose but to fill out the melodic pattern," fulfilling the role of "punctuation and capitals and italics" and the "visual arrangement of line and stanza" in written poetry. Imagining a "hypothetical aboriginal translator," Austin believed he would have, like her, "omitted" those features, as they were incidental to the poem's essence, or at least replicable through the effects of print (capitalization, italicization, etc.). Austin's hypothetical translator would add "no more than he found absolutely necessary by way of descriptive and associative phrases, to define the path of the experience through his consciousness" (50-51). In this way, Austin justified her choice to cut "the verbiage back to its primitive austerity," thereby producing a version of Indian poetry more in line with that of the imagists—one that Austin said she had real "Indians try out" in song and find "satisfactory" (55).

I highlight this act of construction not to discredit Austin's Indian poetry as "inauthentic," but to show how the (re)writing of oral tradition played a key role in the formation of a nationalist literary identity among modernist poets in the United States, which cut against modernism's otherwise cosmopolitan impulses.[7] Not all literary modernists participated in this work, of course, and some writers of the period, such as Mumford, criticized its "Americanization program" (24). But the fact that a core group of US modernist writers turned to Indian poetry for nationalistic purposes is significant and worth recognition. That the new poets of the United States had struck "unconsciously on this ancient" poetic tradition was, Austin argued, "the certificate of our adoption," and

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[7] *Poetry*, for example, was well known for publishing poems from around the world, including translations of Chinese poetry (Taylor 45). And, of course, many US literary modernists like Eliot and Pound lived abroad and worked closely with European writers and poets.

only by examining the earliest poetry in the United States could we "be at all sure that American poetic genius has struck its native note" (xvi-xvii). The imagined similarity of primitive Indian poetry to that of the modernists became a kind of touchstone for the latter's Americanness. Even Mumford, as a backhanded compliment to Austin's original works of poetry, wrote that "there is more of the Indian than of Mrs. Austin in them" (23). And for Austin, the similarity between Indian and modern poetry showed that although movements were then being made in the right direction, Euro-American poets had not yet fully achieved a "native" poetry, as it were. The Indian poet's natural "subjective coordination" with his environment was "what Whitman [had] tried for, [and] what Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay and Sherwood Anderson [were] occasionally succeeding at . . ." (*Rhythm* 32).

Austin believed that rhythm was the foundation of all poetry, and she put forward a vague, psychological theory that rhythmic forms were the product of sensory impressions on the nervous system, which were passed on physiologically to future generations. New rhythms could be "born of new motor impulses," but it took time to overcome inherited ones, and the history of US poetry was, she argued, the history of that struggle (*Rhythm* 13). Unlike Euro-Americans, the Indians, Austin wrote, lived in "a state of acute, happy awareness" with their environments: "Streams of impressions of perennial freshness flow across the threshold of sense, distinct, unfocused, delicately registering, unselected" (28). The Indian poet sang "in tune with the beloved environment," naturally reproducing the "dominant rhythms" of the "plains, the deserts and woodlands." Austin believed she could recognize these rhythms by listening to the "aboriginal verses on the phonograph," even when in "unidentified Amerindian

languages," (18-19).[8] The perceived link between environment and rhythm led Austin to realize the "relationships that must necessarily exist between aboriginal and later American forms" (19). Because it came from the same land, "American poetry must inevitably take at some period of its history, the mold of Amerind verse, which is the mold of the American experience shaped by the American environment" (42).

When Austin spoke of a "genetic resemblance" between the original Indian songs and her "interpretations," she was not, therefore, being metaphorical. If she was successful in her "interpretations," it was because she had acclimated to the Indian's environment and modes of living, which she believed had left a literal impression on her psyche; submersed in the same milieu as the Indians and surrounded by Indian art forms, Austin found that her own "literary style" had acquired a "selective economy of phrase" (its best quality, according to her) as well as a "habit of doubling an idea in its verbal envelope" (its worst) (*Rhythm* 39). Although she did not claim to be an "authority on things Amerindian," Austin wrote, she had "at times . . . succeeded in being an Indian" (41). Austin was undoubtedly "playing Indian," as Philip Deloria describes the phenomenon in his book on the subject.[9] According to Skinner, Austin and other interpreters had "yielded to Indian beauty, willingly sought to enter into the Indian consciousness and to sing of it from within, interpretively" (*The Path* 346). "Interpreting"

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[8] Austin analyzed, for instance, the "Corn Dance of the Rio Grande Pueblos," which she had observed once, describing how movement, melody, and words (that she did not understand) combined to mimic the "rush of summer rain" (*Rhythm* 47).

[9] Deloria traces Euro-Americans' performance of Indianness from the Boston Tea Party to the hippie communes of the 1960s and 70s. Each generation of Euro-Americans, Deloria argues, performed versions of "Indianness" to explore, challenge, and construct US identity.

Indian poetry for literary anthologies and turning to those anthologies as poetic resources were two different things, however. While modern poets might look to Indian poetry for inspiration and influence, Austin did not imagine the relationship between the two as being one of simple imitation, or cosplay. She and others saw modern poets as working within and *further developing* the "mold" of Indian poetry, adapting it to the modern United States. It was the "unavoidable destiny" of the modern poets to "carry [Indian thought] to fulfillment and make of that medium a characteristic literary vehicle" (*The Path* xv). Austin attempted to model that "fulfillment" in her own collection, which, like Henderson's *Red Earth*, included original poems along with her "interpretations." This intention is suggested by the very organization of *American Rhythm*, which begins first with "Amerindian Songs: Reexpressed from the Originals," followed by "Songs in the American Manner," Austin's original poems. In her introduction, Austin explained the difficulties of unconsciously attuning oneself to the rhythmic pulses and imagery of modernity in the manner of the Indian, writing that "the exigencies of what we call civilization have forced upon us moderns a selective intensity of observation such as rarely occurs in primitive experience." The Indian, when confronted with this "intensity," would be at a loss, as many Euro-Americans presently were: "An Amerind, no doubt, if he had to cross Fifth Avenue in the midst of Traffic, in the absence of a traffic manager, would be constrained to the same concentration of passage which keeps us largely unaware of the color, the majesty, the multiplying rhythms of our streets" (28-29). The goal of the modern poet was thus to capture in free verse form, as the Indian could not, this modern complexity, which Austin subsequently tried to do in her poem "Fifth Avenue at Night," describing the "Long undulating lines of light" along the avenue, the

"Grasshopper-green busses / Peering at one another / With great goggle lamps of eyes;" (127-28). It was up to Austin and other "moderns" to bring Indian poetry (but not necessarily the Indian) into the modern world.

As I explored in the previous chapter, Eastman argued that Indian "philosophy," maintained in the form of oral traditions, was the Indian's greatest "gift" to the nation (165). Austin, like her peers, likewise saw Indian poetry as a great gift to the nation. Eastman, however, recorded and promoted Dakota moral philosophy to critique and counteract US imperialism and capitalism. He wanted to use it to remake the nation to protect the rights and enable the active participation of its "little peoples." Austin, in contrast, viewed Indian poetry as a national cultural resource to be mined and utilized in the service of US literature, comparable to the nation's physical resources. Her attitude toward American Indians was, admittedly, complex, however, as she not infrequently took up the pen to defend the character and rights of the Indian. In 1924, for example, she wrote the second of a two-article series on the Bureau of Indian Affairs for *Forum* magazine. The first article was written by Indian commissioner Flora Warren Seymour, who defended the BIA against the "delusion of the sentimentalists," arguing in highly racist terms that the Indians had been living in the "stone age" when they encountered Europeans. Seymour defended the paternalism of the BIA and its gift of "industry and invention" to a land that the "savage" had "barely touched" (73). In addition to debunking Seymour's "stone age" depiction of the Indians (by citing their agricultural and technological sophistication, as well as their aid to early colonists), Austin attacked Seymour's unabashedly imperialist rhetoric. Austin then linked the "Indian problem" to the problem of colonialism around the globe, which aligned Austin politically with

Eastman and Bonnin and others at the Society of American Indians (SAI): "America should work out their own problem as a model for other nations," she argued (281). But it is as important to understand the disjunctions as it is the overlaps between Austin's views and those of Indigenous writers like Bonnin or Eastman. Seymour and the BIA, Austin wrote, was in total ignorance of the value of primitive Indian culture as such, seeking to eradicate it; Seymour was unaware that there was a "rapidly growing appreciation of such Indian culture as remains to us, as a National Asset, having something the same valuation as the big trees of California and the geysers and buffaloes of Yellowstone . . . in Indian life we have a precious heritage of enjoyment, and of access to forms of culture rapidly disappearing from the earth, superior to anything the rest of the world had to offer" (281). What the United States needed, according to Austin, was a "policy" toward its "small backward people" that would "insure to us the best that the Indian has to give . . ." From critiquing global colonialism, Austin thus transitioned subtly but quite easily to an argument that the Indians and their culture needed to be preserved in wild, primitive forms like the vast swaths of western lands that were being converted into national parks. (Ironically, those very same parks were made possible through the displacement of Indigenous peoples, as scholars such as Philip Burnham have demonstrated.) Like the parks, Indian culture, especially its poetry, was for Austin an "asset," a national possession to be used, if not for economic gain, then nonetheless for the expansion of the

nation's cultural wealth. The Indian was to be preserved, for Austin, but as a kind of living museum display of the past.[10]

This position was reiterated in various forms in the other collections of the period. Monroe, for example, described the "deeper resources" of Indian poetry that remained to be "interpreted"—*Poetry*, she wrote, had given its readers but a "mere outcropping of the mine" (251). It was reiterated even by Burlin, whose work went the furthest (among the literary modernists) in attributing Indian story and poetry to individual Indigenous "authors," and who often characterized American Indians as living, active contributors to a multicultural United States. Burlin was a pioneer of "ethnomusicology." Trained as a classical musician, she became interested in Indian songs after visiting the Southwest, and she soon found herself, much like Austin, pursuing a career as an amateur ethnologist, publishing in popular magazines rather than ethnological journals, and recirculating oral traditions collected by Boas and other professionals, as well as travelling and collecting new traditions wherever she could solicit them, including at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis (Patterson 10). According to her biographer, Burlin transformed in the span of just a few years "from a classically trained musician and composer, ignorant of Indian cultures, to a collector and advocate and expert on them" in the eyes of the public (117). *The Indians' Book: An Offering by the American Indians of Indian Lore, Musical and Narrative* (1907) was a crucial part of that transformation. In it, Burlin claimed that "the Indians are the authors of this volume. The songs and stories are

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[10] In "The New York Indian Complex," Arthur C. Parker objected to exactly this desire to preserve the Indian in a primitive form, comparing reservations to "menageries" (12).

theirs; the drawings, cover design, and title-pages were made by them" (xi). Burlin, the "recorder," had merely collected, edited, and arranged their contributions, acting as "the pencil in the hand of the Indian" (xi; xxviii). Rather than artistically "interpreting" Indian poetry, Burlin imagined herself playing the mechanical role of a "recording pencil." *The Indians' Book* included a foreword by a Cheyenne chief named Hiamovi, as well as drawings and title work by Native artists (including De Cora), and before each work Burlin cited the individual storytellers and singers. This arrangement stemmed from Burlin's belief that "primitive man" had a "God-given right to evolution," and that the "Indian's talents," his "latent capabilities," although "child-like," were destined to grow and add to "the culture and industry of our country," if encouraged (xxxvi). In an address at the Hampton Institute in 1904, Burlin similarly spoke of the need to preserve "Indian poetry and art . . . For our own sake as well as for the best development of the Indian" (449). "The 'vanishing race' is a coming people," she argued, "so far as absorption into our civilization is concerned" ("Perpetuating" 630). Burlin, however, employed, like her contemporaries W. E. B. Du Bois and Randolph Bourne, the metaphor of a tapestry for the nation, rather than a melting pot, in which each race was to contribute a unique color to a variegated whole (rather than conforming to a "monotone grey"). She advocated for a "reciprocal interchange of ideas" between Euro-Americans and their "dependent people," to which her collections were clearly intended to contribute ("Perpetuating" 624-25).[11]

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[11] In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1904), Du Bois argued that "actively we [African Americans] have woven ourselves with the very warp and woof of this nation" (263). Similarly, in his famous 1916 article in *The Atlantic*, "Trans-national America," Bourne argued that immigrants in America had not been "melted" in a pot; rather, they were

Michelle Wick Patterson assesses Burlin as a "transitional figure" between the "late-nineteenth-century era of forced assimilation and allotment and the cultural pluralism and appreciation for Native American lifeways of John Collier's Indian New Deal in the 1930s" (8). Burlin functioned as "both a colonizer appropriating Native music and a potential reformer" (12), which is evident in the ambivalence of her statements about the value of Indian art. Burlin, similar to Arthur C. Parker, imagined the cultural "evolution" of Indians as an alternative to forced assimilation, and she saw Euro-Americans and Indians as contributing to one another's developments, but at the same time, she focused her appeals regarding the preservation of Indian art on the benefits of that art to the "Aryan race." Euro-Americans were "a people of great mechanical and inventive genius," a people of science, and not, as the Indian, "naturally song-makers, poets, or designers" (*Indians'* xxxvi). Precisely because Euro-Americans were deficient in these areas, they could not "afford to lose" such a valuable resource, such an "opportunity for inspiration," "however crude." In an article in *The Musical Quarterly* titled "A Plea for Our Native Art" (1920), Burlin argued, like Austin and Monroe, that in the "song-poems of the Southwest lies a great enrichment of American letters." And in the very same breath in which she advocated a "living Indian art"—as well as the "political . . . spiritual and cultural" rights of the American Indian—Burlin wrote that "we who look to Europe for art-inspiration might well turn our eyes to our own Far West with the cry, 'America First!'" (178). Burlin's critique of colonialism and her vision of a multicultural United States thus merged with one of a nationalistic arts program premised

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"threads of living and potent cultures, blindly striving to weave themselves into a novel international nation . . ." (95).

on the appropriation of primitive, Indian art, which the Aryan writer, painter, and composer was to develop into a uniquely Aryan-American tradition. Amid the work of other literary modernists who (re)wrote oral traditions as a national literary resource, the nuanced critical aspects of Burlin's collection strategies and arguments were undoubtedly lost. For one, her belief that the Indians' poems were "born of natural environment" harmonized with Austin's theories. And as both Patterson and Marueen Salzer have noted, Burlin's claim to having acted merely as a "recording pencil" for the Indian was "largely false" (Patterson 10). Burlin carefully suppressed "anything that would suggest the modern world," presenting her Indigenous authors and artists as "primitives residing in a noble past" (135). And just as other literary modernists did, Burlin aestheticized her oral traditions, accompanying them with "authentic" native visual art and with musical notation, so as to present her collected songs as "European-American highbrow, academic verse" (Salzer 85-86). This strategy made her collected materials all the easier to republish in later collections like Barnes' *Love Lyrics* or Cronyn's *The Path*, the latter of which was dedicated to the "Art Forms of a *Vanishing* Race." In these works, Burlin's calls for an evolving, "living" Indian culture were absent. Even *The Indians' Book* itself began with the image of a handwritten note from President Theodore Roosevelt (a family friend of Burlin's), stating, "These songs cast a whole new light—on the depth and dignity of Indian thought, the simple beauty and strange charm—the charm of *a vanished elder world*—of Indian poetry" (xxv; emphasis mine).

These collections' commitments to the motif of the vanishing Indian, along with their intensely nationalistic orientations, raises questions about literary primitivism. Scholars such as Carole Sweeney and Etherington have recently reexamined primitivism

in modernist literary art forms, attempting to move beyond a scholarship that simply dismisses primitivism as racist or "problematic." Instead, they have tried to understand its critical engagements with racial difference. Both Sweeney and Etherington identify a transition that occurred in the wake of World War I, away from an "initial modish interest" in the primitive, what Etherington calls "philo-primitivism," toward "a more heterogenous text of cultural difference that gradually opened up debates on race, colonialism, and representation" (Sweeney 4). They each underscore the dialogic, multivocal aspects of literary primitivism, arguing that it was not "restricted to Western artists," having created discursive spaces for "artists from colonized peripheral societies" to enter debates over colonialism (Etherington xi-xii). According to Etherington, non-Western writers were in fact the ones who "most energetically pursued" primitivist aesthetics (xii). He argues that literary primitivism's "urgent desire to become primitive," to "manifest" the disappearing primitive through "primitivizing acts of writing," was "utopian" in outlook (33). "Across primitivist works . . . there is a common desire for a determinate negation of the world order that culminated in imperialist capitalism," what he calls primitivism's "decolonial horizon" (xvi). Sweeney likewise views modernist primitivism as "often (but by no means always) a countercultural force that abhorred the silencing of colonial subjects even while their objectification was frequently central to their aesthetic": "Far from being solipsistically obsessed with the question of autonomous apolitical form, certain forms of avant-garde modernism nurtured an emergent anticolonialism that was committed to a new poetics of race and difference that would challenge the authority of white mythologies" (7).

Overall, these arguments are sound and well-needed, but perhaps in the drive to reassess, there has been a countertendency to view literary primitivism in monolithic terms—as being not bad, but good (to put it a bit reductively, myself). One should be careful, however, not to lose sight of the unique ways in which individual Westerners and non-Westerners participated in literary primitivism, or even where and why non-Westerners *did not* participate in certain manifestations of it. On the one hand, writers like Austin were clearly capable of explicitly critiquing colonialism and, simultaneously, perpetuating its logic. On the other hand, with the exception of two poems by E. Pauline Johnson in Cronyn's *The Path*, the collected "interpretations" of the literary modernists contained no work by contemporaneous Indigenous writers, whether as original poems or as "interpretations"—Untermeyer said of Johnson's "jingles" that they were "neither original nor aboriginal" (240). As Michael P. Taylor has demonstrated, however, there was no shortage of Indigenous poets at the time. While literary modernists were busy interpreting primitive Indian poetry for literary magazines and anthologies, living Indigenous writers like Bonnin and Parker wrote poems for *American Indian Magazine* (*AIM*) (Taylor 53). *AIM*'s readership may not have been considerable by some standards, but Bonnin was nonetheless a celebrated writer whose stories had appeared in *Harper's* and the *Atlantic*. Likewise, Johnson's collection of poems, *Flint and Feather* (1913), was widely known at the time (59), suggesting, of course, that the literary modernists simply ignored their work. As Taylor argues, from a formal standpoint Parker's and Johnson's poems, much like Bonnin's, did not "show significant signs of 'modern' poetics"; they adhered to traditional meters and rhyming patterns, not the free-verse style favored by Austin and others (56). Ironically, the "primitive" poetry collected by ethnologists in the

previous century—Schoolcraft's poetry of "naked thought"—was much more "modern" to literary modernists like Austin than this actual modern, written Indian poetry. Many of Parker's, Johnson's, and Bonnin's poems were, moreover, overtly political—such as Bonnin's "The Red Man's America" (1917), a rewriting of "America" (My country, 'Tis of thee), which stressed the Indian's lack of franchise in the purported land of the free. It is notable, also, that the two poems Cronyn included from Johnson lacked, according to Taylor, the political valances present in her other works (60-61). Taylor argues that "the actuality of original Indigenous authorship prove[d] antithetical to the public's 'primitive' ideal" (52). I agree, but this antithesis went beyond an inability on the part of the Euro-Americans to acknowledge the fact of living, literate Indigenous poets. For one, the poetry of Johnson or Parker was simply not amenable to (re)writing in the way that oral traditions were, whether those traditions were collected first-hand by the "interpreters" or pulled from obscure BAE annual reports. With collected oral traditions, modernist poets had the freedom to manipulate their materials and thereby construct a version of Indian poetry that served their literary needs—the creation of an American poetic tradition that authenticated the "new poetry" as "native" to the United States. Furthermore, one must consider the possibility that Indigenous authors like Parker or Bonnin simply chose *not* to (re)write oral traditions as proto-modernist poetry, the most obvious reason for which being that such poetry was not amenable to *their* political goals. These were highly educated, astute writers who participated in a wide range of literary forms during the period, and who published in both popular and high-brow magazines. When it came to poetry, they chose to write politically direct works in conventional forms, presumably to reach a wide readership and create immediate effects. The veiled meanings, obscure

allusions, and general inaccessibility of modernist poetics would have been far from their interests as writers. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Indigenous authors like Bonnin, Parker, and Eastman were in fact actively participating in the (re)writing of oral traditions, but as children's literature. This work too was a version of literary primitivism, but one that clearly created opportunities for Indigenous authors that were more aligned with their economic and political needs. Proto-modernist Indian poetry emphasized the evocative effects of rhythm and image; it possessed, according to its interpreters, no historical or conceptual significance. In contrast, the (re)written oral traditions of Bonnin and Eastman underscored the moral dimensions of oral traditions, which were explicitly anticolonial.

Boasian Anthropology and the Author-Raconteur

It has been assumed, incorrectly, that while the literary modernists advanced the collection and study of Indian poetry as poetry—as literary art—the Boasian anthropologists remained uninterested in the artistic dimensions of oral traditions. This belief is largely due to Dennis Tedlock and his critiques of Boasian collecting methods, and especially to Arnold Krupat and Brian Swann, who along with Dell Hymes were at the forefront of the "ethnopoetics" movement of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, a movement that sought to bridge literary studies and ethnology in the United States, and which pushed (successfully) for the inclusion of Indian oral literature in college literature classrooms and modern literary anthologies. Swann and Krupat in particular saw their work on Indian oral literature as derivative from, even if correcting the errors of the collections of literary modernists like Burlin (Krupat, "Literature" 157; Swann, *Coming* xxxvii). But in constructing a history of the struggle to acknowledge oral traditions as

literature, and to include them within an American literary canon as "serious" literature, Swann and Krupat seem to have perpetuated the binary set up by the literary modernists between themselves and the ethnologists, which is to say between an artistic and a scientific approach to collection and translation. And as I argue here, their efforts to recognize the literary-ness of oral traditions was not new, and not a true departure from ethnology. It was part of a long tradition in ethnological writing, even if the motivations and stakes of that recognition had changed.

Tedlock, and Krupat and Swann after him, argued that Boas and his students valued literal translations for mostly linguistic purposes, seeking to, according to Krupat, "preserve the material and ceremonial (but not the social and political) culture of the 'vanishing race,'" and certainly not their literature as such (Tedlock, "Style" 118; Krupat, "Texts" 330). According to Swann, "translation as an art form was not uppermost in Boas's mind, nor was it so in the minds of his students . . . there was no explicit attention to structure, and texts were represented in plain prose, in block form, with little or no attempt to represent the verbal artistry" (*Coming* xxviii). For Boas, Swann argued, "Translation was something of a necessary evil. Literary merit counted for little, and Boas thought style was difficult to translate, being bound up with peculiarities of language and culture" (*Voices* xv). In the wake of ethnopoetics, it had become obvious that Boas's "plain, close, literal translations surely miss[ed] a number of important points." "For one," Swann wrote, "if an original [tradition] is regarded as 'beautiful,' however the term is defined, the translation is no translation at all if it is not also 'beautiful'" (*Voices* xv).

This representation of Boas and his students is more or less accurate if we restrict our focus to the early years of their collecting activities. From the very beginning of Boas's career, he collected the "myths," "lore," and "songs" of Indigenous communities to compare them "with those of [their] neighboring tribes," and to assess the "origin and development" of oral traditions within what he later called "culture groups" ("On Certain Songs" 63-64). He and his students, such as Alfred Kroeber, Edward Sapir, and Robert Lowie, focused almost exclusively on plot elements in the oral traditions they collected, effectively reducing and fragmenting oral traditions into bare sequences of narrative events: "1. A woman married a dog. 2. She had pups. 3. Was deserted by her father. 4. The pups became ancestors of a tribe" ("Dissemination" 16). Although Boas also recorded oral traditions in full, and in the original languages, he was at times content to merely describe an oral tradition's narrative movements—as he did with the "Eskimo Ballad" Cronyn "interpreted," for instance—because those features were to him all that was needed for "deciding the question whether a tale is of independent origin, or whether its occurrence at a certain place is due to diffusion" (13). His collecting methods were fundamentally quantitative in nature. In an 1896 article, for example, Boas suggested that what was needed was a "full collection of the tales and myths of all the tribes of a certain region," which one could then use to "tabulate the number of incidents which all the collections from each tribe have in common with any selected tribe . . ." ("Growth" 3). Kroeber would later heed that call in *Indian Myths of South Central California* (1907), in which Kroeber simplified the oral traditions of southern California into principal events and characters, identifying each of them as unique or similar to others, and thus belonging to a particular "class." To expedite that classification, he included, along with

the translated myths, “abstracts” that reduced already brief stories into sometimes a single sentence.[12] Lowie, in his *Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians* (1918), would go even further, representing the narrative episodes of a particular Crow myth in a table format, marking which ones did and did not reappear in the variations told by other regional tribes (12). For such purposes, “plain” translations were sufficient, ideal even.

Whereas Brinton and Powell had (re)written oral traditions as evidence of cultural evolution, Boas and his students put them in service of the theory of cultural diffusion, and their goal of proving diffusion (as an alternative to evolution) actively informed which traditions they chose to collect and how they collected them. Reducing oral traditions to their “component parts” revealed, according to Boas, that tales were widely disseminated, manipulated, and recombined within regions of cultural similarity, but that they were not shared outside “cultural centres,” which he felt “may be due either to a difference of character, to continued hostilities, or to recent changes in the location of the tribes, which has not allowed the slow process of acculturation to exert its deep-going influence” (“Growth” 3). This pattern of dissemination suggested “that many elements

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[12] For example, the original version of “Coyote and the Hummingbird” reads as follows: “Coyote thought he knew more than anyone; but the humming- bird knew more. Then Coyote wanted to kill him. He caught him, struck him, and mashed him entirely. Then he went off. The hummingbird came to life, flew up, and cried: "Lakun, dead," in mockery. Coyote caught him, made a fire, and put him in. He and his people had gone only a little way when the hummingbird flew by crying: "Lakun!" Coyote said: "How shall I kill him?" They told him: "The only way is for you to eat him." Then Coyote swallowed him. The hummingbird scratched him inside. Coyote said: "What shall I do? I shall die. ' ' They said : ' ' You must let him out by defecating. ' ' Then Coyote let him out and the hummingbird flew up crying: "Lakun!" (201). In the abstract, Kroeber reduced the story to “Coyote vainly tries to kill the humming-bird. At last he swallows him, but the humming-bird scratches him so that he is forced to let him out.” (245).

[of traditions] have been embodied ready-made in the myths, and that they *have never had any meaning*, at least not among the tribes in whose possession we find them" ("Dissemination" 20; my emphasis). In other words, oral traditions were not adopted, adapted, and maintained because they held any particular significance to the Indigenous storytellers and audiences who maintained them, but because of the laws of cultural diffusion.

Like the literary modernists, Boas essentially emptied oral traditions of meaning at a conceptual level, privileging form over meaning, although in his case narrative form. And whereas the literary modernists constructed a version of Indian poetry that validated their own literary practices, Boas and his students collected a version of oral traditions that substantiated theirs, by proving the laws of cultural diffusion. As Boas's student Paul Radin rightly assessed, for Boas to disprove the cultural evolutionism of Brinton and Powell, it was essential that Indigenous oral traditions lack "any meaning" to the people who maintained them. If tribes adopted and adapted elements of oral traditions because of cultural similarities and geographical proximity, it meant that oral traditions, as Boas argued, "cannot be explained as symbolizing or anthropomorphizing natural phenomena," ("Dissemination" 20). Boas was acutely aware of the fact that Brinton's and Powell's interpretations of Indian myth as a kind of primitive natural history, told through the language of fiction, was essential to the evolutionists' belief that human culture evolved progressively from primitive to civilized stages (from myth to science). And, as scholars have long recognized, it was Boas's mission to disprove cultural evolution. Myths, he discovered, traveled great distances, and upon interrogation they lacked any definite meaning among the peoples who maintained them, at least regarding nature.

Powell and Brinton had suggested that that absence of meaning was because the Indians had confused fiction and fact over time, viewing the world through a lens of animistic make-believe. It was up to the mythologist, they felt, to uncover a myth's basis in reality, to recover its true meanings. Boas argued in turn that modern-day Indians did not view myths as veiled representations of nature because the myths "never had such a meaning" in the first place, and that ethnologists "must give up the attempts at off-hand explanations of myths as fanciful . . ." ("Growth" 5). It was incidental to Boas what a symbol or personified element signified, or even whether an oral tradition was considered a work of fiction; all that mattered was how oral traditions, like any other cultural object, moved within and across culture groups.

But around the same time that amateur ethnologists like Burlin, and modernist poets like Henderson and Austin, began insisting on a literary-artistic "interpretation" of Indian poetry, Boas too became interested in the "literary" elements of oral traditions. Perhaps this turn of events was because within ethnology he had all but defeated the evolutionists, over whom he had assumed control of the discipline, rendering unnecessary his militancy against symbolic or otherwise literary explications of oral traditions. Perhaps it was in response to the growing interest among the general public in Indian art forms, especially poetry. Or maybe Boas sensed the explanatory limitations of his early work. Whatever the case, by the second decade of the twentieth century, Boas tried to return ethnology's focus to the literary qualities of oral traditions. In a 1914 article titled "Mythology and Folk-Tales of the North American Indians," Boas identified two problems facing the field: the lack of "faithful" translations in native languages and the lack of variants of a particular oral tradition (374-75). Even with good translation skills, it

was difficult, he explained, to record in such a way that did not interrupt the performer and thus corrupt the record. He speculated that the phonograph might be able to alleviate some of these problems, but without reliable translations and a substantial number of variants, it was impossible to accurately study "literary form—a subject," he wrote, "that has received hardly any attention, and the importance of which . . . cannot be overestimated" (375).

On the one hand, Boas felt that ethnologists needed to move past a focus on just plot and consider the underlying themes of oral traditions, which were also subject to the laws of cultural diffusion. But doing so required good data, which required recognizing skill in storytelling. A "poor rendering of a story" was typically flawed by fragmentation, brevity, and self-corrections, and was thus unenlightening from a "literary" standpoint (376). Far from devaluing "style" and "literary merit," then, Boas explicitly called for translations that could capture the original artistry of the storyteller. Boas argued that it was time to dispense with the "static view" of oral traditions and come to terms, not just with the physical movement of a story or its plot elements, but with how and why cultures and skilled storytellers manipulated their works according to local peculiarities, what he called "their literary style" (338). Boas then proceeded to model what such an analysis would look like, and what it would yield for the ethnologist. Examining creation myths, Boas showed how in each culture group a cycle's episodes were held together by different elements—sometimes by a central hero who appeared in each story, but sometimes purely by localization, by the "peculiar distribution of incidents" within a common geographical backdrop. And these unifying logics, Boas argued, were specific to the preferred "style" of an individual culture, lending the tales their "local color" (396).

As he later explained in "Stylistic Aspects of Primitive Literature" (1925), "the same story told by different tribes may bear an entirely different face . . . the setting is distinct, [and] the motivation and the main points of the tales are emphasized by different tribes in different ways, and take on a local coloring that can be understood only in relation to the whole culture" (335).

Boas concluded that "the tales of each particular area have developed a peculiar literary style, which is an expression of the mode of life and of the form of thought of the people" ("Mythology" 400). Unlike Austin, he appealed to social and material factors as influencing culture, and thus a tribe's "literary style," rather than a pseudoscientific nerve theory, but like Austin and other literary modernists he was nonetheless interested in how locality expressed itself in the formal composition of Indian oral literature.[13] Both Boas and the modernists I considered above had clearly been influenced by the "local color," or regional fiction movement, which peaked in the 1890s, when the stories of Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charles Chesnutt, and Hamlin Garland, among others, featured frequently in magazines like *Harper's* and *The Atlantic* (Foote 4). Whether collected by poets or ethnologists, Indian oral literature, as another "folk literature" of the United States, had clear similarities to the local color stories sponsored by William Dean Howells and other gatekeepers of the literary world. For middle and upper-class Americans at the time, these mostly idealized, nostalgic images of rural, "folk" peoples—much like that of the primitive Indian—acted as antidotes to modernity and its

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[13] In fact, in his 1925 article on the "Stylistic Aspects of Primitive Literature," Boas would argue, much like Austin did, that rhythm was the fundamental element of oral literature, writing that "the literatures of all the people about whom we have information share one feature, namely rhythmic form" (339).

dislocations and alienation, as scholars like Richard Broadhead have noted (119-22). And at least two writers commonly considered practitioners of "local color," Austin and Joel Chandler Harris, were collectors of myth and folklore—Harris, who became famous for his "Uncle Remus" tales, was a member of the Society of American Folklore (JAF) along with Boas, and he published widely on African American folklore. The intellectual and professional overlaps between ethnologists like Powell and literary writers like Harris have been thoroughly demonstrated in recent years by scholars like Brad Evans (75-76), and my purpose in highlighting these similarities is not to argue that Indian oral literature was part of the regional fiction movement (although one could certainly make that argument); rather, when Boas used the term "local color," he invoked a highly familiar concept from the literary world to help analyze oral traditions within the field of ethnology, a borrowing that only appears odd from a latter-day perspective in which ethnology has been commonly viewed as finally developing, under Boas's leadership, along professional, scientific grounds.[14]

Doing so made logical sense for Boas, if one accepted the fact, as he did, that the "folktale" was "primarily and fundamentally a work of primitive art," no different in kind from modern literary art forms. "We observe in them," he wrote, "not only the result of the play of imagination with favorite themes, but also the determination of the form of imaginative processes by antecedent types, which is the characteristic trait of artistic

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[14] Historians such as George Stocking, Jr. established Boas's role in the professionalization of US anthropology, for example, even though Stocking himself was also careful to characterize Boas as a transitional figure ("The Founding" 1; "The Culture Concept" 879).

production of all times and of all races and peoples" ("Mythology" 401). As local color fiction waned in popularity, Boas proposed a "local color" analysis of Indigenous oral traditions to push beyond the racism of cultural evolution, but also beyond the limitations of diffusion as an explanatory model of culture. "Differentiation in the style of composition" among culture groups suggested, Boas wrote, that "the mainspring in the formation of the modern tale must have been an artistic one" (401). From claiming that oral traditions lacked "any meaning" whatsoever, Boas argued in turn that their adoption, adaptation, and maintenance were driven by the artistic values of culture groups and even the individual tastes of storytellers.[15] They possessed literary significance, in other words. "The explanatory element would appear," he wrote, "not as an expression of native philosophy," as the evolutionists would have it, "but rather as an artistic finishing touch required for the tale wherever the art of story-telling demands it" (401).

No one else in ethnology at the time did more to pursue this line of thinking than Boas's student Paul Radin. At Columbia University Radin made the switch from history to anthropology and became part of the first crop of Boasian anthropologists to spread out and work at newly minted anthropology departments across the country. Radin initially collected Ojibwe as well as Winnebago "myths and tales" for the Canada Geological Survey, which published several of his early works. He was classmates with both Kroeber and Lowie, and he worked briefly with Kroeber at Berkeley University, but unlike the other Boas-trained scholars, Radin pledged allegiance to neither Boas's theory

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[15] Better data would reveal, Boas suggested, "what is native" in a tradition, and "what may be due to the literary taste of the recorder, and what may be due to the individual informant, and what may be tribal characteristic," which at present were unknown ("Mythology" 388).

of cultural diffusion nor his quantitative methods, later censuring Boas and his adherents on those very grounds. Although Radin's critique of Boasian anthropology and its fealty to cultural diffusion (as a refutation of cultural evolution) was incisive, he never properly acknowledged Boas's later efforts to move beyond quantitative analysis and attempt to study oral traditions qualitatively as works of literary art (*Method* 5-9). Nevertheless, Radin's assessments remained true of the discipline broadly speaking, and he likely arrived at his views independently of Boas's work. In 1915, for example, Radin published a study titled *Literary Aspects of North American Mythology*, his first major analytical work (previously, his publications had amounted to data collection). In *Literary Aspects*, he explained that it had been only in the last several decades that ethnologists had "seriously applied themselves to the examination of primitive mythology from its literary side" (1). Most of that work, however, had devolved into "a mechanical analysis of myths and the tabulation of the motifs, episodes and themes," and most of the investigators, moreover, seemed "quite oblivious of the implications necessarily entailed by the recognition that in primitive mythology we are often dealing with literature in the true sense of the word" (2). Once that admission was made, Radin argued, "we are justified in applying to this primitive literature, the same methods of analysis and criticism that we apply to our own—paying due regard to the personality of the author, or, if you will, the author-raconteur, to his literary peculiarity; to the stylistic peculiarity of the area, etc." (2). Like Boas, Radin believed that a conventional literary analysis of oral traditions was legitimate because they were fundamentally works of literary art.

And like Boas, Radin argued that myth variation was the result of "literary tendencies at work," not merely cultural diffusion (*Literary* 7). But Radin went much

further in analyzing how features of a myth were "demanded" by a story, by cultural expectations and individual artistry, which led him to certain conclusions that distinguished his work from Boas's. There were, Radin argued, "literary reasons" that governed, not just the selection of certain narrative episodes or characters, but whether certain episodes within a cycle possessed greater or less detail, for instance, as a way to "motivate" the plot (16-22). In his analysis of Winnebago myths, Radin determined that the style of plot development—a "heaping up of incidents to be foretold and then their actual occurrence," which "naturally crowded out other things"—was "not due to any general preference on the part of the raconteur but apparently to *his artistic belief* that in such a way certain episodes in his plot could best be motivated" (26; my emphasis). Referring to what he called a story's "psychological-literary necessities," Radin thus combined Boas's "local color" approach with an analysis that accounted for both the expectations of audiences and the craftsmanship of the author-raconteur (30). "Over and above the precise form in which [the storyteller] obtains a myth stands his relation as an artist to the dramatic situations contained in it and to his audience," Radin wrote. "With the psychological situations firmly in his mind the author-raconteur selects from the relatively large stock-in-trade of themes, episodes, and motifs belonging to his cultural background, those he cares to use for developing his plot, showing in some cases a conservative, in others a radical tendency" (47). The critical apparatus Radin developed would enable ethnologists, in theory at least, to make, like the literary critic, evaluative judgments regarding the skillfulness with which myths and folktales had been developed. In general, myths were, he concluded, of "two distinct types of versions, one in which they have not, to any appreciable extent, been subjected to literary workmanship and one

in which they have." The former were "static," unchanging and formulaic, told in a "passive attitude." The latter were "dynamic, of the nature of free elements with which a specially gifted individual plays and which he endeavors to weld into a literary unit," subordinating the mythical elements at his disposal to "a general theme" (32-33). Radin called these highly crafted works "novelettes." They showed significant "literary remodelling," and roughly every generation, he believed, would "have its original author-raconteurs" who reworked the myths at their disposal (43). Radin, therefore, put forward an explanation of myth variation that accounted for their changes, and thus for the cultural development of a tribe, not exclusively through exchange and contact—that is, through assimilation or acculturation, as Boas and the diffusionists argued—but through internal development, and especially through the actions and abilities of individual tribal members to influence their larger culture. Radin, that is, unlike most of his colleagues, attributed agency and cultural sovereignty to the Indigenous tribes and nations he studied.

These insights led Radin to stress that ethnology was "dealing with specific, not generalized, men and women, and with specific, not generalized, events" (185). Nearly two decades later, in his *The Method and Theory of Ethnology: An Essay in Criticism* (1933), Radin took both the evolutionists and diffusionists to task for having treated "the data of ethnology as though they were comparable to those of biology or physics," viewing people in the abstract, as monolithic races for example, just as biologists saw species in the abstract. Ethnologists, Radin argued, had never seen their subjects as real, living people, opting to study them under terms completely different from those that they would apply to their own, Western societies—thus Radin's insistence that Indian oral literature be analyzed as *literature*, as art for art's sake, not as primitive philosophy.

Radin, who trained first as a historian, envisioned ethnology as a version of cultural historicism, capable of acknowledging both cultural difference and the universal value of its subjects as human beings, which was closely linked to his belief that myth was literature, and that individual author-raconteurs were literary craftsmen. Radin's ethnology had thus come full circle to the days of John Heckewelder, becoming once again a primarily historiographical discipline, although this time oral traditions (as literary art) had a legitimate role to play in that study, as an index of a people's social and artistic values, as well as of their cultural change over time. People, Radin argued, were worth understanding in and of themselves, not as scientific evidence, and not as proof of any theory. Both the Powellians and the Boasians had collected myths, he argued, merely to prove their respective theories, under the guise of objectivity. It was scientifically acceptable, from the perspective of the Boasian anthropologist, for example, "to point out the northern elements in Navajo mythology," since it shed light on the laws of diffusion, "but it would be reprehensively speculative to attempt to study Navajo mythology in order to see whether it could throw some light on Navajo history and the growth of Navajo ideas and customs" (31). In the first place, ethnology's claims to objectivity were dubious, according to Radin. Ethnology assumed oral traditions and material artifacts were "discrete entities" that could be studied quantitatively, when in reality the ethnologist neither stood above or apart from his or her "cultural facts" but actively mediated them through collection and analysis (a position I have supported throughout this dissertation) (9). Furthermore, the supposedly subjective, qualitative approach that Radin advocated could reveal so much more than that of the Boasians: "how illuminating a document may become, how specific and how vivid . . . when seen through the mirror

of an actual man's heart and brain and not through the artificial heart and brain of the marionettes with which Boas and Sapir and Kroeber operate" (238).[16]

In other words, Radin, a Boas-trained ethnologist, also rejected the scientific approach to studying Indigenous peoples and their oral traditions, embracing instead a humanistic one. In doing so, like the literary modernists, he certainly imposed his own, Western values and beliefs regarding "literature" onto the oral traditions he collected and studied, most notably through his concept of the "author-raconteur." It shows obvious similarities to the image of the author-as-literary-craftsman—developed in the previous century by magazines like *The Atlantic* and embodied by writers like Henry James[17]. But much more so than the literary modernists, Radin tried to resist the temptation to put his subjects in service of an agenda other than to understand them on their own terms. For example, in his *Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study in Aboriginal Literature* (1948), Radin argued that the Winnebago possessed a literature like any other people, but its logic and values were unique, determined foremost through the Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) genres of *waikq* and *worak*, culturally specific Indigenous concepts on which he relied to understand Winnebago literature and society (*Winnebago* 12).

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[16] In this particular instance, Radin was modelling his literary-historical approach through an analysis of a conversion story and accompanying prayers related to him by a Crow man named John Rave, the leader of a peyote cult. Radin appealed to a combination of "cultural facts," historical developments, and the personal experiences of Rave to reveal the "multiple interrelations between an old culture and a newly introduced cult" (238).

[17] For an overview on this subject, see Richard Broadhead (80-82).

Coda: (Re)discovering Indian oral literature in the Late-Twentieth Century

Among ethnologists, however, it was not Boas or Radin, but Hymes and Tedlock to whom latter-day literary scholars like Krupat and Swann looked to bridge the fields of ethnology and literary studies, and thereby establish that oral traditions were works of high literary art. In his *Invention of Native American Literature* (2003), Robert Dale Parker observes how during the 1960s and 70s both Hymes and Tedlock "discovered," as many ethnologists had before them, that oral traditions were really works of literature, specifically poetry. By this point, however, both ethnology and literary studies had changed considerably from when Austin, Boas, and Radin were respectively discovering the literary-ness of oral traditions. In the 1950s, following the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, structuralism had replaced diffusionism as a major critical theory in ethnology, and it began to be adopted in turn by literary scholars. Hymes, who saw himself as an ethnologist studying literature, (re)discovered the literary-ness of oral traditions, but this time through the lens of structuralism. In a 1964 article on Chinook oral traditions, for example, Hymes argued that the narratives collected by Boas, Charles Cultee, and Melville Jacobs, "can be shown to be organized in terms of lines, verses, stanzas, scenes, and what one may call acts," as determined by "a set of discursive features" (431). That is, oral traditions, even long, narrative traditions, were actually works of dramatic poetry. Like Austin, Hymes believed that linguistic and performative features completed the work of demarcating lines and stanzas, familiar to written poetry, which could be analyzed and thus retroactively imposed on the written records. Oral traditions could be rewritten, that is, as poetry, correcting a misrecognition on the part of earlier collectors like Boas. And the "discovery of such organization" meant that it was "possible, indeed

essential, to regard such texts as works of literary art" (448). For Hymes, regarding oral traditions as works of literary art was "essential" in so far as it made a "theory of the structure of literary discourse" possible, and thus a "truly comparative, general literature, in which the verbal art of mankind as a whole has a place" (455). Although Hymes accepted "'Literature' as a Western category," as a construct in other words, he nonetheless defended the structuralist belief in the existence of a universal literature, one that was differentiated from non-literary speech by semantic features that were culturally specific ("Ethnographic" 195-97). Proving that Indigenous oral traditions were works of literary art, identified as such at a discursive level, proved in turn the validity of a structuralist approach to language and culture.[18]

Tedlock's motivations and his strategies of collection and analysis were different from Hymes's, and the two disagreed openly with one another, which I do not have the space to adequately explore here. At the risk of minimizing their positions and their differences, I want to propose, following Parker's lead, that Hymes's and Tedlock's effects on the trajectory of the collection and status of oral traditions were nonetheless similar. Tedlock, at roughly the same time as Hymes, argued that oral traditions had been misrecognized as prose, a discursive genre which he believed only truly existed in written

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[18] Structuralism, early on at least, promised to place literature studies on a scientific footing. This was particularly true in the United States, where scholars like Robert Scholes "sought a scientific basis for the study of literature as an interconnected system of various texts" (Habib 632-33). Like Radin's cultural historicism, structuralism, despite its deemphasis on the individual, was humanist in the sense that it applied the same methods (and attributed the same basic capacities) to all human societies, effectively dissolving distinctions between primitive and civilized (Collins 319-20). But structuralism was different in so far as it was conceived as a science. Radin had used oral literature to de-scientize ethnology, as it were; Hymes used it once more to make a science of literature.

form. Relying on his tape recordings of Zuni oral traditions, and highlighting the function of pauses in oral performances, Tedlock suggested that oral traditions be translated and recorded on the written page as poetry, organized into lines and stanzas to evoke their poetic qualities ("Toward" 513). Tedlock's complications of the categories of orality, writing, poetry, and prose—and his insistence that "Poetry is oral history and oral history is poetry" ("Learning" 707)—are fascinating and align him more with poststructuralist thinking than they do with that of structuralists like Hymes.[19] But as his work was taken up by literary scholars, it was Tedlock's authentication of oral traditions as literary art, especially as poetry, and the cultural capital implied in that designation, that became the most important features of his work (Parker 85-86). In the wake of the so-called canon wars of the 1970s and 80s, and in the wake of a Native American literary "renaissance" and a "Red Power" civil rights movement, Krupat and Swann became two of the most vocal proponents of the incorporation of Native American oral literature in the college classroom, appealing to Hymes's and Tedlock's work as justification for that incorporation. Although the interests of Krupat and Swann obviously overlapped with that of Hymes and Tedlock, they were concerned primarily with broadening, and at the same time salvaging, concepts of "literature" and "the canon," and thus also with advocating for minority rights and representation through literary studies. In his landmark book *Smoothing the Ground: Essays on Native American Oral Literature* (1983), Swann

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[19] His article "Learning to Listen: Oral History as Poetry" is the clearest example of this. Tedlock displayed the entire text in lines and stanzas, rather than sentences and paragraphs, calling attention to the effects of formal presentation at the same time that he argued that all speech acts, whether in print-based or oral societies, were in essence poetic, not prosaic.

called for the treatment of Indigenous oral traditions as "serious" literature: "For a long time," he explained, "Native American literature had been treated as tales for children"; it is, however, "adult and serious," and it is "about time that we . . . study this literature as seriously as we study Faulkner or Hemingway," (xiv). And in a series of articles published in 1982-83, Krupat similarly argued that Native American texts—including "creation and origin stories, etiological tales, invocations and prayers, lyrics of love or mourning, etc."—were not only finally overcoming their dubious status as "literature," but were poised to "be permitted entrance into a variety of literary canons," both the "broad canon of American literature" as well as the "official, institutional canon" ("Texts" 337-38).[20] "As American society continues to move away from anthropocentrism and textual authority," Krupat wrote, "the Native tradition may for the first time effectively assert its claim upon the canon of American literature" ("Literature" 167). Or as Swann put it, the nation's weakened "cultural arrogance and attitudes of cultural imperialism" had at last opened up Euro-Americans to the idea that the literatures of minority cultures and non-Western nations were indeed *literature,* and the study of Native American oral literature in specific was imperative in so far as it could help Euro-American readers to further overcome their "cultural isolation and narcissism" and confront the nation's vexed history, which had long been sentimentalized in print (*Smoothin*g xiv-xv).

Swann's subsequent collections of translated Indian oral literature attempted to do just that, providing English professors and students access to quality translations of oral

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[20] These arguments culminated in his book *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon* (1989).

"song-poems," beginning with his *Song of the Sky: Versions of Native American Song-Poems* (1993) and *Coming to Light: Contemporary Translations of the Native literatures of North America* (1996), and extending up to his most recent collection, *Sky Loom: Native American Myth, Story, and Song* (2014). Well-informed of the history of the collection of oral traditions in the United States, Swann saw his work as extending from but also correcting the work of the literary modernists outlined above. Like the literary modernists, he wanted to capture the "beauty" of Indian oral literature, which he felt that anthropologists beginning with Boas had largely ignored as irrelevant to their purposes (xxviii; *Voices* xv). But whereas the literary modernists had presented songs "from various cultures and languages . . . in isolation as American *poems*, cut loose from context and available for assimilation," Swann sought to foreground tribal diversity and Indigenous authorship and provide cultural and linguistic context for understanding oral traditions. He cited in specific Burlin's *The Indians' Book*, and its effort to provide cultural and linguistic context, as an inspiration for *Coming to Light* (xxxvii). Similarly, Krupat saw Austin's and Burlin's collections, the latter of which was republished in 1968, as precedents, however problematic, for his and other scholars' latter-day efforts to broaden the US literary canon to include Indian oral literature, writing that "these influential anthologies, for all their confusions about Indians and Indian literature . . . nonetheless were clear gestures toward that pluralism intended to open the canon" ("Literature" 157).

In the second half of the twentieth century and now, in the twenty-first century, collections of American Indian oral literature abound, and selections of it appear regularly in anthologies of American literature. I make no objections to Swann's or

Krupat's or anyone else's desire to treat Indigenous oral traditions as "serious" literature; there is, I believe, real, immediate value in reading and studying it as such. And I believe Swann has been highly successful in his goals of providing new translations of Indian oral poetry that are self-aware and culturally informed. But the insistence that oral traditions are works of "literature" has, as I have attempted to show in this dissertation, a long, politically complex history that needs recognition. Historically, the designation of oral traditions as "literature" has often worked against the epistemologies and interests of Indigenous peoples. It has shifted over time in response to new social circumstances, debates, and political landscapes, as well as to evolving conceptions of the savage, the literary, and ethnology, which has actively shaped and reshaped the extant archive of Indigenous oral traditions. It is by no means the case that as part of the spoils of the "culture wars," Indigenous oral traditions finally won an overdue status as works of literary art, validated by their inclusion in the US literary canon ("institutional" or otherwise). On the contrary, Euro-Americans have been "discovering," proclaiming, and even celebrating oral traditions as Indian oral *literature*, and Indians as "natural" poets and raconteurs, since the publication of Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches*, at the latest. And it is only through a close examination of the unique ways Indigenous writers—from David Cusick to Charles Eastman and beyond—have engaged with ethnological writing and contested the status of oral traditions as "literary" that a picture emerges of the stakes involved in such a designation. As this dissertation has demonstrated, for most of the nineteenth century the label "literature," or "literary" (poetic, fictional—thus *unreal*), was used to discredit oral traditions as bodies of knowledge, namely as sources of tribal and colonial histories. It effectively shifted their value away from the realm of the historical,

in which oral traditions might document territorial claims or colonial aggressions and transgressions, to that of the literary, in which they 1) provided evidence of ethnological theories regarding the primitive mind and the evolution of culture, 2) validated ethnologists as scientists, or otherwise validated ethnologists' methodological practices, or 3) became appropriated as artistic material for US authors, from Longfellow to Austin. And the participation of Indigenous writers in that process has been at times surprising and unexpected. For example, rather than bemoaning the idea that oral traditions were considered "tales for children," people like Bonnin and Eastman adopted and developed that perspective, producing as a result politically and rhetorically complex works—meanwhile, they ignored the "adult," serious Indian poetry of Austin, Henderson, and Walton.

Amid the "canon wars" of the 1970s and 80s, the collection and status of oral traditions became entangled (once more) in the politics of race relations in the United States and Euro-American debates over the definition of "literature" (and the scope and purpose of both ethnology and literary studies). It behooves us to keep in mind that that entanglement does not represent an altogether new development, but a new iteration of the historical function of Indigenous oral traditions within US discourse.

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