

Broj 3 / Književnost i kultura / Carroll Clayton Savant - The Destiny of Hope: The "Damned Mob" of Women Activist Writers and the Indian Removal

## Carroll Clayton Savant - The Destiny of Hope: The "Damned Mob" of Women Activist Writers and the Indian Removal

"America is now wholly given over to a d-d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied by their trash..." (Hawthorne 304). However Nathaniel Hawthorne chose to voice his frustration with the American female writer, she did play a significant social role in nineteenth-century American cultural history. Formally removed from the political discourse of their generation, women activists turned to other means for disseminating opinions and disapproval. The rising genre of the novel was one of the most effective and visible forms available to American women. Viewed as an historical artifact, the novel was steeped in social convention and cultural ideology. Therefore, when women turned to it to voice opposition to Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act, they did so by embracing the traditionally-accepted methodology of the novel, but altering it through subversive language and plots to suit their critical needs. The goal of this paper is to look at the social implications that surrounded Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* or *Early Times in the Massachusetts* and Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times by an American*. By setting both of these works amidst the cultural atmosphere that gave rise to Jackson's Indian Removal, I plan to look at the social and historic impact of Child and Sedgwick's works as these two authors wrote out in opposition to the treatment and representation of the American Indian. Within the process, I intend to note several of the significant arguments regarding women's role in social and political policy and the ability of women writers to reach the general public through their reading audiences.

The methodology of this inquiry is within the confines of New Historicism: using the novel as an historical artifact as a representation of cultural ideology. Given the scope of this project, it is essential to look at the cultural ideology regarding the Other-ness of the Native American that allowed it to be socially acceptable to implement Removal. By turning to the writings of one of America's first and (during his day) most popular historians, George Bancroft, I will show how the Native American was portrayed as second-class in "academia." This view of the Native American as the outsider perpetuated by the likes of Bancroft led to policy such as Jackson's Indian Removal. By looking at Jackson's policy, I intend to investigate the way Jacksonians viewed the Native American. On the other hand, this project is an inquiry into how American female writers used their artistic voices to oppose the ways the Native Americans had been viewed and treated. Turning to the works of Child and Sedgwick, this inquiry is a matter of queering the social ideology that permeated American thought regarding Indian Removal. Inherently in this argument, my paper will be a close reading of Child and Sedgwick's texts to investigate the various ways they portrayed Native Americans and how this portrayal could be construed as sympathetic to the Native American cause.

Previous scholars have investigated Sedgwick's work from the discipline of historicism. While many point to the autobiographical elements that permeate *Hope Leslie*, many also look at the recounting of the Pequod War as a contribution to the American historical literary memory. In a study discussing Sedgwick's "Indian 'Connections,'" Karen Weierman acknowledges that "...Sedgwick's familial connections intensified her interest in the Cherokee removal crisis" (439). Weierman writes that Sedgwick was significantly influenced by Jeremiah Evarts' campaign opposing Indian Removal. Though she acknowledges Sedgwick's interest in opposing Removal, Weierman does not discuss how she does this in her work, but merely makes passing note, citing a handful of Sedgwick's personal letters. In this shortcoming, Weierman's study is reductionist. This is where my study will fill in the gaps of previous studies: providing a close reading of Sedgwick's work to find instances where her writing is sympathetic to the Native American cause.

In a similar vein, Lydia Maria Child is considered one of the "mob" of women activist writers, sympathetically portraying the Native American in her novels. While there is growing interest in the work of Sedgwick in the more recent years, that of Child has been neglected for the most part. This study will include a close reading of Child as part of Sedgwick's "mob." Looking at Child's sympathetic portrayal of the Native American, I intend to show that Sedgwick was not alone in taking a stance against Indian Removal. While Child's work was published in 1824, a good six years before the legislative push for Removal, I intend to show that the sympathetic sentiment had been

a viable current in the discourse surrounding the Other-ness of the Native American. While Child's depiction of Hobomok could be considered that of the Noble Savage, I intend to show that Child's Nobleness goes beyond typical depictions, to suggest a sympathetic undercurrent in her work.

By looking at Child and Sedgwick's works together, I intend to show how sympathetic portrayals of the Native Americans were used as a way of opposing cultural ideology regarding the treatment of the Native Americans. In discussing Child's work, I will show that Native American sympathies had permeated cultural criticism even before Andrew Jackson began calling for Indian Removal. Turning to Sedgwick's work, I will show how these sympathies, laid out in the writings of Child, intensified as the call for Removal strengthened. First, however, it is essential to investigate the ideologically-bound view of the Native American through Bancroft's "historical" studies of the founding of the United States.

Much has been written about the historiography of George Bancroft's *History of the United States*. While many turn to Bancroft's work to address the question of classification, it is the problem of how ideology influenced Bancroft's writing and permeates his *History* that is interesting. In a study of Bancroft the historian, Watt Stewart writes that Bancroft "[b]eing a man of strong intellect...was also a man of strong convictions - convictions which find their echo in his writings" (77). Stewart notes that Bancroft's depiction of history was concerned with a sense of patriotic duty. He cites the rise of patriotism and its correlation with American nationalism and the election of Andrew Jackson. With all of these streams of cultural consciousness colliding in the late-1820s and early-1830s, Stewart asserts that the climate was ripe for Bancroft's *History*.

He writes that "[t]hese influences, united with the fact that his [Bancroft's] nature and training made him a theorist of radical tendencies, aroused in the historian the response that determined the enthusiastic, sometimes rhapsodic, quality of his historical productions" (82). Therefore, Bancroft the historian, in his patriotic sense of national duty, was quick to gloss over the unseemly details of the founding of the nation and its subsequent history. This sense of duty is what provides the "rhapsodic" literary quality to Bancroft's *History* in his attempt to build a workable history for the developing nation. Stewart notes this, writing that:

Bancroft's willingness to suppress unpleasant facts in order to gild the subjects of his *History* is amusingly illustrated in an order to a London firm for an engraving of Franklin which he purposed to use as the frontispiece to Volume III. He wrote, 'The warts on Franklin's face I wish omitted.' (84).

According to Stewart, Bancroft the historian was willing to forgive historical accuracy in the name of Bancroft the patriot - essentially Bancroft the ideologue. This patriotic fervor, bound by dogmatic language, found in Bancroft's *History* is apparent.

Bancroft's United States was the epitome of civilized society. It was a land born out of the wilderness of the Native. Tracing the colonization of America, he writes that :

...it is but little more than two centuries since the oldest of our states received its first permanent colony. Before that time the whole territory was an unproductive waste... Its only inhabitants were a few scattered tribes of feeble barbarians, destitute of commerce and of political connection. The axe and the ploughshare were unknown. The soil, which had been gathering fertility from the repose of centuries, was lavishing its strength in magnificent but useless vegetation. In view of civilization the immense domain was a solitude (3).

Thus, according to Bancroft, the spirit of the supremely civilized nation lay bankrupt prior to the colonization of America, as it was a nation ruled by the vast wilderness of "barbarians." It is this portrayal of the "barbaric" Native as inept and unable to successfully transform the wilderness of America into the greatness of the United States - the beacon of the civilized world - that catches the eye. This is the ideology that characterized the representation of the Native American that allowed them to be considered the cultural, racial, and ethnic Other. Sedgwick acknowledges this ideologically-bound representation of the Native American in her introduction to *Hope Leslie*. [1] She writes that "[i]n our histories, it was perhaps natural that they [the Native Americans] should be represented as 'surly dogs,' who preferred to die rather than live, from no other motives than a stupid or malignant obstinacy" (6). While Sedgwick points to the language used in representing the "savage" as the Other, she extols the very characteristics which those like Bancroft denounced. She writes that:

[t]he Indians of North America are, perhaps, the only race of men of whom it may be said, that though

**“ This sense of duty is what provides the "rhapsodic" literary quality to Bancroft's History in his attempt to build a workable history for the developing nation...**

conquered, they were never enslaved. They could not submit, and live. When made captives, they courted death... These traits of their character will be viewed by an impartial observer, in a light very different from that in which they were regarded by our ancestors (6).

This language of the "noble savage" lends Sedgwick a sympathetic tendency against the historic ideology of the "barbaric savage."

The American experience of the White Man, was different, however. The ideology of Bancroft shows how he viewed the nation as a gift from the Almighty, to be populated and ruled by His chosen people.[2] Writing of the founding and colonization of the nation, Bancroft writes that:

[t]he enterprise of Columbus, the most memorable maritime enterprise in the history of the world, formed between Europe and America the communication which will never cease. The story of the colonization of America by North-men rests on narratives, mythological in form, and obscure in meaning; ancient, yet not contemporary (6).

Bancroft's epic story of Columbus' voyage and the subsequent colonization of the American frontier is sentimental and innocuous at first glance. Sedgwick echoes Bancroft's sentiment. She writes that "[t]he first settlers of New-England were not illiterate, but learned and industrious men... The Massachusetts colony... [was an] illuminated [spot], clear and bright lights, set on the borders of a dark and turbulent wilderness" (5). When one compares the language used in the contrasting depictions of the young nation, the dichotomy is clear. The America of the Native was a vast "waste" of wilderness, filled with a race of "barbaric" savages. On the other hand, the America of Columbus was grand and hopeful, a nation that was full of promise. Sedgwick's America was peopled by the brave English, willing to settle on the borders of the wilderness; while the Native was a brutal savage, honorably willing to fight to the death. While Sedgwick sometimes relies on the ideological language of Bancroft, she does so in a critique of his very ideology. Where Bancroft views Sedgwick's savage negatively, Sedgwick views him with nobility and reverence. She turns to the reliance of the colonists on the settlements laid out by the Natives. She writes that "[t]he first settlers followed the course of the Indians, and planted themselves on the borders of rivers..." in an attempt to civilize a wilderness (17). According to Sedgwick, the interactions between the Native Americans and the English settlers were that of shared experience: living together in this new wilderness of a developing nation.

The illustration of ideology in Bancroft's depiction of the Native American becomes more explicit when he discusses the interactions and conflicts of the Natives and the colonists. Bancroft's representation of the Native American is tied to his brutal savagery. Sedgwick notes the brutality of the Native as well, but goes beyond Bancroft's blatant display of violence. While her writing describes the violence of the Native, it diminishes it as a matter of characteristic virtue. From the voice of Mrs. Fletcher, she writes that:

'[t]here hath been some alarm here within the last few days, on account of certain Indians who have been seen lurking in the woods around us. They are reported not to have a friendly appearance. We have been advised to remove... to the Fort; but as I feel no apprehension, I shall not disarrange my family by taking a step that would savour [sic] more of fear than prudence. I say I feel no apprehension... I have a cowardly womanish spirit, and fear is set in motion by the very mention of danger' (34-35).

While Sedgwick's writing brings up issues of gender, what is clear from her argument is that, though Mrs. Fletcher seems threatened by the hostility of her neighboring Indians, she does not feel threatened enough to remove to the Fort for shelter. Conflict for Sedgwick is a threat posed by living in the wilderness - as the Fletcher family does. The conflicts Bancroft cites, however specific, are generalities that turn from those of Red Man versus White to that of civilized versus savage.

The numerous accounts of conflict to which Bancroft investigates are filled with instances of Native Americans ambushing and murdering English settlers. When Bancroft recounts an English massacre of the Natives, he does so in almost religious language. This is the ideology of Bancroft: that America is the God-given nation, handed over to His chosen people. Turning to the Pequod War (as this is the narrative of *Hope Leslie*), he writes that "[I]n 1633, some of the Pequods had already shown a hostile spirit, and had murdered the captain and crew of a small Massachusetts vessel trading in [the] Connecticut River...[pleading] the necessity of self-defense" (313). While a compromise had been reached between the Pequods and the Massachusetts government seeking retributions for the "murders," the agreement fell apart as the Pequods "murdered" John Oldham and "carried off" his crew to Block Island (313). The Massachusetts response was swift and violent as "...they ravaged Block Island, and then... undertook the chastisement of the Pequods" (313). Bancroft seems to revel in the account of the massacre of the Pequod War. He writes that:

[h]undreds of the Pequods spent much of the last night of their lives in rejoicings... when the sentinels of the English were within hearing of their songs... [while] the soldiers... put themselves in motion... [and] made their attack on the principal fort... The colonists were fighting for the security of their homes; if defeated, the war-whoop would resound near their cottages, and their wives and children be abandoned to the scalping-knife and the tomahawk... Did the helpless natives climb the palisades, the flames assisted the marksmen to take good aim at them... they were cut down by English broadswords. About six hundred Indians, men, women, and children, perished; most of them in the hideous conflagration. In little more than an hour, the work of destruction was finished, and two only of the English had fallen (315).

“ ***For Sedgwick, the War was a massacre of the Native Americans, while to Bancroft, the War was essential in claiming the supremacy of the White Man...***

While Bancroft frames the War in the guise of self-defense on the part of the English colonists, he puts the Pequods at fault for starting the conflict. Using the language of the horrors of defeat at the hands of the Pequot, Bancroft paints a portrait of a brutal savage, fighting to the death.[3] This is the savage that threatened the civilization of the young nation. Sedgwick, on the other hand, gives a different account of the War. As the ancient Nelema tells Mrs. Fletcher, "[t]hey spared not our homes... there where our old men spoke, where was heard the song of the maiden, and the laugh of our children; there now all is silence, dust, and ashes" (37). Sedgwick, writing sympathetically from the eyes of Nelema, is quick to recount the brutality of the Pequot War which Bancroft was all too eager to celebrate it. The conflicting accounts of Sedgwick and

Bancroft show where ideologies split. For Sedgwick, the War was a massacre of the Native Americans, while to Bancroft, the War was essential in claiming the supremacy of the White Man. Therefore, within the cultural ideology, it was only the next step to remove the "races" of the Red Man from the realm of the White.

Emerging from the War of 1812 a national hero, Andrew Jackson looked to the years of American negotiations with the Native Americans and called for a drastic change. Jackson "...called for the United States to end what he called the 'absurdity' of negotiating with the tribes as sovereign nations" (Lesh 542). While many had looked to the Native American "problem" and offered various solutions, Jackson's was not new, as:

...most white people in the southern and western states refused to accept them [the Native Americans] as their social equals. Instead, they called for political representatives to seize lands belonging to the Native Americans and remove the peoples themselves beyond the reach of the white settlement (Lesh 541).

But Jackson's call came at a pivotal moment, as Georgia in the 1820s turned to "...the federal government to remove the Creeks and Cherokees" (Lesh 542). The conflict between the state and the nations of the Cherokees escalated in 1827. It reached its furor upon the election of Jackson in 1828.

When Andrew Jackson arrived in Washington to assume the presidency in the spring of 1829, he was well known as an advocate of the policy of removal... Not long after his inauguration, Jackson and his Democratic Party were able to push the Indian Removal Act through Congress by very slim margins... Jackson then moved quickly to bring about a general removal of all the eastern tribes, in the North and South alike (Lesh 543).

Thus with the election of President Andrew Jackson, the nation embarked on a long journey of Removal; supported by the ideology of the Native American as the Other - as illustrated by Bancroft - and therefore below the level of equal, it was considered natural to remove the savage from the realm of the civilized - particularly when looking at the question of property.[4]

Cloaked in the language of benevolence, Jackson and his comrades looked to remove the Native Americans in order to gain access to their lands. Ideologically, it was a simple task to remove a race of people that seemed a threat to civilized society. "Given the greed of whites for Indian territory and their insatiable demands... Jackson felt he had no choice but to insist on removal as the only means of preventing conflict and annihilation" (Remini 228). Remini writes that the basis of Removal remained wrapped in the language of benevolence. He states that Jackson's plea to Congress was to set aside land "west of the Mississippi, outside the limits of any state or territory now formed... [where] they can be Indians, not cultural white men; they can enjoy their own governments subject to no interference from the United States..." (232). Mary Young furthers Remini's statement. She writes that "...it was to the interest of the tribesmen to remove west of the Mississippi. There, sheltered from the intruder and the whisky merchant, he could lose his savagery while improving his nobility" (33). Therefore, by pushing the Native west of organized civilization, they became absent from view and imagination, and subsequently ceased to

exist. Despite the Act's call to remove, Jackson's Indian Removal Act hid within the language of choice.

According to the Indian Removal Act, the Native American had a choice to remove. Remini writes that Jackson believed "...emigration should be voluntary..." (232), but that "the Indians could refuse to remove and stay where they were; but if they stayed, they had to recognize that they were subject to state law and jurisdiction. No longer could they live under their own laws and practices" (237). Therefore, the Native who chose not to remove had to assimilate. Knowing the culture of the Native American, the Act assumed they would remove and remain autonomous before they would ever assimilate. Young writes that "[i]f the Indian is civilized, he can behave like a white man. Then let him take for his own as much land as he can cultivate, become a citizen of the state where he lives, and accept the burdens which citizenship entails" (35). Young's Native who chose to remain, assimilated down to the roots of his being. Remini writes that the Act "...marked the beginning of humiliation and deprivation of a proud race of people. Once gone, they would be out of sight and mind, presumably out of harm's way" (250). Despite the language found in the various investigations of the Indian Removal, there were cries of opposition from the beginning.

While Jackson was pursuing his Indian Removal, it was not amidst universal sanction. Remini writes that "...reaction around the country to Jackson's proposal came as a shock to him. A storm of protest... engulfed both Congress and the administration. Cries of outrage came in the form of petitions opposing removal..." (233). Within these petitions, Mary Hershberger notes, one finds the woman's voice beginning to emerge within the national political discourse. Hershberger writes that "[t]o block removal, Catharine Beecher and Lydia Sigourney organized the first national women's petition campaign and flooded Congress with antiremoval [sic] petitions, making a bold claim for women's place in national political discourse" (15). While Hershberger writes of the religious organizations that came out in opposition to removal, it is the role of women in this discourse which is remarkable, as women had long been removed from the realm of politics. Hershberger writes that:

[d]enied political standing by the nation's founders, women in the new republic had developed the concept of republican motherhood, which implied that women's interests could diverge from those of the male electorate and recognized the women's role in promoting the public virtue (18).

Therefore, it was the women of the nation who were responsible for creating its virtuous citizens by raising their children and creating a morally virtuous republic. It was the moral obligation of the women of the nation to act out against Removal. Hershberger notes that women were doing this by participating in the political outcry against the Indian Removal Act. She writes that "[p]opular opposition to Jackson's removal bill overwhelmed traditional forms of political participation... Not only did men send an unprecedented number of petitions, women began to draw up and circulate their own petitions opposing removal..." (25). This political participation on the national scale, as Hershberger notes, was unprecedented and not limited to the political discourse.

Through their novels, Child and Sedgwick, turned to the most visual and accessible way of criticizing the ideology surrounding the negative representations of the Native American. Writing before the rise of the heated rhetoric of Indian Removal, Child's sympathetic depictions of Hobomok are clearly a contrast from those seen in Bancroft. She writes that:

...the manly beauty of Hobomok, as he sat before the fire, the flickering and uncertain light of a few decaying embers falling full upon his face. This Indian was indeed cast in nature's noblest mould. He was one of the finest specimens of elastic, vigorous elegance of proportion, to be found among his tribe (36).

Child's Hobomok is beyond Sedgwick's noble. The language she invokes is that of natural beauty, a product of the sublimity of nature. This Native, as a product of Nature, is, in the Emersonian view, a creation of the Deity. Therefore, according to Child, Hobomok as a Natural product of the Divine, should be treated as such. Child was not alone in writing of equality. Sedgwick, recounting a formal dinner between Governor Winthrop and the Native chiefs, writes that "Governor Winthrop motioned to his Indian guests to take their seats at the side-table, and the rest of the company... surrounded the dinner table" (145-146). Sedgwick's dinner guests are considered "inferior guests" (145) in the Winthrop mansion, therefore are not to dine at the same table as the Governor and his white guests. Sedgwick notes this separation of space. In her account, however, she is writing in the midst of the cries for separateness and "inferiority" of the Indian race as the nation was pushing for Indian Removal. However, Sedgwick gives an account of the Native response to this push for separate realms. Addressing the snub from the Governor and his company, the chief's translator says: "[m]y chief bids me to say... that he expects such treatment from the English saggamore [sic], as the English receive in the wigwam of the Narragansett chief. He says that when the English stranger visits him, he sits on his mat, and eats from his dish" (146). Therefore, Sedgwick's chief expects equal treatment, as he would provide his English guests in his own home. He speaks out against the treatment of his host. This demand for equality takes on different faces in the works of Child and

Sedgwick.

The interaction among the principal characters of both Sedgwick and Child's works explicitly show the writers' ideological tendencies. There was no better way to subvert ideological convention than for both authors to delve into the realm of love. While Sedgwick acknowledges her typical reader as "...the misses in their teens..." (348), the love story goes beyond catering to the class of young female readers. The threat of miscegenation found in both novels was not used merely as a device to incite fear within the culturally-constructed female reader, filled with her social ideologies regarding morality and race. The fact that miscegenation permeates both *Hope Leslie* and *Hobomok* - the first instance among two couples and the second under the single, most tragic couple - shows that the threat of an interracial marriage went beyond the problem posed with the mingling of the races, but went to the very core of the ideological separation between the races. This is the ideology that placed the Native American as second-class (as can be seen with Sedgwick's banquet scene with Governor Winthrop) and demanded his removal from the realm of the White Man. By challenging these assertions, Child and Sedgwick were challenging the very ideology that formed these socially held convictions.

The preoccupation with marriage is a constant undercurrent in Child's *Hobomok*. Mary Conant's midnight stroll through the forest to perform a heathenish ritual in hopes of summoning a husband is recounted by Child in mystic language that blurs the lines between the savage and the civilized. The language Child invokes is that of the heathen Native American. As Mary performs the ritual, she takes "...a knife from her pocket...[opens] a vein in her little arm, and dipping a feather in the blood, wrote something on a piece of white cloth," all while reciting an incantation (13). This is the first of many instances where Child blurs the lines between the traditionally-held views that separate the Native American from the White Man. But this blur of the lines is in the name of love. The tension between Mary Conant and Hobomok first rears its head as Child writes that "[w]henver Hobomok gazed upon Mary, it was with an expression in which reverence was strikingly predominant" (17). Hobomok's feelings for Mary are obvious when he looks at her. However, given the taboo separating the races, Hobomok's sentiment is not returned. Nor is Mary even aware of Hobomok's charged gaze. In the dead of winter, Hobomok faces the elements and makes the pilgrimage from Plymouth to visit the settlers. Child writes of Hobomok's "courtship" of Mary Conant. Though oblivious of his advances, Child writes that:

[a] woman's heart loves the flattery of devoted attention, let it come from what source it may. Perhaps Mary smiled too complacently on such offerings; perhaps she listened with too much interest, to descriptions of the Indian nations, glowing as they were in the brief, figurative language of nature. Be that as it may, love for Conant's daughter, love deep and intense, had sunk far into the bosom of the savage (84).

The reference Child makes to Mary's sentiment towards Hobomok shows a thawing, as she is more willing to accept his generosity towards her. After the death of her "pre-ordained" suitor Charles Brown, Mary turns to Hobomok. Child writes that "[s]he remembered the idolatry he [Hobomok] had always paid her, and in the desolation of the moment, she felt as if he was the only being in the wide world who was left to love her" (121). In her time of grief, Mary turns to Hobomok to tell him "I will be your wife, Hobomok, if you love me" (121). Granted, Mary is in shock of the death of Brown when she agrees to wed Hobomok; the whole marriage scene is wrapped in the language of melancholy and desperation. However, with time, Mary, having lived with Hobomok in the wilderness and having his child, grows fond of her Indian husband. Talking to her friend Sally about her marriage, Mary states, "...I have no doubt you think I must be very miserable; but I speak truly when I say that every day I live with that kind, noble-hearted creature, the better I love him" (137). Sally responds to Mary's declaration of happiness with, "I always thought he was the best Indian I ever knew... and within these three years he has altered so much, that he seems almost like an Englishman" (137). Although in the end, all is righted as Mary's true suitor, Charles Brown, returns from his mistaken death to claim his rightful bride, Child's argument is clear. Showing the benevolence of the Native American Hobomok, Child is arguing in favor of their inherent civility, and therefore, equality. Marriage, on the other hand, for Sedgwick, serves a different role.

Just as Child writes of the tension between Mary Conant and Hobomok as an illustration of the strained relations between the new settlers and the Native Americans, as a criticism of the ideologically-held idea of the Native American as inferior, Sedgwick turns to this same assertion. Written during the height of calls for Indian Removal, Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* is clear in its context. Magawisca, the Native daughter of the Pequot chief, and her brother Oneco, are promised to the Fletcher family as servants. While it is striking that the government of Massachusetts should sentence two Native children to indentured servitude, it is interesting in that the government,

“ **Showing the benevolence of the Native American Hobomok, Child is arguing in favor of their inherent civility...**

by doing so, is expanding its reach to control the Natives within the law of the White Man. The first note Sedgwick makes of the tension between Everell Fletcher and Magawisca is upon her arrival to the Fletcher household. Sedgwick, in a similar vein to Child's description of Hobomok, writes that "[t]he Indian stranger was tall for her years, which did not exceed fifteen. Her form was slender, flexible, and graceful; and there was a freedom and loftiness in her movement which...expressed a consciousness of high birth" (23). While the dignity Sedgwick attributes to Magawisca is written in the language of beauty, what Sedgwick is invariably doing, is turning Magawisca from the Native servant into the noble female savage. Sedgwick writes that "...this daughter of a chieftain, which altogether, had an air of wild and fantastic grace... harmonized well with the noble demeanor and peculiar beauty of the young savage" (23). Therefore, Magawisca, with her beauty, dignity and grace is beyond the nobility of the noble savage. Mrs. Fletcher describes her as a "...wild doe from the forest... [who had a] sentiment of compassion" (24). Recanting the events as the household welcomed Magawisca, Mrs. Fletcher writes to her husband that Everell had taken a liking to the Native princess. She writes:

...though yet a child in years, that in her mien that doth bring to mind the lofty Judith, and the gracious Esther. When I once said this to Everell, he replied, 'Oh, mother! is she not more like the gentle and tender Ruth?' ...Two young plants that have sprung up in close neighbourhood [sic], may be separated while young; but if disjoined after their fibers are all intertwined, one, or perchance both, may perish (32-33).

Martha Fletcher is concerned with the feelings Everell is expressing for Magawisca. But in her letter she mentions nothing outright of the threat of their feelings going further. Sedgwick points to Everell's feelings for Magawisca, as "...she seemed, to him, to embody nature's best gifts, and her feelings to be the inspiration of heaven" (53). Where Everell sees everything Divine in Magawisca, Sedgwick evades the threatening language as seen in the tension between Mary Conant and Hobomok. Perhaps it was understood that nothing could come of the relationship between Everell and Magawisca, or perhaps this could be a gendered double standard, as Everell is a young man and his duty in life is different than that of Mary Conant. If Everell were to marry Magawisca, one would doubt that the Fletcher family would view this as a travesty, as Mr. Conant reacts to that of his daughter marrying Hobomok. But Sedgwick provides the opportunity to investigate this possibility.

Looking to the secondary characters of Oneco and Faith Leslie, Sedgwick takes up the threat of miscegenation once again. However, in this instance, Faith Leslie the captive, marries Oneco her captor, and resists every attempt of Hope Leslie to reunite her with her biological family. As Magawisca tells Hope Leslie that her sister Faith is alive and well, and is married to Oneco, Hope's reaction speaks volumes about the taboo of miscegenation. "God forbid!" exclaimed Hope, shuddering as if a knife had been plunged in her bosom. 'My sister married to an Indian!' (188). Just as Mr. Conant is devastated when he finds out his daughter Mary is married to Hobomok and wishes the rumors of her death true; the news that Faith Leslie is alive and well is glossed over by Hope Leslie. Magawisca's rebuttal exemplifies the ideology behind Hope's dogmatic reaction.

'An Indian!' exclaimed Magawisca, recoiling with a look of proud contempt, that showed she reciprocated with full measure, the scorn expressed for her race. 'Yes - an Indian, in whose veins runs the blood of the strongest, the fleetest of the children of the forest, who never turned their backs on friends or enemies, and whose souls have returned to the Great Spirit, stainless as they came from him. Think ye that your blood will be corrupted by mingling with this stream?' (188).

Thus, Magawisca justifies the marriage of Faith Leslie and Oneco, while simultaneously criticizing the ideology surrounding the taboo of miscegenation. The language Magawisca uses to vindicate the love of Oneco for Faith is inherently that of equality. Essentially: "Can not a Red Man love the White Woman the way a White Man can?" As Magawisca consoles Hope Leslie on the "loss" of her sister, she states "...[d]o not weep thus; your sister is well with us. She is cherished as the bird cherishes her young... she is dear to Mononotto as if his own blood ran in her veins; and Oneco - Oneco worships and serves her as if all good spirits dwelt in her" (188). Though Faith Leslie is eventually returned to her biological family, the method in which this is accomplished is wrapped in the language of a kidnapping. In her marriage plots, Sedgwick shows that love is equal. Thus, by looking at three very different cases of miscegenation, shows how two authors viewed the "problem" within the contemporary discourse of their respective days. However, looking at the language that the authors collectively employ shows that they are going against conventional dogma, therefore participating in Hershberger's political discourse without explicitly doing so.

The social representation of the Native American within the cultural discourse of the early nineteenth century was that of the inferior race of the brutal savage. By painting the "barbarian" in terms of Other-ness, patriotic American historians like George Bancroft made it socially acceptable to call for Indian Removal as a necessity for safety, while simultaneously usurping their land. The first action of the newly-elected Jackson administration was to push the Indian Removal Act through Congress. Spawned to action by events in Georgia between the state and

the Creek and Cherokee nations, Jackson urged the Native American to push west of the Mississippi River, suggesting that it was for their own good to maintain their cultural autonomy. The historical discourse suggests that Jackson pursued his Indian Removal Act amidst universal approval. However, scholars like Hershberger and Remini prove the contrary. Hershberger writes that it was the activism of American women - organizing, petitioning and participating in the political process - that was unprecedented. What Hershberger does not mention is that women were participating in the political process through means other than political activism. The novels of Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Lydia Maria Child tackle the problems of equality through the methods of dealing with the taboo of miscegenation. Sedgwick and Child also contest the historical ideology of the representation of the Native American. By doing so, these two women writers subverted the very ideology considered universal to depict the Native American as Bancroft's "barbarian." Testifying before Governor Winthrop, Eliot (and Sedgwick) makes the case for the sympathetic Native cause. Sedgwick writes that:

[h]e touched on diverse instances of 'kindness and neighbourlike [sic] conduct that had been shown them by the poor heathen people, who having no law, were a law unto themselves.' He intimated that the Lord's chosen people had not now, as of old, been selected to exterminate the heathen, but to enlarge the bounds of God's heritage, and to convert these strangers and aliens, to servants and children of the most High! (283).

Hidden within the language of Christian conversion, Sedgwick's Eliot speaks of the nobility and kindness which the Native American had demonstrated to the White Man and calls for inclusion of the Native into the social fabric of civilized society. Sedgwick's cry for Native American sympathy was rooted in the demand for equality, and therefore, along with Child, could be ranked with the likes of Hershberger's Beecher and Sigourney, among America's female political activists.

## Bibliography

Bancroft, George. *History of the United States of America, from the Discovery of the Continent*, thoroughly revised edition, Volume 1. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1879.

Bell, Michael Davitt. "History and Romance Convention in Catharine Sedgwick's 'Hope Leslie,'" *American Quarterly* 22: 2 (Summer, 1970).

Child, Lydia Maria. *Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times by an American*, twelfth paperback printing. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2007.

Gould, Philip. "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War," *American Literature* 66: 4 (December, 1994).

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. XVII, William Charvat, ed. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1987.

Hershberger, Mary. "Mobilizing Women. Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle against Indian Removal in the 1830s," *The Journal of American History* 86: 1 (June, 1999).

Lesh, Bruce A. ed. "Andrew Jackson: On Indian Removal," *Milestone documents in American history: exploring the primary sources that shaped America*. Dallas: Schlager Group, 2008.

Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson & His Indian Wars*. New York: Penguin Group, 2001.

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*, seventh paperback edition. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1999.

Steward, Watt. "George Bancroft Historian of the American Republic," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 19: 1 (June, 1932).

Walters, John Spencer. "Informing the nation Jacksonian style: The ideological impetus for, and impediments to, the U.S. government's informing function during the antebellum period," *Journal of Government Information* 27 (2000).

Weierman, Karen Woods. "Reading and Writing 'Hope Leslie': Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Indian 'Connections,'" *The New England Quarterly* 75: 3 (September, 2002).



Young, Mary E. "Indian Removal and Land Allotment: The Civilized Tribes and Jacksonian Justice," *The American Historical Review* 64: 1 (October, 1958).

Zagarell, Sandra A. "Expanding 'America': Lydia Sigourney's Sketch of Connecticut, Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 6: 2 (Autumn, 1987).

---

[1] While Child also makes note of the historicity of her text, Sedgwick is explicit in her introduction in that: [t]he following volumes are not offered to the public as being in any degree an historical narrative, or a relation of real events. Real characters and real events are, however, alluded to; and this course, if not strictly necessary, was found very convenient in the execution of the author's design, which was to illustrate not the history, but the character of the times" (5).

Turning to the historical annals and records of the time, Sedgwick's work is full of "allusions" to history, where Child's is indebted to the English literary tradition. In a discursive introduction, Child lays out the framework of her novel. She writes that "...your friend... half tempted me to write a New England novel. 'A novel! ...when Waverly is galloping over hill and dale, faster and more successful than Alexander's conquering sword? ...the mind is every where supplied with 'Pioneers' on the land, and is soon like to be with 'Pilots' on the deep'" (3). Child's work, then is intended whole-heartedly as a work of fiction.

[2] Child notes this, writing that:

[t]wo centuries only have elapsed, since our most beautiful villages reposed in the undisturbed grandeur of nature; when the scenes now rendered classic by literary associations, or resounding with the din of commerce, echoed nought but the song of the hunter, or the fleet tread of the wild deer. God was here in his holy temple, and the whole earth kept silence before him! But the voice of prayer was soon to be heard in the desert. The sun, which for ages beyond the memory of man had gazed on the strange, fearful worship of the Great Spirit of the wilderness, was soon to shed its splendor upon the altars of the living God (6).

Like Bancroft, Child's America was a wilderness awaiting the settlement of God's chosen people. Child echoes this sentiment throughout the first chapter, referring to the civilized nation as the modern-day "Eden" (5). However, unlike Bancroft, Child's New World is filled with an overwhelming beauty that unites all of its residents. She writes that "[t]he scene around me owed nothing of its unadorned beauty to the power of man. He had rarely been upon these waves... I viewed myself as a drop in the vast ocean of existence, and shrunk from the contemplation of human nothingness" (7).

[3] Sedgwick notes this characteristic of the Native American. She writes that:

[t]he chieftain of a savage race, is the depository of the honour [sic] of his tribe; and their defeat is a disgrace to him, that can only be effaced by the blood of his conquerors. It is a common case with the unfortunate, to be compelled to endure the reproach of inevitable evils; and Mononotto was often reminded by the remnant of his tribe, in the bitterness of their spirit, of his former kindness for the English. This reproach sharpened too keenly the edge of his adversity.

He had seen his people slaughtered, or driven from their homes and hunting-grounds, into shameful exile; his wife had died in captivity, and his children lived in servile dependence in the house of his enemies (57).

As Magawisca recounts the horrors of the Pequod War, she tells Everell that "[s]ome of our people threw themselves into the midst of crackling flames, and their courageous souls parted with one shout of triumph; others mounted the palisade, but they were shot and dropped like a flock of birds smitten by the hunter's arrows" (49). Sedgwick's Native boldly goes into battle, risking all. If failure is a result, he would forfeit his own life rather than admit his failure.

[4] Child reverses this call. Writing before the calls for Removal, Child writes of the fear the Native Americans held of the encroachments of the White Man on Indian territory. She writes that the Indian:

...princes began to fear encroachments upon their dominions, and their prophets were troubled with rumors of a strange God. The Pequods looked with hatred upon the English, as an obstacle to their plan of universal dominion; the Narragansets stood trembling between the increasing power of their new neighbours [sic], and the haughty threats of their enemies; some of the discontented sachems of Mount Haup had broken out in open rebellion; and even the firm faith of Massasoit himself had, at times, been doubted. In such a state of things, embassies and presents were frequently necessary to support the staggering friendship of the well disposed tribes (30).

Therefore, Child was writing from the voice of the Natives. Despite the growing calls for Removal during her time, as settlers tried to negotiate between their divinely-ordained settlements and that of the Native savage, Child voiced the concerns of the Natives that was largely ignored within the rising discourse of Removal.

---

