

## ABSTRACT

### American Indian Stereotypes in Early Western Literature and the Lasting Influence on American Culture

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This thesis commits to highlighting three major stereotypes concerning Native Americans, found in early western literature between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The three defining stereotypes of Native Americans are the bloodthirsty savage, the Noble Savage, and the Halfbreed. These gross misrepresentations of the indigenous people of North America not only reflect the popular opinion of minority cultures held by dominant white society during the time of their publication, they also contribute to the development of casual desensitization in white culture to the injustices heaped upon minority groups today. Though the study of these stereotypes in this thesis is focused primarily in the past, concentrating on the works of major western novelists such as James Fenimore Cooper, Zane Grey, Charles Brockden Brown, and Owen Wister, as well as on pulp fiction and Beadle dime novels of the era, the influences of the fictional depictions persist into present media. These stereotypes also extend to the national perspective of miscegenation between the white and Native American races, and are just one of the multiple ways in which stereotyping is used by white dominant culture to label and limit minority cultures within their own society.

American Indian Stereotypes in Early Western Literature  
and the Lasting Influence on American Culture

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of American Studies

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To Kenny, my favorite instigator; your friendship has made me a better person

To Dr. Larry Bowden, the man who started it all



## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction: American Roots in Indian Stereotypes

#### *Introduction*

In the United States, when a child is asked about what they see when they think of an Indian, how do they respond? Do they mention Pulitzer Prize winning novelist M. Scott Momaday or National Book Award winner Sherman Alexie? Does the child refer to Leonard Peltier and Russell Means, two prominent American Indian Movement activists?

Chances are any young person under the age of eighteen will be entirely unfamiliar with these and other contemporary examples of Native Americans in the United States. If questioned about Indians, they are more likely to reference a Quick Draw McGraw cartoon or a baseball team. Their descriptions would exist primarily of feather headdresses, loincloths, tomahawks, and wild war whoops. Even children who had studied American Indians in grade school would still define them as characters from a long ago past, figures firmly lodged in history.

But education is not the only culprit for the uninformed status of American youth. When questioned, a large majority of the adult public responds with similar or the same answers as their children. While they may not associate cartoon representations with reality, they still ascribe the Native American to an obsolete role. Most adults born in the United States assume that the Indian is an archetype of the past, assimilated so completely into contemporary culture that they no longer exist beyond the realm of tokenism. When I questioned 135 passing adults in a crowded mall, only 26 of them knew with certainty

what the American Indian Movement was, or that a civil rights movement for Native Americans had even happened.

So where does the tragic level of misinformation on the American public's part come from? How has the perspective of an entire race of multi-national people managed to remain static even into the present age of information and technology? Ultimately, the overarching origin for this skewed national perspective of the Native American lies in the stereotypes perpetuated by this culture's media. Over five hundred years after the first recorded commentary about American Indians, the pre-conceived notions of what defines indigenous people in North America seem like they have always been present, a constant thread woven into the framework of American culture. Contemporary writers, activists, and civil rights groups have struggled to overcome the pervasive effect of these longstanding stereotypes with inconsistent results. Perhaps their failure to do so lies partly in not fully understanding the origins of such generalities. The source of the national opinion on Native Americans lies in the manipulation of early authors documenting their perspective of Indian living. That influence increased tenfold when the United States began to experience westward settlement and a rise of its own, individual literature. Fiction writers took early assumptions about American Indians and built an industry upon them, turning the misrepresentation into a tool for glorifying "American Heroes," such as Buffalo Bill and Natty Bumppo. Essentially, the very roots of what defines American culture today have an intimate relationship with how American writers responded to the presence of the American Indian in this country.

### *Precursors to Nineteenth Century Western Literature*

Literature addressing American Indians dates back as far as the late fifteenth century, possibly further. In 1493, Christopher Columbus wrote about the Tainos tribe, referring to them as “Los Indios,” and describing them as innocent, friendly, and naked creatures. By 1524, the North American explorer Giovanni Verrazano had produced the first description of Indian life within what is now the United States. He not only detailed their daily life, but also noted differences between the groups he encountered. Gonzalo de Oviedo also gave a detailed analysis of America’s indigenous people. His book, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535), focused predominantly on Indians located in the southwest region of the United States. Between 1528 and 1529, Indians gathered in Mexico by Hernán Cortés traveled throughout Europe as performers, and the German artist Christoph Weiditz captured their performances through cartoon illustrations. They were the first Indian touring show, and documentation of their popularity would influence future American Wild West shows in their depiction of the American Indian.

The Noble Savage and the bloodthirsty savage appear within the pages of history with increasing regularity, separated by less than twenty years. Michel de Montaigne’s *Des Cannibales* (1580) first portrayed indigenous people as Noble Savages, but it would not be until 1670 that John Dryden would formalize the term in his *The Conquest of Granada*. The Noble Savage title, originally used for early Europeans, would in turn be applied to the American Indian in American literature. Meanwhile, Governor John White of Roanoke, Virginia inspired increased fear of the bloodthirsty savage when he returned to his Roanoke colony in 1590 to discover his townspeople inexplicably missing. White

declared that it “could be no other but the deed of the savages our enemies.”<sup>1</sup> The town, later known as the “Lost Colony,” would compound the rising distrust of Native Americans in early America. By 1677, books like William Hubbard's *Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England* would be commonplace in their portrayal of Indians as “children of the devil” and the “dross of mankind.”<sup>2</sup>

Captivity novels rose in popularity between 1680 and 1700. Some, like A *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) and *Narrative of a Shipwreck in the Gulph of Florida* (1699), saw more than thirty editions printed to satisfy the widespread demand. Cotton Mather used the captivity narrative as propaganda against American Indians during this time period. By 1744, the Massachusetts General Court had declared 250 pound bounty on every Indian scalp produced and captivity narratives grew to outrageous numbers.<sup>3</sup> In 1777, Jane McCrea’s body was found murdered and scalped – allegedly by Indian allies of the British in New York – and she quickly became the object of numerous works of art and fiction, propaganda which attracted volunteers to the colonial side before the Battle of Saratoga. 1793 saw the publication of *The History of Maria Kettle* by Anna Eliza Bleeker, one of the most famous surviving captivity narrative fiction stories.

This early stage of American literature, however, was not populated entirely by stereotyped Indians. William Byrd’s *History of the Dividing Line Run in the Year 1728* actually suggested intermarriage as a solution to the problem relations with Indian tribes.

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<sup>1</sup>Stefan Lorant, Ed, *The new world; the first pictures of America, made by John White and Jacques Le Moyne and engraved by Theodore De Bry, with contemporary narratives of the Huguenot settlement in Florida, 1562-1565, and the Virginia colony, 1585-1590*; (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946)

<sup>2</sup>Raymond William Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 254-55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The book would not see publication until 1841, but his progressive thinking at so early a date suggests a marginal percentage of authors with a more realistic understanding of American Indian peoples. Quaker John Woolman's 1763 journal on his journey to the Susquehanna River also would not be published until years later, but depicted a very human looking portrait of the Indians he met during his travels. In 1779, a Dartmouth professor named John Smith included an intelligent Indian character in his essay, "Dialogue Between an Englishman and an Indian," which he presented at his college. Washington Irving also argued in favor of the Native American when he used his sense of irony to pinpoint the shallowness behind European claims to Indian lands. His books, *A History of New York* (1809) and *The Sketchbook* (1819), contributed both to Indian causes and to Indian idealization that would become a part of the Noble Savage archetype. Irving would later publish additional books, *A Tour of the Prairies* (1835), *Astoria* (1836), and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837), in which Indians played a major role. Though his works were significantly sympathetic to American Indian perspective, he eventually turned his attention back to European subjects.

American Indians continued to play an integral part in the development of the United States as a country. For example, the first musical score ever printed in America was "The Death Song of an Indian Chief," which was released in March 1791 in the *Massachusetts Magazine*. In 1799, Charles Brockden Brown published the first American novel to use Indians significantly in its plot (even if they were painted in a highly negative manner), and James Fenimore Cooper would begin his series *The Leatherstocking Tales* in 1823, amid a popular flurry of pulp novels that romanticized American Indians. His contribution to popular fiction would change the face of American literature forever.

Romanticizing the Indian dominated western fiction and poetry between 1800 and 1830, a factor discussed in Chapter Three. Titles such as *Frontier Maid; or, the Fall of Wyoming* (1819); *Logan, an Indian Tale* (1821); *The Land of Powhatten* (1821); and *Ontwa, Son of the Forest* (1822) all portrayed dramatically idealized Indians that fit into the Noble Savage definition. In 1820, James Eastburn and Robert Sands produced a six-canto tragic poem title *Yamoyden, a Tale of the Wars of King Philip*, and by 1830 the theater was dominated by “Indian plays,” that heavily featured the Noble Savage motif. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published “The Song of Hiawatha” in 1855, and the poem immediately met with success in its depiction of the Noble Savage. 1884 saw the publication of Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*. Where her white-critical novel, *Century of Dishonor*, had met with lackluster response, Jackson’s new work became a hit. Its love story between a white woman and an Indian man would live on in theater and film. Also on stage in 1893 was Belasco and Fyles’s play, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, which victimized innocent Indians at the hands of corrupt white culture.

This same era saw the American Indian being equally misrepresented in popular frontier novels as the bloodthirsty villain. The 1837 novel *Nick of the Woods* by Robert Montgomery Bird would supply a prevailing image of Indians as “loathsome savages” that was immediately emulated by other frontier novels of the time. In 1860, the first Beadle Dime Novel, *Malaeska; the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, was published. *Seth Jones; or, the Captive of the Frontier* quickly followed, and contributed to the pattern of portraying Indians as “howling savages made for biting the dust, sometimes by the dozen.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian*, 255.

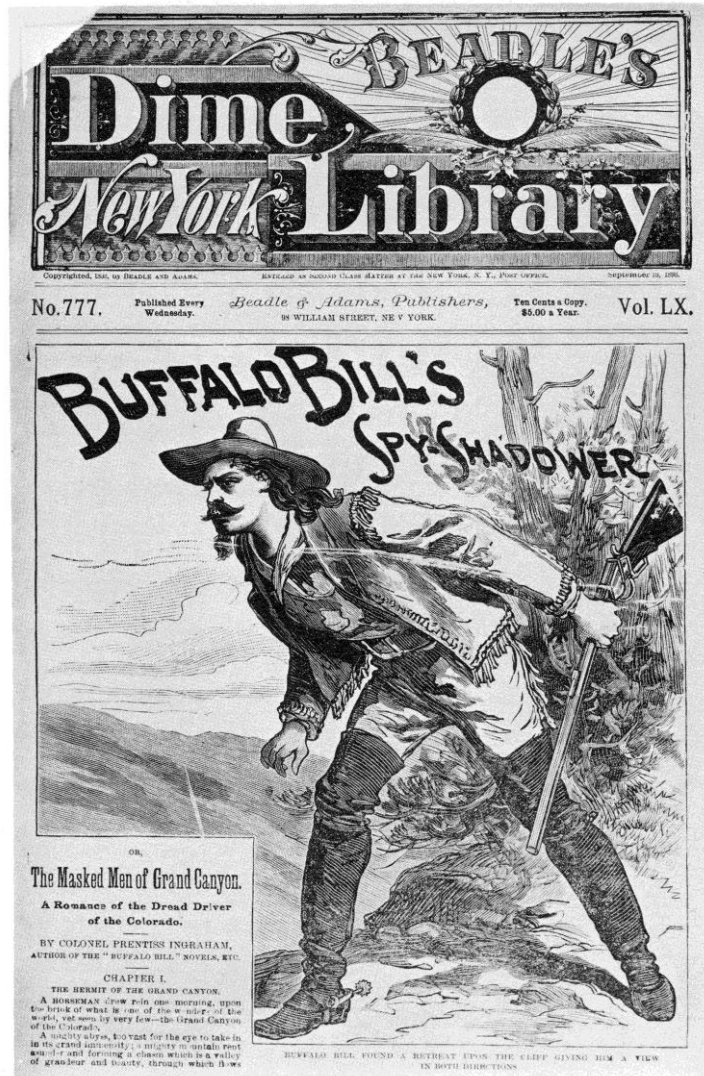


Figure 1.1 "Buffalo Bill's Spy Shadower," Beadle Dime Library, vol. 60, no. 777

Ned Buntline can be credited with introducing Buffalo Bill into the dime novel spotlight in 1869, an interpretation of the hero that led to performances on stage and, eventually, the outdoor Wild West shows that Buffalo Bill became most famous for. These shows ran from 1882 to 1916, playing into the pre-existing stereotypes of savage, attacking Indians, and would later serve as a foundation for the action packed scenes in movie westerns. Plains Indians, especially the Sioux, become the generic face of all Indians in film and popular media.

The 1900s saw greater complexities among the Indian stereotypes in western literature but did not lessen the severely skewed perspective the American readership had of the American Indian. The play *Strong-heart* went to stage in 1905 and explored the turmoil of a converted Indian (like those discussed in Chapter Four) who fell in love with a white woman. Another play, *The Squaw Man* by E. M. Royle, broached the subject of miscegenation by dramatizing the tragedy of an Indian woman married to a white traveler, who then abandoned her. The 1930s introduced the Lone Ranger and Tonto to the American public, first through radio and then in novels and comic books. Tonto would become one of the most popular converted Indians in American literary history. Stories of his adventures with the Lone Ranger would continue well into the late 1960s, serving as just one of the many subtle barriers laid before activists in the American Indian Movement.

#### *Literature and American Identity*

This brief overview of the literature preceding and leading into the nineteenth century reveals how greatly the stereotypes broken down in the following chapters were influenced by early documentation of America. The added perspective on the American Indian stereotypes also shows, definitively, how intertwined America's origins are with popular opinion and reception of indigenous people. How much of the United States' identity comes from early American reaction to Native Americans, particularly in literature? That answer may become clearer through more detailed study of the stereotypes that define American Indians in Western literature.



## CHAPTER TWO

### The “Savage” Writings: Bloodthirsty Indian Stereotypes in Fiction

#### *Introduction*

When James K. Folsom wrote in *The American Western Novel* that Indians “became a focal point for the discussion of primitivism which plays so large a part in eighteenth-century intellectual history,” he referred largely to the interest in Native Americans as bloodthirsty savages. This interest was born out of a propagandistic desire to dismiss the rights of indigenous peoples and justify measures taken to oppress and extract them from coveted land. Originally, literature about the American west was written as a way to breed interest in those living in the East. Writers wanted to entice possible investors to consider starting a new life out in the frontier. While savage Indians could hardly be considered compelling to women or children, it was the sort of excitement often dreamt about by young men who were considering improving their situation.

Bloodthirsty savages were generally written as lower than human in both intelligence and appearance. They were unattractive, foul smelling, and spoke in an unappealing gibberish tongue. Often they dressed scandalously and bore gruesome tattoos or face paint, which gave them a fearsome, unholy or inhuman appearance in battle, which attributed to their acts of merciless destruction and torture. But despite all the savage Indians’ potential for harm, they were never so cunning as to be smarter than the story’s hero. Bloodthirsty Indians were something to be feared but also conquered.

Often drunkards fitted with only animal intelligence, stereotypes paint Native Americans as brutish creatures in need of being tamed or conquered, and “imbedded in the actions of the hero of the book is a none-too-carefully concealed program for action against them.”<sup>1</sup> Reading popular novels about the American West could easily put delusions of grandeur in a young man’s head, and, coupled with the promise of cheap and available land, may serve as enough impetus to move beyond the comforts of his eastern town.

The Native American as the bloodthirsty savage serves as a popular theme even in contemporary literature. Their villainy is used to spotlight the countering good of cowboy heroes or “good” Indians. Even more so, a bloodthirsty savage serves to justify the actions taken to destroy their way of life as a necessary measure for ensuring peace. As Calder states in *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, “the fearful emotions of just revenge was encouraged by Easterners shaking their heads over their breakfast newspapers and demanding that the West be made safe for innocent, hardworking, civilized whites.”<sup>2</sup>

In exploring the stereotype of the American Indian as a bloodthirsty savage, this chapter explores first the works of major American western writers, then the more common pulp-fiction and dime novels from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. During this time period, the more influential novelists included Owen Wister, James Fenimore Cooper, Zane Grey, and Louis L’Amour. The themes of their popular works are examined first.

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<sup>1</sup>James K. Folsom, *The American Western Novel*. (New Haven: College & University Press, 1966), 141-44

<sup>2</sup>Jenni Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger: The American West in Film and Reality*, (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1974), 46.

### *The Savage in the Western Novel*

Charles Brockden Brown is often associated as the first American writer to idealize the West in his fiction by writing about Indian savagery. Lillie Loshe claims in *The Early American Novel* that Brown believed “the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the western wilderness are far more suitable” to calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathies of the reader.<sup>3</sup> His most notable work involving Indian hostility is *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799), in which the plot is driven forward by attacks from savage Native Americans. According to Loshe, these Indians were “simply savages, with strength and endurance, and also with the cruelty of wild beasts.”<sup>4</sup> Albert Keiser also attributes Brown with “first successfully utilizing the Indian as fiction material... even if others before him had sensed his literary possibilities.”<sup>5</sup> These “possibilities” would go on to shape the formulae for the traditional western of unquestionable “good versus evil.” Brown himself had “the colonist’s conception of the Indian as a murderous savage, whose every action if not closely circumscribed leads to tragedy.”<sup>6</sup>

While James Fenimore Cooper did not share the same opinions as Brown concerning Indians, that does not mean the American author was innocent of employing hostile Indians in his stories. The first and most famous of his work, *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (1826), bears the first appearance of the bloodthirsty

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<sup>3</sup>Lillie Deming Loshe. *The Early American Novel*, (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1907), 69.

<sup>4</sup>Loshe, *The Early American Novel*, 73.

<sup>5</sup>Albert Keiser. *The Indian in American Literature*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 33.

<sup>6</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 37.

savage in Cooper's novels. This second installment to *The Leatherstocking Tales* features the heroic white raised by Indians, Natty Bumppo (also known as "Deer Slayer"), and his Indian companion, Chingachgook (also known as John Mohegan). However, the story also portrays a whole cast of villainous Indians, beginning with the traitorous Huron, Magua. Magua agrees to lead Heyward, Gamut, and the Munro sisters to Fort William Henry, but reveals his malicious nature almost immediately by plotting to guide them into an Indian ambush. When Natty Bumppo and his companions oust his plan, the Indian turns tail and takes a coward's flight into the woods, thereby solidifying his villainous nature and deserved position as the force of "evil" in the book. He returns to the traveling group by nightfall to stage additional attacks, injuring Gamut and eventually taking all but Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook as captives. The evil Magua threatens to kill the entire party unless Cora will agree to become his squaw, a proposal based entirely upon his need for revenge against Colonel Munro. When Chingachgook bests him in hand-to-hand combat, Magua again displays his cowardice by pretending to be dead in order to escape. When placed alongside noble figures such as Natty Bumppo, Magua's behavior is even more deplorable and deserving of the reader's disgust.

Magua, however, is not the only dastardly Indian present in *Mohicans*. The Huron that he leads are described as "lolling savages" who partake of "brutal indulgence[s]" such as the murder of women and children, scalping corpses, and sexual assault"<sup>7</sup>(Figure 2.1). Cooper reveals their duplicitous nature when the Huron, as allies to the French, agree not to attack those at Fort William Henry once they have surrendered. As the conquered people file out of the Fort, one savage took a child from its mother and

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<sup>7</sup>Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans*, (New York: Heritage Press, 1961), 79.

“dashed the head of the infant against a rock” in an act of ultimate maliciousness and brutality against the innocent.



Figure 2. 1 Cora Richter, Wife of a Young Missionary, Abducted by an Indian, *The Lost Trail: A Legend of the Far West*, 1864

He is then described as “maddened by his disappointment, and excited by the sight of blood,” savagely murdering the mother as well before joining other Huron in a massacre of all but the main characters.<sup>8</sup> Cooper feigns unwillingness to describe the scene, but leaves the reader with enough mental imagery to create implied horrors in what is not said.

“More than two thousand raving savages broke from the forest at the signal, and threw themselves across the fatal plain with instinctive alacrity. We shall not dwell on the revolting horrors that succeeded. Death was everywhere, and in his most terrific and disgusting aspects. Resistance only served to inflame the murderers, who inflicted their furious blows long after their victims were beyond the power of their resentment. The flow of blood might be likened to the outbreking of a torrent; and as the

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<sup>8</sup>Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 133.

natives became heated and maddened by the sight, many among them even kneeled to the earth, and drank freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide.”<sup>9</sup>

These descriptions only serve to elevate the bloodthirsty nature of the “savage” in the minds of Cooper’s audience. His writing in *The Last of the Mohicans* facilitates the stereotype of American Indians largely as sub-human, murderous beasts. The civilized, “good” Indians that do exist are acknowledged to be a dying breed that will soon be extinct. In fact, Martin Barker and Roger Sabin suggest in their book, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth* that a close reading of the novel reflects the belief that “the only good Indian is a dead one.” The authors further elaborate that despite the “pro-Indian” perspective Cooper adopts by writing Indian protagonists, he still “refers to Indians throughout as ‘savages,’ hardly a neutral term, and contrives situations where their lack of ‘civilization’ is contrasted with the whites.”<sup>10</sup> This contrast is seen even with Chingachgook, who displays his “Indian” lack of honor by willingly abandoning the Munro sisters when they are cornered in the cave by Huron.

Cooper’s other installments in *The Leatherstocking Tales* reinforce the ironic balance between the bloodthirsty “savage” and the Noble Savage, though their initial publications range from 1823 to 1841, during a time in which the relationship and perceptions of these two stereotypes would be changed to suit the blossoming lust for land in white society

Zane Grey, like Cooper, would also rise to western literary fame by writing about the “Old West” during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Grey would even write about a similar siege

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<sup>9</sup>ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Barker, Martin and Roger Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), 22.

at Fort Henry by American Indians, though these would be allied to the British instead of the French. The publication of this first novel, *Betty Zane* (1903), would lead a career as a prolific author, though I wasn't until he published *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910) that he gained any great deal of popularity. Still, much of Grey's success can be attributed to his formulaic writing, which, according to Gary Topping, employs a catalyst of a "stampede, Indian attack, kidnapping, exposure to the elements, and so on" to solve the issues at hand.<sup>11</sup> The employment of the hostile Indian as a plot device was already well established in pulp fiction and dime novels, and so the sometimes contrary nature of timely Indian attacks probably didn't seem particularly unusual to Grey's readership.

By 1913, Grey had perfected his manipulation of the "savage" in his novels, and it didn't just include American Indians. For example, his book *Desert Gold* (1913) labels both the Indians and the Mexicans as possessing of savageness. Arthur G. Kimball makes the same point in *Ace of Hearts: The Westerns of Zane Grey* when he states that "Grey uses the term in three senses: 'primitive,' fiercely violent, and Indian."<sup>12</sup> *Desert Gold* not only places the stigma of the bloodthirsty savage on the traitorous Papago Indians, but also on Mexicans who, as non-whites, have been realistically considered in association with the Indian race. These Mexicans display a "savagely jocose" brutality towards others, especially Indians.<sup>13</sup> Savagery as an emotion proved to also be a repeating pattern in Grey's writing.

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<sup>11</sup>Gary Topping, "Zane Grey: A Literary Reassessment," *American Literature*, Vol. 13 (Spring 1978), . 51 – 64

<sup>12</sup>Kimball, Arthur G. *Ace of Hearts: The Westerns of Zane Grey*, (Ft. Worth: TCU Press, 1993), 211.

<sup>13</sup>Zane Grey, *Desert Gold*, (Roslyn, NY: Walter J. Black, Inc, 1975), 95.

*The U. P. Trail* (1918) further stereotyped the Indians as bloodthirsty savages. Even worse, they're utilized as stage props, with no definition or motive to their actions. The "bloody savages" appear at the beginning of the novel and massacre a wagon trail, and then pop up repeatedly throughout the narration to stage attacks on the railroad workers. Like Cooper, the author also suggests that Indian extinction is inevitable and necessary, and marks the advancement of the railroad system as a signal for the Indians' demise.<sup>14</sup> In *Desert Gold*, a Sioux chief who stands watching the locomotive with an "acceptance of the inevitable bitterness," acknowledges whites as "a superior race, but not a nobler one."<sup>15</sup>

Grey further explores the potential of savagery in Indians in his novel *To the Last Man* (1922) when his main character, the half-breed Jean Isbel, discovers the savage Indian side to his nature. When Jean sneaks up on Greaves to kill him, Grey writes "to kill this enemy of his father's was not enough! Physical contact had unleashed the savage soul of the Indian."<sup>16</sup> In an act that interlaces sexuality and savagery, Jean stabs Greaves "low down, as far as Jean could reach."<sup>17</sup> Presumably, in the groin. Kimball argues that "Grey's language suggests Indians have a kind of super capacity for 'savage' violence" in this novel and the implication persists through other books where the characters share blood with Native Americans.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Kimball, *Ace of Hearts*, 214.

<sup>15</sup>Zane Grey, *The U.P. Trail*, (New York: Pocket Books, Inc, 1963), 313.

<sup>16</sup>Zane Grey, *To the Last Man*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), 175.

<sup>17</sup>ibid

<sup>18</sup>Kimball, *Ace of Hearts*, 110.



Sexual domination and savageness appear again *The Vanishing American* (1923), perhaps one of Grey's most well known novels. In the passionate scene between Marian and Nophaie, the Indian with a white man's education, Grey writes that,

"He did not kiss her. That was not the Indian way. Tenderness, gentleness, love had no part in this response to her woman's allurements. His mastery was that of the primal man denied; his brutality went to the verge of serious injury to her. But for the glory of it — the sheer backward step to the uttermost thrill of the senses — deep in the marrow of her bones — she would have screamed out in pain. For he handled her, bent her, swung and lifted her, and flattened her body as might have a savage in sudden possession of a hitherto unconquerable and unattainable woman of the wilds."<sup>19</sup>

Such a scene suggests that Indians are only capable of "savage" behavior, though Grey does not apply it in a negative fashion. Does he? It seems that no matter how intellectually assimilated Nophaie has become in the white culture, he cannot escape the savageness of his heritage. His lovemaking to Marian pushes the limits of brutality, and seems more an assault than a mutual expression of desire. In this way, even Grey's miscegenation is reminiscent of a bloodthirsty Indian rape.

*The Border Legion* (1916) is a captivity narrative that creates the same tension between sexual desires and savageness as *The Vanishing American*. Except this time, it really is rape. Though Jack Kells isn't an Indian, Grey has him act "as if his nature was savage and he had to use a savage force" in his attempted rape of Joan.<sup>20</sup> Imagery of the lecherous Indian savage rises to the forefront to the reader's mind at such suggestions, a method Grey knew and utilized to reinforce the level of horror in Kell's actions. Kimball suggests that "Grey's description hints at the double focus of the psyche's dark urges

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<sup>19</sup>Zane Grey, *The Vanishing American*, (New York: Pocket Books, Inc, 1982), 297.

<sup>20</sup>Grey, Zane, *The Border Legion*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1916), 55.

projected onto the Indians and manifest in the imagined tortures ('blinded,' 'scorched') by these savages run amok ('madman')."<sup>21</sup> Even if actual savages are absent, the association of characters with Indians as bloodthirsty, brutal savages can reinforce the stereotype in a reading audience.

### *The Savage in Pulp Fiction*

James K. Folsom writes in *The American Western Novel* that the Indian in early western literature represents the "pinnacle of eminence as the quintessence of bestiality in human form... Indians are presented as brutal, debased, and incredibly cruel."<sup>22</sup> As discussed with Cooper, the destruction of the Indian is considered inevitable and necessary, often written in books as a situation where "the whites [have] no choice but to make war against the Indians." They may not always be directly at fault for the tragedies taking place in the novel, but they are often "socially culpable."<sup>23</sup> Folsom states that writers were not interested in obtaining a "true to life" perception of the Native American, and so "the Indian was treated more and more like 'the enemy.'" In dime novels and popular fiction, "particular Indians grew increasingly dastardly, and the Indian problem as reflected in such works became more or less straightforward statement of how 'our side' won. The Indian, in such works, plays the negative to positive American virtues which are unhesitatingly affirmed."<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, this was what the American

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<sup>21</sup>Kimball, *Ace of Hearts*, 119.

<sup>22</sup>James K. Folsom, *The American Western Novel*. (New Haven: College & University Press, 1966), 141 -145.

<sup>23</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 144-145.

<sup>24</sup> Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 147.

readership of the nineteenth century wanted to hear, and producers of dime novels were willing and able to make a profit from it.

The origin of the dime novel can be attributed to Beadle & Adams who first began publishing *Beadle's Dime Novels* in 1860. According to *Virgin Land* by Henry Nash Smith, the traditional formula for a dime novel involved a hero that always hunted hostile Indians, escaping capture and “aids in the rescue of a heroine from the Indians according to ancient prescription.”<sup>25</sup> Nash considers the earliest use of the cowboy hero in Beadle dime novels to be a biography of Buck Taylor from 1887. In this novel, Buck establishes himself first as born from the Leatherstocking hero when he is “captured by Comanches and freed by an Indian he has befriended, as well as when he rescues McNally’s daughter from the Indians.” The core of the Cowboy hero lies in opposition from “hostile” Indians. When Indians in dime novels began to decline between 1860 and 1893, their gradual disappearance preceded the dismissal of the Leatherstocking hero himself, and a somewhat unmaning of the cowboy hero.<sup>26</sup> One Beadle’s first productions, *Maleaska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter* (1860) by Ann S. Stephens, uses the hostile Indian archetype even earlier by including bloodthirsty Indians who murder a white man in the opening pages of the story. Indian ancestry is so abhorrent to those in the novel that the half-breed son of Maleaska kills himself when he finds out about his heritage. In 1864, William Bushnell published *The Hermit of Colorado Hills*, a story that takes place in Texas cattle country where “the agents of evil that threaten the

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<sup>25</sup>Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 100.

<sup>26</sup>Smith, *Virgin Land*, 96.

rancher are Indians.”<sup>27</sup> Similar narratives, like *Cowboy Chris, the Desert Centaur, or Hawking, the Human Hawk. A Story of the Arid Plains* (1897), present heroes who gain honor by defeating the bloodthirsty savages menacing innocent white rancher. These heroes believe it is their “duty” to “send as many ‘Paches as we kin to ther happy huntin’ ground.”<sup>28</sup> By murdering and scalping Indians (including women and young boys), they’ll be “doin’ the kentry er mighty big favor” because “‘Paces an’ rattlesnakes is just one and the same.”<sup>29</sup>

Around the same time as the publications of *Beadle’s Dime Novels* and other competing pulp fiction series, contemporary newspapers such as *The Dallas Morning News* were publishing articles like “A Sketch of Texas Literature,” which only served to reinforce and validate the stereotypes present in the writing of pulp novelist by suggesting that stories of bloodthirsty savages were entirely truthful. Even a hundred years later, reporters like William B. Ruggles of *The Dallas Morning News* published reviews on writings of early settlers in America, and praised them for their fortitude and moral character in the face of immense adversity. The journalist didn’t question the opinions or stories written by those settlers, and instead expressed a certainty that “there was nothing imaginary about Indians who harried these early settlers.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Mody C. Boatright, “History and Theory of the Popular Western Novel: The Beginnings of Cowboy Fiction,” in *Critical Essays on the Western American Novel*. Ed. William T. Pilkington, (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1980), 45-47.

<sup>28</sup>Boatright, *Critical Essays on the Western American Novel*, 52.

<sup>29</sup>ibid

<sup>30</sup>William B. Ruggles, “Hardy Folk who began American Experiment,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 13, 1950.

One of the greatest fears instilled in the American audience by these dime novels was the possibility of Indian captivity. Authors used shock tactics to add levels of horror to the Indian antagonists in their stories, resulting in captivity narratives such as *The History of Maria Kettle* (1793) by Mrs. Ann Eliza Bleeker, where “the bloodthirsty savages mercilessly butcher all but one of a family they had previously befriended.”<sup>31</sup> Paulette F. Molin states in her book, *American Indian Themes in Young Adult Literature*, that “the Indian violence pervading captivity fiction is especially disturbing and propagandistic when it is centered on young children.”<sup>32</sup> These assumed truths about brutality towards white children were unfounded. The vast majority of American Indian tribes valued children highly and treated them kindly. Such reality has been unable to keep authors like Keehn Allegheny from writing *I am Regina*, a contemporary novel that portrays not only abuse of children, but also “an attempted rape, with twelve-year-old protagonist Regina... and one of her captors, Tiger Claw.” Allegheny further stereotypes Indians by universally characterizing them with “drunkenness and stereotypical language.”<sup>33</sup> In fact, many captivity narratives suggest that Indians are so savage and evil that being touched in any sexual way by one is considered an act of defilement, where “the protagonists in this account are portrayed as martyrs, to their husbands and to their destinies”<sup>34</sup> This trend began as early as the seventeenth century but reached true popularity through the mass production of the dime novel. In writings where “the

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<sup>31</sup>Keiser, Albert. *The Indian in American Literature*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 37.

<sup>32</sup>Paulette F. Molin, *American Indian Themes in Young Adult Literature*, (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2005), 70-72.

<sup>33</sup>Molin, Paulette F, *American Indian Themes in Young Adult Literature*, 72.

<sup>34</sup>Molin, *American Indian Themes in Young Adult Literature*, 73.

supposed terrible fate of Indian captivity is discovered not to be so awful after all... this final revelation is, to the two searchers, the most horrible of all.” Meaning that when authors of dime novels wrote characters who did not suffer at the hands of bloodthirsty Indians during their captivity, they were often then mistreated by the whites who rescued them. Being held prisoner by Indians inevitably resulted in death, pity, or rejection at the hands of the white culture. In this way, sympathizing with the Native American was discouraged in the reader, and instead led to further stereotypes, like the ones in Alan Le May’s *The Searchers*, where the Comanche “come to stand for a type of subhuman, bestial, demonic life” whose “stoical, cunning, treacherous, warlike nature is also a symbol of their unhumanity.”<sup>35</sup>

Taking the horrors of the generic bloodthirsty Indian a step further, many authors found growing popularity in writing “Apache novels.” These dime novels targeted the Apache people as even more cruel, devious, and merciless in their killings and torture than any other group of American Indians. In *There Must be a Lone Ranger: The American West in Film and Reality*, Jenni Calder states that the rise in popularity of Apache violence stories led to the general belief that “the Apache above all others... employs torture and takes an avid interest in the suffering of his victims. He is portrayed as the cruelest and toughest of all Indians.”<sup>36</sup> C. L. Sonnichsen, in his book *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction*, explores the formula for Apache stories as having self-explanatory titles, like *Apache Ransom* or *Apache Hostage*, that would attract the reader interested in “western horror.”

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<sup>35</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 165.  
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<sup>36</sup>Calder, Jenni, *There Must be a Lone Ranger: The American west in Film and Reality*, (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1974), 52.



Figure 2. 2 *The Death of Jane McCrea*, 1804; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

Typically, these novels contain a “malignant Apache chief [who] lurks in the background” as an “irresistible, inhuman presence endowed with almost supernatural malice and cunning.”<sup>37</sup> Despite their uncanny capacity for trickery and deceit, Apaches are characterized with deficiencies such as bad table manners and the preference for eating the unsavory parts of animals raw (probably a stereotype born from ritualistic eating of the liver or heart of animals following a successful hunt, a ceremonial act meant

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<sup>37</sup>Sonnichsen, C. L., *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978), 71-73.

to honor the spirit of the animal and empower the tribe). The Apache is believed to be “lacking in human feelings” and “does not love his horse, but rides him to death and then eats him.”<sup>38</sup> In writing about the Apache language, authors describe it as “unpleasant to civilized ears,” and “later writers describe it... as ‘gobble talk’ or ‘hissing, guttural Apache.’”<sup>39</sup>. Animalistic and merciless, an Apache will even “abandon his old people and leaves them to starve... even when he is in no hurry at all.” The writers of these stereotypes served an audience with “a highly developed taste for horror and violence” and often created atrocities beyond even what Native peoples could conceive.

Apache women in particular are considered “the keenest and most resourceful torturers.” According to Sonnichsen, she “reserves her supreme efforts for a man who has betrayed her.”<sup>40</sup> White women captured by Apaches could expect sexual abuse, and though they would not be subjected to torture, they were likely to be mutilated after death out of sheer disregard for their dignity. If a white woman bore a half-breed child from her attackers “she was likely to be despised and rejected when she got back to her own people—especially by her husband.”<sup>41</sup> Sonnichsen says “as any reader can tell you, the way to avoid the worst is to save the last bullet for the woman. The Idea that a woman suffers unspeakable things if she is captured by Indian is one of our basic beliefs. No popular writer could approach his typewriter with confidence if this cliché were taken away from him.”<sup>42</sup> The assertion that it would be better to seek suicide than to be taken

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<sup>38</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 73.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid

<sup>40</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 75.

<sup>41</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 76.

<sup>42</sup>ibid



prisoner by an American Indian did much to inflate the stereotype of the bloodthirsty savage. Sonnichsen concludes that we believe what we want to believe about Apaches and their ways, to a point that “minor errors go unnoticed, and even major slips do not seem to embarrass the authors of these tales.”

The movement into more contemporary western literature showed no abatement to the stereotyping, even after Native Americans were granted citizenship. In fact, there was an increased demand for “shocking violence” that contemporary writers have strived to live up to. Sonnichsen published his book in 1978, over one hundred years after the first publication of the dime novel, but observes

“in Western fiction the Apache is still the Enemy—at least the bad ones are. And the bad ones are at war with the good ones as well as with the white men... To some of us, all Apaches are evil personified, and to others, some Apaches are evil personified. It will probably remain that way in spite of all efforts to upgrade the Indian and make him lovable.”<sup>43</sup>

### *Conclusion*

So why was this kind of stereotyping allowed to happen? Calder believes that the treatment of the Indian in the western was effected “by the fact that everyone knew the Indians had lost.” The evidence of inevitable domination by the white culture “could only encourage the squandering of Indian lives,” and appealed to a culture that was “geared to equating Indian with depredation.”<sup>44</sup> Only two other alternatives existed for Indians in fiction at that time, one being a “heroic, meaningless (because that kind of heroism is

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<sup>43</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 81.

<sup>44</sup>Calder, Jenni, *There Must be a Lone Ranger*, 42-43.

irrelevant) death in the old way” and the other a “stagnant, meaningless death-in-life on the reservation.”

The next step in negative representation of the American Indian became known as the “Salvaje... a sophisticated and intensified version of the animal heathen who appear frequently, described with scorn and abhorrence, in nineteenth century accounts.” Salvaje is considered “a worthless creature who certainly does not inspire fear.”<sup>45</sup> This figure appears to be the extreme reactionary contradiction to the concept of the “Noble Savage,” so completely defined by its savage nature that it is pathetic rather than terrifying. Salvaje typically lurk through the pages of a book, drinking themselves to death and maintaining a complete lack of any redeeming quality. In her book, Calder reasons that “the fearful emotion of just revenge was encouraged by Easterners shaking their heads over their breakfast newspapers and demanding that the West be made safe for innocent, hardworking, civilized whites. Revenge was easiest to justify when the victim was savage”<sup>46</sup>

Is there any hope of overcoming the stereotype of the bloodthirsty savage of the plains? Radio and Film have since reinforced this literary misrepresentation with their wild descriptions of painted natives that scream ululations from atop their blood-streaked ponies. Many generations of American children have grown up with this concept of the Indian in their minds. But that is not to say that change is impossible. In 1966, William B. Ruggles, the newspaper journalist who had previously asserted “there was nothing imaginary about Indians who harried these early settlers,” penned another articles titled

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<sup>45</sup>ibid

<sup>46</sup>ibid

“The Red Man- His Wars, Mores, and Sorrow.” This article questioned the many versions of Custer’s last fight, citing sources that contradict the fables of when and how Custer died. Ruggles also pointed out that “the disastrous Battle of the Little Bighorn would never have occurred if this country had observed its treaty with the Indians to the Dakotas.”<sup>47</sup> He praised Dale Van Every’s book, *Disinherited*, as providing a more truthful and complete look at the history of the Cherokee people and how the U.S. Government exploited them. According to Ruggles, “it cannot be read without a sense of national shame.”<sup>48</sup> What inspired the change in this journalist is unknown, but his shift in attitude reflects a growing adjustment of popular society’s opinion of the Native American, during a time leading up to the actions of the American Indian Movement in 1972. While AIM certainly forced American citizens to recognize that the Native American was not an extinct race of the past, it may have also damaged the softening perspective towards their savage status. Even so, literature has taken an immense leap since that time period in its efforts to more fully understand and represent the American Indian. Much of this greater understanding can be attributed to the rise of Native authors themselves.

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<sup>47</sup>William B.Ruggles, “The Red Man- His Wars, Mores, and Sorrow,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 20, 1966.

<sup>48</sup>ibid

## CHAPTER THREE

### Noblesse-Oblige: The Noble Savage in Western Literature

#### *Introduction*

The development of the term “Noble Savage” occurred during the Primitivism movement in the eighteenth century, and served a dual purpose for justifying both the low opinion whites had for Native Americans and the brutal mistreatment of the American Indian during that time period. While the “Noble Savage” was morally superior to the white man because of his natural goodness, a state untainted by tuition, he was also considered less intelligent and less human, and therefore acceptably expendable by American standards. Though dominant culture seems to have experienced a shifting awareness of American Indian rights, culture, and religion to one of greater social equality since that time, the roots of what was originally coined the “Noble Savage” lives on even in contemporary literature.

Dryden originally established the romantic glorification of a savage and more natural lifestyle, ultimately referred to as the “Noble Savage,” in his famous heroic play, *The Conquest of Granada*, where he stated

“I am as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards. Acted at the Theatre-Royal. In two parts*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: J. Knapton, G. Strahan, and W. Davis, 1704), 6.

However, it would not be until this “description of the assumed political state of nature” was expounded upon by Rousseau in his *A Discourse on Inequality* that the term “Noble Savage” would come to mean the many things it is associated with through American eighteenth century Primitivism. He explained that all men when in the “state of nature” were essentially good, with untainted intuitions and inclinations. But to be civilized was to be corrupted and made unhappy by experiences in society. Gaining knowledge through tuitions enforced unnatural behavior on the “natural man” and removed him from his more natural, and therefore good, inclinations. American Indians, then, became an ultimate example of man uncorrupted and unfettered by civilization, a concept that countered the beliefs surrounding original sin and reinforced that all men were, at their core, good. This could be related to Emerson’s encouragement to seek the “Aboriginal Self” in his essay “Self Reliance.” This self supposedly existed inside all men and listened not to the tuitions taught by society, but to the natural instincts of the soul. The Noble Savage’s determining features included a harmony with nature coupled with a moral innocence and inability to lie. They were marked by their generosity and selflessness when interacting with strangers, as well as possessing a “natural wisdom” and noticeable moral courage. They were also considered distinctly robust in physical health.

The American Indian has since been idealized in this fashion throughout history and most notably in literature during the nineteenth century, including in James Fenimore Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*, with its noble descriptions of chief Chingachgook and his son Uncas, Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, featuring Queequeg, and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, containing Crusoe’s companion, Friday. These literary figures not

only reinforce the American dominant society's view on the Native as a Noble Savage, but also serve as a justifying equalizer against the perception of all Indians as bloodthirsty cannibals. While Custard stated, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," others began to see the American Indian as an "illustration of the freedom, simplicity, and general closeness to nature which the age admired."<sup>1</sup> This oversimplification of the indigenous people would persist for some time in the cultural framework of America, particularly in literature.

### *The Noble Savage in Pulp Fiction*

The presence of the Noble savage in popular fiction, particularly in the nineteenth century, was typically a way to "somehow to 'prove' the desirability of that [white] civilization which, it was alleged, he [the Noble Savage] would accept with open arms."<sup>2</sup>

*The Early American Novel*, written by Dr. Lillie Deming Loshe, Ph. D, discusses the development of the Indian as a romantic figure as "a result of the tendency to idealize the virtues of primitive man, and to contrast the virtues of man in his natural state with the vices of a degenerate civilization." According to Loshe, the later eighteenth century saw a "more romantic and less didactic treatment of this contrast, and the Indian began to be idealized for his own sake, and as part of the picturesqueness of the forest and the wilderness."<sup>3</sup> The Indian grew in popularity in magazines, showing "anecdotes, short stories, and accounts of customs and manners." This interest in Indians by the public was "aroused by the Indian's more romantic possibilities inspired by a considerable number

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<sup>1</sup>Fairchild, H. N, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961), 138.

<sup>2</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, (New Haven: College & University Press, 1966), 141.

<sup>3</sup>Loshe, *The Early American Novel*, (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1907), 60.

of very curious tales.”<sup>4</sup> *The Early American Novel* cites Ann Eliza Bleeker’s *History of Maria Kettle* as one of the first historical fiction novels containing Indians, both good and bad. Ironically, this female author had never met traveled to the frontier, let alone met an Indian face to face.

Quickly following that first book was *Ouabi, or the Virtues of Nature* by an authoress known as Philenia, which portrays Chief Ouabi with “dignity, stoicism, and loftiness of spirit” that is comparable to “the idealized Indian with whom we are familiar in fiction.”<sup>5</sup>

*Virgin Land* by Henry Nash Smith is considered one of the foremost texts of authority on the development and maturation of the West. In Nash’s study of the literature of the west, he comments on Charles W. Webber’s 1848 novel, *Old Hicks, the Guide*. This book portrays the Comanche as “children of the ancient mother nature” who are enslaved by the white villain, Count Albert. They are “skilled in the art of healing by the purely natural means of cold water or sweat baths,” and Webber himself is quoted in saying,

“The highest truths in many departments of human investigation... are recognized and acted upon intuitively in the savage or elementary forms of the social state... The great geniuses are, and have been, essentially savages in all but the breech-clout.”<sup>6</sup>

This intuitive honesty and uprightness in Indians of the early western also leads to giving him supernatural abilities and a mystical connection to the earth.

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<sup>4</sup>Loshe, *The Early American Novel*, 66.

<sup>5</sup>Loshe, *The Early American Novel*, 68.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Webber, *Old Hicks the Guide, or, Adventures in the Camanche Country in Search of a Gold Mine*, (New York, Harper & Bros, 1848), 304-305.

The Indian is further idealized in *The Champion of Freedom, or the Mysterious Chief* by Samuel Woodworth, whom mystifies the noble savage by presenting “the apparition of the mysterious chief, the majestic form of the dead Indian warrior who foretold the hero’s birth, and in time of stress or crisis always appears to exhort, admonish, or reprove.”<sup>7</sup>

James K. Folsom, the author of *The American Western Novel*, refers to James S. French’s novels, such as *Elkswatawa; or, the Prophet of the West* (1836), in which “Indian characters are compassionately if ineptly drawn.”<sup>8</sup> Some of French’s Indians are “almost a caricature of those romantic Indian qualities” of moral uprightness, literal honesty, and simplistic thought and speech mentioned by Loshe. The scheming of a more dastardly Indian presence inevitably defeats these noble, harmless savages. By 1902, white culture considered the war with the Indians to be over, and the natives as defeated, so they no longer felt the pressure to make their characters “true to life” because they knew they had already been defeated. This widespread opinion led to an explosion of romanticized Indians in literature. One unreal version was the “good” Indian that “represents what the whites had always wished the Indian might become.”<sup>9</sup> Tonto, perhaps one of the most famous Noble Savage/Indian sidekicks, maintains a relationship with the Lone Ranger that “points up the inherently ludicrous quality of this pathetic mixture of *noblesse oblige* with fantasy.” Written as he is, Tonto covets neither the Lone Ranger’s superior horse, Silver, nor his reputation as a hero. Folsom states this is

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<sup>7</sup>Loshe, *The Early American Novel*, 80.

<sup>8</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 141.

<sup>9</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 145-145.



because “he knows his place.”<sup>10</sup> Acting out the desires of white writers, “good” Indians may also convert their “misguided brothers [from] the error of their ways.”<sup>11</sup>

William Gilmore Simms, whom Albert Kaiser believes is “the greatest story-teller the Old South produced,” and who painted “one of the most faithful portraits of the American native,” also fell into much the same trap of romanticizing his Indians, even if he didn’t intend to. While his novels were once at the height of popularity, he has since fallen from historical greatness, likely due to his pro-slavery opinions. Keiser studies Simms’s novels in *The Indian in American Literature*, pointing to *Lucas de Ayllon* as an example of how the “natural virtues of the Southern Indians... emphasizes fierce valor and generous hospitality.”<sup>12</sup> Simms stated his opinion of the Indians in his writing by saying,

“We have heard so much of the inflexibility of the Indian Character, that we are apt to forget that these people are human; having, though perhaps to a small degree, and in less activity, the same vital passions, the same susceptibilities—the hopes, the fears, the loves and the hates, which establish the humanities of the whites.”<sup>13</sup>

His statement seems ironic in the light of his pro-slavery stance, though it’s uncertain whether Simms looked upon the two minority groups as different or the same. Kaiser maintains that Simms is sympathetic to the Indian in that “even though a savage, he is a savage rather in his simplicity than in his corruption, with a brutality of barbarism

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<sup>10</sup>ibid

<sup>11</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 148

<sup>12</sup>Albert Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 154.

<sup>13</sup>William Gilmore Simms, quoted in Albert Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 154-156.

rather than of vice.”<sup>14</sup> This assumption of the Indians’ innocent character based on the impression of simple-mindedness is exactly what gave birth to the Noble Savage in the first place.

In *The Yemassee* (1882), Simms portrays the Indians as “unable to adapt themselves to the relentless march of civilization.” A young chief named Oconestoga is enslaved by the poisoned drinks of the whites and “does their bidding to the detriment of his own race, [becoming] all the more pathetic in view of the qualities of body and mind inherited from the gentle Matiwan and the proud and noble Sanutee [his parents].”<sup>15</sup> The chief is dishonored in his betrayal to his people, but being truly noble at his core, he acknowledged his shame and gave himself over to the punishment of the tribe. The elders decide to cast Oconestoga out of the tribe, enforcing the perspective that white man’s corruption ruins an Indian for his own kind. However, before the ceremony can be completed, Matiwan saves her son from becoming an “expatriated man, homeless, nationless, and godless... barred even from the forest heaven” by murdering him and ensuring his soul goes to the land of their ancestors as a member of the tribe. This act of violence shows how brutality is justified in the Noble Savage, and Matiwan’s sacrifice only makes her more noble and “merciful.” Keiser writes,

“in the whole range of American literature it would be hard to find a more noble and attractive woman than Matiwan, the mother of Oconestoga and the wife of Sanutee. Her fine qualities are many; but outstanding among them is the mother’s undying love for an errant son. Her solicitude for the degraded knows no bounds: it does not even stop at murder in order to save the child of her bosom from the terrible punishment of eternal disgrace.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>ibid

<sup>15</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 164-165.

<sup>16</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 169.

This opinion reflects how Simms's readership would have felt as well. The dramatics in the books elevates the tragedy of a duped Indian into an expression of his innocent and trusting nature, and twists an act of familial murder into an expression of bravery and compassion. Had these characters not be cast as Noble Savages, *Yemassee* would have been just another story of the savage blood thirst found in all Indians. Either way, neither perspective is a fair representation of the American Indian Culture.

This idealization of the Indians in *The Yemassee* extends to Oconestoga's father, Sanutee, as well. The former chief is written as proud and brave, and Simms's takes the time to explain his hostility towards the white man as a product of fear for his people. Sanutee "gives the whites a fair warning to withdraw, and in his efforts to save the commissioners reveals humane qualities."<sup>17</sup>

Keiser argues that Simms ascribed these personal qualities to the Indians in order to resist "the temptation of endowing them with the supernatural, and stayed well within the bound of probability." Simms also "takes pains to point out and to emphasize... the Indian's show of emotion" as a way of contradicting the "assumed habitual taciturnity of the native."<sup>18</sup> Keiser quotes Simms in saying,

"In [the Indian's] own habitation, uninfluenced by drink or any form of degradation, and unrestrained by the presence of superiors, he is sometimes even a jester—delights in a joke, practical or otherwise, and he is not scrupulous about its niceness or propriety"<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 170.

<sup>18</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 171.

<sup>19</sup>Simms, William Gilmore, *The Yemassee*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 80-81.

While Simms does not try to cover up the blood thirst or violence of the Native American, he “does not place blame at their door, but rather at that of the scheming palefaces who often appear as thoroughly bad.” The Yemassee were originally a peaceful and honorable race, but were “chose strife and hostility in preference to becoming the slaves of a superior people.”<sup>20</sup> This portrayal is a stark contrast to how Americans and Indians were depicted in Apache novels and other stories spotlighting the bloodthirsty savage. It is indicative of the swinging pendulum of popular opinion concerning American Natives, and how that opinion always reached for one extreme or the other.

Folsom, in his discussion of twentieth century literature, agrees with Kieser’s assessment that authors’ used Indians to cast blame on dominant society. He states that the writer “often uses Indian values—or what he conceives to be Indian values—as a method of castigating the imperfections of modern civilization. In such novels Indian values are often seen as categorically superior to white.”<sup>21</sup> Hamlin Garland’s *The Book of the American Indian* (1923) tells “The Story of Howling Wolf” as a disastrous mistreatment of a good Indian by “the brutal and savage ‘civilized’ world.”<sup>22</sup>

*The Searchers* (1945) by Alan Le May, also describes the Indian as ethically and behaviorally superior, showing how “the uncanny (at least to the whites) qualities of the Indian- his stoical reserve, his apparent lack of feeling, his woodmanship- transforms him into an almost supernatural being... His deeper perception into the facts of primitive life may be used as an emblem of his deeper perception into the meaning of life itself.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 173.

<sup>21</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 156-158.

<sup>22</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 155,

<sup>23</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 171.

In *There Must be a Lone Ranger*, Jenni Calder describes Indians as possessing a combination of qualities, such as “nobility and low cunning, dignity and cruelty.” Calder claims, “there can be good Indians, but even the noblest are primitive.” Much of the sympathetic writing attributed to the Indian is considered the result of a “cultural guilt complex,” which has still managed to confuse writers from creating a balanced representation of the Indian without artificiality.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Calder references the story of *A Distant Trumpet* to imply that “the only good Indian is an Indian devoted to a white man, or at least devoted to the idea of the white man’s ultimate victory.”<sup>25</sup>

In *Virgin Land*, Nash discusses the part played by Indians in the origin of the cowboy hero. Nash considers the earliest use of the cowboy hero in dime novels to be the “alleged biography of [Buck] Taylor by Prentiss Ingraham published in 1887.” In this story, Taylor is freed from Indian captivity by another Indian he has befriended, placing both the “good” and the “bad” Indians in roles pivotal to the advancement of the plot.<sup>26</sup> But the “good” Indian is only considered such because of his support of the white man. Buck Taylor is also a topic of interest in *Critical Essays on the Western American Novel*, edited by William T. Pilkington. In Mody C. Boatright’s critical essay, “History and Theory of the Popular Western Novel: The Beginnings of Cowboy Fiction,” the author discusses the savage, Mad Wolf, who is made noble by Taylor’s compassion. Originally wounding Mad Wolf and killing his fellow tribe members, Buck then “takes care of [him] until he is able to travel and then sends him away.” Mad Wolf “later helps Buck escape

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<sup>24</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1974), 40.

<sup>25</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, 51.

<sup>26</sup>Smith, *Virgin Land*, 110.

from captivity,” and irony lies in the fact that Buck maintains the two scalps he took from Mad Wolf’s companions, items which become trophies once he returns to the ranch.<sup>27</sup>

Calder argues that “only in death does the Indian become the equal of the white man. And only in killing does the white man, the unthinking sheriff, become the equal of the Indian.” In Buck Taylor’s story, such seems to be the case.<sup>28</sup>

It seems even pro-Indian sympathizers of the time period could not write with fairness and equality where concerning Native Americans. In the 1881 publication of Helen Hunt Jackson’s *A Century of Dishonour*, Jackson wrote of the many injustices committed by white dominant society on the American Indian throughout history. But Calder states that the book failed to invoke awareness or change because “the truth was not important. Indians, after all, were not the same as other people.”<sup>29</sup>

In his book *From Hopalong to Hud*, C. L. Sonnichsen agrees with Calder’s assessment that some readers suffer from a “massive guilt complex about what we have done to the Indian.” He writes that there “is no middle ground. If the Apache is a gentleman of distinguished culture, the white man is a savage, and vice versa.”<sup>30</sup> Writings as early as 1907 have reflected the pro-Indian sympathy Sonnichsen talks about, such as *Indian Love Letters* by Marah Ellis Ryan, which sentimentalized the Hopi tribe in the extreme.

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<sup>27</sup>Mody C. Boatright, “History and Theory of the Popular Western Novel: The Beginnings of Cowboy Fiction,” *Critical Essays on the Western American Novel*. Ed. William T. Pilkington, (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1980), 47.

<sup>28</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, 41

<sup>29</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, 49.

<sup>30</sup>C.L. Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, ( College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978), 65.

Although Sonnichsen believes he lives in a time when “the dominant voices... are pro-Apache,” he reminds the reader that “believers have not discovered anything new.” The trend of pro-Indian sympathy that continues to into the present was also at its height in American Western Literature in the 1940s, where it turned the white man into the “Bad Guy,” and the Indian into the “Good Guy.”<sup>31</sup> Still, Sonnichsen makes a point in stating that overall perspective of the Indian is “improving steadily... the Apache smell is no longer offensive and can be compared to the odor of ‘rotten bark.’ The possibility that a white man has his own odor can even be acknowledged.”<sup>32</sup>

However, when the accustomed savages become the “Good Guys,” someone must fill their place as the villain for the white man to fight. The popular choice was, of course, a different tribe of Indians, essentially turning Indian against Indian. This undermined any persuasive power turning the Apache into the heroes could have had, by perpetuating the belief that even though some good Indians may exist, the fact that others were evil must still be considered general truth.

One extreme representation of the Indian revealed itself in the “angelification” of the Indian maiden. This popular literary method passed “rapidly into the realm of parody and burlesque.” However, Calder points out how “Indian maids have continued to be celebrated, all the same, in chamber of Commerce handouts to tourists and round-the-Council-Fire sessions at Girl Scout Camps.”<sup>33</sup> This stereotype, sometimes also known as the “Pocahontas Legend,” idealizes American Indian women as virtuous despite their primitive behavior and dress. Like Pocahontas, the Indian Sacagawea has been

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<sup>31</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 66-68.

<sup>32</sup>Sonnichsen, *From Hopalong to Hud*, 79.

<sup>33</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American*, (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 72.

“mythicized and sentimentalized,” even after giving birth to a son while in the company of Lewis and Clark. These persisting stereotypes can be traced to early western fiction depiction of Indian women during the trend of pro-Indian sympathy.

In a 1911 copy of *The Dallas Morning News*, the Associated Press gives a favorable review of a book contemporary to its time, titled *The Indian Book* by William John-Hopkins. Associated Press praises the young adult book for its multi-layered view of the Mandan Indians, stating that “the author makes the simple life of these primitive people vividly human, and the child forms a sympathetic and humane conception of this vanishing race, altogether different from his usual picture of the paint-daubed scalper.”<sup>34</sup> The book is composed of short stories that range from recounts of hunts and animal wildlife, to activities that compose everyday life, such as boiling marrow from animal bones to make butter. While this book must have offered a new, more insightful and optimistic view of Native Americans compared to other writings of its time, the review makes it clear that *The Indian Book* is still not altogether realistic. The American Indian in this case is idealized into a “simple,” noble creature that lived happily within its uncorrupted natural environment. This would become a common angle in presenting native tribes to children. The Indian is made into a Noble Savage that children may come to love instead of fear, but he is still as savage and his existence is still placed as a presence only in some mythical untamed wilderness that is a part of the past.

Balance in portraying the American Indian saw advancement in the circulation of Louis L’Amour’s *Hondo* (1953), where the Apaches are more realistically good and evil, finding “a dichotomy between cruelty and humanity with some understanding.” The

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<sup>34</sup>Associated Press, “American Literature Strong on Morality,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 18, 1911.



Apache chief, Vittoro, is “restrained and honourable,” even though he is also, “savage and relentless; that is a part of his personality and of his way of life.”<sup>35</sup> The value of his representation comes in the fact that he is neither “inhuman nor illogically cruel.” But because he is a “good Indian,” Vittoro must “die with suitable anonymity at the hands of the calvary,” reinforcing the argument that Indian protagonists in the early western were doomed to death by the end of the book.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Noble Savage in Major Western Literature*

Of all early western authors, James Fenimore Cooper was the first to write complex American Indian characters as surviving protagonists in a multi-novel series like *The Leatherstocking Tales*. His portrayal of the “good” Indian typically reflected an effort to give additional depth to whom that Native was as a person, but even he could not escape the popular stereotype of the Noble Savage. Cooper’s “fascination in this period with what was being lost with the disappearance of Native Americans”<sup>37</sup> led him to participate in what historians have labeled the “cult of the Vanishing American.”<sup>38</sup> This interest is readily apparent in *The Leatherstocking Tales*. In this series of novels, the attention paid to the passing nature of “good” Indian tribes (the Mohicans, generally) is what leads characters like Chingachgook and Uncas to fall into the stereotypical role of the Noble Savage.

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<sup>35</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, 52.

<sup>36</sup>Calder, *There Must Be a Lone Ranger*, 53.

<sup>37</sup>Barker, Martin and Roger Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth*, (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), 30.

<sup>38</sup>Lora Romero, "Vanishing Americans: Gender, Empire and the New Historicism," *American Literature* 63.3 (1991): 385.



Figure 3. 3 Chingachgook and Hawkeye in *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826

Chingachgook is first introduced (in the arrangement of the book order) in *The Deerslayer* (1841) as Natty Bumppo's traveling companion and adopted brother. His presence is representative of nature, and natural living, and he is often contrasted against the actions of other white characters like Harry March. One of the most poignant scenes in the novel takes place in chapter thirty-two, where Natty Bumppo stands between "the

two trails, that to the garrison, and that to the village of the Delawares.”<sup>39</sup> Waiting in one direction are Chingachgook and Hist-Oh!-Hist, and in the other, Judith, Captain Warley, and the settlement troops. Natty Bumppo is faced with the choice of moving on into the wilderness with the Indians or devoting himself to Judith and leading a domestic, “civilized” life with her. Ultimately, he chooses to go with Chingachgook and Hist-Oh!-Hist, metaphorically rejecting white civilization and choosing the life of the Noble Savage for himself as well.

But while Chingachgook represents this natural ideal, Cooper is not willing to make him so morally perfect as to become more heroic or martyr-like than the white protagonist, Natty Bumppo. In *The Deerslayer* alone, Hawkeye displays his moral superiority when he sacrifices his own freedom to help the others in his party escape the attacking Huron. In chapter twenty-five, Natty also proves his integrity by returning to his friends as a messenger from the Huron warriors, fully intending to return as their captive for torture. He advises Chingachgook not to try to rescue him, thereby making himself the martyr and moral superior to Chingachgook’s Noble Savage status. This is an important aspect of the Noble Savage stereotype, who is to be considered morally pure but still an inferior to the dominant white race. This inferiority to the Leatherstocking man, who is a balance of both white and Native cultures, continues in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Chingachgook is once again left in relative, hidden safety with Colonel Munro while Hawkeye and Uncas go to negotiate with the hostile Huron. Such division could also be representative of Uncas’s role as Chingachgook’s successor in filling the Noble Savage formula for the book series.

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<sup>39</sup>James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer*, (New York: Heritage Press, 1961), 537.

Chingachgook and his son are the last two members of the once noble Mohican tribe, which has been wiped out due to white man's atrocities against them. In *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Cooper uses Chingachgook to represent not only an entire tribe of people, but all "good" Indians on a whole. His son, Uncas is portrayed as being the redeeming hope for the future of his people. He is young, robust, and honorable (when compared to the vicious Huron), and he reflects all the skills of the Noble Savage in his ability to navigate the wilderness and think with an inherent wisdom that has nothing to do with corrupt white education. Uncas's love for Cora in the novel is meant to represent a new beginning for his people in a way that will allow them to be accepted into the dominant culture. But since Cooper was writing during a time when miscegenation was a rejected conclusion in western literature, Uncas must die rather than successfully marry even a partially white woman. Accordingly, he is murdered by Magua in the final battle, dying a noble death that is made all the more tragic by the involvement of his own race. The irony of being killed by another Indian is Cooper's way of implying that no "good" Indians can successfully exist in the framework of the new white society taking dominion over the west. Ultimately, all Native people will fall beneath the abuse of the white man or be betrayed by their own. Uncas's death also solidifies his role as the morally superior Noble Savage in *Mohicans*, and he is made legendary through his victimization by Magua, a force corrupted by the white man.

Martin Barker and Roger Sabin claim that Cooper saw the extinction of Native Americans, like the Mohicans, as "the natural way of things." Cooper therefore used Indians in his novels as a "metaphor for the rise and fall of civilizations," which further

labeled them as the unrealistic, clandestinely doomed Noble Savage figures.<sup>40</sup> In reading Cooper's novels, the audience is confronted with Indians as mystical beings that existed in a different time, no longer presented in the contemporary world. This portrayal facilitates the notion of the Indian as a "dead race" and damages current, living Indians' chances for equal recognition and rights.

The "dead race" is even more apparent when the reader considers that the Indian protagonists of *The Leatherstocking Tales* represent the last vestiges of an extinct tribe. The Mohican people are reduced to Chingachgook and Uncas, both who meet their deaths in the series of novels without passing their heritage on through children. The American Indian is made even more "noble" and romantic by the notion that the Mohican race is gone forever. But in reality, the Mohican tribe lived on, attempting to exist peacefully alongside white culture, and even "fighting on the American side in the War of Independence." Despite their contribution to the country, they were ultimately stripped of their land and neglected by the American government. Their fame in Cooper's books did not save them from a life of obscurity and neglect. Indeed, it may have contributed to it.

Nonetheless, Barker and Sabin remind critical readers to remain aware of the environment in which Cooper wrote his novels, and how taboo the respect he paid to his native characters was during that time period. In *The Lasting of the Mohicans*, the authors write,

"The conquering of native American tribes was still very much an ongoing process in Cooper's day: the policy of 'Removal' was in full force in the 1820s and '30s (and the great Indian wars were not to come

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<sup>40</sup>Barker, Martin and Roger Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth*, 21.

until the 1860s). The cultural contribution to this policy was overwhelmingly to portray Indians as subhuman and easily slaughterable (*sic*). Cooper never stooped to this level, and when his books appeared, he was attacked for romanticizing them.”

In this light, readers can see very clearly the origins of the Noble Savage archetype as a counteractive measure against savage propaganda in American popular culture.

Though over forty years would pass between the completion of *The Leatherstocking Tales* and his first novel, Author Zane Grey followed a pattern of romanticizing Indians to the point of the Noble Savage as well, both by making them the friends of his heroes and by sacrificing them at the hands of the corrupt white culture. In his 1910 novel, *Heritage of the Desert*, Grey idealizes the Navajo people, particularly the Chief Eschtah, who befriends Naab and serves as a source of aid for him against the Holderness clan. Naab views Chief Eschtah as a wise and honorable “savage” that has shown loyalty to him. He asks his advice on what to do about the theft of his cattle and his land, the chief tells him,

“Eschtah grieves. He does not wish to shed blood for pleasure. But Eschtah’s friend has let too many selfish men cross his range and drink at his springs. Only a few can live on the desert. Let him who came too late go away to find for himself, to prove himself a warrior, or let his bones whiten in the sand. The Navajo counsels his white friend to kill.”<sup>41</sup>

This revealing statement solidifies Chief Eschtah’s role as the archetypal Noble Savage by first detailing his reluctance to kill, then validating his white friend’s claim to the land and offering his support to the white man in the form of counsel. However, because he condones killing in return, he still acknowledges that he is part of a savage

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<sup>41</sup>Zane Grey, *Heritage of the Desert*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910), 256 – 257.

culture. The irony of Eschtah's support for a man who essentially also "came too late," but successfully took the Navajo's land from them is not acknowledged. This factor is ignorable because the Navajos are considered simple, peaceful creatures, who are content with their place in life. They embody the very definition of the Noble Savage.<sup>42</sup>

In *The Vanishing American* (1925), Zane Grey plays upon the victimization of Indians to paint them as noble. In one scene where Nophaie, Marian, and Withers discover the Indian woman Gekin Yashi and her infant dead from influenza, abandoned by Morgan and huddled in an Indian Hogan. As Marian gazes on the once beautiful Gekin, she thinks on how the purity of the Indian woman was destroyed by her experience with white culture and religion, musing that "the little Beauty of the Nopahs had found the religion of the white men as false as Hell," and had been "infinitely worse off for her contact with civilization."<sup>43</sup> This ruination of Indian purity through civilization implies the nobility of the savage, and plays on the guilt of the readership for the sins committed against all Indians (two factors which encompass the function of the Noble Savage archetype). Marian's acknowledgement of the tragedy also allows the reader to accept and make peace with those injustices.

This pattern of victimizing the Noble Savage continues in Grey's novel, *The Rainbow Trail* (1915). In this story, yet another female Indian named Glen Naspa is seduced and assaulted by a white missionary. While the white protagonist, John Shefford, is able to save her once from attack, Grey's writing formulae makes her downfall inevitable. Shefford later discovers the Indian woman in her home, having died

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<sup>42</sup>Arthur G. Kimball, *Ace of Hearts: The Westerns of Zane Grey*, (Ft. Worth: TCU Press, 1993), 60.

<sup>43</sup>Zane Grey, *The Vanishing American*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 295.

in childbirth, and his guilt over the tragedy leads him to feel “something of the white man’s burden of crime toward the Indian weighing upon his soul.”<sup>44</sup> Grey was not the only author to use this method of victimizing an Indian woman and orchestrating her death as a metaphor for the ruthless cruelty of white culture. The roots of this imagery can be traced back as far as the 1890s, when David Belasco and Franklin Fyles wrote the play *The Girl I Left Behind Me* (see figure 2.2). This story of an Indian uprising involves an maiden named Fawn Afraid, whose involvement with white culture ultimately leads to her death.

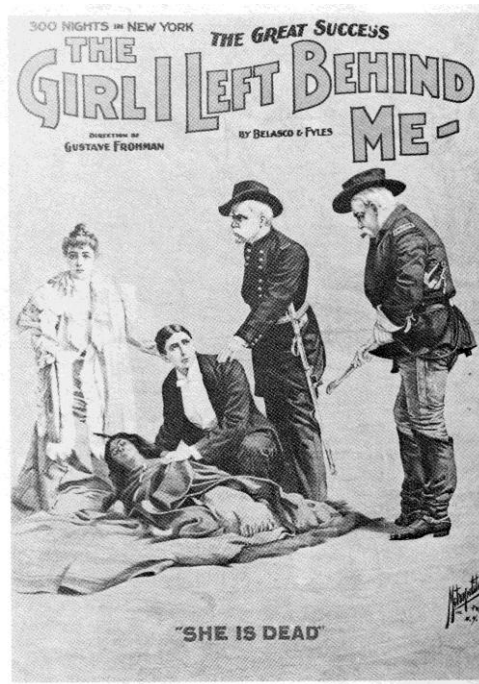


Figure 2. 4 *The Girl I Left Behind Me* (1893) by Belasco-Fyles

Returning to Grey’s novels, one can see how the author uses the Noble Savage character to criticize a morally corrupt American society, but then also gives the reader a way to dismiss that society as removed from them personally by allowing them to

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<sup>44</sup>Zane Grey, *The Rainbow Trail*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1915), 167.



identify with a white hero. Shefford's attempts to rescue Glen Naspa and his subsequent friendship with her brother, Nas Tas Bega, release Shefford from blame in contributing to her death. The brother, Nas Tas Bega, is an Navajo who has had fourteen years of white education, but rejects the teachings forced upon him by the American culture. He says, "they took fourteen years of my life... they wanted to make me a missionary among my own people. But the white man's ways and his life and his God are not the Indian's. They can never be."<sup>45</sup> Nas Tas Bega performs his role as the Noble Savage companion to the white hero not only by befriending him, but also by acting as a teacher of Navajo sacred ways and as counsel when Shefford needs advice. In this case, the Indian's mentoring role to the white protagonist is indicative of the Noble Savage formulae both because of the spiritual connection to nature that is superior to the white man, and because of the Indian's willingness to help the white man live more "naturally."

In *Regeneration Through Violence*, Richard Slotkin points out this criticizing and yet accepting perspective of dominant culture in Grey's books. He states that "the Indian fighter, and the deerslayer (*sic*) have an air of simplicity and purity that makes them seem finally heroic expressions of ... the human spirit." But, when realistically interpreted, what seems so idyllic is really "the Indian debased, impoverished and killed in return for his gifts; the land and its people, its 'dark' people especially, economically exploited and wasted; the warfare between man and nature, between race and race, exalted as a kind of heroic ideal."<sup>46</sup> Arthur Kimball agrees with this assessment, adding that Grey's books

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<sup>45</sup>Zane Grey, *The Rainbow Trail*, 41.

<sup>46</sup>Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600 – 1860* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 565.

could be “read as veiled rationales for and critiques of capitalist exploitation in general, but particularly embodied in the winning of the West.”<sup>47</sup>

This trend is repeated with increasing regularity in fiction, including in *The Vanishing American* (1925) by Zane Grey, who utilizes lecherous and greedy ministers to oppose noble and good Indians that honor the nation by participating in the World War I. The character of Nophaie is possibly the most complex Native American Grey ever writes, white educated and torn between accepting dominant culture or his tribe’s culture to the point of rejecting both. Grey has him fall in love with a white woman, and displays a certain progressiveness in having the heroine, Marion, return his love. Grey originally wrote them as living a happily married life at the conclusion of the novel. However, Grey’s contemporary readership displayed a level of control over his works by editing his version in 1923 before its publication as a series in the *Ladies’ Home Journal*. Editors of the journal “forced Grey to revise its ending into a Noble Savage death scenario,” rather than subject heir audience to miscegenation of the races. Such an instance indicates the fine line walked by authors sympathetic to the Indian “plight.” The stereotypical writing of Grey and others should not always be seen as a downfall that ostracized them from popular opinion, but rather as a reflection of what was “in” during that era of fiction.

With that in mind, perhaps it is unfair to criticize authors like Cooper and Grey for their unrealistic idealism concerning Indians. Wallmann states that Grey’s “support for equal and humanitarian treatment of minorities, particularly Indians,” was his

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<sup>47</sup>Arthur G. Kimball, *Ace of Hearts: The Westerns of Zane Grey*, (Ft. Worth: TCU Press, 1993), 181.

“strongest social commentary... long before the position was fashionable.”<sup>48</sup> But was his stereotypical depiction of Indians really supportive of equal rights? How can an American readership seriously contemplate Indian rights if they do not even have a realistic notion of who they are? The persisting image of the American Indian as a victim has been as damaging to the native peoples as that representing them as savages.

### *Conclusion*

So how did this perspective of the American Indian as the Noble Savage affect real Natives in America? Where African Americans gained citizenship after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, and the right to vote in 1870, American Indians were still suffering the devastating effects of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which relocated as many as 100,000 under duress during a time of westward expansion. President Martin Van Buren did not protest to the extreme measures taken to ensure the signing of the treaties for the land once belonging to the American Indian tribes, and the Trail of Tears alone claimed approximately 4,000 Cherokee lives. Nationally, the Indian Removal Act approved the coerced or force removal of major tribes in the Northeast and Southeast of the country, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Native Americans, all of which were justified as acceptable losses in dealing with Indians who didn't know that it was for their own good. The process of assimilation which followed this upheaval only added to that rising death count, as American Indians struggled to resume a destroyed way of life in unfamiliar territory on reservations that were too small to support their lifestyle. American Indians would also fall victim to

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<sup>48</sup>Jeffrey Wallmann, *The Western: Parables of the American Dream*, (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1999), 127.

disease, most noticeably small pox, alcoholism, and starvation due to the United States government's near eradication of the buffalo. The uncorrupted image of the Native was compromised by their victory at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876, and the resulting slaughter at the massacre of Wounded Knee in 1890, but it still wouldn't be until 1924 that the Indian Citizenship Act would even acknowledge American Indians as citizens of the United States. Another fifty years would pass before their religion was recognized as legal practice under the right of freedom of religion. To this day, American Indians are the only ethnic group in the United States that must gain a federal permit to practice their religion, and are even then restricted by stipulations such as the Eagle Feather Law, which denies use of eagle feathers in sacred ceremony by anyone whom cannot prove certifiable Native American ancestry. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, established in 1824 to regulate and manage American Indians during the growth of America, continues to use tactics of assimilation for the American Indian that will force them to abandon traditional values and accept the dominant white culture influence in place of tribal hierarchy. Federally registered tribes may receive benefits and funding from the American government, but lesser known tribal nations continue to fight simply to be acknowledged as their own American Indian subculture in the larger definition of the race. What then, is left of the "Noble Savage" in this clearly defeated and scattered culture of people? Only the memory of their past glory as perceived through sentimental American eyes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Assimilated Outsider: Half-breeds and Converted Indians

#### *Introduction*

Previous chapters have already discussed how the literary Indian, whether a warring savage or a peaceful mentor, was still ultimately doomed to extinction by his authors, based on the extreme nature of his character. Were he a Noble Savage, then his passing from this earth was both poetic and inevitable, and if he were a murderer, then it was a blessing he was gone. But perhaps authors realized that if one of the dynamic characters of their stories were to completely disappear from its pages, then they would have very little to write about. Therefore, western authors devised a third, equally stereotypical role for American Indians to perform. This role was the half-breed, or “converted” Indian.

The half-breed Indian was habitually portrayed in two extreme ways. They could represent the combination of what was best in the “red” and “white” worlds, resulting in a being that was superior to both races. But more likely they would exemplify the worst of the two cultures, displaying all the corruption and negative stereotypes of both and essentially making themselves an outsider from all societies. Ironically, this half-breed role that sentenced the Native American to an outsider status seemed to be the only option for their continued existence in western literature at all.

“Converted” Indians were those that maintained their blood heritage, but left behind the life of an Indian to serve as a white man’s companion. A converted Indian’s

only interest should be supporting the white protagonists in the story, and should a choice be made between white people or American Indians, the converted Indian was expected to choose white dominant culture as the acknowledged superior society.

Both the concept of the half-breed and Indian conversion were dependent upon the Native American's assimilation into white dominant culture, either through genetic mingling or by complete rejection of their own culture for "superior" white ways.

This assimilation seemed to operate as a solution to the doomed state of American Indians. In early Western literature, authors tended to treat the mixed bloods and the converted Indians less like two-dimensional parts of the frontier backdrop and more like complex characters themselves. They were, additionally, given a lifespan that survived beyond the final pages of the book or the conquering of the West.

Nonetheless, the greater detail paid to half-breed and converted Indian characters did not save them from being stereotyped into a role that was both highly simplistic and unrealistic, and that did not allow for room to grow beyond the function of supporting the white hero. Those half-breeds or Indians that were successfully written as the main character in a novel or pulp fiction story were usually doomed to a Noble Savage death in its final pages, and still rarely found acceptance from one or both of the societies in which they were born from.

### *The Half-breed of Popular Fiction*

Very often, the only way an American Indian in early western literature could be a "good" Indian without being stereotyped as a noble savage was if they were "converted" to white ways, or are born a half-breed with access to civilization. This half-breed ideal was appearing as early as the 1820s, becoming popular alongside the

popularly received Noble Savage. For example, Joseph Snelling's short story "The Bois Brule" (1830) depicts a somewhat rare half-breed in the hero William Gordon. He is not only a rarity because he is the main protagonist of the novel, but also because he is a mixed blood of *European* and Indian heritage. Gordon is improved by the commingling of the two bloodlines, largely because the "conventionally assumed nobility of the Indian... reflects in the even greater nobility of the *bois brule*."<sup>1</sup> Snelling wrote that "the mixture of blood seems an improvement on the Indian and white. By it, the muscular strength of the one, and the easy grace, and power of endurance of the other, are blended."<sup>2</sup>

Jenni Calder writes in her book *There Must Be a Lone Ranger* that "being a half-breed means that he [the Indian] has the edge over both red and white." In women, "a touch of Indian blood is like an extra spicy dash of local colour. The girl is just a little bit exotic; not too much so, for that would make her unacceptable. She is just different enough to make her in the eyes of those around her unusual and fascinating."<sup>3</sup> This careful balance was meticulously followed, lest the readership of a novel find the half-breed's romantic interest and unacceptable combination. As previously written, editors were not above forcing changes on a writer to ensure that inappropriate miscegenation did not occur.

An example of a positive female half-breed can be found in Edward Willett's *Silver-spur; or The Mountain Heroine. A Tale of the Arapaho Country*. The main

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<sup>1</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 169.

<sup>2</sup>William Joseph Snelling, "The Boise Brule," *Tales of the Northwest*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1936), 78.

<sup>3</sup>Calder, *There Must be a Lone Ranger*, 54.

heroine is indeed a half-breed named Dove-Eye, and is perhaps the first heroine to ever commit an act of violence. She “rides astride and carries a battle axe,” as well as rescues her love interest from hostile Indians.<sup>4</sup> One can surmise then, that being a positively depicted half-breed meant, to women, a new level of freedom, which allowed them to actively participate in the plot impetus of a story. Female half-breeds were considered beyond the proprietary limits of white society, and in literature they were not required to play the passive damsel which must seek rescue from a stronger hero. Such women characters were the foundation of the robust female Leatherstocking, like Calamity Jane, who will be discussed in further detail later. However, should the half-breed heroine successfully make a match and get married, she must then “be revised somewhat before she can become a full-fledge heroine.”<sup>5</sup> This is because marriage indoctrinates her into white culture, and her half-breed status will not allow her to be completely accepted and *acceptable* unless she rejects all forms of Indian behavior.

Though half-breeds were sometimes portrayed as the best of both white and Indian cultures, it did not mean they were universally accepted by the largely white reading audience of their time. Nor were they greeted with acceptance within the pages of their books, a factor deliberately orchestrated by the author. Many half-breed heroes or heroines who persisted in remaining true to the stereotype or to their “Indianess” were considered outsiders and villainous influences, untrustworthy and self destructive. Calder reminds her audience in *There Must be a Lone Ranger* that “traditionally the half-breed is the villain... a renegade combining the worst features of both races. He drinks. He is

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<sup>4</sup>Smith, *Virgin Land*, 113.

<sup>5</sup>ibid.



treacherous. Frequently, he manages to betray both red and white.”<sup>6</sup> She argues that the idea of a converted Indian or a half-breed being fully accepted into either of its two cultures is impossible, and that “the white man as Indian, or the Indian as white man, is ultimately bound to be rejected by white society if he [the hero] does not reject white society first.”

What placed the half-breed in the role of the villain was the fact that he or she was the physical representation of dominant white society’s ultimate fears of thinning bloodlines. Half-breed characters in stories forced the white American readership to think of the “mongrelization” of their race as a real possibility. This fear was not a new one, but had haunted the Anglo-Saxon race since before their arrival on the North American continent. This fear of weakening the purity of white bloodlines also attributed to dominant culture’s efforts in oppressing the African American throughout history. Native Americans were placed in much the same category, considered less than human in many ways. In 1850, Scottish racial theorist Robert Knox voiced the American national opinion when he stated,

“I have heard persons assert, a few years ago, men of education too, and of observation, that the amalgamation of races into a third or new product, partaking of the qualities of the two primitive ones from which they were sprung, was not only possible, but that it was the best mode for improving the breed. The whole of this theory has turned out to be false. . . . Nature produces no mules; no [healthy] hybrids, neither in man nor animals.”<sup>7</sup>

In his book *Half-Blood*, William Scheick argues that this aversion of the American readership to the half-breed lay in uncertainty over the future of the nation, in which miscegenation arguably plays a large part. The full blooded Indian was fading

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<sup>6</sup>Calder, *There Must be a Lone Ranger*, 54.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Knox, *The Races of Men*, (London: H. Renshaw, 1850), 64–65

from the pages of fiction, as well as from the American landscape, and while he could then be “restricted to America’s prehistory or history, could be safely confined in the past, the mixed-blood Indian belonged very much to the present and quite possibly to the future of America.”<sup>8</sup>

This depiction of the half-breed as a negative force was rife throughout dime novels such as *Malaeska* (1839, revised 1860) by Ann Stephens, *Redlaw, the Half-Breed; or, the Tangled Trail* (1870) by Joseph Badger, and *The Half-Blood; or, the Panther of the Plains* (1882) by Edward Ellis. All of these half-blooded villains represented the very lowest form of human behavior, acting with maliciousness and a complete lack of scruples. According to Harry J. Brown, the half-breed “evolves into a more definitive symbol of outlawry, an element of criminal instability in a historical moment when the institution of law becomes paramount to a nation conceived in reason and yet, with Allotment, anxiously anticipating the integration of an element the best scientists deemed savage and irrational [the Indian].”<sup>9</sup> So though the half-breed was granted greater options and consideration by its author than the Noble or bloodthirsty Savage, their presence in popular fiction still confirmed white dominant culture’s continued resistance to equal integration of the races. The Indian must remain an outsider or disappear through assimilation, essentially becoming the “converted” Indian.

### *Converted Indians of Popular Fiction*

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<sup>8</sup>William J. Scheick, *The Half-Blood: A Cultural Symbol in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Fiction*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 2.

<sup>9</sup>Harry J. Brown, *Injun Joe’s Ghost: The Indian Mixed-Blood in American Writing*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 24-25.

The converted Indian is not in fact a half-breed, but serves in a role that places him in the same societal limbo that the half-breed experiences. Converted Indians can be full blooded Native Americans who have had access to white education and have embraced it (unlike the Noble Savage) to the point of rejecting their own tribal customs. Their intent is not to teach the white protagonist to live more morally upright or more naturally, but to support the leadership of a hero in whatever his or her judgment decides. Folsom writes that the converted Indian plays an “honorable but subsidiary role; he is faithful, even though appearances may at times seem to be against him, and he obeys without question the orders given by his white companion.” The Lone Ranger’s Tonto is a prime example of the converted Indian, because he is not only smart and helpful to the hero, but also “knows his place.”<sup>10</sup>

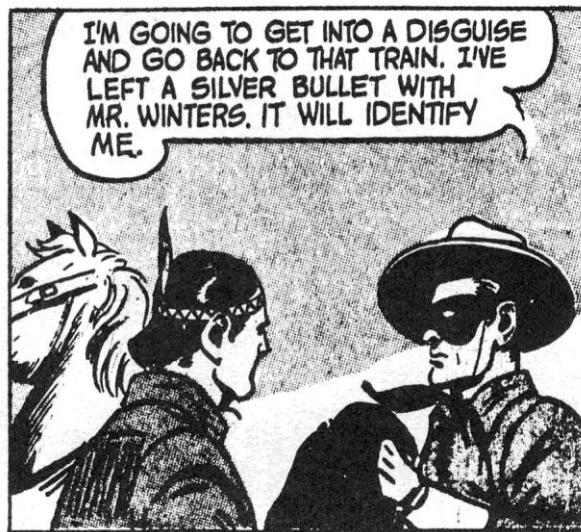


Figure 4. 1 The Lone Ranger and Tonto, 1972.

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<sup>10</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 147-148.

Some stories support the idea that conversion is a necessary path for American Indians. For example, the pulp fiction story “Wahiah—a Spartan Mother” by Garland, the American Indian mother Wahiah forces her child to go to Indian school, where they will cut his hair short, force him to speak in English, and learn white man’s education. When her son resists, she breaks his bow and arrows (his “symbols of freedom”) and tells him to “obey.” Whether Garland means that the boy should obey his mother’s wishes or the teachings and dominance of the white man is unclear.

Garland is granted immunity from picking sides because of what Folsom calls the “inevitability of change” in the American culture, a concept which reflects James Fenimore Cooper’s perspective about the fate of the American Indian. Garland’s writing argues for the rehabilitation of the Indian without “turn[ing] him into a white man.”<sup>11</sup> But perhaps that is not entirely true, considering that even though the converted Indian will technically still be an Indian and maybe even still speak like an Indian, he will have a distinctly “white” way of thinking. The fact that the converted Indian is not turned “into a white man” is really the reason he continues to play a supporting role to a white protagonist.

*The History of the Female American, or the Extraordinary Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield, Compiled by Herself* is a story that serves as a prime example of how conversion often makes the affected character more a white person than a Native American. In this story, Unca Eliza Winkfield is a half-breed young woman with a wealthy benefactor, who ensures that she receives the best in white education and training. During a voyage by sea, an evil ship captain leaves Unca marooned on an

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<sup>11</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 151-153.

unsettled island after she refuses his advances. The heroine discovers the indigenous people of the island and tricks them into thinking she has been sent by their gods to convert them to Christianity. Dazzled by her beauty and compassionate behavior, the natives willingly submit to conversion and are “civilized.” Unca’s “missionary efforts” are further aided by her cousin, a clergyman who discovers her whereabouts on the island after three years of searching and marries her.<sup>12</sup> So though Unca is partially American Indian, her conversion to white ways is so complete that she ultimately serves the purpose of the dominant culture in converting another race of indigenous people. She is the model of the Native American fully assimilated into white society, to the point that she is acceptable to marry.

Returning to the analysis of the female heroine, Henry Nash Smith’s study of “The Dime Novel Heroine” in *Virgin Land* reveals that Indian conversion or the comingling of blood could “transform the heroine from the merely passive sexual object she had tended to be in the Leatherstocking tales” into an actively participating hero. Women who have the suggestion of Indian blood or influence are suddenly allowed to dress like men or impersonate men, shoot guns, act in violence, and pursue their love interests like men would. It became increasingly popular for author’s to also write of a “counter-conversion” that revealed the female half-breed to not truly be Indian at all. Instead, the audience would later discover that their heroine was an “upper-class white girl captured long ago by Indians” and that “beneath the savage costume she was almost as genteel as ever.”<sup>13</sup> This counter conversion allowed female characters to take on male

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<sup>12</sup>Loshe, *Early American Novel*, 79.

<sup>13</sup>Smith, *Virgin Land*, 112-113.

Leatherstocking attributes, and led to a popular pattern of heroines like Calamity Jane, Wild Edna, and the Denver Doll.

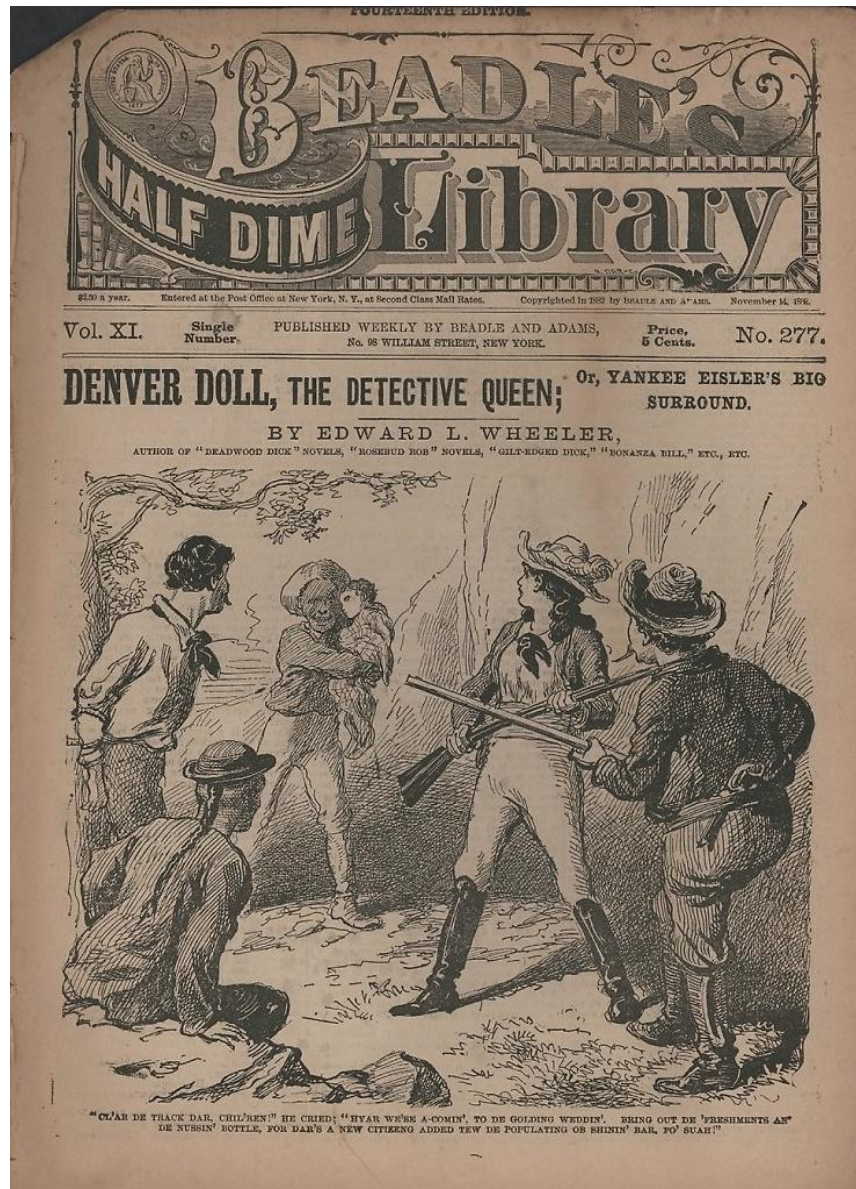


Figure 4. 2 *Denver Doll, The Detective Queen; or, Yankee Eisler's Big Surround* by Edward L. Wheeler

However, when considered with the American Indian in mind, this literary model proved to be just another way white culture could use Indians and Indian stereotypes to

improve upon white characters and archetypes in fiction. Ultimately, the female who is truly a half-breed gains nothing, and these pulp stories reinforce the fact that acceptance only come with being “all white.”

In *Gender and Genre: An Introduction to Women Writers of Formula Westerns, 1900-1950*, author Norris Wilson Yates reinforces Nash’s points on the growth of the heroine through involvement of the half-breed or an inverse conversion of a white woman to Indian ways.<sup>14</sup>

This analysis of the half-breed and converted Indian in pulp fiction and dime novels proves two things. One, that fiction authors thought about their Indian characters’ interaction with society at a greater depth and complexity. Two, that the greater consideration still did not gain American Indian figures acceptance in dominant culture. The half-breed may have received greater access to the privileges of the white man, but they never became equal to white characters in early western fiction, especially in the case of white men. In the Walter Van Tilburg fiction novel, *The Tracking of the Cat* (1949), the author reinforces the persisting opinion of half-breeds and converted Indians in the American readership in his description of Joe Sam, whose “knowledge... sets him off from the other characters.” Joe Sam’s “philosophical distance from them is emphasized by his racial difference. His racial attributes serve still more to reinforce this role as an outsider.”<sup>15</sup>

#### *The Half-breed as written by Major American Authors*

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<sup>14</sup>Norris Wilson Yates, *Gender and Genre: An Introduction to Women Writers of Formula Westerns, 1900-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 9.

<sup>15</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 175.

While James Fenimore Cooper was well known for his sympathetic opinion of Native Americans in his writing, the concept of mixed-blood characters seems to have made him nervous and hesitant to elaborate. In none of his major works is there a single, true half-blooded Indian. More often the title is used as a way for one character to question another character's creditability, such as in *The Pioneers* (1823). Young Oliver Edwards is repeatedly accused of being a half-breed, based on his impoverished state, his unwillingness to work a "civilized" job, and his close association with John Mohegan (Chingachgook). Richard Jones seemingly validates the assumption that Edwards is a half-breed by reasoning, "...when did you ever know a half-breed, 'duke, who could bear civilization? For that matter, they are worse than the savages themselves. Did you notice how knock-kneed he stood... and what a wild look he had in his eyes?'"<sup>16</sup> However, the conclusion of the book must see to the unveiling of the truth, which proves that Edwards is not of Indian blood, and therefore an acceptable spouse for Elizabeth Temple.

Cooper often suggests that his Leatherstocking hero, Natty Bumppo, is something of a half-breed. Bumppo, who has turned away from civilization and white love interests to pursue a life in the wilderness alongside Chingachgook, is typically associated with the morally superior Noble Savage in Cooper's descriptions. Nonetheless, the author ensures his readership is not left in doubt as to Bumppo's true race, declaring he is a "man without a cross," meaning without crossbreeding.<sup>17</sup> He is instead a product of counter conversion, a factor which makes it possible for Bumppo to represent an infallible and idyllic hero.

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<sup>16</sup>James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers; The Sources of the Susquehanna*, (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1858), 267.

<sup>17</sup>James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 138.



There is one notable instance in which Cooper addresses the half-breed in his fiction writing. *The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (1829) tells the story of a woman abducted by Indians and given to one as a wife. When puritans capture and execute her Indian husband, the heroine dies of shock and fear, leaving behind an infant that is the product of her unwilling marriage. This half-breed infant is left abandoned, and though Cooper resolves all other conflicts at the conclusion of the novel, he never clarifies what became of the infant. Perhaps this is another indicator of his uncertainty over the issue of miscegenation and thinning white bloodlines.

Zane Grey took a far different approach than Cooper in his handling of the fictional half-breed or converted stereotype. In *The Vanishing American*, the author declares that the “best Indian of all” is one who was “carried off as a youth and given the advantages of a white education.”<sup>18</sup> His hero, Nophaie, was perhaps one of the most complex Native American characters of his time. As an Indian who was raised with a white education, Nophaie is torn between the two cultures. He breaks the mold of the converted Indian by his rejection of the white teaching he has received, considering it “a dark heritage of hate.”<sup>19</sup> However, he is also denied status as a Noble Savage because he finds he cannot return to the naturalness and spiritual connection with the land that he perceived as a child. The effort Nophaie makes to commune with nature in the Canyon of Silent Walls is met with frustration and exhaustion. He can feel the “passionless, pitiless, ruthless, all-pervading and all-concealing eyes of nature on him in his

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<sup>18</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 153.

<sup>19</sup>Grey, *The Vanishing American*, 10.

abasement,” but still the wall remain silent.<sup>20</sup> Just when he gains hope that nature is speaking to him, his communion is interrupted by a letter from Marian, and the “strange hope born there in the canyon... burned out in the fire kindled by Marian's offer of love.”<sup>21</sup> Love for a white woman replaces his need for a connection to his native roots.

Ultimately, Nophaie does prove to be a converted Indian in the making. Grey concludes the novel with the hero accepting the vanishing state of his tribe, and finding peace in being “absorbed” by Marian.<sup>22</sup> As the novel ends, she and Nophaie stand in a doorway watching what is left of the Nopah tribe “ride away into the sunset,” a moment that is highly symbolic of the hero embracing his white education and culture.<sup>23</sup> In this case, Nophaie is not to serve as a supporting character for a white male protagonist, but his relationship with Marian is not a far deviation from that formula. Additionally, Marian is consistently implied as a form of salvation for Nophaie, stopping him from sinking back into his “savage” ways. For example, it is her efforts alone that hold Nophaie back from killing Morgan and Blucher, two villains who would deserve their death for the crime of seducing and abandoning Gekin Yashi. Nophaie wants to kill them as vengeance for Yashi and his own people, an act that would be acceptable, even encouraged, in American Indian culture. Marian’s plea to refrain “for the sake of their love,” is a manipulation by Grey to villainize the methods of Nophaie’s Indian heritage and idealize the white option of “nonviolence.” When Nophaie complies, he is displaying his acknowledgement that Marian and white society are superior to his own. We see this

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<sup>20</sup>Grey, *The Vanishing American*, 206-207.

<sup>21</sup>Grey *The Vanishing American*, 219.

<sup>22</sup>Kimball, *Ace of Hearts*, 73.

<sup>23</sup>Grey, *The Vanishing American*

same acknowledgement in Nophaie's decision to choose Marian's love over a closeness with nature.

Another of Grey's novels that feature a half-breed is *To the Last Man*, a story about blood feuding and revenge. Jean Isbel is the half-breed who is expected to use the fiery, violent instincts of his Indian side to put an end to the feud. His father thinks his "savage instinct of self-preservation bequeathed by his Indian mother, and the fierce, feudal blood lust of his Texan father" will give him an edge in the fight.<sup>24</sup> Isbel quickly displays to the reader the savageness of a half-breed, and though he is the protagonist, he exudes a sort of villainy in his "dark joy" as committing violence. Grey writes that "all that was wild and savage in his blood and desperate in his spirit" turns him into something "more than man and less than human."<sup>25</sup> This description is very close to the formulae for the villainous half-breed, and the comparison is reinforced when Isbel proves that he exists outside the law.

Thomas Jefferson was known to sometimes publically display his opinion that the United States was destined to experience intermarriage of the various races present in the country.<sup>26</sup> However, prolific writers that followed after him did not seem to share the same opinion. The poet Walt Whitman anonymously published *The Halfbreed* in 1846, in which he detailed the half-breed as "a degenerate half-devil, a grotesque manifestation of the cultural fear of racial crossing inherited from earlier historical romance."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Grey, *To the Last Man*, 47.

<sup>25</sup>Grey, *To the Last Man*, 198.

<sup>26</sup>Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh, (Washington, D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), 8:227.

<sup>27</sup>Brown, *Injun Joe's Ghost*, 24.

Considering the strength of popular opinion of the half-breed being in his favor, it is somewhat surprising that Whitman published this piece anonymously.



TOM DREAMS

Figure 4. 3 Tom Sawyer Dreams of Injun Joe, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

The author Mark Twain also painted the half-breed in a negative, demonic light. Perhaps most infamous villain of his writing career was Injun Joe from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) a character who had not one redeeming quality and who died in the most gruesome manner possible. He acts without morals in his habitual grave robbing and casually murders the physician accompanying him to get revenge for a long past wrong. Joe tells the dying man, "...I swore I'd get even with you if it took a hundred years... Did you think I'd forget? The Injun blood ain't in me for nothing. . . . *That* score is settled—damn you."<sup>28</sup> Twain implies that those with Indian heritage hold grudges and exact revenge that is highly inproportionate to the perceived wrong. Injun Joe also seems

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<sup>28</sup>Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1917)

to forget that it was his own ill behavior that led him into the trouble for which he makes the physician pay.

Brown states that,

“The villainous half-breed is uncomplicated by Twain’s standards, unconflicted by mixed motives, unsympathetic in his brute language, unredeemable in his inhuman vengeance for petty wrongs. He grows directly from the dime-novel tradition that flourished alongside more respectable literature like *Tom Sawyer*, in which half-breed outlaws, made vile by the taint in their blood, likewise wreak havoc upon the world, avenging their own birth to a hostile world. This double-edged hatred, pointed with equal force toward the half-breed himself and his enemies, inevitably leads in the dime novel and in *Tom Sawyer* to spectacular self-destruction.”<sup>29</sup>

Joe was not just a murderer and a thief, he also took pleasure in acts of mutilation that, when Twain describes them, are closely suggestive of the brutalities committed by the stereotypical bloodthirsty savage in apache fiction. Tom overhears him plotting the torture of Widow Douglas to another man, declaring, “When you want to get revenge on a woman you don’t kill her—bosh! You go for her looks. You slit her nostrils—you notch her ears like a sow! . . . I’ll tie her to the bed. If she bleeds to death, is that my fault? I’ll not cry, if she does.”<sup>30</sup> Twain’s character study of Injun Joe is strongly reflective of the influence villainous Indians and half-breeds from dime novels played on popular opinion of Native Americans.

### *Conclusion*

What western literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth century seemed to forget was that intermingling of the races happened with increasing regularity in all white settled areas of the frontier and any portion of the united states patrolled by military

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<sup>29</sup>Brown, *Injun Joe’s Ghost*, 14.

<sup>30</sup>Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 254 – 255.

forces as early at the 16<sup>th</sup> century. And though more half-breed children were born each year, they were rarely as easy to define as being completely good or completely evil like the stories would imply.

So while the introduction of the half-breed into western literature opened doors for the involvement of the American Indian in fiction, it was no less a misrepresentation of who the real people were than the absolutes of the bloodthirsty or Noble Savage. If anything, white dominant culture utilized the half-breed stereotype in empowering their own race further, by providing converted Indians who supported their white companions or allowing genteel women to masquerade as Indians in order to gain an active role. Furthermore, this analysis of the half-breed reveals the persisting fact that American western literature was rarely, if ever, able to portray American Indians as anything other than absolutes. As with the bloodthirsty savage and the Noble Savage, Native Americans in fiction were either evil beyond redemption, or infallibly good. It wouldn't be until actual American Indian authors, like Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday, contributed their own works to the genre of fiction that truly insightful and complex Indians became to take predominance in literature.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The “Horrid Alternative”: Red-White Miscegenation in Western Literature

#### *Introduction*

Unlike the Noble Savage, the bloodthirsty savage, and the half-breed, miscegenation is not really a stereotypical label applies to the American Indian in fiction. However, it warrants at least some discussion because the method in which intermarriage is approached in nineteenth and twentieth century Western fiction is built upon the foundation of the other stereotypes and steeped in unrealistic expectations. Kolodny says that the concept of Indian-white intermarriage is “always disturbing to . . . white society” because it calls “into deepest question the Europeans’ claim to a superior cultural organization.”<sup>1</sup> This resistance was not selective just to American Indian and white relationships, but had long been a point of unease in White and African-American relations long before Europeans had arrived in North America. The impetus of such an aversion to miscegenation lay in the fear of mingling pure white blood with a lesser species.

Essentially, dominant culture viewed miscegenation with a sort of horrified fascination, like a phantom that they could neither ignore, nor wanted to acknowledge for fear of making it a reality. The stereotypes of Indians at this time constantly suggested they were somehow more, or less, than a human being, and could not be considered on

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<sup>1</sup>Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 70.

the same plane as a white person. So authors in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created formulas for their writing that allowed them to explore miscegenation in a hypothetical way, without risking the outrage of their readership by allowing characters to intermarry. They often wrote their white and Indian characters as feeling attraction for one another, but rarely moved that interest to the point of a successful marriage. If another white suitor were involved, it was they would ultimately win the spouse, often with the help of the defeated Indian. Even into the 1900s, when gender and racial roles began to shift in Western fiction, miscegenation was still handled in a prickly fashion. The topic of interracial relationships between the Indian and the white hero would reach a level of taboo that later made it the subject of daring resistance on the white hero's part. Until that point, though, nineteenth century miscegenation was considered "not only unnatural, but revolting . . . to every feeling of delicacy in man or woman."<sup>1</sup>

*The Changing Face of Marriage in Nineteenth Century Pop Fiction*

In his book *The American Western Novel*, James K. Folsom claims that "the miscegenation theme is not so important as one would expect, especially if one looks for an analogy between the Indian in literature about the west and the Negro in literature about the South." He goes on to state that only rarely is race made an issue, and that usually the "when it takes place, [marriage] becomes an emblem of the hero's decision to cast his lot with one or the other of the two different cultures."<sup>2</sup> Folsom believes that miscegenation "emphasizes one conventional fact of life about both real and literary Indians—their difference from whites. That this difference does not necessarily imply

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, *Cultural Reformation*, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 168.



inferiority—though it may be made to do so—probably explains the relative rarity of the theme.” He argues, somewhat flippantly that “white and Indian marriage in the Western is generally handled much more like American marriages to Europeans in novels with an international flavor, or like marriages in America between various socially equal but distinct ethnic groups.”<sup>3</sup>

How Folsom came to these conclusions is unclear. It certainly wouldn’t be through analysis of the literature in question. Miscegenation may have appeared to be an unimportant theme due to the rarity of its successful application, and Folsom is correct in suggesting that a protagonist’s relationship was often a metaphor for the author’s pro-Indian sympathies. But to suggest that the differences between whites and Indians implied by intermarriage did not suggest an inferiority of one race to the other is to ignore overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Folsom’s assurance that interracial marriage between whites and Indians was the same as marriage amongst “socially equal but distinct ethnic groups” is just incorrect. None of the stereotypical handling of American Indian characters in early Western literature reflects a perspective of equality, as previous chapters have proven. That miscegenation could be used as an equalized institution between fictional characters who were already conceived as unequal was laughable.

The reality of miscegenation in Western literature was that it rarely led to a happy ending, particularly for the American Indian. Marah Ellis Ryan’s 1892 pulp novel, *Squaw Élouise*, defines a moderately popular plot manipulation in which an Indian falls in love with a white person, but voluntarily chooses to “die and thereby set the hero free

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<sup>3</sup>Folsom, *The American Western Novel*, 173

to marry a white woman” or man.<sup>4</sup> In his study of romantic western literature, Norris Wilson Yates states that “Native American women sacrifice their lives for the benefit of whites, usually white men,” and that “marriage between whites and Native Americans is avoided, but white racism and male chauvinism are implicitly criticized.” This voluntary suicide on the part of the Indian female not only implies male superiority, but also a racial dominance to the point that the Indian acknowledges and accepts their lack of value, and their devotion (which would rival that of a converted Indian) leads them to do what is perceived as “best” for their beloved. In this case, their death is of the greatest benefit to the white protagonist.

This pattern can also apply to those who are not Native American, but are associated strongly with them. In the dime novel, *Silverspur; or the Mountain Heroine. A Tale of the Arapaho Country*, the white heroine Aneola has been raised by an Indian tribe and the counter-conversion has made her a more aggressive female than her passive damsel counterparts. In the story, Aneola offers herself to a white man captured by her tribe and forced to pick a bride from among them. However, the white man rejects her, and Aneola “relents, helps him escape, and then leaps from a cliff.”<sup>5</sup> Aneola, like other Indian women, has realized that she is unfit for marriage to a white man, ruined by her “Indianness.” However, she is still genetically white, and therefore unable to marry a Native man because that too would be an act of miscegenation. Denied any viable chance at happiness, Aneola’s only solution is to end her life.

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<sup>4</sup>Norris Wilson Yates, *Gender and Genre: An Introduction to Women Writers of Formula Westerns, 1900-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 9.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, *Virgin Land*, 114.

Such implications of unworthiness do not apply only to female Indians in love. One of the more famous nineteenth century pulp novels concerning miscegenation is Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times* (1824), in which a "delicate Mary Conant" impulsively accepts the proposal of Chief Hobomok while lost in the throes of despair over her deceased white fiancée. Though they remain married long enough for Mary to give birth to a half-breed son, the reappearance of Mary's former fiancée inevitably means death for Chief Hobomok. Albert Keiser describes in *The Indian in American Literature* how "the generous chief commends his son to the rival's care and suggests that the handsome English bird sing the marriage song in the wigwam of the Englishman."<sup>6</sup> Chief Hobomok then disappears into the ether, never to be seen or heard from again. Here is an example of the implied belief that an American Indian, if challenged by a member of the dominant culture, should voluntarily sacrifice their marriage to a white spouse and acknowledging the greater worth of the white suitor opposing him. And though Mary and Hobomok did successfully intermarry, the author seems very deliberate in emphasizing how said marriage is "not an empowering act of will but rather the tragic consequence of the collapse of [Mary's] will."<sup>7</sup> Mary is "mournful and incoherent" to the point that Chief Hobomok doubts her sanity, but hastens the wedding ceremony anyway because he fears her returned senses will cause her to "shrink from the strange nuptials."<sup>8</sup> Mary's participation in the wedding ritual is passive at best, and the reader is left in doubt of whether she is truly aware of the

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<sup>6</sup>Albert Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 44.

<sup>7</sup>Brown, *Injun Joe's Ghost*, 57.

<sup>8</sup>Lydia Maria Child, *Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times*, (New York: Scholarly Press, Inc, 1977), 123 – 124.

proceedings. This passive unwillingness, coupled with the timely arrival of Mary's white fiancée, is more than enough reason in the story to invalidate the interracial relationship.

Other novels reinforce this concept of voluntary surrender by the Native American spouse. For example, *The Cassique of Accabee* by William Gilmore Simms portrays yet another Indian chief who falls in love with a white woman he rescues from death. This Indian also "generously allow[s] the white suitor to marry her" instead of himself.<sup>9</sup> Keiser, who considers Simms "averse to miscegenation," comments on the lengths the author will go to avoid writing about a red-white marriage. Another Simms's story describes a young chief who loves and is loved by a white woman, but who is shot down "in the very act of proposing... by his cousin and enemy." The only consolation given is that the "affectionate daughter of the settler, impressed with the love of the noble red man, remains unmarried to the end of her days."<sup>10</sup>

Another, somewhat unorthodox, story that reinforces the capitulation of the American Indian is *Ouabi, or the Virtues of Nature* by Sarah Wentworth Morton. This fiction piece tells of an Indian chief who discovers his betrothed Indian maiden has fallen in love with a white man, and resolves to "sacrifice his happiness to theirs... blind[ing] them to his self-devotion by pretending to desire another bride, and after giving them to each other falls dying at their feet."<sup>11</sup> In this case, the Native American must surrender his marriage to the white suitor's dominance, even if the love interest is of his own race.

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<sup>9</sup>Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature*, 155-157.

<sup>10</sup>ibid

<sup>11</sup> Loshe, *Early American Novel*, 68.

Curiously, miscegenation is condoned because it is the white male's preference, and the lingering suggestion of the Indian "princess" stereotype makes such a union at least tolerable to nineteenth century readership. The power of the male protagonist to bend the rules on miscegenation in western literature grew, forging a new romantic dynamic that utilized female natives as converted Indians.



Figure 5. 1 *Blood Brother* (1950) by Elliot Arnold

The reader experiences this changing dynamic in *The History of the Female American, or the Extraordinary Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield, Compiled by Herself* (1790). In this story, the heroine of the story is a half-breed woman who has been white educated and finds herself converting the indigenous people of a deserted island to Christianity. When her all-white cousin discovers her whereabouts, he decides to take her hand in marriage, an act that is acceptable in this story both because it was the

man's idea and because Unca is already partially associated with dominant culture.

Unca's parents, however, are not so lucky. Her mother is a full-blooded Indian princess, whom her father married once he "lost his first disgust for her complexion." But because she is not a converted Indian maiden, Unca's mother is not an acceptable spouse.

Consequently, she meets her death before Unca even turns six years old, murdered by a jealous sister (which not only compounds the tragedy, but also turns all blame away from white culture). Once again, true miscegenation is rejected within the pages of Western literature. By cutting out all ties to her Indian heritage, does the death of Unca's mother in the story somehow make the half-breed heroine more respectable to white culture?

Obviously the Indian side of her family cannot be trusted, and even as Unca is disconnected from those native roots, she is strengthening her association with her white heritage by marrying a relative of the white half of her heritage. In the case of this story, such a marriage could hardly be considered miscegenation at all.

However, by the early twentieth century Western literature began to show a change in its approach to intermarriage between Whites and American Indians. In 1909, Theresa Broderick published her novel *The Brand: A Tale of the Flathead Reservation*, which bucked even the previously accepted rules of miscegenation by having the white, Nordic heroine marry a hero who is genetically "one-fourth Flathead, although he lives a white lifestyle as a prosperous rancher."<sup>12</sup> While marrying a largely white, converted half-breed does not seem too daring of a step forward for literature, the fact that the heroine is choosing her spouse willingly (and said spouse survives to the end of the book) is a notable factor in advancing interracial marriages. B. M. Bower's *Good Indian* and

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<sup>12</sup>Yates, *Gender and Genre*, 13.

Honoré Willson's *The Heart of the Desert* were also published in the early twentieth century, and both depicted situations of miscegenation. In *Good Indian*, the heroine marries a hero who is one-fourth Sioux, and in *The Heart of the Desert*, another white heroine from the East gives her heart and hand to a full-blooded Native American “whose genetic mix—Apache, Mojave, Pueblo—suggests that he represents the Southwestern tribes as a whole.”<sup>13</sup> This reflects marked progression in authors’ opinions about intermarrying and gender roles in marriage. The fact that these two authors were female most likely contributed to their empowering of the heroine, and may reflect a female openness to miscegenation that was not shared by their male colleagues.

#### *Miscegenation in Major Western Fiction*

Even some of the most prominent western writers in American history have addressed miscegenation in their stories with wariness and trepidation. Some refuse to address the topic at all. For example, James Fenimore Cooper penned an entire series of novels, *The Leatherstocking Tales*, which included a Noble Savage protagonist sharing adventures with his white companion. However, that same author was decidedly leery about including acts of miscegenation in his storyline. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper is guilty of following the popular formula of forbidden miscegenation already employed by pulp fiction novelists. He first introduces the concept of interracial relationship as a horrifying option for the captured and threatened Cora. Maqua gives Cora a choice of either becoming his squaw or seeing her sister, Alice, murdered. She seems initially resigned to making the sacrifice for her sister’s life, but Alice cries out, “Cora! Cora! You jest with our misery! Name not the horrid alternative again; the

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<sup>13</sup>Yates, *Gender and Genre*, 82.,

thought itself is worse than a thousand deaths!”<sup>14</sup> Miscegenation becomes a “horrid alternative” in the minds of the Cooper readership, something so appalling that Alice would gladly sacrifice her life to spare Cora the horrors of a mixed marriage with a savage. This scene, which suggests that “a marriage between white and Indian held consequences much worse than death,” lingers in the audience’s thoughts throughout the book, a fact that does not bode well for the later romantic relationship between Cora and Uncas.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 5. 2 Cora and Alice admire Uncas, *Marvel Classics* 1976

In writing about the attraction between Cora and Uncas, Cooper first explains their mutual admiration through Cora’s partially non-white heritage. Barker and Sabin suggest that Cora’s “black blood” signifies her affinity with Indians, but while such an

<sup>14</sup>James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, 109.

<sup>15</sup>Brown, *Injun Joe's Ghost*, 28.



affinity explains why Cora feels attraction for Uncas, it does not make the interracial relationship acceptable.<sup>16</sup> According to Brown, miscegenation “represents a fundamental contradiction to the national ideology of racial separatism and... the historical romance, intent upon the creation of a national literature, registers this contradiction as a tense silence.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, instead of addressing the controversy, the “half-caste” Cora is saved from committing a societal crime by Uncas’s (timely?) death. Once again, the Indian must meet his death for the benefit of the white character.

Zane Grey proves to be a bit more adventuresome in his exploration of intermarriage in his stories, though this may be because his works were published beginning in the early twentieth century instead of the mid nineteenth century. *The Vanishing American* (1925) explores the relationship between a white-educated Indian named Nophaie and a white heroine named Marian. Both are passionately in love with each other, and Grey uses the looming awareness of their forbidden romance to explore the complexity of physical passion, often comparing it to as “savage” emotion, as though passion could only be the function of an Indian. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, much of Nophaie’s savagery is “absorbed” by Marian, diffusing his resistance to his white education and allowing the Indian to be associated with dominant culture. Such resolve allows Grey to give miscegenation a chance for success. The original version of *The Vanishing American* showed Marian and Nophaie getting married and living into old age. But before the story was released as a series in 1923, editors of *Ladies’ Home Journal* forced Grey to change his ending to the death of Nophaie. It seems the popular

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<sup>16</sup>Barker and Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans*, 23.

<sup>17</sup>Brown, *Injun Joe’s Ghost*, 28.

opinion of acceptable marriage was still an influencing force, even in early twentieth century literature. With the new ending, Grey's novel adhered to the previously created pattern of failed miscegenation, which Nophaie sacrifices himself for Marian's benefit.<sup>18</sup> He tells her, "White woman, savior of Nophaie, go back to your people."<sup>19</sup>

Grey's *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910) also has miscegenation as a successful alternative in it. When John Hare and Mescal, a half-breed woman of Navajo and Spanish descent brought up in white society, fall in love, the union is first met with disapproval. Naab's confidant, Chief Esctah, condemns the relationship by reminding them that "white and red blood will not mix."<sup>20</sup> However, he later recants on his opinion, blessing Hare and Mescal's marriage and their role as the heirs to August Naab's property. Mescal's white upbringing and education makes her a more acceptable choice as a wife than an unconverted half-breed, but the fact that she is a mix of two "other" races is an act of progressiveness on Grey's part.

### *Conclusion*

Miscegenation has experienced a complete reversal in popularity amongst American readership since the 1960s. Where it once was an unmentionable occurrence, a "horrid alternative," now it seems to reflect the secret fantasies of every woman who reads a historical novel. Bookstore shelves are crammed full with pulp historical romance novels, completely lacking in historical fact, that spins tales of idyllic half-breed men that sweep ill-content white women off their feet. The unwanted "savage" passion

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<sup>18</sup>Wallmann, *The Western: Parables of the American Dream*, 127

<sup>19</sup>Grey, *The Vanishing American*, 235.

<sup>20</sup>Grey, *Heritage of the Desert*, 179.

from Grey's novels is now something to be coveted by the heroine and the reader alike, both plagued by nostalgia for the untamed era of America's West. The Indian who features in these sorts of novels is, of course, like a dark-skinned Adonis. Typically, he is misunderstood by everyone but the white heroine, and his rough mannerisms are appealing rather than repulsive to her. While the formula of these romance novels often includes the Indian's physical dominance over the heroine, it is usually the heroine's choice whether she remains with the Native. These books are engineered to have happy endings, and so lull their audience into a false sense of contentment concerning the relationship between white and American Indian peoples.

While those in the scholarly world may scoff at these depthless, formulaic books, stating them to be without truth or merit, the fact remains that they are the predominant historical novel read by Americans. Historical romance novels exist with the same prominence and prolificacy as nineteenth century Beadle Dime Novels, and they are swallowed just as eagerly as their earlier counterparts by the American readership. In many cases, these novels may be the only example of American history a reader has in relation to the West, and their false idealism plays into the national nostalgia for a "Wild West" that never even existed.

While the Indians in these books are treated sympathetically by their authors, they are still badly misrepresented. Even romance novels that involve Indians in a contemporary setting suggest a certain nobility or idealism to its Native American characters, largely connected to their traditional heritage. Ultimately, devoted readers of this genre concoct an unrealistic understanding of American Indians and their "Noble" race, both past and present. This illusion of the American Indian and of the west has

contributed to the dominant culture's fascination for returning to a "wilder" time. The birth of America is made to seem like an adventure and a lark, rather than the harsh struggle for survival it truly was. And while there is nothing wrong with these novels generating an interest in Western history, such interest from a reader is usually passing and insincere. Furthermore, American readers grow to resent past reality because it disappoints them by not being the idyllic world they had imagined. Popular culture would much prefer to think of American Indians as heroes of the past as mythical as Hercules and Odysseus, rather than accept the guilt that comes with understanding their true history and acknowledging who they are today.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

If the stereotypes present in this thesis were merely objects of the past, the previous chapters would have presented an objective analysis of changing influences in Western literature. Unfortunately, that is not the case. As mentioned multiple times throughout this thesis, the stereotypes attached to Indians in nineteenth and early twentieth century literature are still alive and present in American culture today. They coexist with the expression of patriotism presented to the American public through media every day, and most citizens are completely unaware of it. Cartoons, commercials, national sports teams, and many more factors that define American life are all affected by an unrealistic preconception of the American Indian. Why does a culture that is hyper aware of equality and justice allow such a thing to happen? Perhaps it is because stereotypes such as those presented by authors of popular Western fiction have become such an ingrained part of American society that dominant culture has become desensitized to their bigoted and racial undertones (figure 6.1). Meanwhile, the real American Indian tribes of this country fade further into obscurity, skirting the edge of extinction because America has never taken an interest in their personal identities beyond their resistance to governmental law.

The purpose of this thesis was not to point a finger at past literature and declare it the origin of all American Indian problems. It was not to make those who read pulp fiction feel guilty, or to turn Cooper's readership against him.



Figure 6. 1 "A Great Day for the Indians, *Boston Herald*, April 22, 1923

The purpose of this thesis is to reawaken the awareness of a complacent American audience, to challenge them not to simply absorb the media that surrounds them every day, but to question it. If this thesis can reveal to only a few how completely the misrepresentation of the American Indian is tied into the foundation of this nation and how it has affected the American identity all the way into the present, then it will have met with great success. American Indian authors are reaching across the great chasm of American fiction to correct these misconceptions about their people. Award winning authors like N. Scott Momaday, Sherman Alexie, Linda Hogan, Jamake Highwater, Leslie Marmon Silko, and more all offer exceptional books about American Indian lifestyle, both historical and contemporary. Book of this nature is what will aid the

American readership to understand American Indian tribes are they exist in the *here* and *now*, and may prove to be the salvation of the race.

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