Certainly, throughout the nineteenth century, Native Americans continued to serve a range of aesthetic and often predictable functions within imaginative literature, recycling stereotypes whose roots were already established by the late eighteenth century. This book goes on to explore the fact that live Indians, like John Brant, continued to interact with the British within the British Isles, as well as across the Atlantic, and expressed their own views on cultural relations and representations, rather than remaining passive mere objects of representation. In other words, one witnesses a continual movement between the mythical and the material; between native peoples as beings consigned to another age, that narrative already inscribed, and as active participants in contemporary transatlantic history.

CHAPTER THREE

“Brought to the Zenith of Civilization”: Indians in England in the 1840s

The family of George Catlin experienced the realities behind the Wyoming Valley massacre at firsthand. His grandfather escaped being killed by swimming the Susquehanna; his grandmother and mother were held prisoner for several weeks. These events helped to determine the direction that the young Catlin was to take. In Life amongst the Indians (1861), he recalls how, in 1806, when he was ten years old, he encountered an Oneida man, On-o-gong-way, on the lands around his family’s home in this same valley. Although initially terrified, he began to converse with On-o-gong-way and came to see things from a different perspective. The man told the boy tribal stories, taught him how to throw a tomahawk, and described what it was like for an Indian to travel, in contemporary America, “some hundreds of miles over a country partly of forest, and partly inhabited by a desperate set of hunters whose rifles were unerring, and whose deep-rooted hostility to all savages induced them to shoot them down whenever they met them in their hunting grounds.” Shortly after this formative meeting, On-o-gong-way, presumably journeying home, was found murdered. This episode not only laid the foundation for Catlin’s interest in the specifics of Indian cultures but also informed his subsequent understanding of the threatened position of the Indian in modern America. During the 1830s, he traveled west five times, painting and recording the life of the Plains Indians on their own lands, as well as witnessing the forced migration of tribes after the passing of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, and seeing the terrible effects of diseases, such as smallpox, on the lives of indigenous peoples. His paintings, extensive collection of native artifacts, and ethnographic writings were all underpinned by the belief that the race was persecuted, facing inevitable extinction, and that the opportunity to commemorate it should not be lost. Although he exhibited, lectured, and demonstrated on the East Coast—sometimes accompanied by Indians, sometimes not—his antagonism toward the way in which the U.S. government was treating its native inhabitants was very likely a major factor in his being unable to persuade them to purchase or support his collection. Short of funds, and led to believe that he would find a sympathetic audience in England, Catlin sailed from New York to
London in late 1839 with his collection of Native American objects, costumes, and some six hundred portraits and other paintings.²

CATLIN’S BRITISH SHOW

The artwork illustrated the appearance, habitat, and customs of various tribes; the items on show included men’s and women’s robes, “garnished and fringed with scalp-locks from their enemies’ heads,” bows, quivers, spears, shields, cradles, calumets, tomahawks, scalping knives, war clubs, eagle and raven headdresses, wampum, whistles, rattles, drums, and masks. Catlin rented the Egyptian Hall, in Piccadilly, set up in the center a Crow tepee made of twenty or more ornamented buffalo skins, and proceeded to mount what was initially a highly popular exhibition. This ran for two years before going on tour to Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast, and Dublin. Catlin was on the point of returning to the United States when the opportunity arose to add some live Indians to his show: first 9 Ojibwa (in 1843–44), then 14 Iowa, who visited Britain and Paris (1844–55), and then 12 more Ojibwa (1845–46), who, already in London, then traveled to Paris to join with Catlin there and to visit Belgium with him.

In his account of these years, Catlin relates how he and his Irish assistant, Daniel Kavanaugh, found themselves continually answering the questions of an inquisitive audience. Possibly, Catlin exaggerated the naïveté of the inquiries in order to play up the pioneering, and highly necessary, nature of his own enterprise. But as he tells it, the explanations often addressed some rather basic questions. Indeed, Kavanaugh hit on a plan of having a table printed with the answers to the most frequently posed queries. Some of these are culturally specific: the “Indians” are “not cannibals.” They do not scalp the living; they never eat the scalps. “There are no tribes that go entirely naked; they are all very decent.” But some of the responses are more general and, at the very least, suggestive of the perceived haziness, in the popular culture of the early Victorian period, of the fundamentals of transatlantic social and physical geography. “The Rocky Mountains are in America, between New York and the Pacific Ocean, and not in the Indies at all.” “The Americans are white, the same colour exactly as the English, and speak the same language, only they speak it a great deal better, in general.” Perhaps most surprising of all among these commonly required responses is: “You can’t come overland from America” (1:48–49). If this represents a considerable degree of ignorance about Catlin’s homeland as a whole, it suggests yet more strongly the relatively blank canvas onto which he projected his information and interpretation concerning native peoples.

The one significant source of ideas about the Indian with which a number of his British audience would have been familiar was the fiction of James Fenimore Cooper. First published in London by J. Miller in 1826, Cooper’s 1831 edition of The Last of the Mohicans—with the author’s notes—was brought out the same year by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, with new editions appearing in 1834 and 1836. In 1838 Edward Ravenscroft published the novel in parts, which were then brought together in single-volume format. Clearly, Catlin capitalized on Cooper’s popularity. The question of “whether Cooper’s descriptions of the Red Indians were true” figures in the list of common inquiries (1:48); when the Iowa came outdoors, he “advertised that for one shilling, the public will have an opportunity of witnessing for the first time in Europe illustrations of the stirring descriptions given by Cooper in his celebrated novels, The Last of the Mohicans, Prairie &c.”⁴

Cooper’s dominant elegiac theme built, in both sentiment and cadence, on those tropes of Romantic poetry that sought to commemorate a fast-disappearing race. Early in The Last of the Mohicans (1824), Chingachgook famously and formulaically laments: “Where are the blossoms of those summers!—fallen, one by one, so all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of the spirits. I am on the hill-top, and must go down into the valley, and when Uncas follows in my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans.”⁵ Cooper added a footnote to the opening of the second chapter in 1831, establishing a historical context for his readers by informing them of the confederation known as the Six Nations and concluding, “There are remnants of all these people still living on lands secured to them by the state, but they are daily disappearing, either by deaths or by removals to scenes more congenial to their habits. In a short time there will be no more of these extraordinary people, in those regions in which they dwelt for centuries, but their names” (13).

The material exhibits were complemented by the lectures Catlin gave and by the appearance, in 1841, of his Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians, describing his travels in the United States and his firsthand knowledge of tribal lives. This book, published in London (a decision based on the lack of an international copyright law), was received sympathetically by reviewers. Above all, what they picked up on was that Catlin sought to memorialize what he feared were a people on the edge of oblivion: “(to use their own very beautiful figure),” he writes in Letter 1, “they are fast traveling towards the shades of their fathers, towards the setting sun.” Celebrated in such terms, the Native American was unmistakably invested with some of the Romantic fascination with the idea of the Last Man, the possessor of an acute sensibility and capacity to register the beauties
of the natural world, but with no fellow being left with whom these sensations can be shared. 7

In considering the idea of vanishing races, Catlin had, additionally, a political point to make, with implications that stretched far beyond his own country. In a fully attended lecture at the Royal Institution on 14 February 1841, he not only made the case for a preservationist Museum of Mankind but also tied in what he had observed in North America to the dangers that colonizing powers in general presented to the native inhabitants of the lands they sought to rule, whether humans were exterminated through the bayonet through smallpox, or through whiskey and rum. He directly addressed the land that he was visiting and its spirit of expansionist enterprise:

Great Britain has more than thirty colonies in different quarters of the globe, in which the numbers of civilized men are increasing, and the native tribes are wasting away—that the march of civilization is everywhere, as it is in America, a war of extermination, and that of our own species. For the occupation of a new country, the first enemy that must fall is man, and his like cannot be transplanted from any other quarter of the globe. 8

However, in proposing that artists and men of science should be sent off to make records of disappearing tribes around the world, he did not dissent from the dominant view of his time: that extinction was, in the long run, inevitable. His speech had, indeed, a good deal in common with the essay “On the Extinction of the Human Races,” which the influential British ethnologist James Cowles Prichard had published two years previously: his latest version of his much worked-over argument that while all of humanity was descended from the same stock, different races developed and degenerated according to different time scales. 9 And while in his address to the Royal Institution, and in further versions of the speech that he gave to audiences drawn from a range of literary and scientific institutions, Catlin stressed material causes, his theories were underwritten by the primary assumptions of extinction discourse, one founded on the premise of a progressive history of racial development, “with the white, European, Germanic, or Anglo-Saxon race at the pinnacle of progress and civilization, and the ‘dark races’ ranged beneath it in various degrees of inferiority.” 10 As Patrick Brantlinger writes at the opening of his valuable discussion of the dominance of extinction theory in the long nineteenth century, such discourse, like Orientalism and other versions of racism,

does not respect the boundaries of disciplines or the cultural hierarchies of high and low; instead, it is found wherever and whenever Europeans and white Americans encountered indigenous peoples. A remarkable feature of extinction discourse is its uniformity over other ideological fault lines: whatever their disagreements, humanitarians, missionaries, scientists, government officials, explorers, colonists, soldiers, journalists, novelists, and poets were in basic agreement about the inevitable disappearance of some or all of the primitive races. (1)

For his Royal Institution lecture, Catlin dressed up a couple of English people in native costumes, weapons in hand, and by 1842 the exhibition was amplified by his decision to introduce a couple of Englishmen in tribal gear so that they might bring the costumes to life, sing an Indian song, and give “the frightful war whoop” 11—a gesture straddling the line between educational innovation and publicity gimmick. Nor did Catlin have any qualms about appropriating Indian identity later the same year when attending the fashionable Caledonian Ball at Almack’s, together with his nephew Burr and Charles Murray. Murray, a great supporter and facilitator of Catlin’s, was a recognized British authority on Indian matters, having published his Travels in North America, Including a Summer Residence with the Pawnee Tribe of Indians in 1839. 12 From 1838 to 1844 he was master of the household at Queen Victoria’s court, and his family and social connections undoubtedly facilitated Catlin’s stay in London. The men dressed in some of Catlin’s finest costumes; painted themselves up in red and black and experienced the excited crowd pressing in upon them; their identities were revealed only when they were called upon to dance and their war paint started to run in sweaty streaks. This experience in “redding up” may have given Catlin some partial insight into what it felt to be the object of intense curiosity, to have one’s personal space disregarded, and to be subject to street taunts. But he and his companions could retreat from their masquerade “and deliberately and leisurely . . . scour ourselves back again to our original characters.” 13 At first sight, this was hardly an option available to real Indians, although, as we shall see, the potential for masquerade did in fact work in two directions.

The poignancy behind Catlin’s overall message was intensified by the arrival in England of actual Indians. When nine Ojibwa, from Canadian territory, arrived in Liverpool in November 1843, they were unquestionably objects of spectacle. 14 They were visiting England under the custodianship of Arthur Rankin, a Canadian who had been brought up on the borders of their lands and had served for six years in the British army. In part they were looking to speak to the queen on a local land issue; more generally, they hoped to earn money to take back to their families. Rankin came to an arrangement with Catlin, and the Ojibwa stayed with him for around seven months, forming a compelling part of his exhibition. As a Canadian, moreover, Rankin could write with some
authority when he contextualized the Ojibwa in relation to the country they were visiting; they belong, he wrote, "to a numerous and powerful tribe, which has ever been devotedly attached to the British Government." He emphasized—thus implicitly flattering the nationality of potential spectators—how much more favored these First Nations people were than their counterparts in the United States: "Those Indians who are fortunate enough to be within the British territories receive much better treatment, and the paternal consideration of our Government has led to a strong feeling of attachment on the part of these primitive people towards their 'Great Mother,' as the Queen of England is called by them."(7) Following a falling out with Catlin, which pivoted on the question of the motives that underpinned the public display of these people, Rankin resumed his role as their manager; shortly afterward, when the fourteen Iowa Indians, under the sponsorship of the impresario George H. C. Melody, joined Catlin, they took on much the same role as the Ojibwa had done. 

Both groups performed dances and uttered "the dreadful war-whoop" in the same rooms that his canvases and objects were on show, and both groups were, effectively, live exhibits, introduced and explained in lectures and in the question-and-answer sessions Catlin held. Whatever his anthropological motives, they therefore could not escape being regarded by many member of the public in the same light as other shows of supposed freaks and curiosities, from Tom Thumb to African Bushmen to the Norfolk giants, who themselves visited Catlin's show and called on the Iowa in their lodgings, where the Indians—anxious that their reports of these physical anomalies would not be believed on their return home—took the giants' measurements with lengths of string. Yet despite this table-turning moment, one cannot deny that many respondents to Catlin's Indians reacted as though they were just one more example of "ethnological show business."(7) Viewing Catlin retrospectively, Cheyenne W. Richard West, director of the National Museum of the American Indian, has written of how he represents an "easy and large target," an "emblematic exploiter of native peoples... Taking his canvases, artefacts, and live Indians on tour to a host of venues, including European cities where the show's 'red men' inspired a familiar combination of awe and condescension, Catlin can be seen today as a cultural P. T. Barnum, a crass huckster trading on other people's lives and lifeways."(18)

Such a comment underrepresents the degree to which Catlin, despite his faults, seems to have been motivated by genuine caring not only for the individuals with whom he toured but for their tribal lifestyles, anxious to achieve an understanding of their ways of life, and not just to present a flashy, superficial stereotype. Nonetheless, he cannot avoid his position in a long line of those who displayed the Indian before the British people as an object of curiosity, albeit often, as in the case of the 1710 Iroquois visit, in conjunction with political motives."(9) Richard Hakluyt, in his Divers Voyages (1582), quotes from Fabian's chronicle that told of three Newfoundland men brought to Henry VII's court by John Cabot; they were wearing skins, eating raw meat, and "spake such speech that not man coulde understand them"—yet a very early example of assimilation is then recorded, since the account goes on to note that "two yeeres after, I saw two apperalled after the manner of Englishmen in Westminster palace, which that time I could not discerne from Englishmen."(9) In 1609 Walter Cope took some "Virginians" to England, where they gave a demonstration of canoe handling on the Thames. To be sure, many visits combined the functional or diplomatic with elements of display. Manteo and Wanchese, Carolinian Algonquians, were brought back to England in 1584 so that they could teach their language to Thomas Heriot and return with him to Roanoke the next year. When Pocahontas arrived in England in 1616, accompanied by Uttamatomalkin, a leading man and priest among the Powhatan of the Chesapeake, she functioned as a kind of living advertisement for the Virginia Company, being received and entertained both by Queen Anne and the bishop of

Figure 4. "A Group of Iowa." Unattributed photograph, frontispiece to William Harvey Miner, The Iowa (Cedar Rapids, IA: Torch Press, 1911).
London; to quote Frances Mossiker, she was “on the payroll and on parade.” But increasingly, as their political usefulness to the British declined, Indians were thought of as entertainers rather than as emissaries. At the same time, their travels became increasingly multifunctional, as often they looked to earn money as well as engage in land rights negotiations. Thus the Seneca chief and six braves who visited England in 1818 appeared in theaters in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and London.

So the Indians who appeared with Catlin’s show both were and were not a novelty. Even at the moment of the Ojibwa’s arrival, there was a Sac chief, Joe Kosot (Walking Bear), in London. Nor—although one might think so from Catlin’s account—did they remain a singular attraction. In May 1845 Maungwudaua, a cousin of the missionary Peter Jones, brought a group of eleven Canadian Indians, from the Ojibwa, Odeauwai, and Missassage tribes, to London, where they appeared at the Egyptian Hall, before joining Catlin in Europe. Yet both at the time and in his subsequent narrative, Catlin’s combination of showmanship and urgent rhetoric led him to present his visitors as creating a startling impact; he played up their visual and aural strangeness, and—a theme that would be insisted upon again in the publicity surrounding Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows later in the century—their unrepeatability of witnessing at firsthand a people facing extinction. To be sure, their presence in urban centers away from London must have been astonishing, especially to working people who frequently, in the 1840s, had only a hazy sense of the world that lay outside their own environment and origins. As they toured Manchester, the Ojibwa were all clad in skins of their own dressing, their head-dresses, their faces daubed and streaked with vermilion and black and green paint. They were armed with their war clubs, bows and quivers, and tomahawks and scalping knives, just as they roam through the woods in their country; and their yells and war whoops, which were occasionally sounded in the streets at some sudden occurrence that attracted their attention, gave a new excitement amid the smoke and din of Manchester.

It is impossible to gauge, of course, how far Catlin was encouraging his companions to perform “Indianness.” But the Indians’ visit was not entirely a matter of their being placed passively on display. Their presence afforded the opportunity for different types of ethnological observation; Mr. Bally, a phrenologist, took casts of their skulls, which were presented to Catlin for his collection, with Bally himself retaining a copy. They had their photographs taken (photographs that, if they surface, would probably be the earliest surviving photographs of Native Americans). “The Indians,” reported the Manchester Guardian, “were greatly surprised at the ‘mystery’ by which portraits were obtained in so very short a time. We understand that the portraits were very good ones, the proverbial immobility of the Indians making them admirable ‘sitters.’” What is more, the experience of being in a new country—a modern, industrializing country—was designed to be educational for the Indians. In and around Manchester, they visited cotton mills and wool mills, receiving rolls of flannel and woolen cloth as gifts. We shall return to the problems of assessing the nature of such visits and of interpreting the Indians’ responses; what needs to be noted here is that the press continually drew attention to the sensational impact they made on those who encountered them. “Their singular appearance excited much curiosity,” reported the Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, “and the assistance of the police was required to prevent their being obstructed by a crowd of people, who pressed about them to obtain a sight of them. . . . In one large room, where 1,300 power looms were attended by six hundred and fifty girls, the girls were so astonished or affrighted at the appearance of the Indians, that they lost the broken threads for some minutes.”

Yet it is also apparent that Catlin’s enterprise did not go unchallenged. “Philanthropists,” who claimed some firsthand knowledge of Indian tribes in both the United States and Canada, wrote to the Courier that while he had been gratified to visit “Mr. Catlin’s most picturesque and instructive gallery,” he also felt “a painful pity, in witnessing human creatures, women of superior manly form and carriage, with intellect in their eye and feature, and yet behave and act parts that were not above the wild but measured gambols of the roughest of little children.” He wondered aloud if they were Christians, believing that if they were, they “would better know the dignity of [their] regenerated nature than thus to exhibit” themselves; if they were not, the blame lay at the hands of those who advised and superintended them. Later, in London, on the second night of the Ojibwa’s appearance at the Egyptian Hall, Catlin himself recorded the presence of two protesters, one asking whether he thinks it is right “to bring those poor ignorant people here to dance for money?,” and one who claims that he thinks “it is degrading to those poor people to be brought here, Sir, to be shown like wild beasts, for the purpose of making money.” Making his defense, Catlin pointed out his friendliness toward “these abused and dying people,” that he had personally always been opposed to the kind of exhibition described, that these Indians were subjects of the queen who had voluntarily entered into a contractual engagement with the man who had brought them over, and that they were trying by honest means to earn a little money to take back to their children.

The existence of such protests indicates the sensitivity of certain members of the public to the Indians’ human rights and to the possibility that
they were being exploited for financial ends. Such concerns about anthropological display were not new in England. They had been voiced when Saartjie Baartman, the San woman commonly known as the Hottentot Venus, was exhibited in London in 1810–11, and here not just the fact of display, but the fact that she appeared to be kept in a condition of servitude was directly linked to Britain's recent abolitionism. It is significant that humanitarian concerns should again be raised when the relationship of the Indians to Catlin, and the conditions in which they lived and traveled, were manifestly not as extreme as those which Baartman suffered. In both cases, however, there is an explicit or implicit connection to the politics of slavery. Indeed, a *Punch* cartoon of October 1842 brings out well the complex resonances of slavery and Indians when it came to signaling American national identity. Ostensibly, this cartoon shows a reluctant, somewhat taken-aback Britannia accepting the cup of peace (while noting the imminent threat of the dagger labeled “War”). The occasion was the treaty established by American Secretary of State Daniel Webster and the British foreign minister, Alexander, first Baron Ashburton, which established a clear borderline between Maine and New Brunswick in the northeastern United States, as well as settling some uncertain lines of demarcation in the Great Lakes region; it was notable as a land dispute settled by diplomatic negotiation, not violence. The United States, represented as an arrogant aggressor by *Punch*'s artist, is once again figured as a feathered Indian, albeit one with “savage,” rather than classical, features. However, around his waist—above the skirt made from the American flag—is a belt of slavery. Slavery is thus openly equated with the United States, but the drawing simultaneously conveys, whether deliberately or not, the potential for reading its native inhabitants as also bound to its national repressive practices.

There was considerable overlap between those who were active in antislavery issues and those who protested against the American government's treatment of the country's native inhabitants. Catlin's Indians—and indeed Catlin himself—were, as they toured Britain, greeted warmly by those who had been abolitionists and were sympathetically interested in the lives of indigenous peoples. Quakers, in particular, with their long history of amicable relations with and toward Indians, were very keen on meeting the Ojibwa and the Iowa. What concerns me in the next section, however, is not the responses of those who were relatively well informed and humanitarily sympathetic, toward the visiting Indians, but the perception of the general public, as far as this may be estimated from Catlin's account and from press reports. Above all, this throws light not just on the ways in which Indians were regarded but on the popular consciousness of race in the 1840s and, in particular, on the question of mixed-race liaisons.

*INDIANS, SEX, AND INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE*

Indian men were seen as sexy. This, at any rate, is the message one receives from the account George Catlin gives. On just the second night of the Ojibwa's first public appearance, in Manchester, the good-looking Sah-mah seems to have made a notably striking impression. One lady tried to kiss him, and then,

The excitement and screaming and laughing among the women in that part of the room made kissing fashionable, and every one who
laid her hand upon his arm or his naked shoulders (and those not few) got a kiss, gave a scream, and presented him a brooch, a ring, some other keepsake, and went home with a streak of red paint on her face, and perhaps with one or two of black or green upon her dress.

(1:119)

Similarly, in London,

Many ladies were offering them their hands and trinkets: some were kissing them, and every kiss called forth the war-whoop (as they called it, "a scalp"). The women commenced it as Sah-mah had dashed into the crowd; and as he was wending his way back, finding it had pleased so well, he took every lady's hand that was laid upon his naked arm or his shoulder as a challenge, and he said that he kissed every woman that he passed. This may or may not be true; but one thing is certain that many there were in the room that evening who went home to their husbands and mothers with streaks of red and black paint upon their cheeks, which nothing short of soap and water could remove.

(1:168-69)

Prominent among the London fans was a woman whom Catlin labels the "jolly fat dame." On her first visit to the Indians when they were appearing at the Egyptian Hall, she affected to be on the point of fainting, attracted from her position (and that the crowd was also looking at her and that she had admitted to put on her stays); her rotund form became wedged in a state of semisuspension as she tried to descend back into the crowd. She was rescued by the chivalric efforts of the interpreter, Nott-e-kaam ("Strong Wind," more frequently called by his French Canadian formers, Nettetinaer), the interpreter's name, Cadotte, by Catlin), and seated in the shadow of the pillar; she was back the next night (in stays and in her best poplin-and-lace dress), admired the young man with "every breath she inhaled, and every glance that she had of his manly and herculean figure as it moved by her" (1:163), and returned evening after evening. Nor was she the only one. From other women, he received "many precious and sly gifts, containing enclosures of beautiful little stanzas, and cards of address, Cadette—of whom more later—after the departure of the Ojibwa, and in the arrival of the Iowas, she had no difficulty in transferring her affections to them. Some of the Iowas, in their turn—especially the Medicine Man Senontiyah—evidently thoroughly enjoyed playing up to the women in the audience (2:25).

What might we make of these responses? First, they evince a perhaps surprisingly unabashed capacity for the public expression of sexual attraction on the part of these early Victorian women. It is not altogether easy to place the audiences for popular displays such as these in class terms. Certainly, the novelty of live Indians was sufficient to attract inquisitive spectators of all classes. Catlin's accounts suggest that many were not very highly educated, yet clearly they not only had the financial resources to pay the entrance fee of a shilling, but were comfortable giving away money, as well as bangles, pins, and other trinkets. The "jolly fat dame" was accompanied on at least one occasion by two maids. Yet if their behavior could hardly be considered seedy by the increasingly consolidating standards of bourgeois respectability, its public nature ensured that it partook of the carnivalesque: if this is to be seen as a transgressive expression of libido, its arena is a highly artificial one. It has something in common with the twentieth-century phenomenon of the female fan, flirting and squealing with a desire that is focused on an object both immanent and, in practical terms, unattainable.

Interestingly, Catlin's Indians were not the first to excite the longings of British women—at least if one puts any credence in the bawdy ballad that Harry Howard wrote in 1765, on the occasion of the visit of three Cherokee chiefs to London on a mission to complain about the English
encroachment on their lands: "Wives, Widows and Matrons, and poor little Misses, Are pressing and squeezing for Cherokee kisses." Did the London women of the 1840s have any sense of a folk tradition, in which Indian men were somehow thought of as specially attractive? or were they, which is more likely, turned on by the very strangeness and exoticness of the eagle and ostrich plumes, the shields and war clubs, the dances, the half-naked, painted, bronzed male bodies? How, indeed, might one assess their prior knowledge and assumptions concerning Native Americans in general, and is it possible to relate their sexualized responses to such knowledge? What we face here is the problem of going outside literary traditions of representation, or, at the very least, of attempting to gauge the degree of impact such representations might have on these audiences. While these displays undoubtedly were attended by Catlin's friends and acquaintances who had known Indian culture firsthand and who, like Charles Murray, wrote about it both in trave-
logue and fiction; and while those who encountered the touring Indi
ans at, say, the breakfast party that Disraeli held for them at his house overlooking Park Lane may very well have been familiar with the literary role of Indians in sentimental and humanitarian poetry; and while the visitors were besieged by members of numerous religious denominations who had varying degrees of knowledge of missionary work among Indians, hypotheses become much more shaky when one tries to weigh up the cultural preconceptions held by visitors to the Egyptian Hall and other venues. As we have seen, the closest hard evidence lies in the note Catlin took of the questions that were frequently posed during the first London appearance of the Ojibwa, and some of these were unmistakably, if mildly, sexually infused. "Several ladies were waiting to inquire whether the Indians actually had no beards; and a great number of questions had been answered, begging to know "whether the interpreter and the handsome little fellow Sub-habab were married?" (1:148).

The cultural history of white-Indian liaisons was a long one within England, reaching back to Pocahontas's rescue of John Smith and her subsequent marriage to John Rolfe—something that, by the mid-nineteenth century, had become a fable of assimilation and was turned to in the frequently reworked story of the trader Thomas Inke's rescue by man's "The American Forest-Girl" (1826) had more recently offered a poetic version of the Pocahontas story, although the events are sanitized through her making it clear that the "young slight girl—a fair child" is motivated by her love for a lost brother. In 1841 Lydia Sigourney's Pocahontas was published in London; first it celebrates the young

Indian girl for having saved the germ of the Saxon race in America through her passionate intercession, and then concludes with stanzas that reinforce nearly Catlin's emphasis on a people in terminal decline while incorporating echoes of Gray's "Elegy," which suggest that he contribution of the "unhonored dead" to a country is perhaps Nonetheless worthy of record.

Forgotten race, farewell! Your haunts we tread,—
Our mighty rivers speak your words of yore,
Our mountains wear them on their misty head,
Our sounding cataracts hurl them to the shore;
But on the lake your flashing oar is still,
Hush'd is your hunter's cry on dale and hill,
Your arrow stays the eagle's flight no more;
And ye, like troubled shadows, sink to rest
In unremember'd tombs, unpitied and unblest.

The council-fires are quench'd, that erst so red
Their midnight volume 'mid the groves entwined;
King, stately chief, and warrior-host, are dead,—
Nor remnant, nor memorial, left behind:
But thou, O forest-princess, true of heart,
When o'er our fathers war'd destruction's dart,
Shall in their children's loving hearts be shrin'd;
Pure, lonely star, o'er dark oblivion's wave,
It is not meet thy name should moulder in the grave.

In each of these instances, the conventional gender hierarchy mirrors the racial hierarchy: the cultural valence of both whiteness and masculinity is consolidated in the same figure. What happens when the pattern is inverted, and white woman is the subject of the attentions of Indian man? The dominant model here, of course, is the captivity narrative, which customarily works in two directions: white woman as victim—taken away from her family, raped, tortured, even murdered (the paradigm case is Jane McCrea, in Linda Colley's terms "a captive and slaughtered virgin, a war propagandist's dream")—or white woman assimilated, as epitomized by the best-selling Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (1824); Jemison, of Scottish Irish parents, freely chose to live as a Seneca and was happily married to two successive husbands, despite acknowl-
edging, in her terms, "my reduction from a civilized to a savage state."

The Quaker Mary Howitt, who published a number of pro-Indian poems in the 1820 and 1830s, offers a version of this pattern in her poem "Elia

Gray," in which an escaped British soldier is rescued by someone he takes to be an Indian woman, but as he hears her singing a ballad in her
wigwam, he realizes she is English. Yet, despite being happy to pray with him, she has no desire to return, to be “rescued”; she is now completely domiciled among the family who took her in when she was starving and is “an Indian wife” and mother.41 While neither she nor Howitt is exactly exuberant about her situation, the overall message of the poem is one of Indian kindness, which deserves to be repaid with loyalty, and of the validity and strength of new family bonds. There is no hint of any sense of cross-racial marriage or at miscegenation; on the other hand, nor is there any hint of physical or emotional attraction.

Yet if one moves away from literary representation, or from the sanctioned, artificial space for the carnivalesque that the public display of Native Americans provided, the ways in which sexual attraction between the races was perceived shift dramatically. The infatuation of the “jolly fat dame” with Cadotte may have been serious to her, but the very fact of its seriousness—combined with her physical appearance—allows Catlin to turn the woman, without too much cruelty, into a figure of fun, indeed to treat her in a similar register of condescension to that in which he periodically writes of the Indian. However, when Cadotte falls in love with an English girl, Catlin is dismayed. Daniel Kavanagh had to enlighten his employer as to the cause of the symptoms of sickness the interpreter had been manifesting. Next door to the house the Indians have been lodging, he tells Catlin, “is one of the most beautiful black-eyed little girls that I have seen since I have been in London, and, by putting her head out of the back window to look at the Indians, and by playing in the back yard, she long since showed to everybody who saw her that she was fascinated with Cadotte. She used to kiss her hand to him, and throw him bouquets of flowers, and, as his letters” (1:79). She and her sisters, and then her father, mother, and brother, come into the lodging house to visit, and Cadotte in turn becomes smitten. The “black-eyed maiden”—Catlin does not name Sarah Haynes (her name is found in newspaper reports) but refers to her only by a balladlike epithet—starts to visit the show nightly and had—at least according to Catlin—a notable sexual effect on her bewildered performance. Catlin acknowledges, coyly and awkwardly, that her difficulty writing about the episode (having been used to “record the dry realities of Indian life, stripped of the delicious admixture which is sometimes presented when Cupid and civilization open their way into unstable fashion.” His embarrassment is signaled by the ways in which by civilization, being contaminated by the designing siren—a woman or patronizing amusement.

The whole soul of the “Strong Wind,” which, until now, had been unchained and free as the mountain breeze, was completely enveloped in the soft and silken web which the languishing black eyes, the cherry and pulpy lips, and rosy cheeks of this devouring little maid had spun and entwined about it. He trembled when he straightened his tall and elegant figure above the platform, not that he was before the gazng world, but because her soft black eyes were upon him. His voice faltered and his throat was not clear when he brandished his glistening tomahawk and sounded the shrill war-whoop. This was not that the ears of hundreds, but that the ears of ONE, were open to catch the sound (1:181).

Yet Catlin’s opinions are entirely clear when he is dealing not, as it were, with romance, but with what he sees as something quite different: the practical implications of the liaison. He discusses the situation with Arthur Rankin and is less than pleased to find that Cadotte has already asked for, and received, Rankin’s consent in the matter of marriage: “I told him I thought such a step should be taken with great caution, for the young lady was an exceedingly pretty and interesting girl, and, I had learned, of a respectable family, and certainly no step whatever should be taken in the affair by him or me without the strictest regard to their feelings and wishes.” Learning that the father remained opposed to the marriage, Catlin thought it would be cruel to do anything to promote it and that,

much as I thought of Cadotte, I did not feel authorized to countenance a union of that kind, which would result in his spending his life in London, where his caste and colour would always be against him, and defeat the happiness of his life; or she must follow him to the wilderness of America, to be totally lost to the society of her family, and to lead a life of semi-barbarism, which would in all probability be filled with excitement enough for a while, but must result in her distress and misery at last (1:183–84).

At this point in the narrative, the focus shifts from the imminent marriage to Catlin’s own wrangles with Rankin about who, effectively, had the stronger claim to exhibit the Indians: Rankin, who was, from Catlin’s viewpoint, an out-and-out showman, or Catlin, who, despite the accusations that he was using these native peoples for his own financial ends, took pains to stress that his prime motive of anthropological interest. What does become clear is that Rankin wanted to make capital out of the insults, announcing the hour and day at which the couple were to be married in Saint Martin’s Church, sponsoring a wedding procession with four-in-hand coaches and bands and generally drumming up a
curious audience for his subsequent show, at which "the beautiful and interesting bride of the Strong Wind; the interpreter, will make her appearance on the platform with the Indians, and preside at the piano" (1:187). But Rankin was foiled on two counts. First, the London press turned against this blatant attempt at exploitation; and second, Cadotte himself, not having been consulted about the proposed appearance of his bride, refused to have anything more to do with Rankin. Rankin had to explain himself to an angrily disappointed audience. After a short stay with the Haynes family, the couple returned to Canada.

Sarah Cadotte did not escape from being an object of curious attention, even after she left London. The couple took up residence on a reservation, Walpole Island, at the entrance to the Saint Clair River, which was shared by Ojibwa and Pottawatami. Visiting in 1833, William Kingston heard of the disappointment of the "poor, poor girl," who had romantic imagination had pictured and the reality," as she arrived in a looking to him, she—well read in James Fenimore Cooper—had projected all kinds of nobility and virtues onto Cadotte, but he took to drink and abused her. Moving, after two years, to Sault Sainte Marie school, although Cadotte's conduct toward her improved, and she believed it was her duty to stick by him and help hi

the idol she had once adored had proved a hideous monster—her love was breaking. Yet to a later she refused to submit to his will. She was herself so rapidly hastening. And thus she saw women's folly, and of woman's constancy, and of severe and bitter punishment for one frail—

that is, falling blindly and extravagantly in love with the wrong man before Kingston, drew similar conclusions. In his travel book of 1860, he noted that Cadotte had done but that though many attempts were made to induce her to return, as she had lived, the faithful loving wife of the degraded savage richness, depth and purity where least valued and least deserved to

To the last, the rhetoric surrounding the romance determinedly explicated what it wanted from this singular story in order to satisfy its own generalizing ends. Hancock naturalized the exceptional, making it fit a familiar norm—in this case, one in which, seemingly, sexualized affection is seen, predictably but disastrously, to be stronger than the conventional dictates of racial difference. The specter of woman's desire is manifest through her apparently irrational enthusiasm for the Indian; this willful emotion is seen as symptomatic of a gendered weakness.

Was Catlin correct? Would Cadotte's "caste and colour" have been against him in London? How was this mixed-race marriage seen? As far as one can tell, popular opinion—apart from being fascinated by the sensational element—saw in these nuptials a form of amalgamation that dignified the woman, reducing her, and her offspring, to the level of the presumed racial inferior. This was not necessarily a result of her supposed subordinate position in the hierarchy of gender, cross-racial marriage was generally thought of as having a lowering effect. This can be seen by considering something that was rarely picked up on at the time: Cadotte, as his name suggests, was not a pure-blooded Ojibwa but the son of an Indian mother and a Frenchman who had long been an interpreter for the English factories in those regions. As H.L. Malchow has explained, in most areas of Canada, "mixed-bloods were treated as Indians rather than being enculturated as whites," and this enculturation and consuming of Cadotte certainly led him to be treated by the London press as unequivocally Indian, even if some of the more serious papers, in passing, noted his family background accurately.

An interesting parallel may be drawn with the case of Eliza Field, the South London daughter of the owner of a soap and candle factory, who in September 1833 crossed the Atlantic to marry the Mississauga preacher Kehkewaquonaby. Also known as the Reverend Peter Jones, Kehkequonabie, whom she had met while he was on a fund-raising preaching tour of England, was, like Cadotte, the son of a white man and an Indian woman. But the Welsh side of his ancestry seems to have made no difference to the reactions on either side of the Atlantic to this marriage. Despite the fact that Eliza, who came from a devout background, would be working on an Indian mission, friends and relatives opposed the marriage—her brother-in-law looked upon it "in horror."

The New York Commercial Advertiser emotionally attacked the union: "Many people have denounced Shakespeare's Othello, as too unnatural for probability. It can hardly be credited that such a fair, beautiful and accomplished woman, as Desdemona is represented to have been, could have deliberately wedded a black a Moor as Othello. But if we ever entertained any incredulity upon the subject, it has all been dissipated by the occurrence of which we speak."
Chapter Three

This offensive racism, together with a collapsing of all non-Caucasians into a repellent racial Other, cannot be explained away by transatlantic differences. For even if the serious London press was somewhat more respectful in its terminology, taking pains to emphasize that Sarah Haynes was a woman from a respectable background, the event was seen as an occasion for humor, at the expense of both Indians and women. *Punch*’s sustained piece of sneering manages to incorporate a reference to a growing social concern:

We have a superabundant female population. This fact is on all hands allowed and deplored. We see an easy remedy for this. Let parties of Indians be imported. Let us have samples of the Chippewas, the Dog Ribbed, the Sioux, the Chactaws—indeed, a company of every tribe of wild men, from Hottentots to Greenlanders—and let them be let loose in our various towns for the sole purpose of captivating the hearts, and so carrying away in lawful wedlock, our superabundant females.\(^{1}\)

The laborious humor continued in the next week’s number, which contained mock advertisements purporting to be from other Ojibwa looking for wives. The blatant racism of these pieces is the more notable in the light of *Punch*’s sustained opposition to slavery, suggesting that the periodic found something especially ridiculous in the Native American that was not present in the African American. Very probably, the Indians themselves had become tainted in England through being seen as part of what was commonly perceived as a commercial enterprise (and Rankin’s attitudes here did not help), with the consequent suspicion that therefore there was something ignobles about their ethnicity.

Popular print shared in *Punch*’s deliberately careless racial homogenization. Two contemporary broadsides, in particular, provide vivid evidence of 1840s racial thinking at the level of street culture. In these two ballads, “The Ojibway Indians and Love” and “The London Law and the Ojibway Indian,” several things stand out. First, there is a complete lack of concern with the specificity of Native American culture. Racial Others are interchangeable. “His name is Nowka, Jigglem, Chinga,/ Indeed, the dominant racial characteristics that are called upon are unmisunderstandable African stereotypes: “A nose just like an orange outline”; “And a great long head ring run through their snout.” The overall Africanist—

Miss Haynes (“married without delay, Unto a coy black and brown,/ With his jiggem jiggem hanging down, And in 9 months time will bring to town, A little ojibway indian”) [lines 84–88], and implicates women more generally:

The lasses all I do declare, Around the Hampstead Road and Euston Square Wives and daughters gay and smart, Deep and wounded to the heart In love with those great Indian blacks” (Lines 5–9)

“The London Law” goes so far as to prophesy a dismal future for the nation if this tendency should take hold.

Toward the end of Colonial Desire, Robert Young’s considered analysis of nineteenth-century ideas concerning hybridity, the author writes that “nineteenth-century theories of race did not just consist of essentializing differentiation between self and other: they were also about a fascination with people having sex—interminable, adulterous, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex.”\(^{1}\) This fascination passed far beyond the theorizations of such writers of racial science as James Cowles Prichard and Robert Knox. But when we witness it in England in its most vermicular form, the disgust and hatred are leveled not so much against these racial Others (although that certainly underpins the stereotyping) as against the women who dare flirt with them, desire them, even marry them, in a way that bears no resemblance to the decorous versions of interracial romance offered in polite literature. The inferiority—to put it mildly—of the Indian is taken for granted; what is truly shocking to many commentators (and Catlin is not immune from an embarrassed equivocation on the issue) is that the presence of the Ojibwa in London sparked not just public curiosity but public displays of libido on the part of women. The most widely expressed concern that the presence of Catlin’s Indians stirred up in London was, ultimately, one about domestic sexual politics.

Ojibwa and the Social Conditions of Britain

There is plenty of evidence in the British press about how Catlin’s show and the Indians who appeared in it were publicly received in the 1840s. How did these Indians interpret England? Our evidence is somewhat limited, since it must come largely from Catlin’s words, in the book he published about his years in England and Europe. To this may be added Maungwudau’s brief but significant account, written “for the benefit of
his youngest Son, called Noodinokay, whose Mother died in England. 512 What we hear of Indian voices in Catlin may, of course, fairly be termed an act of ventriloquism. 513 But Catlin spent a great deal of time with them; he talked with them at the end of each day about their impressions of what they had seen—admittedly often through an interpreter, although he had a good working knowledge of their languages—and he set down their views in a manner that one may assume is an approximation to authenticity. This may seem a bold statement, but elsewhere in his narrative Catlin is very careful to record localized speech forms—distinguishing between Manchester and London working-class accents, for example—and my case is strengthened by the fact that he is not a polished, literary writer; he repeats himself, he rambles, and he has little sense of molding his material into an aesthetic, or even a potential whole. To be sure, a certain condensation creeps into his presentation—he refers to their " rude, uneducated minds," for example, when describing the impression made on them when they watched the State opening of Parliament (1:173). We should acknowledge, too, the factor of linguistic hierarchy that comes into play precisely because Catlin shows attempts to differentiate between Indian expression and standard English in relation to Franz Boas's records of Indian narratives, Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman have recently called our attention to language's use in "legitimizing hierarchical relations between 'modern' and 'backward' or 'traditional' groups, societies and nations and in naturalizing social inequality within nation-states through assertions of cultural difference." 544 In conveying Indian voices, Catlin invariably makes them sound as though they think and express themselves in a simpler, more "corny" way than the—by implication—more sophisticated producer of Western civilization. He thus completely obliterates any trace of the verbal subtlety and suppleness of the Ojibwa language, a tongue charged with energy (almost four-fifths of its words are verbs) and full of evocative nuances. In 1850 the Ojibwa speaker and writer George Copway wrote how much more could be conveyed, in a verbally condensed form, in his language by comparison with English: "It would require an almost innumerable number of words to describe a thunder-storm, and after all you would have but a feeble idea of it. In the Ojibway language we say, 'Be-wah-sam-moogn.' In this we convey the idea of a continual glare of lightning, noise, confusion—an awful whirl of clouds, and much more." More often, sometimes Catlin suppresses information that would have allowed his readers to see that the Indians had already had, in some cases, considerable exposure to cross-cultural contact. Trading patterns had been long established between the French, the English, and the Ojibways, and the tribe had given military support to the British. One of the parties

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Par-au-aw and others, had fought on British lines, and been wounded, in the 1812 war. Although Catlin was happy enough to suggest the Ojibwa's primitivism to the British public, he was quick to signal, when the Iowas took their places, that there was something more authentic about these second visitors—a perspective that the public was happy to take at face value. 546 At their first appearance, they were compared with the previous group, and it was "proclaimed in every part of the room, that they were altogether more primitive in their appearance and modes, and decidedly a finer body of men." 547 He explained to them that "the position of this tribe being upon the great plains between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains, 1000 miles farther west than the country from which the Ojibwe came, their modes and personal appearance were very different, having as yet received no changes from the proximity of civilization." 548 Yet such an introduction ignores the fact that New-monya, the chief of the Iowas, had visited St. Louis and Washington D.C., to negotiate over land rights, let alone the fact that this particular group had already performed together publicly in, among other locations, Hoboken, New Jersey.

In reading Catlin's account, one is led to believe that he is introducing both groups of Indians to all aspects of white society for the very first time, and that they translated their impressions directly into their own, unmediated terms. Thus to see the smoke of an industrial city is to think "the prairies were on fire." 549 Yet the tunnel that is being excavated under the Thames is "the Great Medicine Cave." 545 The Great Mother," Queen Victoria, and their disappointment at her state of health and the general lack of flamboyance at Windsor, of the Iowas's breakfast with the politician Disraeli and of their responses to such diverse attractions as a fox hunt in Yorkshire; Truman and Hanson's London brewery (where, to the astonishment of the workforce, they performed a medicine dance in an empty vat) and the Surrey Zoological Gardens. When the Iowas encountered "the poor distressed and ragged prisoners, the buffalo from their own wild and free prairies, their spirits were overshadowed with an instant gloom; forebodings, perhaps, of their own approaching destiny," hypothesizes Catlin, milking the moment for all its rhetorical potential. 548. The Iowas exercised on Lord's Cricket Ground and during the summer moved from the Egyptian Hall to camp in that long-standing entertainment venue, the Vauxhall Gardens. Both groups were skeptical toward many of the well-intentioned clergy who tried to convert them, recollecting the double standards of missionaries whom they had known back home. We can see how Indian views of English sexual conduct were heavily, and unfavorably, inflected by their
Brought to the Limits of Civilization (1777-1800)

Figure 7: A scene from "The Indian Mill," a play by James Fenimore Cooper, performed in 1823. The play depicts the conflict between indigenous peoples and settlers in the Louisiana Purchase region. The play was met with mixed reactions, with some critics praising its depiction of Native American culture, while others criticized its portrayal of indigenous peoples as savage and primitive.

Cooper's play, like many of his works, addressed the issue of the impact of European settlement on indigenous peoples. The play's title, "The Indian Mill," reflects the play's examination of the effects of the expansion of European civilization on the indigenous populations of the region.

The play's themes include the clash of cultures, the struggle for land, and the impact of European settlement on indigenous peoples. Cooper's play, like many of his works, addressed the issue of the impact of European settlement on indigenous peoples. The play's title, "The Indian Mill," reflects the play's examination of the effects of the expansion of European civilization on the indigenous populations of the region.
“saw a great many fine houses, but nobody in the windows; saw many
men with a large board on the back, and another on the breast, walk-
ing in the street—supposed it was some kind of punishment; saw men
carrying bags of coal, their hats on wrong side before; saw fine ladies
and gentlemen riding in the middle of the streets in carriages, but a
great many poor and ragged people on the sides of the roads; saw a
great many men and women drinking in shops where they saw great
barrels and hogheads; saw several drunk in the streets. They had
passed two Indians in the streets with brooms, sweeping away the
mud; they saw them hold out their hands to people going by, as if they
were begging for money: they saw many other poor people begging
some with brooms in their hands and others with little babies in their
arms, who looked as if they were hungry for food to eat. They had
much to say about the two Indians they had passed. "It could not be
that white people would dress and paint themselves like Indians in
order to beg money, and they could not see how Indians would cur-
sent to stand in the streets and sweep the mud away in order to beg
for money." They appealed to me to know whether they were really
Indians, and I said: ‘Yes, they are natives from the East Indies, called
Lascars. They are naturally, most probably like yourselves, too proud
to work or to beg; but they have been left by some cruel fate, to earn
their living in the streets of London, or to starve to death, and poor
fellows, they have preferred begging to starvation.’ The Indians
seemed much affected by the degradation that these poor fellows were
driven to, and resolved that they would carry some money with them
when they went out, to throw to them. (1:129)"

One might usefully juxtapose these accounts with descriptions given
by British travelers to Indian settlements on the edges of Canadian and
American towns, and the revulsion they expressed at the drunkenness
and degradation that they witnessed; the Indians visiting England are
conspicuously more concerned with learning about the processes of
cause and effect that lie behind poverty and with considering the ques-
tion of responsibility. The Indians did not routinely give money to beg-
gars and other poor people whom they saw in the streets, but when an
occasion arose where a considerable share of their profits went to local
causes, and they also supported one-off cries for help. In
old woman, with her little child, both in rags, and begging for the means
of existence'; they not only offer her money but are "anxious to talk
care of." She had, it emerges, been in the workhouse but was not al-
lowed to live with her husband there, so had taken to the streets to beg.

“The poor Indians, women and all, looked upon this miserable shivering
object of pity, in the midst of the wealth and luxuries of civilization, as
a mystery they could not expound" (2:135–36). Once again, in suggest-
ing wide-eyed wonder, Catlin is trying to present these native peoples as
naive primitives, distanced from modern society, but he undermines his
own rhetoric through the evidence he provides of the Indians’ very
shrewd social and economic awareness of the society in which they
found themselves. Also in Birmingham, handing over £721.16s., Senon-
ty, the Medicine Man, speaking publicly, addressed his audience in
very direct terms:

“Mr. Friends,—If we were rich, like many white men in this country,
the poor people we see around the streets in this cold weather, with
their little children barefooted and begging, would soon get enough to
eat, and clothes to keep them warm.

“My Friends,—It has made us unhappy to see the poor people beg-
ging for something to eat since we came to this country. In our coun-
try we are well, but the poor all have enough to eat, and clothes to
keep them warm. We have seen your poorhouses, and been in them,
and we think them very good, but we think there should be more of
them, and that the rich men should pay for them.

“My Friends,—It makes us unhappy, in a country where there is so
much wealth, to see so many poor and hungry, and so many as we see
drank." (2:143)

The Indians were determined, too, that the British should recognize
how the host country was implicated in the causes of the Indian poverty
that underlay their reasons for crossing the Atlantic to raise money, in-
cluding the introduction of smallpox, venereal disease, and the sale of
“fire-water.”

The urge to document and understand British society, with its hard-
ships and inequalities, is particularly noticeable in the case of one of the
Iowa, Jim (Wash-kum-mon-ya), who, profoundly shocked by aspects of
what he witnessed, sat out to look into these conditions in his own right.
He mirrored the techniques of nineteenth-century Anglo social investiga-
tors and travelers by donning, with the Medicine Man, Western clothing
in order to go out into London unobserved. From Catlin’s perspective,
this disguise—heaver hats, frock-coats, woolen pantaloons, high-heeled
boots, wigs, and canes or umbrellas—enabled them to profit “by gaz-
ing upon the wonders and glories of civilization, which we never otherwise
could have beheld together” (2:65). But in fact, this sartorial disguise al-
lowed its Indian wearers not so much to greet British civilization with
awe as to “pass” in order, ultimately, to critique its practices. Jim began
to learn to speak and write English so that he could better carry out his inquiries. He had Daniel Kavanagh, Carlin's assistant, help him make a record book of all he saw; he kept statistics on poorhouses, prisons, breweries. He counted gin shops, keeping the score by noting a tall stick. He noted the annual consumption of spirits in Great Britain, the estimate that 50,000 "drunkards die yearly in England and Ireland," and the attribution of much insanity, pauperism, and crime to alcohol. Something of that, he said, he looked forward to showing those "black-coats," or missionaries, who were always talking about Indians getting drunk (2:188). He collected newspaper clippings on issues that interested him, such as the petition to the queen, signed by 100,000 women, against white slave-trading; he started to enter into his notebook the number of murders and robberies recorded in the Times and took notice of accounts of death from starvation. Amused by Punch, he suggested that they take out a subscription and try to pay for it with the numerous Bibles that they were given by well-meaning British Christians. He visited a coal mine in the north-east of England, where he saw "six or seven hundred men, women, and children, as black as negroes," living and working underground: he thought that being in the miners' cells of a prison would be far preferable to the slavery they saw there, of "hundreds of women and children drawing out... from some narrow places where the horses could not go, little carriages loaded with coal; where the women had to go on their hands and knees through the mud and water, and almost entirely naked, drawing their loads by a strap that was buckled around their waists; their knees and their legs and their feet, which were all naked, were bleeding with cuts from the stones, and their hands also; they drew these loads in the dark, and they had only a little candle to see the way." (2:160)

Jim noted the Crown's expenditure, seeing how the apparatus of the state functioned, soldiers and police alike being necessary "to keep people at work in the factories, and to make them pay their taxes" (2:186). He said he thought it was wrong to send missionaries from this country to the Indian country, where there were so many poor creatures here who want their help" (2:71). This was hardly a unique perspective. But the point about missionary work is rather different when made by an American than when Dickens protested in Bleak House that missionary effort would be better directed domestically than overseas.

Jim's views were very close to those that Carlin privately held. He wrote at some length to his father on 3 March 1842, saying that he was completely sick of the insolence of wealth and the wretchedness of poverty which belongs to this great polished nation, with its boasted Institutions—its wealth, its refinements, its luxuries—with its vices, with its incongruous mass of loyalty & disloyalty, Republicanism and Despotism—mixed & patched up together, soon to fall & crumble to pieces into the levels of Agrarianism, or the hands of Nations which will stand ready to prey upon the riches of the ruined & falling edifice.  

But Carlin's publicly expressed responses to these social investigations were decidedly equivocal. While he started off encouraging Jim in his note taking, pleased that he would be carrying a record of the advanced modern world back to his people, the reportage did not equate with what he originally anticipated.

They had been brought to the zenith of civilization that they might see and admire it in its best form; but the world who read will see with me that they were close critics, and agree with me, I think, that it is almost a pity they should be the teachers of such statistics as they are to teach to tens of thousands yet to be taught in the wilderness. . . . I have long since been opposed to parties of Indians being brought to this country, believing that civilization should be a gradual thing, rather than open the eyes of these ignorant people to all its mysteries at a glance, when the mass of its poverty and vices alarms them... (2:187–88)

Quite possibly, he included the Indians' perspectives on urban life because they matched his own, yet he was not running the risk of offending the British by letting the observations appear in his own voice. Rather than his ventriloquizing them, he was, when it suited his purpose, letting them speak for him.

But we might respond to Jim's investigations somewhat differently. First, we can see readily that Native Americans, viewing England from their cultural and social perspectives, were in a position to challenge its contemporary claims to greatness. More important for my argument, however, and more important for Native American history, is the fact that these peoples were quite definitely not allowing themselves to be consigned to oblivion, nor to the status of the ahistorical and timeless. Their presence affords what Gerald Vizenor has called "an aesthetic, ideological disanalogy" with the idea of a vanishing race. Jim's activities not only contradict the view that Carlin was promulgating about native people's being on the edge of destruction, and the alternative possibility for assimilation that was also being rhetorically and politically allowed for, but also show his engagement, on the part of his people, with the values of various societies in the present and future.
A further native perspective on 1840s Britain is provided by the Ojibwa Maungwudaus (George Henry). After converting to Christianity around 1825, he attended the Methodist mission school at the Credit Mission in the late 1820s and went on to serve at several missions in the 1830s before moving to Walpole Island in 1837. Speaking fluent English, he worked as a government interpreter at the Saint Clair mission in 1840, the year he resigned from the Methodist church.44 Doubleday inspired Catlin’s example, he organized a dance troupe of Walpole Island Ojibwe that traveled to England in 1844. Like other Indians in London in the early 1840s, he met with Queen Victoria. He was kindly greeted and entertained by members of the Society of Friends, visited the tunnel under the Thames and the Zoological Gardens, attended a public execution, and performed the rites of a literary tourist, going to Shakespeare’s house and grave at Stratford, Byron’s Newstead Abbey, and “Burn’s cottage, small, with straw-roof” (8). He suffered personal tragedy during his visit. Three of his troupe members died of smallpox (they had refused white man’s medicine; the Quakers had seen to it that everyone else was vaccinated). Two of his children, and then his wife, also passed away. Joining up with Catlin in France, the overall impression of the American’s venture that he took away with him were not happy ones, either. Frank Little, who met Maungwudaus when he stopped at his family’s general store in 1850, recalled that the Ojibwe chief had told him: “The Indians under Catlin did not thrive. They pitched for their wigwam homes and native woods. The artificial mode of living, diet, clothing, sleep, etc. preyed upon their health. They sickened, and many died.”45 Little introduced him to Taunpoka, who was to become his second wife; re-forming a troupe, they performed at the Saint Lawrence Hall, Toronto, in 1851.

Maungwudaus is a clear example of a First Nations member preferring to act—and being prepared to act—as an impresario for performers who are his own people; what we know of his life bears witness to the weight he gave to personal, and tribal, autonomy. His capacity to speak on his own behalf is also evinced by the short pamphlet he produced after his European visit. His words, unlike those of the other Ojibwa visitors, are not selected and framed by a white man’s account. But many of the rhetorical devices he employs are quite similar to the ways in which their views were recorded, although in his case there is a much more conscious sense that he is translating the culturally unfamiliar into terms that would make his experiences vivid to an Indian audience. He writes of the crowds in London: “Like musketeers in America in the summer season, so are the people in this city, in their numbers, and hiring one another to get a living” (3); the guardsmen in Queen Victoria’s entourage “do not shave the upper part of their mouths, but let the beards grow long, and this makes them look fierce and savage like our American dogs when carrying black squirrels in their mouths” (4); he conveys the height of Canterbury Cathedral’s spire by saying that it was too high for their arrows to reach; explains how women hold their knife and fork at the table, “with the two forefingers and the thumb of each hand; the two last ones are of no use to them, only sticking out like our fish-spears, while eating” (5); and describes his visit to the medical school in Edinburgh: “We went to see about seventy young men, who are to be medicine men. They had thirty dead bodies, and they were skinning and cutting them same as we do with venison” (8). While he did not draw attention to questions of poverty in the same way that Catlin’s Indians did, Maungwudaus did note, apropos of his visit to Ireland, that “the country people make fire of turf; many of them are very poor; the British government is over them” (8). Nonetheless, he gives a lively account of what we may take as an encounter with modernity, showing, as it does, the domestication of science and the shifting perspectives on physical existence offered by optical technology. In Ipswich, dining with Quakers, one of their number placed a small cheese on the table at the end of the meal.

When our eating was over, a doctor, whose name is F. W. Johnson, placed over the table, what he calls microscope; it had three brass legs and a small glass to it, and when he had put a very small bit of the cheese we had to eat on a clean plate, he made us look at it through the little glass that was on the three legged brass, and we saw hundred of worms moving in it. This made all our friends laugh, and we tried to laugh too, but we were very much frightened at the same time knowing that we must have swallowed thousands of them. When our friends saw that we were frightened, the medicine man dropped one drop of rain water in a clear glass, and he made us look at it again through the little glass, and we saw hundred of living creatures swimming in it; some like beasts, some like snakes, some like fish, some had horns and some had no horns, some with legs and some had no legs; some had wheels on each side of their bodies, and with these they were moving about like steamboats, hooking, chasing, fighting, killing and eating one another. Then one of our oldest friends said to us, “Now, friends, you must not think that this is the first time you have seen eating worms. We swallow thousands of them every day either with food or water. They are floating in the air, and we inhale them, when we draw breath; thousands of them are also floating in our veins. The Great Spirit, who made us and all other beings is wonderful in power and wisdom. We sincerely hope that you will at all times love him, and obey what he tells you in your hearts.” We waited two or three days for the worms to bite. Sometimes we would be looking for
them, thinking that they might have grown larger while they were in our bodies, but we did not feel their bites nor saw any of them. We have oftentimes been thinking since, that our friends must be something like bears, who loves to eat living worms or maggots. (10-11)

Here, as throughout his account, individual experience gains in importance not through subjective response but as something that may be shared through terms designed to reach a specific readership or audience, with its own familiar frames of reference. Native peoples are not the Other against which modernity is being postulated; rather, the modern world is being presented for them.

Maungwudaus, like the Indians who traveled alongside Catlin, had been affected by a number of the features that we have come to consider characteristic of modernity. These include demographic upheavals and the concomitant severance of people not just from their ancestral habitats but from a sense of their traditional connections to both space and time; the expansion of their relationship to capitalist world markets and industrialization, including the growing tourist industry; their role as subjects, rather than agents, in the formation and development of a huge nation-state and their subjection to externally imposed bureaucracy; their relationship to the growth of the rhetoric of individuality (frequently a bad fit with tribal identity) and to the articulation of various freedoms, whether these involved self-determination, the ownership of property, or freedom of speech; and their incorporation into systems of mass communication—whether we think of accounts of tribal lifestyles and warfare in the press or the ways in which they became the subjects of photographic record. 46 One might fairly argue that since colonization, an increasing number of Native Americans had engaged voluntarily or otherwise, with these phenomena, but their impact on native life during the nineteenth century involved unprecedented physical and psychic violence. Nonetheless, Maungwudaus’s pamphlet is indicative of one particular desire to regain some agency within this changing order of things, producing, as well as being present within, print culture. Moreover, it—like the words of Wash-Ka-Mon-Ya and other Iowas and Ojibwa visitors—shows him, in terms of his engaged interest in the British, to be refusing what Johannes Fabian has famously termed the “denial of coevalness,” that “persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a time other than the present of the producer of the anthropological discourse.” 47 As this chapter indicates, this was hardly a role universally inhabited by Native Americans of this, or indeed previous, centuries. Despite the importance, then and today, of tradition as both concept and practice within Indian society, identity, and modes of thought, it stands not isolated from modernity but rather in mediation and dialogue with it—a dialogue that takes place both in relation to material practice and to such things as the role of spiritual life and the place of tribal as against the primacy of individual identity. The Other, as has already been noted, was undergoing a process of transformation. 48

Yet assertion of the validity, even superiority, of their own ways of life also strongly characterized the reactions of these visiting Indians. They both participated in and critiqued developing forms of modern life, not just within their own nations and in the superpower that surrounded these, but in a broader social and political circum-Atlantic context. The availability of Indian voices brings home the fact that analyzing British responses to Indians in the nineteenth century is not merely a matter of interacting with a set of icons and images. Such an analysis involves taking into account the British engagement with live individuals, who, for their part, had every intention not just of surviving but also of entering into debates about the directions in which various contemporary societies were developing.
66. The term “noble savage” has been extensively discussed, most recently by Ter Ellingon, in *Myth of the Noble Savage*.
67. See, for example, Edmund Burke’s appropriation, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, of Native Americans as a type of “savages” to whom those responsible for the French Revolution should be equated. For a discussion of Burke and the concept of savagery, see Luke Gibbons, “Subordinated to Savages.”
70. Wind, “Adieu to All,” 42.
72. [Scott], “Gertrude of Wyoming,” 243.

**CHAPTER THREE. “Brought to the Zenith of Civilization”: Indians in England in the 1840s**

2. The literature on Catlin is relatively extensive. In particular, I am indebted to Brian W. Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries*; Gurney and Heyman, *George Catlin*—the catalogue of the magnificent exhibition, first shown at the Renwick Gallery, which displayed the complete collection of paintings that made up Catlin’s “Indian Gallery”; Treatner, *National Man Observed*, and Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 1-52.
7. See Fiona Stafford’s excellent book *Last of the Race*.
8. Catlin, *Notes* 1:62. Catlin was not exactly disinterested in making this suggestion—to which he would return in subsequent years; he entertained the hope that the purchase of his own collection might form the foundation of such a museum.
14. I use the First Nations name Ojibwa; in the United States this tribe is known as the Chippewa.

15. [Rankin], *Short History*, 6.
22. “He stands six feet two, and, dressed in his splendid native costume, presents a noble and warlike appearance. The chief was introduced last week by his excellency the American minister, who received him with much kindness.” *Manchester Guardian*, 18 November 1843, 5. Very few Sac Indians had survived the “Black Hawk” removal war of 1832-33, after which they had had to cede their last six million acres in Illinois for a tiny piece of land in central Iowa.
23. See Donald B. Smith, “Manitowoc Goes Abroad.”
25. Ibid., 1:120. The *Manchester Guardian* of 22 November 1843 (4) notes that Cadotte, the interpreter, refused to allow a case of his head to be made.
26. *Manchester Guardian*, 22 November 1843, 4. The trade in photographs was not just one-sided. Rankin notes that when the Ojibwa were staying in London, they became friendly with an elderly neighbor, Mr. Saunders. On a late occasion, after a repast, the Old Chief was noticed to be in a close conversation with his followers, and at length made a harangue after his usual mode, and to this effect:—He had a favor to ask his brother (Mr. Saunders) had shown great kindness to his people. They loved him, and when they were again in their own land it would be pleasant and agreeable to see him still. They wished to have his face (meaning a portrait). They would be able to show to their tribe the man who had been a father for them. The old gentleman kindly complied with the request, and the Ojibways, at their own expense, purchased a daguerreotype likeness, which would doubtless, for many years hereafter, be handed down as a heirloom in the forests of the far West. (Short History, 19-20).
31. Slavery was indeed an issue in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty; the United States agreed to station ships off the African coast in an effort to detect American ships engaging in the slave trade, but Webster rejected a request to allow the boarding of American ships by the British navy.
32. For the development of racial theory as it bore on relations between the sexes, see in particular Young, Colonial Desire.
33. See Gentleman's Magazine 25 (1765), 95.
34. Quoted by Fairchild, The Noble Savage, 73.
35. See Felsenstein, English Travels.
38. Sigourney, Pococambus, and Other Poems, 23.
39. Colley, Captives, 228.
40. Jenison, Life of Mrs. Mary Jenison, 207.
41. Mary Howitt, “Eliau Gray,” in Ballads and Other Poems, lines 81, 194.
42. Kingston, Western Wanderings 2:188.
43. Hancock, Emigrant’s Five Years, 240-41. Sarah Haynes died in March 1851; Alexander Cadotte (b. 28 March 1820) married Celeneis Bartel or Bay on 20 June 1853 and died on 30 January 1901. See the genealogical research on the Cadotte family at www.3.sympatico.ca/onealcrw/
44. Catlin, Notes 1:110.
45. Malcho, Gothic-Images of Race, 217.
46. Donald B. Smith, Sacred Feathers, 139.
47. Commercial Advertiser, 12 September 1833, quoted in Sacred Feathers, by Donald B. Smith, 141.
51. Young, Colonial Desire, 181.
52. Maungwudaus, An Account of the Chippewa Indians, title page.
53. For the fullest and most useful discussion of the complex language and translation issues at stake here, see David Murray, Forked Tongues.
54. Briggs and Bauman, “The Foundation of All Future Researches.”
55. Capway, Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches, 125.
56. For a discussion of the issue of authenticity, see especially Susan Bernardin, “Authenticity Game,” as well as many of the other essays in True West, ed. Handley and Lewis, 155-75.
57. Catlin, Notes 1:121. The astonishment, incidentally, was two-sided: “In one large room, where 1,300 power looms were attended by six hundred and fifty girls, the girls were so astonished or affrighted at the appearance of the Indians, that they lost the broken threads for some minutes.” Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, 18 November 1843, 6.
58. It may be noted, however, that the Manchester press at this time does not write of current industrial disputes in terms that would corroborate Catlin’s account.
59. Friedrich Engels, Condition of the Working Class, 84.
60. See Lyotard, The Differend, For an illuminating discussion of Native American silences, see Glenn, Unspoken, 107-49.