

OURS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: RACIAL CONSTRUCTION OF EARLY  
AMERICAN CHRISTIAN IDENTITIES

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This project interrogates how religious performance, either authentic or contrived, aids in the quest for freedom for oppressed peoples; how the rhetoric of the Enlightenment era pervades literatures delivered or written by Native Americans and African Americans; and how religious modes, such as evoking scripture, performing sacrifices, or relying upon providence, assist oppressed populations in their roles as early American authors and speakers. These performative strategies, such as self-fashioning, commanding language, destabilizing republican rhetoric, or revising narrative forms, become the tools used to present three significant strands of identity: the individual person, the racialized person, and the spiritual person. As each author resists the imposed restrictions of early American ideology and the resulting expectation of inferior behavior, he/she displays abilities within literature (oral and written forms) denied him/her by the political systems of the early republican and early national eras. Specifically, they each represent themselves in three ways: first, as a unique individual with differentiated abilities, exceptionalities, and personality; second, as a person with distinct value, regardless of skin color, cultural difference, or gender; and third, as a sanctified and redeemed Christian, guaranteed agency and inheritance through the family of God. Furthermore, the use of religion and spirituality allows these authors the opportunity to function as active agents who were adapting specific verbal and physical methods of self-fashioning through particular literary strategies. Doing so demonstrates that they were not the unrefined and unfeeling individuals that early American political and social restrictions had made them--that instead they were intellectually and morally capable of making both physical and spiritual contributions to society while reciprocally deserving to possess the liberties and freedoms denied them.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*, shook the nation with not only its attention to slave injustice but its call for repentance within the rotting soul of the slavery system. Condemning social, cultural, and spiritual corruption, Stowe insists that it is nothing "but the *character* of the master" to shield and defend the slave, and with all the literary indications of Christian moral failure, American slaves, at least in Stowe's terms, were not only left overexposed but also altogether unprotected (401). As a key instigator of the Civil War, as widely claimed by historians, Stowe's novel specifically targets the domestic sphere of women and Northerners and demands the reformation of Christian identity that not only supports the injustices of enslaving the African American population but also contravenes the foundational tenets of Christian compassion.<sup>1</sup>

Condemning the external consequences, yet more importantly, the internal corruption of Christianity in word but not deed, Stowe's iconic representation of the Christ-like martyr figure, Uncle Tom, leads in the extensive literary representations of the meek, unlearned, slave man, exalting above his superiors and lighting the way for spiritual repentance and freedom, even among his persecutors. Through repeated references to his "poor [and] simple" nature, informed by the "words of an ancient volume[,]" Stowe reflects the humble, common-man spirit of Christ within Uncle Tom and exalts him as a character defined by faithfulness, devotion, kindness, and a sacred ability to forgive his persecutors, even upon death (106). Ultimately, the literary image of Tom that concludes the text is the everlasting connection to Christ's love, neither damaged nor severed by man's earthly sinfulness and instead made new again by enduring redemption.

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<sup>1</sup> See Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "Chapter XLV: Concluding Remarks"

President Lincoln, in November, 1862, allegedly greeted Stowe with these words: "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!" (Weinstein 1).

George, upon observation of Tom's death, does not depart without transformation from such an event, reflecting in "solemn awe...What a thing it is to be a Christian!" (382). Eternally transformed by this simple slave's life and death, both George and Stowe's readers are meant to recognize the dissonance between the Anglo-American slave-owner who professes Christianity and is yet guided by greed and depravity, and the lowly, uneducated, and mistreated slave, who holds steadfastly to spiritual promises in spite of the grotesque exhibitions of pseudo-Christian slave owners and traders.

While Stowe's advocacy culminated a long-building tradition that formed a definitive but representative voice within fiction for the African American slaves, many other activists—including politicians, speakers, autobiographical writers, and novelists, a mixture of Anglo-Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans—entered the public sphere with their performances of orality and their written texts at least seventy-five years earlier.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, marginalized peoples, particularly Native Americans and African Americans, struggled to attain not only personal freedoms but also spoken and literary agency in early republican discourses. Negotiating their places within the public and private spheres and individually adapting the early American rhetorical forms already established, Native Americans and African Americans emphasized the ideas and ideals of the Euro-American Enlightenment in both written text and oral speech. At the same time, these oppressed populations also projected authenticity and claimed authority through religious experience and performance. By dramatizing the process of spiritual conversion within speech

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<sup>2</sup> When using terminologies in the project, I specifically address the tribal affiliation, region or origin, or geographic area of descent when labeling certain populations or individual persons. Moreover, if these individuals reference themselves in a particular way—for instance, William Apess rejects the term Indian but adopts the labeling of a Pequot—I use these identity labels and footnote or cite the reference. In terms of general categorization and grouping, this project directly references both Native Americans and African Americans in a collective term.



and print, both Native Americans and African Americans stressed not only their natural human rights but also their eternal identities shaped through salvation. With a focus on their various modes of religious performance, this dissertation explores the many Christian literary voices seeking to represent the oppressed populations of African Americans and Natives Americans from the Second Great Awakening to the final decade pre-dating the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

All the authors in this project, at least on some level, lean upon their Christianized states in order to use their voices either behind a podium or pulpit or within the printed literary sphere. William Apess, John Marrant, and Jarena Lee all belonged as members to Methodist sects, and Elias Boudinot was schooled by Moravians which inculcated the Cherokee nations in literary and redemption. Lydia Maria Child struggled with classifying her own faith and, as a result, critiqued American religion, both the good and the bad, within her writing. This project demonstrates that religion is often employed as a tool of agency: The Anglo-Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans presented here sought to revise their existences within a volatile young nation by utilizing their personal experiences of spiritual redemption as a means for facilitating national improvement.

This project interrogates how religious performance, either authentic or contrived, aids in the quest for freedom for oppressed peoples; how the rhetoric of the Enlightenment era pervades literatures delivered or written by Native Americans and African Americans; and how religious modes, such as evoking scripture, performing sacrifices, or relying upon providence, assist oppressed populations in their roles as early American authors and speakers. Even though the African American and Native American populations of early America before the eighteenth

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<sup>3</sup> Historians and scholars understand the Second Great Awakening to have begun in roughly 1790, spanning until roughly the 1820s. The Civil War began on April 12, 1861, and ended on May 9, 1865.

century were denied access to rights and freedom, they learned to manipulate these imposed constraints—renouncing the expectation that they should be subordinate and silent—to assert their independent bodies, voices, and spiritual identities through the use of literary expression. These performative strategies, such as self-fashioning, commanding language, destabilizing republican rhetoric, or revising narrative forms, become the tools used to present three significant strands of identity: the individual person, the racialized person, and the spiritual person. As each author resists the imposed restrictions of early American ideology and the resulting expectation of inferior behavior, he/she displays abilities within literature (oral and written forms) denied him/her by the political systems of the early republican and early national eras. Specifically, they each represent themselves in three ways: first, as a unique individual with differentiated abilities, exceptionalities, and personality; second, as a person with distinct value, regardless of skin color, cultural difference, or gender; and third, as a sanctified and redeemed Christian, guaranteed agency and inheritance through the family of God. Furthermore, the use of religion and spirituality allows these authors the opportunity to function as active agents who were adapting specific verbal and physical methods of self-fashioning through particular literary strategies. Doing so demonstrates that they were not the unrefined and unfeeling individuals that early American political and social restrictions had made them—that instead they were intellectually and morally capable of making both physical and spiritual contributions to society while reciprocally deserving to possess the liberties and freedoms denied them.

In addressing the adaptation of African American and Native American Christian ideals, this dissertation explores the specific ways in which these oppressed populations were negotiating their respective positions within early republican to early national discourses. Thus, the project puts forth the following questions of critical inquiry: Where do Native American and

African America religious conversations converge or differ? How are Christian writers negotiating the demands of republican rhetoric while staying true to their own cultural histories and traditions? How does one demonstrate that religious conversion is not simply an assimilation to Anglo-American values and beliefs but instead an individual experience of salvation and agency, crossing barriers of race? How do African American and Native American writers and also other writers who seek to represent them assert agency that elicits power while still pandering to an Anglo-American readership or audience? How is Christian performance, both oral and corporeal, used for personal, racial, and communal empowerment?

In asking these questions, a clear distinction must be made between the physical (and different) presence(s) of the body of the oppressed, the body as represented within the literary or historical text, and the text as situated within the public sphere. The actual body of the oppressed victim often becomes the site for observation, as darker pigments all too often elicited abusive injustice, and mixed Indian garb reflected a culture assimilating toward progress while holding tightly to heritage. The literary records of these historical events—in this case, John Marrant's autobiography; Lydia Maria Child's novel; Jarena Lee's journal; and Elias Boudinot's and William Apess's speeches—project authenticity and preserve the original encounter, at least as the author wanted us to remember it. Yet these authors, either as oppressed persons themselves or as advocates for fellow oppressed persons, establish a sense of presence by re-placing the oppressed body in the text, a technique that is largely a matter of authorial strategy and intent. In doing so, the scene of oppression can be reimagined, adapted, or even authenticated, and Anglo-American listeners and readers are given a second chance to respond differently to injustice and subjection. Narratives of abuse, struggle, and oppression are then rebirthed as they are presented to a viewer, evoking continued dialogue and a readerly reaction, response, and perhaps

advocacy. This retelling of history and oppression recasts the event and carves a space for dialogue between author and reader, a form of communication that did not consistently exist between perpetrators and victims in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> The incorporation of such moments within the text represents the multi-faceted progressions of history, experiences, and messages: We, as readers and scholars, gravitate to the written form, as it is able to reconstruct our understandings of the body as a site for racial and cultural agency.

Analyzing the ways in which African Americans and Native Americans evoked self-agency requires an exploration of the historical context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century modes of printing. In his foundational research, Michael Warner, building upon Habermasian theory, suggests that

[e]ven in its local discourse, print did not and could not have had a universal character or an undifferentiated audience. Both print and writing could be alien to the entirely or even partially illiterate, including almost all Native Americans and the enslaved blacks. And saying that letters were ‘alien’ to the illiterate is more than a tautology, since it is to these groups that writing and print may have appeared most clearly as technologies of power.  
(11)

Thus, understanding print as a “technology of power” suggests that while access to the public sphere was generally denied to African Americans and Native Americans (and in some cases forbidden by American law), these populations were still attempting to acquire forms of technology not only to express their own thoughts through writing but also to confront the systems of power that were oppressing them, both in the private and public spheres. At the end of the eighteenth century, these peoples began invoking tools of literacy and speech in innovative

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<sup>4</sup> Jürgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), established that the public sphere was a space that could be accessed by superiors and inferiors for discourse of the community. He asserts that even “...before the public sphere assumed political functions in the tension-charged field of state-society relations, the subjectivity originating in the intimate sphere of the conjugal family created, so to speak, its own public” (29). This evolution of communication from the private sphere to the public sphere included African American and Native American voices.

fashions to foster personal freedom and national improvement. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein reveal a pressing concern for the lack of minority representation in the literary field, “the historical convergence” (or the efforts of African American agency recorded in history), indicating that “print culture and African American literature have rarely been considered in relation to one another” in the modern era (2).<sup>5</sup> As Cohen and Stein emphasize the need for “an equivalent body of work on the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century’s rich history of African American print culture[,]” which is more critical than descriptive, this project seeks to answer that call through an evaluation of early American Christian writers, including Anglo American, African American, and Native American authors and speakers (3).<sup>6</sup> Native American scholarship in the last decade, especially the works of Jace Weaver, Hilary E. Wyss, Robert Warrior, Laura L. Mielke, and David J. Silverman, has begun to emphasize not simply twentieth-century Native American fiction and poetry but other forms of literatures, ranging from early non-fiction productions of eighteenth-century print to Anglo-American responses of Native American identity in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Less commonly, however, are African American

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<sup>5</sup> This “historical convergence” is represented by the “literary societies, circulating libraries, political conventions, and church conventions” articulated in print media and established by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century African Americans (Cohen and Stein 2).

<sup>6</sup> Cohen and Stein compare this absence to the surge of “Hispanophone print archives” and “Native American communications media” which reflect “excellent work” (3).

<sup>7</sup> See Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*, which posits the concept of “communitism” (xii) which is related to Gerald Vizenor’s “survivance” and Warrior’s “intellectual sovereignty”—both of which are explored in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this project. “Communitism” promotes community and activism, as Weaver seeks to restore healing to the Native American community through promotion of its literatures. See Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America*, which explores almost two centuries of Christianized Indians and the manners in which they used religion to adjust to colonial expectation and culture. See Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, for a better understanding of why “critical attention to Native literature has focused either on fiction, autobiography, and poetry, on the one side, or on oral traditional literatures on the other, when in fact, nonfiction writing has been so vital for so long” (xix). See Mielke, *Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature*, for an exploration of how Native American sympathies, both effective and ineffective, show themselves in works of nineteenth-century fiction. See Silverman, *Red Brethren: The Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America*, for an understanding of how Native American settlements attempted to both

and Native Americans literatures evaluated in conjunction with one another. While their efforts were exceptional for the time, the authors I have included here—Marrant, Child, Lee, Boudinot, and Apess—sought to pave the way, through Christian literary representation, for the other silenced voices of the oppressed.

In recent years, the field has expanded to include more texts produced by African Americans and Native Americans, and yet much growth is still needed to adequately account for the ways in which these peoples sought to be understood socially, culturally, politically, and spiritually. In a push away from studying only the “pure language of writing[,]” in the American literary canon, which Warner asserts is the manner in which Anglo-American colonists depicted their own abilities to communicate, scholars such as Joanna Brooks have begun to “reconstruct...the founding moments of African American and Native American literatures...[whose] American literary traditions emerged during the era of the American Revolution...to create a new future for their peoples” (13, 3). Joanna Brooks’ scholarship has begun a movement toward reexamination of African American and Native American texts, not simply through the filtered lens of the Anglo-American but through the lived or performed experiences of the oppressed speaker or writer. While *American Lazarus* seeks to “take...early black and Indian literatures as builders of distinctive African American and Native American intellectual histories[,]” this project aims to more narrowly emphasize the spiritual experiences and resulting consequences of African Americans and Native Americans in the early republican and early national eras (15). Furthermore, the chapters which follow build upon other critical works which have sought to place African American and Native American literatures into

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resist and succumb to Anglo-American colonial expectation through use of Christianity and a unique sense of racial identity.

conversation with one another, in order to recast them into the established literary canons of the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries. While my project (and the chapters within) individually evaluate Christian speakers, ministers, authors, and histories—two African American, two Native American, and one Anglo-American—these accounts of remembrance work together to reflect the communal struggle of the early American oppressed victim constrained and suppressed in the margins of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America.<sup>8</sup>

For instance, Joanna Brooks implements the trope of the “American Lazarus” to regenerate undiscovered or underappreciated early African American and Native American texts.<sup>9</sup> As she argues that the rebirth of these literatures means asserting a more diverse identity in early American studies, my project intends to build upon her purpose of canonizing these kinds of authors: While Brooks has metaphorically raised these African American and Native American bodies from the dead, my project aims to give them renewed life. Giving them “renewed life” involves emphasizing the manners in which their religious and spiritual identities function as strategies for not simply survival but more specifically, achievement of national unity. While historians and literary scholars, alike, have often argued that Christianity denotes complexity—that African American and Native American religious identity represents assimilation to Anglo-American expectation or that, instead, the act of Christian conversion was

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Warner, in “The Preacher’s Footing,” presents a line of analysis that hinges upon the understanding that evangelical religion and the Enlightenment were “defined by different media” (369). In this context, “different media” does not simply denote binary expressions of either orality or print culture, but instead, Warner explores “highly charged and conflicted conceptions of discourse...[that] cut across the print/orality opposition that has transfixed so many scholars in recent years” (369). He posits that behaviors such as ministers’ footings (first established by Ervin Goffman) guide us toward a fuller understanding of Christians’ formative roles in the Enlightenment era (369). This dissertation leans upon Warner’s approach, evaluating not only the textual-level of occurrence—the words that indicate narrative proceedings—but instead the myriad Christian literary methods of overcoming oppression which include salvations and conversions, spiritual training, attire and costuming, corporeal performance, self-fashioning, Pauline power, Christian sovereignty, counter-history, and other complex negotiations of text.

<sup>9</sup> Her primary texts include Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson, Phillis Wheatley, John Marrant, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Jupiter Hammon.

personally authentic and authoritative—this project features authors who use personal, redemptive Christianity as a social and political strategy—consistently rhetorical and sometimes corporeal—to negotiate not only the reexamination of their individual worth but also the communal value of marginalized early American people. In other words, this project embraces the existing understanding of African American and Native American religious complexity and attempts to emphasize the importance of such an identity through the evaluation of the early republican and early national oppressed literary leaders.

Performance, in this project, suggests a wide range of communicative strategies including orality, counter-history, self-fashioning, narrative agency, and fictional reimagining. Joshua David Bellin and Mielke assert that the trajectory of performance studies has steadily developed since the 1980s and within it, Bellin identifies the “*performative paradigm*” which “explore[s] the ways in which international public acts of entertainment, ritual, and suasion do not simply reflect or represent cultures but... ‘constitute cultures’” (6).<sup>10</sup> For African Americans and Native Americans before the eighteenth century, modes of expression and performance before an Anglo-American audience or readership were all but non-existent. As a result, obtaining literacy and practicing orality signaled a shift in not only educational levels but also acts of agency. Writing and speaking called for an awareness of African American and Native American performance, stimulating a reconsideration of these peoples’ worth, not simply as marginalized minorities with nothing to say but instead as complex peoples possessing ethical values, intellectual ideas, and reconciliatory solutions for a discriminatory and fragmented nation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Bellin, “The Place of Performance” which more specifically discusses this concept of the “performative paradigm.” See also Rosemarie K. Bank, *Theatre Culture in America*, which describes the trajectory of performance, as theatre merges with culture. Bank explains that performance moved beyond the stage in more everyday expressions of cultural, racial, and gendered agency.

<sup>11</sup> Other modes of performance have developed from projects such as Mitchell Breitwieser’s description of the “representative personality”—the act of “designing a life” through self-construction and the awareness of human



Shifting emphasis to performances based entirely on speech, Jay Fliegelman illuminates the differences between reading a text silently or performing it aloud—that by silencing a text, such as the Declaration of Independence, “we have lost sight of crucial mid-eighteenth-century assumptions about speaking and personal expression, about rhetoric and the art of reading...assumptions necessary to a full understanding of the Revolutionary American culture” (24). Sandra M. Gustafson echoes these assertions and offers yet another reading of the power of oral performance in the early republic; she explains that her method of “[v]iewing speech and text as symbolic and performative forms of language rather than as discrete and hierarchical entities opens understanding of the ways that the bodies of language figure constructions of the social body in oratorical performance” (xvi). This study of the ways in which the members of eighteenth-century society shifted toward exerting agency through oral performance—in speeches and even sermons—continues to pervade literary studies.<sup>12</sup> In this project, orality is applied through the vein of religious and political expression, as Christian ministers, speakers, and novelists—Marrant, Child, Lee, Boudinot, and Apess—make rhetorical choices to empower themselves and their comprehensive communities.

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nature in order to control the effectiveness of one’s self and one’s works (3). While some scholars, such as Bellin and Mielke, focus on the specific acts of public performance, for instance, “playing Indian,” other scholars emphasize intrinsic or internal acts of self-representation or self-fashioning, such as Breitwieser’s claim that authors like Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin are making specific rhetorical choices which regulate aspects such as behavior and activism.

<sup>12</sup> For more exploration of the concepts of print culture and orality, see also David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America*, which traces “the development of distinctive and culturally powerful modes of communication in each arena of private society” (xiv). See Nancy Ruttenburg, *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*, who argues that “democratic personality was expounded by those who observed, whether sympathetically or critically, the numbers of individuals emerging so unexpectedly from social invisibility to speak with power and authority in a newly constituted – and uncannily transient – public sphere” (4). See James P. Warren, *Culture of Eloquence: Oratory and Reform in Antebellum America*, who asserts that “speakers mediate between their own moral convictions—the truth they seek to tell—and the audience’s ability to hear and understand that truth” (5). See Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition’s Public Sphere*, for an evaluation of the ways in which both Anglo-American and African American abolitionists sought to imagine their audiences of receptivity within the public sphere.

Scholars such as Lisa Brooks have reconsidered the ways in which readers should engage with texts written by Native Americans, noting that her book is “an opportunity to hear their voices, however mediated by the particularities of their place and time, as well as our own. It is an attempt to recover some of that which has been taken, hidden, or lost, with the hope that [her] writing, too, can play a role in regeneration” (xx). While African American studies has valued this approach for a longer span of time, the literary field is now more receptive to a counter-reading of Native American participation in and contribution to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society. This scholarship offers a more expansive view of not simply how African Americans and Native Americans survived but how they implemented language, rhetoric, and religion to argue against a system of oppression that restricted their social and political freedoms. And yet, much work still remains for scholars within the early American fields of study: The efforts of Bellin, Joanna Brooks, Lisa Brooks, Cohen, Gustafson, Mielke, Stein, Warrior, Weaver, and Wyss have illuminated the path that leads to a broader, more conclusive reading of African American and Native American literatures. Specifically, this work stresses the dimensions of African American and Native American personhood as represented within various literary genres, emphasizing the manner in which religious performance allows for a greater understanding of the historical, racialized, and spiritual person.

Chapter 1, “‘I Went Over the Fence:’ Self-fashioning, Spiritual Performance, and Pauline Power in John Marrant’s Autobiography,” focuses upon *The Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black*, first delivered as a sermon in 1785. A free African American, Marrant creates a narrative form that draws upon the literary traditions of the spiritual autobiography, captivity narrative, and providence tale as he presents his story of Methodist salvation and redemption. While he highlights his struggle before conversion—the shallow

enjoyment of sinfulness, vanity, and pride in his success as a Charles Town musician—he describes another sort of struggle after salvation—a lack of acceptance from his peers and family, a feeling of isolation, his capture by a Cherokee tribe, and his eventual return home. While his testimony documents man’s search for solace and eternal reassurance through a relationship with God, it also reveals the ways in which African Americans were negotiating a social, cultural, and political space for themselves within the early republic. This chapter argues that Marrant fashions himself as a colorless instrument of Christ by using his Christianity to metaphorically subvert any other imposed identities, racialized or other. The term “colorless” signifies Marrant’s ability to minister to many peoples by the use of his own spiritual body, overcoming his era’s racialized barriers of color. By an invocation of what I call Pauline power—or the acknowledgement that only through man’s accepted weakness, as a hollow vessel, can God fully minister through him—Marrant discards his own musical instruments to become an instrument which God can use. These physical, not oral, manifestations of God’s power demonstrate Marrant’s use of his body, both in actual form and within the text, to establish his credibility as a member of society, an author in the public sphere, and a Christian in the kingdom of faith.

Like Marrant, who exerts his Christian identity through oral, written, and corporeal expression—atypical for a black man in late eighteenth-century Charles Town—Child also demonstrates the proto-advocacy of authorship, except she occupies a different social terrain: In the sphere of an Anglo-American Christian family, Child separates herself from the oppressive gendered space in which she resides, as she resists the state of the young nation which she feels is both morally and ethically troubling in its marginalization of African Americans, Native Americans, and women. Chapter 2, “Puritan Principle and Savage Majesty in *Hobomok*: Loving

Like the Great Spirit, Beyond Natural History” positions nineteenth-century fiction against pre-established modes of writing, in this case, eighteenth-century natural history. Child rhetorically returns to the early seventeenth century, as Apess does in his *Eulogy*, and yet her historical representation of the events leading up to King Philip’s War are presented to a readership through the genre of fiction. As Apess draws upon the horrendous instigations and outcomes of warfare to advocate for immediate societal change, Child remembers the intimate and personal interactions of Native American allies and English colonists. In comparing Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) and Benjamin Franklin’s *The Autobiography*, “The Increase of Mankind” (1751), and “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” (1783) to Child’s *Hobomok* (1824), I argue that Child chooses to express herself through fiction because it functions as a mode that allows for reimagining the worth of the Native American body. Child’s novel confronts the problem of the early national archive that absences, reduces, and disparages the Native American in historical record: As she reprises the “Hobbamock” of New England, Child revises Native American worth through a fictional elucidation of courage, intelligence, selflessness, and spirituality in her creation of “Hobomok.”<sup>13</sup> As most frontier novels were published from the 1820s to the 1850s, Child participates in a proto-literary discourse which sought to defend the Native American peoples against Indian Removal and continued social and political injustice. However, as this chapter argues, her narrative attempt at advocacy was not altogether successful in restoring worth, agency, and freedom to Native American peoples. As Child critiques New England Puritanism and the Christian hypocrisy of her own time, she attempts to reconsider the historical remembrance of Hobbamock in order to

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<sup>13</sup> Edward Winslow’s “Good News from New England” (1621-1623) offers the fullest account of Hobbamock’s historical contributions to the early colonies. Winslow’s spelling of “Hobbamock” differs from Child’s version of “Hobomok.” The use of these spellings are described more carefully within Chapter 2.

create an improved reading of the Native American natural Christian. She portrays Hobomok as a republican gentleman of her time but then elevates him above all members of the Puritans which surround him, eventually aligning his sacrifice of Mary with Christ's unconditional acts of love. Furthermore, while Hobomok does indeed disappear from the text after the return of Charles, I argue that Child at least attempts to give him permanence within New England history and within the novel itself. Because Child was an Anglo-American female—like nineteenth-century African Americans and Native Americans—she was battling for her own social and political worth; this struggle prevented Child from boldly declaring the equality of oppressed Native American peoples, because she was a first-time, female novelist concerned with publishing constraints and the receptivity of her readership. Nonetheless, as she experiments with giving agency and voice back to the Native American community, she partners Hobomok with the longevity of nature and the landscape. As such, readers and scholars of *Hobomok* can view Child's attempt at Native American counter-history as a powerful influence upon the literary trajectory of Native American agency, informing the successful advocacy of her own later work and the works of novelists who followed her.

Chapter 3, "The Liberty of a Pen in Hand: Control of Language in Jarena Lee's Journal" concerns Lee's attempts to enter the public sphere during the early republican period. This analysis of Lee's journal builds upon the momentum generated in Chapter 2, which elevates feminine empowerment through advocacy for the self and others in a terrain which was traditionally reserved for Anglo-American men. Through her own ministerial evangelism, Lee resists the competing literary modes of the early nineteenth century as best she can, but like Child, vestiges of political and cultural pressures reveal themselves in the publication. This chapter also builds upon the previous understanding of Marrant's identity as a physical

instrument of God's use, as Lee positions herself not only as a spiritual instrument of God but also a more direct instrument of language and literacy. I affirm that while Frederick Douglass has been generally esteemed as the herald for asserting autobiographical authority when he broke ties with William Lloyd Garrison (1855), Lee actually performs a similar act much earlier in her 1836 and 1849 editions. It is not only an assertion of spiritual authority that she presents to her audiences and readership, but she more powerfully garners attention and asserts power through her possession of literacy and command of language. As a free, widowed African American woman with children, Lee faced much social and religious opposition due to her own gender and race. Much of the journal details her geographic negotiations, in travel, and her rhetorical negotiations, in print, to please her listeners and her readership while fulfilling what she believed to be her life's spiritual calling. Lee's record of travel and ministry is unusual, as it moves beyond the domestic sphere and into a realm of independent professionalism that was not typically respected or appropriate for eighteenth-century women. Moreover, Lee is ever-aware of her untraditional roles beyond her home and within the church and arranges her autobiography with this sensitivity in mind. In doing so, Lee employs various rhetorical strategies—collectively called narrative control—in which she distances herself from her family; describes hell and the devil far more than heaven; and exacerbates the weak, insecure, female stereotype with her descriptions of sickness and mental instability. While most Lee scholars take notice of this literary strategy, they have not fully appreciated the risks involved in her execution of narrative control. This chapter argues that in Lee's emphasis upon her ability to preach, despite her gender and race, she calls attention to herself in unwelcomed ways: As she attempts to evade judgment from what I call the invisible witnesses (or the absent but powerful Anglo-American viewers and readers of her sermons and journals), she appears suspiciously distanced from her family and

friends; she gives narrative voice to Satan and damnation that results in an interruption of her spiritual mission within the autobiography; and she takes great strides to distance herself from the domestic sphere but promotes feminine inferiority and therefore loss of narrative empowerment by her recurrent descriptions of her feeble, sickly body.

Chapter 4, “Melancholic Memory, Republican Fragmentation, and Christian Sovereignty in Elias Boudinot’s and William Apess’s Speeches,” addresses the complications in remembering and paying homage to a history of trauma and violence, while aspiring for progress within the present moment. Evaluated together, Boudinot and Apess take the reins from the Christian advocates pre-dating them in the late eighteenth century (Samson Occom) and early nineteenth century (Lydia Maria Child) by mastering the terrain that they occupy through possession of language, religion, sophistication, and culture. As a result, they use this knowledge to subvert the norms and expectations of first their listeners and then their readers. Boudinot, a Cherokee, delivered “An Address to the Whites” in 1826 in order to advocate for funding for the first Native American newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*. In this speech, he also sought to reform the negativity associated with “Indians,” while advancing the education, industry, and intelligence of his nation. Apess, in 1836, delivered *The Eulogy of King Philip* from the Bostonian stage in order to reposition the seventeenth-century Wampanoag leader, King Philip, to a proper place of respect and admiration. In doing so, Apess castigated the Puritans of the past and the Anglo-Americans in the present for their mistreatment of the Native American nations, but he also rebukes the American Christian—the republican gentleman who positioned himself above the Native Americans—erecting a new model of citizenship and Christian charity through King Philip. By using a Freudian framework of “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917), I argue that Boudinot and Apess oscillate between expressions of mourning and melancholia in their

rhetorical return to the past. Their speeches threaten to fixate upon loss but ultimately advocate for forgiveness and national unity. In an effort to move from the past into the present, Boudinot and Apess evoke republican rhetoric to restore this harmony by destabilizing the national infrastructure which claims to represent all peoples but actually fails marginalized populations. In other words, by turning the republican rhetoric back upon the listener, Boudinot and Apess mirror the hypocrisy of the early American principles of equality. Because republican identity, valued by the Anglo-American, ultimately fails the Native Americans populations, these speakers exert forceful agency through the use of what I call Christian sovereignty, or a belief that spiritual salvation offers the assurance of eternal worth and importance, therefore exalting them to a position which allows for advocacy and change. For Apess especially, divinity—as practiced by many Anglo-Americans—involved corruption and abuse of power which resulted in abuse and mourning for the Native American. However, in its connection to the painful past, and in its purest form, Christianity offered the restorative promise of future national reconciliation for Anglo-Americans and Native Americans.

The hope for this project is that these authors are reprised as the leaders of their eras, not simply as mundane writers and speakers but instead among the literary trailblazers for the late eighteenth- to early and mid-nineteenth centuries. For instance, while literary figures such as Phillis Wheatley represent the oppressed (and enslaved) African American voice, she is published only through the posturing of her Anglo-American editors. On the contrary, Marrant, Child, Lee, Boudinot, and Apess independently answer the early American cry for national unity through a celebration of their Christian voices. Moving beyond only their racialized identities that restrict their value and worth within the discourses of early American politics, these significant American literary figures utilize the agency of Christianity to advocate for racial



reconsideration and healing. As African American and Native American identity is reconsidered, these brave legacies remind readers of the devastating fragmentation of America's past but the restorative progress of the future.

## CHAPTER 1

### “I WENT OVER THE FENCE:” SELF-FASHIONING, SPIRITUAL PERFORMANCE, AND PAULINE POWER IN JOHN MARRANT’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

John Marrant’s 1785 publication of *A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, with assistance provided by Reverend Mr. Aldridge who related, arranged, corrected, and published this text, concludes with an eternal image of all ethnicities united through Christ.<sup>14</sup> Left fatherless at a young age, Marrant, along with his family, traveled from Florida to Georgia before establishing a more permanent home in South Carolina. More interested in acquiring musical knowledge than in committing to a manual trade, Marrant demonstrated prodigious skill in instrumental performance and was often employed for social gatherings and festivities throughout the Charles Town community. His account, drawing upon these experiences in Charles Town, reveals his persistent struggle to find a secure place within his own society: In his search for emotional, spiritual, and internal peace, Marrant journeys with listeners and readers through his personal passage toward redemption and triumph in Christ. Encountering tensions between his own family and friends and wrestling to establish his worth

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<sup>14</sup> This prefatory information is pulled from the text itself, using the verbiage and the editor’s responsibilities on Marrant’s title page.

Because the majority of the field of early American literary studies believes the fourth edition to be more purely representative of Marrant’s wishes and perspectives, the close readings included in this chapter are extracted from that edition.

Earning vast admiration from its initial oral performance, Marrant’s salvation experience was first artistically portrayed in a poetic interpretation by S. Whitchurch, reportedly printed and sold by S. Hazard and Hughes and Walsh in 1785. Reproduced four times within the first year of print and republished at least twenty times by 1835, Marrant’s *Narrative* proved wildly popular within and beyond the United States. Tiya Miles, in “‘His Kingdom for a Kiss’: Indians and Intimacy in the Narrative of John Marrant,” writes that the narrative “would soon become one of the three best-selling Indian captivity narratives in genre’s history” (165). Cedrick May, in *Evangelism and Resistance in the Black Atlantic, 1760-1835*, claims that Marrant’s *Narrative* “would have been considered a best seller on both sides of the Atlantic by today’s standards” (8). Despite its international popularity, the text’s reputation and interest declined until Henry Louis Gates, Jr. revived it in the late twentieth century. Although the text depicts spiritual struggles encountered, dangers at hand, and despair in finding a cultural community of solace, scholars, until recent years, have overlooked Marrant’s *Narrative* because it evades distinct racial identifications.

among the Anglo-American, African American, and Native American populations, Marrant concludes that by power exerted through God alone, humanity is able to find purpose and community. Moreover, the knowledge he gains through interacting with multiple identity groups allows him, first, to empathize with and, then, to minister to people of all colors, practices, and beliefs.

At the end of his narrative, Marrant demonstrates a firm sense of his spiritual resolve:

I have now only to intreat [sic.] the earnest prayers of all my kind Christian friends, that I may be carried safe there; kept humble, made faithful, and successful; that strangers may hear of and run to Christ; that Indian tribes may stretch out their hands to God; that the black nations may be made white in the blood of the Lamb; that vast multitudes of hard tongues, and of a strange speech, may learn the language of Canaan, and sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb; and, anticipating the glorious prospect, may we all with fervent hearts, and willing tongues, sing hallelujah; the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ. Amen and Amen. (39-40)

This passage suggests that the unity of the Christian community is made possible through language, resulting in the final response of heavenly expression and musical performance. Marrant incorporates this holistic spiritual redemption by first soliciting prayers from the Christian community for exhibition of Christ-like characteristics including humility, faithfulness, and success. He then transitions toward the identification of specific peoples residing both within the American nation and across national borders. These calls-to-action depend upon first hearing the voice of God and “learn[ing] the language of Canaan” in order to respond in various physical and oratorical ways, finally networking the “Indian tribes,” the “black nations,” and the “vast multitudes of hard tongues” in a collective response of spiritual language and music (39).<sup>15</sup>

The invocation of multiple identities within this passage, that is the “Indian tribes,” “black nations” and those made “white in the blood of the Lamb”—a representative summary of

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<sup>15</sup> I employ the terms “Indian tribes,” “black nations,” and “vast multitudes,” referencing Marrant’s own labels of the oppressed communities.

their more significant presences within the larger narrative—reveals the challenge of how we, as readers and scholars, are to make sense of Marrant’s complicated roles as an eighteenth-century African American, reformed musician, redeemed Christian, Indian captive, and returned son and sibling (39). His abilities for literacy far outreached most African Americans of his time, as Marrant learned to read and write by the age of eleven and then publically preached about and recorded spiritual conversion after his own salvation experience. But as the narrative reveals, Marrant wrestled with finding a group of people with whom he felt comfortable associating; as a result, Marrant’s own verbal confession to one racial identity is largely marginalized and ignored within the text. This concern with Marrant’s racial classification or association has problematized literary scholars for some time: Because Marrant’s text was not part of the abolitionist circuit attempting to condemn slavery, it was often overlooked in its relevance to testify to an eighteenth-century African American man’s experience. Furthermore, because much of the narrative documents the time Marrant spent in Indian captivity, his account wanders in racial and cultural focus and destination.<sup>16</sup> These ambiguities serve to inspire the investigation in

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<sup>16</sup> Since Marrant’s text details the ever-shifting movement between communities, it also stylistically reflects literary elements of various narrative forms. In other words, these early American forms often documented a specific occurrence or circumstance related to race, identity, or experience. For instance, newly-converted Christians or Christians undergoing a supernatural, divine encounter often recorded their thoughts and emotions by use of the providence tale. For more scholarship concerning providence tales, see Eve Tavor Bannet and Susan Manning, *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660-1830* and James Hartman, *Providence Tales and the Birth of American Literature*. Similarly, African Americans, both slave and free, implemented the forms of the slave narrative and the forms they draw on—spiritual autobiographies and captivity narratives—including elements such as the memories of childhood, the quest for literacy, and conditions of oppression. For more scholarship concerning African American autobiographies, see William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865*; Roger Lundin, *Invisible Conversations: Religion in the Literature of America*; Dwight McBride, *Impossible Witness: Truth, Abolitionism, and Slave Testimony*; Crispin Sartwell, *Act Like You Know: African-American Autobiography and White Identity*; and Roland Leander Williams, *African American Autobiography and the Quest for Freedom*. And finally, those kidnapped and confined during exploration or colonial settlement regularly recorded the experience either during or after captivity. For more scholarship concerning captivity narratives, see Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800*; Frank Shuffleton, *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America*; Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives*; Teresa Toulouse, *The Captive’s Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*; and Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds*.

this chapter as I explore how Marrant uses his Christian identity as a means for inclusively to find a place amidst and abiding amongst the African Americans of Charles Town, the Methodists of George Whitefield, and the Cherokees of the wilderness.

The complicated relationships between performance, race, and religion work together to achieve Marrant's intended purpose of unifying Christian peoples through the inter-workings of Christ within the community of believers.<sup>17</sup> Focusing on Marrant's sinful disobedience, exhibited through his prodigious musical ability, and then his casting aside of this same talent in order to become an instrument of God, this chapter interrogates the ways in which the racialized "other"—in the late eighteenth century—implemented innovative ministerial and rhetorical strategies in order to exert a distinctive authorial voice. Further, I consider the ways in which

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Marrant, in his particular form of spiritual self-representation is adapting, revising, and redirecting prior literary conventions and traditions. This reading attempts not to exclude any form of literary convention but to consider how Marrant's narrative is a generically united text that combines stylistic and rhetorical elements from three communicative strategies. All clearly evident within Marrant's *Narrative*, the concept of the hybrid-genre, graphed onto the text itself, is greater proof of Marrant's ability to participate in an Anglo-American dominated game of discourse, a higher intelligence than was assigned to the African American of the time. Moreover, his act of self-fashioning, both within the moment and within the text, is meant to demonstrate an acute attention to the needs of various peoples. Not only does Marrant want observers and readers to view him as capable of adapting in multiple settings, but, more importantly, he aims to present himself as one answering to and serving a higher power who unites all peoples; thus, he is able to minister to any population he encounters. Ultimately, Marrant wants us to view him as a man spiritually enlightened, physiologically displayed through acts of spiritual performance, as he claims authority as a sacred spiritual instrument for the black, Cherokee, and religious communities.

<sup>17</sup> This use of performance stems from the scholarly work of others, such as Daphne A. Brooks's *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* which is inspired from black feminist theory that "opened up new ways of considering the representational politics of the black body in the cultural imaginary" (7). More specifically, Brooks indicates that "[d]ense and spectacular, the opaque performances of marginalized cultural figures call attention to the skill of the performer who, through gestures and speech as well as material props and visual technologies, is able to confound and disrupt conventional constructions of the racialized and gendered body" (8). The "opaqueness" of Marrant manifests itself through, first, his implementation of multiple literary genres (his use of the conversion narrative, the captivity narrative, the providence tale, and the autobiography) and, second, through his association with multiple people groups (the African Americans, the Methodists, and the Cherokees). Moreover, Saidiya V. Hartman, in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America*, calls for a greater participation between the spectacle of and the witness of performance in literature; she interrogates: "What does the exposure of the violated body yield? Proof of the black sentience or the inhumanity of the 'peculiar institution'? Or does the pain of the other merely provide us with the opportunity for self-reflection? At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator" (3-4). While Marrant was never a slave, his spiritual performances that attempt to evade race offer an opportunity for significant reflection: first, as they appeared in historical occurrence; second, as they were presented again within his narrative; and third, as we, readers and scholars, reengage with his text in a modern context.

Christianity, a supposed universal identity, allowed African Americans a space of agency within the discourses of the public sphere. Lastly, I argue that Marrant's method is unexpected; whereas most notable figures and activists of the eighteenth century used refined methods of orality as a means of public communication, Marrant utilizes his own body, both in a physical form and within the text, to establish himself as a credible individual, willing to submit to God's greater purposes and representing himself and his body as a chosen instrument for the collective body of Christ's people. Through Christian redemption and in his quest for spiritual freedom, Marrant repents of his carnal nature, as one who has become an empty vessel for God's redeeming purposes. Marrant's hollow state, ironically, allows for the fullness of Christ at work within him—what Marrant deems as “set[ting his] soul at perfect liberty, and being filled with joy” that is eternal and everlasting (13).

Through the discarding of carnal musical performance and the adopting of spiritual performance, then, comes a kind of power; through the effacement of the personal right to the body, or rather the emphasis upon bodily feebleness and insufficiency, Marrant is able to present himself, in actual encounter and to the greater public sphere, as an “instrument” of Christian truth.<sup>18</sup> In other words, Marrant seeks to achieve spiritual freedom at the expense of his own racial identity, as he depends upon his own weakness, albeit God's strength, to empower him through an abnegation of self. Indeed, Pauline power, at work in the text, is exemplified early after Marrant's conversion, and he testifies to his new state, that the more persecution he faces

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<sup>18</sup> My use of spiritual performance denotes Marrant's turning from his carnal performances (playing the violin and other instruments for personal recognition and financial gain) to a complete dependency on God, offering up the body and its talents, for use by God alone. In essence, Marrant's own body becomes the instrument through which God uses for his specific eternal purposes.

May explains that the function of serving as God's instrument is like “the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles[.]” “the individual will is sublimated to that of God, and the prophet becomes an instrument through which God makes his will known. In this way, God has a direct line of communication through the human agent chosen for this spiritual station...” (120).

“the stronger [he] gr[ows] in grace” (14). No longer performing with the violin or French horn, Marrant still *performs*, in actual occurrence and for readers of the text, as he showcases his spiritual ministry among the Cherokee tribes and within his own community—including the African American peoples of Charles Town and the Methodist congregation. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul, writer of at least thirteen letters, provides a framework for understanding the type of power Marrant historically displays and also uses, later, to confront his readership.

In the words of Paul, spiritual power is defined by the denial of self and dependency on faith in God, through Christ. He writes: “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (KJV, 2 Corinthians 12:9). The term Pauline power, which I have coined and used in this chapter, denotes a specific denial of the self—including one’s talents, abilities, strengths, and pride—in order to rest fully upon God’s ability to work through the weak, human body. Specifically, for Marrant, the use of power is the impetus of the narrative: While it is personal power that motivates Marrant’s actions and deeds early on in the text, his spiritual revelation requires an oppositional shift toward the desire of self-denial for Christ’s glorification. Even though the first display of power functions through a dependency on self, the second rejects the needs and desires of the individual, in order to emphasize the selfless, eternal significance of Christian dependence. In fact, Marrant’s self-insufficiency, and his acknowledgement of it, are exposed within the narrative. In other words, Marrant’s religious experience assumes not that he is *able* but is choosing to turn to Christ, instead of depending on himself; instead, Pauline power requires the full acknowledgement that man is *unable*, fragile, and fallible—that only through man’s humility can Christ’s authority be

made known. Marrant, in his use of Pauline power, dismisses his own abilities and accomplishments and surrenders his independence and control in an acknowledgement of God's strength in man's weakness.<sup>19</sup>

This chapter, subsequently, argues that these moments of spiritual performance include specific acts of self-fashioning, that Marrant is fully cognizant of his racialized state, as a black man (as he calls himself), but he relies upon his Christianized state to rhetorically transcend racial oppression and injustice.<sup>20</sup> Marrant's repentance of his sinful state, made evident through

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<sup>19</sup> Theologian John William Drane's scholarship, "Tradition, Law, and Ethics," illuminates this chapter's use of Pauline power through a discussion of Pauline traditions, laws, and ethics. He writes that "...those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified...passions and desires...so their moral directives are formulated by the fruit of the Spirit which manifests itself in their lives...The main emphasis here is on the person of Jesus Christ, his significance in the divine plan, and his indwelling in the life of the Christian" (172). Marrant's narrative reflects this theological principle, as the text shifts the spotlight from Marrant's unique self, to Christian power, exhibited through Marrant's submission. While previous literary scholarship scarcely mentions Pauline theology, Sandra Gustafson does acknowledge that "[p]ower for many colonial Americans also had a Pauline face, as divine agency transmuted the preacher's physical weakness or social insignificance into spiritual authority" (xxi). She further claims that Pauline power "accumulates rhetorical authority from displays of weakness" just as Marrant's natural state is ineffective, even with reliance upon his exceptional musical abilities (243). His divine nature, however, sanctified through Christ (and through the casting aside of his worldly musical talents), reminds his spectators and readership that his earthly ministry reflects a supernatural presence.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines sanctification, in a theological sense, as "the action of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying or making holy the believer, by the implanting within him of the Christian graces and the destruction of sinful affections." See also, Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James*: Methodist sanctification is described as "the experienced reality of heaven in the present" (86). Chapter 3 also addresses the Methodist concern for sanctification, as reflected within Jarena Lee's journal.

<sup>20</sup> Marrant's ability to transform into a representative figure or vessel of meaning redeems the sins of the individual, and on a greater level, humanity, in order to collectively unite a fragmented community. Mitchell Breitwieser explains that self-fashioning is a "determined self-design....[T]he aspirant commits himself to a course of vigilant self-surveillance and self-discipline. He attempts to enhance thoughts, feelings, scruples, and drives that are consonant with human nature as he has diagnosed it, and to discourage or expunge all that seems discordant..." (3). In this sense, Marrant's individual purposes are no longer important, as he is ever-changing into a more effective representative for the whole. Nancy Ruttenburg, *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*, discusses that the "strategy of self-representation (which [George] Whitefield would later model before mass audiences and theologically legitimate as 'humble self-enlargement') epitomizes the hybridic nature of democratic personality" as it claims "to transcend or simply to abrogate the distinction between self and other (including the divine Other)" (5). Marrant's spiritual identity is greatly valued within the text, because even though he expresses his temporary successes and gains at the start of the narrative, he insists that his redeemed state has allowed for his survival of treacherous persecution, despair in the wilderness, and frightening captivity. Ultimately, Marrant needs those reading his narrative to recognize the power he has been granted through salvation, and this persona (whether authentic or inauthentic) is being carefully crafted before his readership. Chapter 3 specifically address's Lee's rhetorical needs in forming an identity to appeal to her congregations and readership.



his moments spent with Reverend Whitefield, allows for the intervening of Pauline power, human weakness made strong through heavenly strength. This willingness to become an instrument of God then provides Marrant the opportunity to eclipse his racial classification within American society so that he may function, not as a messianic figure himself, but as a colorless instrument used by God to serve the myriad peoples he encounters. This intricate image of Christian transfiguration; what I call here, the colorless instrument of Christ, addresses Marrant's once sinful nature of carnal musical performance and his adoption of Christianity through a tent revival conversion experience.<sup>21</sup> The term colorless does not gesture toward a man without skin color or a man of white skin color but instead a man whose identity, symbolically, is not defined by only one cultural or racial category: Marrant is made metaphorically colorless through his redemption but more significantly because of the experience he gathers through his ability to interact with and minister to different early American populations.

#### Classifying John Marrant in the Trajectory of Literary Studies

Current literary scholars, such as Miles and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, view Marrant's narrative more solely through a lens of either the captivity narrative (Miles) or the conversion narrative (Dillon). Miles claims that Marrant's "persistent lack of attention to his own racialization as black in the text suggests that [he] was not interested in positing his racial assignment as a central theme of his revelations and leads us to confront the possibility that Marrant was more interested in associating himself with Indians than with African Americans"

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<sup>21</sup> From the moment of transfiguration, Marrant's identity is altered from a worldly man seeking pleasure and gain to a Christian man pursuing only God's purposes for "the kingdoms of the world [to] become the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ" (40). In other words, he no longer plays an instrument; instead, he is the instrument played upon. In order to achieve this purpose, Marrant allows himself to become a symbolic messenger of God, participating in various spiritual performances, not through his own power, but through the powerful exhibition of Christ working within him. This exercise of Pauline power allows Marrant to elude his racialized position in eighteenth-century America, instead shaping his identity collectively within the black community, the Methodist Christian sect, and the Cherokee Indian tribe.

(165).<sup>22</sup> I agree with Miles that Marrant certainly employs rhetorical and literary strategies within the text to escape definitive and imposed racial classification; however, given that Marrant's narrative adopts various genre forms, as he geographically moves to and from myriad communities—eventually resulting in freedom from captivity and his return to the acceptance of his home community in Charles Town—we should view the claim that he adopts a Native American persona as only partially complete. Instead of asserting, as she does, “that entering the sphere of cleric, citizen, and culture hero that is strictly reserved for white men in the transatlantic Enlightenment milieu means distancing oneself from blacks and drawing nearer to Indians[,]” I read Marrant (and also his narrative) as one which seeks to negotiate between all these communities not only as a powerful personal agent seeking political and cultural potency but also as a spiritual representative of the Christian community that included many races (165).

Furthermore, Dillon posits that Marrant participates in an “embodied public sphere” as she places his use of the French horn, but not Marrant himself, at the center of her analysis. (319). She further explains that Marrant's use of music, noise that was once senseless and disruptive, is converted to a more significant sound with Christian meaning and communal order, a kind of assault on a white system of power. This chapter broadens Dillon's execution of the “embodied public sphere” through an understanding of the manners in which Marrant uses his physical body, in submission to God as a hallow vessel or instrument, in order to fashion himself as racially evasive due to his Christianized state. Gustafson affirms that “claims to authenticity and relations of power were given form and meaning through the reliance on or freedom from

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<sup>22</sup> Katy Chiles, in *Transformable Race: Surprising Metamorphoses in the Literature of Early America*, also argues that “Marrant's *Narrative* offers up a picture of black transformation, not of an African American ‘becoming white’...but, rather, of a black man ‘becoming’ Native American” (108). My reading of Marrant's text confronts this understanding of racial identification, as I argue that Marrant's spiritual identification seems far more powerful than any racialized classifications within the text.

text in oral performance[,]” that speech, not just text, informed the formulation of a national identity, and this field of oral discourse was inclusive, not restrictive, of both Native Americans and African Americans (xvi-xvii). What she terms the “performance semiotic of speech and text” elucidates this reading of Marrant’s performative purpose, as I argue, however, that these ends are achieved not through oral performance within Marrant’s *Narrative* (or through his delivered sermons) but through the emphasis on the physical body, spiritually transformed through Christian conversion (xvi).

### The Complicated Evolution of Racial Construction in the Enlightenment Era

In 1785, racial identity—for Anglo-Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans—would have been understood in complex terms. As Chiles reminds readers, man’s understanding of race, at the end of the eighteenth century, was grounded somewhere in between the environmental theories predominantly predating this time and the earliest emergences of Jeffersonian models of race represented in the production of natural history in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785):<sup>23</sup>

“...in the late eighteenth century, one’s appearance signals what one ‘is’ at the moment—not internally but, rather, just ‘in fact.’ Within this way of thinking, for instance, if one lives in Africa and acquires dark skin from exposure to the sun, one ‘is’ black. If one lives in America and develops a tawny complexion, then one ‘is’ red. If one’s light coloring forms from living in Europe, then one ‘is’ white. While certainly these examples are oversimplified...the scientific belief that one’s true race emanated from one’s interior was far from a foregone conclusion of this historical moment. Instead, many people largely understood their race to be a reflection of their exterior circumstances (both of environment and culture), and thus they considered race not an inner truth that might or might not be displayed faithfully on the body. Rather, most early Americans envisioned racial identity as a place one maintained on a spectrum of racial states” (110).

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<sup>23</sup> Bruce R. Dain, in *A Hideous Monster of the Mind*, claims, and modern popular consensus agrees, that “*Notes* remains the most important and influential eighteenth-century American statement on race. During the past thirty years Jefferson has been condemned as a racist, praised as an abolitionist, and psychoanalyzed as the founding father of modern white America’s racial hang-ups, guilt, and hypocrisy. A man full of contradictions and not given to revealing his intimate thoughts, he lends himself to these interpretations” (5). As Marrant was publishing during the same years as Jefferson, an application of Jeffersonian theories proves fruitful for this chapter’s implementation of performance, race, and religion.

As Marrant's *Narrative* is lived, written, and published at this pivotal point of political and cultural interchange, his own racial ambiguity replicates the slippery and often conflicting racial theories of his time. The emergence of natural history, as a literary and scientific form, attempted to more effectively systematize racial classifications of early Americans, but these productions of knowledge, at best, hinged on the skewed perspectives of privileged, Anglo-American thinkers such as Jefferson.<sup>24</sup> Dain labels these attempts, such as Jefferson's, as evolving extensions of prejudices predating the introduction of slavery, the principal difference being that natural history was the first "systematic modern attempt to describe and understand living nature on the basis of observation and reason operating upon sense experience" (6). While the written language constructing natural history made the attempt rational, the form, regardless, failed in its attempt to form conclusive evidence based on factual consistency.<sup>25</sup>

Early American authors who were writing about Christian identity and participating in this racial discourse—some African American or Native American—are imperative to the discoveries within this project. Because republican ideologies, and often laws, restricted the full participation of minority voices within the public sphere, writers such as Marrant were forced to negotiate or fashion a space for one's own voice, against the oppression of the early American system.<sup>26</sup> Some of the earliest writers to raise their voices amongst the collective noise of the

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<sup>24</sup> Carl von Linné, more commonly known as Linnaeus, published *Systema Naturae* in 1758, inspiring the more massive production of scientific classification in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Other scientific perspectives, such as Georges Louis Leclerc's and Comte de Buffon's (who inspired Jefferson's defense of the New World), also attempted to explain the complicated merging of nature's processes and man's place in the world.

<sup>25</sup> Dain explains that the inconsistency in natural history form and content plagued Jefferson and other Enlightenment thinkers of the time, as their responses involved puzzlement and then a resulting default to personal biases: "When Jefferson and other major white intellectuals of the American Enlightenment recognized natural complexity, however, they tended to throw up their hands and retreat to confident statements about the natural truths that presumably could be perfectly grasped by man" (9).

<sup>26</sup> Lois E. Horton describes the slippery position for African Americans in the North who were forced to endure

more powerful Enlightenment figures—for example, Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, Olaudah Equiano, and Marrant—as Dain affirms “believed that reason, imagination, and the capacity for Christian conversion were one and the same. Conversion implied reason, imagination, humanity, and equality. In this view, Africans’ capacity to write about conversion did not just prove black humanity but eventually suggested white inhumanity and moral inferiority. . . . Such writing powerfully repudiated black skin as a natural category” (4). These active participants of spoken and written rhetoric sometimes sought to avoid or circumvent the labels placed upon them; in other words, instead of going toe-to-toe with writers such as Jefferson who made racial observations based on natural observances, and thus following his regimented method, Marrant claims authority based on religious experience and spiritual transcendence. Furthermore, because in the late eighteenth-century the coexistence of race and religion was often conflicted, Marrant employed methods of religious performance as a means to help negotiate the conflict.

Chiles speaks to acts of racial malleability by explaining that “one might morph from one status to another (in the sense of visible alterations of the exterior body) . . . race is less a statement about what one ‘is’ internally (and how that might or might not be visible to the skin), but, rather, what one *remains*—for a shorter or longer period of time—externally” (110). For Marrant, displayed within his recorded conversion experience, malleability of racial

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a period of racial construction that confined them to a lesser citizenship [that] limited and sometimes diminished their economic opportunities, and confronted them with theories contending their innate inferiority. They managed to make new alliances, but in interracial activities that crossed class lines they often endured the indignity of paternalistic treatment and were segregated even in some antislavery meetings. Northern free blacks knew that the enslavement of southern blacks affected their status, but they also knew that the dependent state of the northern African Americans still in slavery and long-term indentures bolstered arguments for excluding them from full citizenship. For them, the fight against slavery, actions to eliminate discrimination and racial distinctions, political organization, efforts for education and occupational training, and moral reform and racial uplift to combat racist ideologies were intertwined. (69)

identification is made possible through the adoption and exercise of Christian faith. In the face of a young nation's efforts to rigidly define or segregate racial categories, Marrant uses both performance and religious conversion as a means for racially marginalized individuals, like himself, to navigate or challenge these categories. In doing so, Marrant is operating in a culture in which performance was valued by the viewing or listening bodies. While the public sphere valued the performances of orality, including costuming and display, Native Americans and African Americans, and, in this case, Marrant, were adopting similar practices in order to be heard and understood. His narrative suggests that despite the narrative's co-existence with eighteenth-century American racialized discourse, Marrant portrays spiritual union in a performative manner that supersedes the pre-established categories of racial hierarchy. Moreover, his own recorded experiences push readers toward an understanding of his use as an instrument of God, one who not only experiences the redemptive power of Christ, but, through his spiritual conversion, can express the presence and power of Christ made manifest for all people, despite eighteenth-century racial constructs.

Within his demonstrations of spiritual performance, Marrant exhibits basic inattention to and disregard for his own racial identity. His unique individual body, that of the "black" man (as addressed in the title of the work and on the final page) plays a minor role within the narrative itself, as Marrant's racialized body falls secondary to other occurrences within the text; however, when Marrant performs religious or spiritual action within the narrative, his body—unconsciously or involuntarily—is involved. Even more significant are the moments in which Marrant faces spiritual tests or temptations, what he calls "great trial[s][,]" and in these moments, the presence of his body becomes important to the purposes of the narrative (21). Otherwise, his personal racial identity, at least through naming of it in the text, has little to no significance.

Furthermore, other individuals within the text do not seem to react in any particular way to his blackness. This effacement of race, or Marrant's intentional dismissal of it, enables him to serve as a cultural or trans-racial messenger: His blackness is lacking in significance because of Christ's unifying power for all of mankind, regardless of racial classification or skin color. Because Marrant's identity transcends the whole apparatus of eighteenth-century racial ideology and because he depends, at least after conversion, on his spiritual identity, empowered by Christ, the identity transformation allows for a spiritual overcoming of racial barriers. The presence of Christ, embodied within Marrant, guides this narrative of transformation, and the ability to relate to and survive amongst several identity groups empowers Marrant, as a Christian vessel and an instrument of Christ. The enduring struggle of the early American racialized body is hardly represented in Marrant's plot, and his avoidance of imposed identity structures reinforces his solidarity with a diversity of people.

#### Charles Town, the Wilderness, and Captivity:

##### Marrant's Message of Christianity through Self-fashioning

In Charles Town, at the tent revival, in the wilderness, in captivity, and upon reconciliation with his family, Marrant, through word and deed, seeks the approval of his readership—not to justify his worth as a marginalized man but to affirm his value as a divinely appointed spiritual instrument. Recognizing his fragile state as a man, Marrant exposes his weaknesses and despair without Christ and further allows for Christ to move through him, on his behalf, which becomes a spiritual performance throughout the text. More specifically, these performances translate from one identity group to another, and because, at least in Marrant's terms, the redemptive nature of Christianity is available, without cost, to all African, Native, and Anglo-Americans, the color of the skin no longer restricts a person: Christ purifies all ethnicities.

Before conversion, Marrant demonstrates, for his listeners and readers, the significant divide between commanding his own instrument and thus living a life of self-mastery versus acknowledging his depravity and discarding of his instrument in an act of full spiritual surrender for use by God alone.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Marrant's struggle for power manifested within himself, amongst his employers, and in regards to his heavenly father as master provides a full understanding of his initial carnal nature. The use of this term, "master," appears in print five times before even Marrant describes his spiritual experience during the Methodist tent revival. Because Marrant forthrightly admits his struggle for control of his life, independent success and wealth, and overall pride and rebellion, readers should look closely at these experiences in order to position Marrant's struggles previous to his salvation against his behaviors post-conversion. Although his familial structure is seemingly insignificant and is never mentioned again within the *Narrative*, Marrant does address his severed family, providing evidence that his father died before he was five years old. Within his immediate family, Marrant, then, has no paternal master, and although he is provided guidance and support from his mother and sisters, he emphasizes his untraditional childhood and constant shifting from hometown to hometown. Admittedly unstable from the start, Marrant lays bare his confession to the sinful seeds embedded within his carnal nature before conversion. While emphasizing his "strong inclination to learn music[,]” directly associated with his "disobedience either to god or man[,]” the absence of spiritual conviction, overpowered by the presence of fleshly pleasure, instigates the narrative proceedings, and Marrant introduces the central impetus for his adolescent moral destruction: In short, the

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<sup>27</sup> Because Marrant's narrative progresses linearly from sinfulness, to conversion, to redemption, and to ministry—mirroring the form of a conversion narrative—my evaluation and analysis of the textual plot will be executed along with the pattern of textual occurrence.



beginning of Marrant's narrative details the struggle between himself, as master, and God, as master (8).

Whereas traditional Christianity places Christ as the *master* of the body, mind, and soul, Marrant, through his music, revels in his community standing, his accumulation of monetary wealth, and his complete devotion to pleasure, as he ascends to a personal position of musical master of various instruments.<sup>28</sup> Lester Ruth explains the early stages of Methodist sanctification, as it relates to personal surrender in exchange for God's will. In discussing sanctification experiences, Ruth writes: "One set of these explanations focused on the overcoming or negation of some aspect of sinfulness that remains in new believers. The victory over this sin in human nature was described in images like overcoming self-will and self-love, mortification and crucifixion, burning vain desires, washing from heart uncleanness, an entire change of nature, and deliverance from indwelling sin" (102). Almost immediately a musical prodigy, Marrant expresses his power as the corporeal master of music: "I became master both of the violin and of the French-horn, and was much respected by the Gentlemen and Ladies whose children attended the school, as also by my master: This opened to me a large door of vanity and vice..." (9). Dillon asserts that "while mastery is constitutively denied to [Marrant] by the racialized structure of Charleston society, he finds another form of mastery here—one that competes (linguistically) in this passage with the master status of the school owner to whom he is apprenticed" (328-329).<sup>29</sup> What is missing from Dillon's reading is Marrant's internal unrest due to his resistance of

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<sup>28</sup> KJV, Matthew 6:24: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate one and love the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other."

<sup>29</sup> Dillon discusses, more specifically, the social and economic structures of the racialized Charlestown society of the late eighteenth century, claiming that Marrant carves out a space for himself, overcoming some social structures, through his musical abilities. In clarifying her argument, she asserts:

In advancing this argument, I do not mean to suggest that Marrant's French horn was, in fact, an abeng of sorts (an interesting, but eminently speculative claim). Rather, I would suggest that Marrant's experience with the French horn gave him mastery not only of music but of the unstable and mobilizing force of

salvation expressed within the *Narrative*. In other words, Dillon positions Marrant's sovereignty or mastery (as produced through music) against the racial hierarchy of Charles Town; yet, Marrant's conviction, even early on, reveals an inner-stirring for a submission to a sovereign power greater than any human, black or white. While he ignores this spiritual calling at first, choosing instead to chase vanity and wealth, Marrant is positioning his readers for an impending conversion. Marrant does, in fact, boast of his natural abilities for musical performance—the *mastery* of his art—and yet he confesses that he becomes “unstable as water[,]” gaining monetary provision, acclaim, and independence, after leaving his professional master (9). These worldly successes do not provide Marrant the internal solace that he seeks, and even though he posits his popularity upfront for the reader, this rhetorical act functions to demonstrate the futility of such recognition. His actions early in the text, specifically of musical performance, serve as a way not for Marrant to achieve spiritual redemption and intimacy with God or as a demonstration of using one's gifts, talents, and service for a higher power; instead, musical success and monetary gain, at least for Marrant, signifies a complete absence of God. He is aware of his need for provision and sustenance, which, in the case of an adolescent boy, comes from the family environment in conjunction with an employment of trade or skill. Indeed, the earlier quotation employs the use of “master” twice, and neither correlates to the heavenly master that Marrant deems so life-sustaining later in the narrative.

Facing the crossroads of worldly gain and spiritual improvement, the physical structure of the church-house thwarts Marrant's musical pathway and presents an opportunity for conversion within. With his companion by his side and his French horn in his hand, Marrant

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performance and assembly, particularly for African Americans whose performances achieved radical force from the position of the ‘break’—that is, from the position of epistemic dissensus or the site of frame disjuncture and by means of catalyzing or crystallizing the possibility of new assemblages emerging from such disruption. (334-335)

interrupts the tent revival of prominent minister, Reverend Whitefield, and is caught off guard as he faces the conviction that he is accountable for his sins and should confess, first, and then should convert to Christianity.<sup>30</sup> At first agreeing with a friend to enter the tent revival by “hallooing” and “blow[ing] the French horn among them[,]” Marrant inadvertently becomes susceptible to the Biblical teachings and commands of Reverend Whitefield (10).<sup>31</sup> More specifically, Marrant’s body is a controlling force even upon entrance, as he is seen “pushing the people to make room, to get the horn off [his] shoulder to blow it, just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text...” (11). Marrant’s conviction, triggered by the vision of Whitefield’s Bible, demonstrates the confrontation of not only the flesh versus the spirit, but of the body and verse, and while the minister consults the Bible for divine inspiration, viewers see Marrant’s body collapse. This powerful moment marks the end of Marrant’s carefree disobedient life; almost immediately, Marrant’s internal change is noted by his refusal to play the violin and his replacement of musical practice with scriptural study. This exchange of material props, one

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<sup>30</sup> Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), details a similar experience of observing Whitefield from afar:

...I came to a church crowded with people; the church-yard was full likewise, and a number of people were even mounted on ladders, looking in at the windows. I thought this a strange sight, as I had never seen churches, either in England or the West Indies, crowded in this manner before. I therefore made bold to ask some people the meaning of all this, and they told me the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield was preaching. I had often heard of this gentleman, and had wished to see and hear him; but I had never before had an opportunity. I now therefore resolved to gratify myself with the sight, and I pressed in amidst the multitude. When I got into the church I saw this pious man exhorting the people with the greatest fervor and earnestness, and sweating as much as I ever did while in slavery on Montserrat beach. I was very much struck and impressed with this; I thought it strange I had never seen divines exert themselves in this manner before, and I was no longer at a loss to account for the thin congregations they preached to. (139)

<sup>31</sup> Thomas S. Kidd, in *George Whitefield: America’s Spiritual Founding Father*, confirms that “Whitefield was one of the earliest Anglo-Americans to make serious efforts to reach African Americans like John Marrant with the gospel...” (261). Furthermore, Kidd validates the magnetism in which Whitefield delivered his message of salvation to oppressed populations, including African Americans in Charles Town, in addition to affirming the effectiveness of the receptivity of his sermons: “Perhaps Marrant’s retrospective account is stylized, but there can be no doubt that Whitefield’s preaching remained powerful. His meetings, as Marrant suggested, still attracted standing-room-only crowds: at another sermon in Charleston, his supporters had to ‘hoist’ Whitefield in at one of the church windows because he could not get in at the door” (249).

worldly and the other spiritual, empowers Marrant with a different sort of relief than his instruments could provide. The alteration represents the casting aside of the physical possessions that offer him selfish gains, in replacement of religious reinforcement in the form of the Bible, scripturally inspired, that increases the strength of the spirit.

Marrant encounters Whitefield and the Christian Methodists almost immediately within the narrative, and the spiritual relationship offered through the sect becomes a vital cornerstone for Marrant's movements and ministries throughout the remainder of the text. The act of conversion, as retold by Marrant, is at first observed as a very physical act, at least in its initial impact, but all the manifestations of the physical body stem from a spiritual root. Historically, Whitefield worked diligently in his ministries with diverse peoples, serving oppressed individuals such as Samson Occom, Phillis Wheatley, and Marrant. Joanna Brooks specifically describes the increasing allure of religious revivalism for African American and Native American peoples of the eighteenth century, as she gestures toward Whitefield's "noted...sentimental regard for black people, and especially for those who attended his revivals" (25). She further explains that this "ecclesiastical interest in communities of color" evoked an "attentiveness to racial difference" (32).<sup>32</sup> Whereas some religious tent revivals would have excluded the participation of African American men or women, Whitefield calls singular attention to Marrant's presence within the camp meeting, before Marrant even has the opportunity to "halloo" out as intended. The focus on this portion of the *Narrative* is to highlight the physical manifestations of Marrant—his willed disembodiment—especially his moments of self-fashioning, while illuminating the spiritual significance of such actions, in order to

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<sup>32</sup> Brooks also explains the impact of revivalism in the Methodist sect with the new productions of African American and Native American literatures. Because "this era of intensive racialization" highlighted racial individuality and expression, both groups of people began "reclaim[ing] and reinvest[ing] racial identity with positive values" (45-46).

demonstrate that regardless of the imposed racialized nature of his society, Marrant's redemptive Christianized state allows him the power to unite various factions within eighteenth-century America as the colorless instrument of Christ.

This particular scene of conversion magnifies the moments before Marrant transitions from a *master* of his instrument to an instrument used by the heavenly *Master*. Up to the moment of conviction, Marrant's physicality had been manifested through the playing of the violin and French horn, but after an encounter with the word of God, Marrant's control of the body is lost. In fact, Marrant would have observers and readers believe that he transforms from one in control of his physical demonstrations to one overwhelmed by them in order to be made of greater use as God's chosen vessel. Stricken by Whitefield's words but more poignantly by his physical placement (Marrant watches Whitefield "pointing with his finger" while "looking round...directly toward him"), he becomes both "speechless" and "senseless[.]" stripped of his previous carelessness with the incapability to walk or stand (11). In this moment, Marrant's horn, previously resting upon his shoulder, completely disappears from the text. When Marrant collapses and then "come[s] a little too [sic.][.]" the musical instrument that was, up to this point, central to the narrative is upstaged by the conversion experience (11).<sup>33</sup> Taves explains that this

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<sup>33</sup> Dillon addresses the fanatical, Christian nature of this excerpt—the possibility that the "material object" of the French horn and carousing within the tent revival are only dramatic exhibitions of the Methodist sect that distract from the larger message of the *Narrative*:

Indeed, in a dismissive review of Marrant's narrative, which appeared in a London periodical, the role of the French horn is the specific subject of mockery: the review reports that Marrant had strolled into a meeting house where Mr. W. was preaching, in order to disturb the meeting by blowing a French-horn; but was himself struck to the ground by a blast from the spiritual trumpet. The mirroring relation between the literal French horn and the figurative spiritual trumpet is presented here as *de trop*—a sign that the narrative as a whole is too 'glibly' constructed, too 'enlivened by the *marvellous*' to be of serious interest to readers. The French horn is too much of a scene stealer, according to this review, and its presence turns Marrant's conversion narrative into an orchestrated performance of Methodist drama rather than a legitimate account of religious experience. (319)

On the contrary, as historians have theologically established that Methodists regularly participated in loud, joyous, but arguably chaotic worship experiences, such a reading of denomination provides authenticity to Marrant's

type of sound-making was commonplace in Methodist revivals: “Preachers lost control of preaching services, not simply because people cried out or shouted, but because the people transformed them into prayer meetings...in the way that shouters prayed for mourners, shouters assumed that mourners needed their prayers in order to be saved” (103). In fact, the only sounds audible within the text are the authoritative declarations of Whitefield and Marrant’s “hallo[ing]” in the spirit. This moment provides insight into the distinct role reversal taking place—first that Marrant plotted to enter the meeting, halloo about, and disrupt with his French horn and then that he was instead overcome by Whitefield’s directive, that he hallooed about not through mischievous means but due to his “bitterness of...spirit[,]” and that his French horn disappears from the narrative altogether (11).

Marrant’s physical body immediately suffers upon confrontation with Whitefield and the scripture he preaches, and these behaviors continue for four days, as the state of his health controls the narrative progression. Finding that he can “neither walk or stand” and must be “carried by two men[,]” Marrant provides precise commentary about his self-denial and lack of physical improvement (11, 12). Debilitated by the experience of God’s power, Marrant combats his internal turmoil and resists food consumption, only swallowing a little water from time to time, as his religious experience becomes a living testimony of Pauline power at work in the converted Christian. While his bodily incapacities are exhibited through overall weakness, emotional distress, the rejection of food, drink, and medicine, and the loss of muscle control and motor skills, Marrant would have us believe, indicated by his body and within the text, that the source of this corporeal trauma is entirely spiritual. In fact, Marrant experiences confusion by

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account. Similar responses of engagement with cacophonous music, demonstrative shouting, and emotional response are witnessed within Lee’s journal (Chapter 3).

wondering about his “wounded spirit who can cure?” and is asked to repeatedly pray with Whitefield in order to combat the affliction (12). Readers should take notice, however, that prayerful words, alone, are not the antidote for Marrant’s suffering, but repentance and transformation take place because of an act of physical performance guided by Whitefield’s insistence on “falling upon [their] knees” in a recurrent fashion (13). Orality, in conjunction with sacred spiritual behaviors, is modeled for Marrant by Whitefield, and like a religious apprentice, Marrant mirrors these behaviors early on and learns the basic principles and disciplines of Methodism that can be passed along in later encounters. Ultimately, he is performing physical weakness and performing authenticity, simultaneously, just as he witnessed such powerful behaviors in the Methodist tent revival.

As prayer is prescribed as medicine, the incorporation of scripture becomes the therapy for recovery, and Marrant rejects both his worldly master and his musical talents in order to pledge exclusive allegiance to his new-found faith in God. Finding that his talent for playing the French horn and violin is oppositional to his conversion, Marrant allows the complete spiritual immersion of his body, mind, and soul in order to become an instrumental mouthpiece for Christianity.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, his personal physical performances have changed, as they have been traded for eternal gains by submission to a spiritual master. The sinful and carnal behaviors that have guided the *Narrative* up to this point are immediately replaced by spiritual exhibitions, and the focus shifts from Marrant, as a master of music, to Marrant, as an instrument of heaven. However, tension exists between what is actually happening within the moment and what Marrant tells readers is happening; in the words of Marrant, a greater power took dominion over

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<sup>34</sup> Lee too, in her own manners, presents herself as an “instrument” ready for use by God. See Chapter 3 for the ways in which she allows God to lead her to a greater calling of ministry through the travel circuit of evangelism.

the sins of the flesh and claimed the physical body for rebirth, so that he could be made new, in preparation for his spiritual sojourn to the wilderness, the Cherokees, and back to his own family.

As Marrant transforms from lost to redeemed, his dependency on material possessions shifts accordingly. The *Narrative* details a range of worldly physical objects that at first accompany Marrant in his life “devoted to pleasure and drinking in iniquity like water” and then in his conversion that sets his “soul at perfect liberty” (9, 13). These material performance props, as they are called here, are not talismans, charms, or supernatural powers for Marrant’s physical and spiritual journeys; they function as sources of support and often sustenance, or, as Marrant describes them, comforting objects that provide peace and rest in times of weakness and trial. While directly affecting Marrant’s physical (emotional and mental) well-being, these objects, nonetheless, serve as extensions to his actual body. Around the age of thirteen, Marrant’s entire identity was defined by his musical talents. Guided by a “strong inclination” to cast aside his traditional educational experience and replace it with individualized musical training—even against the warning of his mother—Marrant “learned very fast, not only to play, but to dance also” and was prodigious enough that he was soon performing before his own school and the local community (8). Even though Marrant could not have predicted this application early on, his extraordinary ability for performance, directly involving his communal peers, certainly paved a way for his later, spiritual ministry. As his family had been relocating from state to state, Charles Town music provided a security for young Marrant. Day in and day out, he was armed with either his violin or French horn, and from this talent emerged a personality attracted to attention, praise, and conceit. One could say, then, that these instruments are material props, not simply for public performance and payment but serving a metaphorical purpose as well, boosting a young man’s self-esteem and providing a sense of security—an aide or assistance—that geographic



movement from town to town may have displaced. Even as these objects first appear to assist Marrant in the most commonplace manners, the exchange of these objects—for instance the trading of the violin for the Methodist hymnal—indicates how these worldly material props become sacred objects of comfort. Nonetheless, Marrant’s ability to perform with these items remains constant, even though his performative intent is altered. As he incorporates religious objects, such as the Bible and the hymnal, in his encounters, his purposes of self-fashioning in the wilderness and amongst the Cherokee tribe are made evident. This exchange allows Marrant a means to rely on another source of power for his personal sustainment: With the surrender of his instrument and in the adoption of objects representative of his faith, Marrant, in behavior, testifies to his acknowledgement of weakness and dependency on a higher master.

The end result is the making of man into an instrument of God; in other words, Marrant must completely cast aside his worldly musical instruments that have provided personal gain and wealth through performance in order to be cleansed for preparation toward becoming a humble instrument who God can use for the increase of an eternal kingdom. This surrender of musical objects is important for the preparation of Marrant’s earthly mission. Dillon calls the French horn a “transitional object[,]” a possession that “in the hands of John Marrant, performs the relation between white luxury and black labor[,]” and while this assessment analyzes the social and political implications of Marrant’s historical position within an American labor force, my attention is directed toward both the performative nature of his talents and also the discarding of them in order to fulfill a greater service for his community—that of a spiritual mouthpiece, an instrument used by God (334). The exertions of musical performance demonstrated previously in the text begin to fade away as Marrant’s physical manifestations become divinely inspired through service to Christ.

Immediately after his conversion experience, manifesting itself even before his departure, Marrant behaves in a manner that fluctuates between broken despair and spiritual euphoria, placing his claim to alleged sanity and redemption in jeopardy.<sup>35</sup> As many readers and scholars have already noted, Marrant's sound mind, truth-telling, and authenticity, as a spiritual messenger and writer, are perhaps in question, both in his actual encounters with multiple peoples and within the text. Several moments within the narrative signal the uncertain condition of his mental state: Upon his refusal to play the violin for his sister, Marrant is called "crazy and mad;" his remaining sisters and brother join in the verbal attack, calling Marrant "every name but that which was good;" eventually, the entire family, including his mother and the surrounding neighbors, are "hardened...saying [he] was crazy;" and after his return from captivity, the community report is that one of the Marrant family "had quitted [sic.] school, went to Charles-Town to learn some trade; but came home crazy, and rambled in the woods, and was torn to pieces by the wild beasts" (14, 15, 15, 31). What Marrant claims as conversion and Christian salvation is perceived by the local collective body as lunacy and madness. Moreover, critics have often commented about the rituals and behaviors within the Methodist sect, including the presence of Whitefield: Dillon asserts that "the community gathered around Whitefield is initially construed as senseless; it is characterized by Whitefield's status as a 'crazy man' and the imputed lack of meaning of his speech[.]" while Dee Andrews argues that from the perspectives of other theologies, Methodists had the historic reputation of "making people crazy" (321, 88).

Furthermore, Marrant discovers that he is spiritually unequipped to face curiosity, questioning, resistance, and temptation inside his own family and home. After Marrant's

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<sup>35</sup> The conflict between mental instability and Christian redemption is also explored in Chapter 3, in Lee's and her son's suicidal tendencies.

conversion, his behaviors and ways of thinking are greatly altered, calling into question his stability and sanity. Having undergone such a change, his family hardly recognizes him, in speech and manners, as the person he was before. Marrant, however, would have readers believe that his change in behavior is only a reflection of his spiritual redemption, and the skepticism he receives from his family is a spiritual test he must pass. Young in his faith and unable to withstand such oppression, Marrant responds by fleeing into the wilderness for a transitional period within the *Narrative*. Certainly redeemed and yet feeble, Marrant's spiritual strength must be made stronger so that his faith can be tested among several Native American tribes. Indeed, Marrant highlights the geographic barriers that "divided the inhabited and cultivated parts of the country from the wilderness[,]" without racializing these areas; guided by his convictions and enlightened by a higher authority, he moves into an area that offers both seclusion and reflection (16). Emphasis, then, is placed on the movement of the physical body from one geographic region to another: The assertion is that agency, in this movement, is gained by shifting from Charles Town to the wilderness, that what Marrant leaves behind him is not lost indefinitely but that his associations with other peoples multiply in the narrative progression.

It also appears that Marrant would have us to believe that Charles Town, before conversion, epitomizes the chaos and "craziness" of the secular world, whereas the Methodist faith offers a promise of solace and order. However, his confrontation with what he claims is spiritual truth in the Methodist tent revival and his resulting labor before God for spiritual "liberty" does not automatically erase the consequences of his past occupations, interactions, and overall carnal character, what Marrant describes in his personal assessment (before conversion) as being "unstable as water" and "living without God or hope in the world" (13, 9). In other words, whereas Marrant embodies a salvation experience, the behavioral shift from disbelief and

recklessness to purity and redemption is gradual. Even Whitefield warns, in his daily follow-up with Marrant, that he should “‘Hold fast’ [to what] ‘hast already obtained’[,]” a clear signifier that salvation, although immediate, does not erase the earthly struggle of self and others (13). Marrant’s solution for the chaos of Charles Town, then, is a retreat from civilization, a natural niche provided in the wilderness for physical depletion but spiritual rejuvenation. In this space, Marrant can focus on his newfound purpose as a heavenly instrument, in preparation for his upcoming tribulations amongst the native Cherokee peoples. Furthermore, upon Marrant’s return to Charles Town, after he has endured being “sharply tried[,]” his once accusatory family and community, who Marrant identifies as “family...friends...and acquaintances[,]” collectively receive him with rejoicing and gladness (15, 33). The opinion and consensus of societal spectators transform from fear and skepticism to acceptance and belief but only after Marrant has exercised his faith and sustained his spiritual performance in front of many diverse peoples.

In the transition from the carnal flesh to the new spiritual body, Marrant experiences familial conflict, self-imposed exile, and disciplined fasting. Worldly pleasures and comforts disappear from Marrant’s set of priorities, and the narrative is instead directed by a desire to fulfill a heavenly will ordained from above. Marrant, at first, denies his own body to become a strong spiritual messenger, and although wrestling with his young spirituality, becomes steadfast and “persuaded in [his] mind” that the old life would ensure death, whereas the new life promises rebirth (15). Furthermore, his self-banishment to the wilderness provides a fresh space for healing from his sinful past in Charles Town—at first a member of the black community and then indoctrinated into the protestant revivalism of the Methodist sect. Because he feels he can no longer survive in the isolation and persecution of his home—as he is rejected by his family, Marrant flees to find solace outside of known civilization, into the fields, eventually choosing to

step “over the fence[,]” confirming his decision to turn from “the old course of sin and vice [in order to] serve and cleave to the Lord” (16, 15). Another way of understanding Marrant’s familial conflict is by viewing the separation as a necessary step for casting aside the comforts of the world in order to cling to an eternal relationship. In other words, just as Marrant rids himself of his vanity, selfishness, and musical instruments, he must also detach from his dependency on his family; in order to fully surrender to God, he must cleanse himself of all worldly impurities and stand independently in his newfound faith to wholly succumb to Christ’s commands. Feeling an incapability to hold fast to his faith, Marrant chooses not a complete cutting off and rejecting of his family, and yet he insists upon the need for “quietness and retirement” and eventually, a calling “to go from home altogether” (15, 16).

No longer carrying, practicing, or playing his instruments, Marrant seeks solace and direction from his two material objects of great personal worth—his “small pocket Bible” and “Dr. Watt’s hymn books” (15). The silence and indifference that Marrant experiences within his own home and his internal struggles of self-doubt and uncertainty are minimal in light of his newfound performance props—no longer assisting in personal and professional gain but navigating Marrant’s path toward a more sacred destination. In fact, Marrant explains that his Bible not only provides textual guidance, but it offers protection and sustenance, as he grew stronger in grace, the more he was persecuted (14). In this sense, the Bible functions as Marrant’s survival guide for religious journey—his ultimate source for spiritual nutrition and sustenance, but it also allows Marrant the capacity of security and defense—a refuge and shield from treacherous encounters.

Even nature itself takes notice, as Marrant explains, providing material assistance for him, as the bushes become a covering shelter, the moss transforms into a bed, and the fueled fire

becomes a defense; Marrant considers this tranquil environment a preparatory field for the trials upcoming. There is no verbal conversation exchanged in this verdant setting between God and man, but Marrant references the “sweet communion” shared below the trees and darkness (21). Communion, in eighteenth-century Methodism, was an important act of worship and engagement. Richey Russell writes that “...early Methodism had an Edenic quality to it” that included a “richly communal and spiritual character” for the collective body (xii). He further explains:

Persons engaged one another—singing, praying, shouting, praising God, weeping. These were communal acts. The interaction and intimacy and sense of oneness which Wesley expected of his small religious groups, the class and band, had gone public. The deeply felt, affective unity expressed itself in love—of course to God but most dramatically toward one another. For early Methodists, community was itself intensely spiritual, contagiously so, a spreading fire of love and holy zeal. That communal intensity expressed itself physically in emotional embracing and visually, even for the newcomer, in the displays and expressions of affection. (3)<sup>36</sup>

Marrant, in his time spent alone in the wilderness and isolated in captivity, mimics the communal behaviors learned in the church house. He is deprived of a Christian community to interact with, but he fully transfers these behaviors to a one-on-one interaction with God. David Hempton, too, discusses the close intimacy shared between God and man—that “Methodists believed that God was with them, not in a general theological sense, but in a set of encounters, which supposedly obeyed no other explanation than that of a proactive divine presence” (40). As the forest becomes a provisional environment for Marrant’s physical needs, he encounters God’s divine presence within the sanctuary of his own making.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> This understanding of communal Methodist theology is also valuable for Chapter 3’s argument concerning Lee’s relationship with the church and with her readers.

<sup>37</sup> For more scholarship concerning the Methodist beliefs on communion, see D. Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800* and J.D. Walsh, “Élie Halévy and the Birth of Methodism.” Russell also notes that these worship experiences were sometimes called “love feasts” (3, 102-103).

As an initial act of exercising his faith, Marrant must recall the physical manners of religious discipline presented before him by the Christian community he left behind. During this period of sacred preparation, it is important for Marrant not only to describe his spiritual development but also to detail the ways in which his body responds to these circumstances. These corporeal demonstrations parallel with Jesus's temptation in the wilderness as Marrant likens himself to Biblical prophetic occurrence; his earlier dependencies on playing instruments, camaraderie, monetary gain, and even intake of food, shift to the background of his own development. Instead, he practices self-denial, abnegation, and the purging of the body within the wilderness and then performs these actions, again, within the text. Armed with only his pocket-sized Bible and hymnal, he confronts the dangerous unknowns of the wilderness and relies almost solely on fasting, prayer, and communion with Christ. Marrant writes that when he restrains his appetite for days, he "seem[s] to have clearer views into the spiritual things of God[,]” and as the body becomes weaker the spirit becomes stronger (15). This eucharistic reversal that requires physical denial of nutritional replenishment allows for a more significant renewal of the spirit of the man, revealing, in this instance, Pauline power, that is achieved through personal weakness and supernatural strength. Whereas the Christian sacrament and Lord's Supper, the sampling of bread and wine, traditionally represents the brokenness of Christ's body and blood shed as an atonement for sins, Marrant reverses the role of food and drink intake to achieve intimacy with God. As he fasts, his own physical body is weakened, but his faith in God and the transfer of God's power to him is strengthened.

Even though Marrant does emphasize his verbal behaviors, imitating the ways that Whitefield taught him to plead before the throne of God in prayer, he, moreover, emphasizes the manners in which he prays in conjunction with physical movements. Beyond the eyes of the

Anglo-American, African American, and Native American communities, Marrant remains tucked away for spiritual preparation within the wilderness, and there, his prayerful expressions intersect with exhibitions of bodily suffering. The dependency that he experiences internally manifests itself externally through crying, stumbling, and leaning upon trees. Stressing his faintness, brought on by a lack of nutritional resources, Marrant seems to rhetorically combine his behaviors of oral prayer with his physical actions. His verbal interactions, as communicated within the text, only provide a partial connection with Christ; he presses further and describes the complex ways in which his body responds to his spiritual behaviors:

...I was so feeble that I tumbled half way down the tree, not being able to support myself, and lay upon my back on the ground an hour and a half, praying and crying; after which, getting a little strength, and trying to stand upright to walk, I found myself not able; then I went upon my hands and knees, and so crawled till I reached a tree that was tumbled down, in order to get across it, and there I prayed with my body leaning upon it above an hour, that the Lord would take me to himself. Such nearness to God I then enjoyed, that I willingly resigned myself into his hands. (16-17)

This moment provides not just a cursory glimpse into Marrant's interactions with his savior but, more so, an insight into his fashioning of rhetorical performance. Brought to a place of complete humility, Marrant plays the role of inferior to a higher power, as he positions the body to the lowest location possible, the floor of the wilderness. Providing insight into the complex interpretations of prayer in conjunction with sacred body positions, Carol Zaleski describes the act of bowing or being prostrate in this way:

When one is face down on the ground, it is difficult to think of promoting one's own agenda. To think with the mind of the church, comes naturally in this position....And it is true that lying flat on the ground is not, for most Christians, an appropriate posture for prayer; ordinarily, we stand or kneel, and each of these postures has a rich symbolism of its own. But there is something about the image of prostration that evokes the essential gestalt of Christianity: to pray, in union with Christ, 'not my will, but Thy will be done.' (35)<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> KJV, Luke 22:42

Serving as a historical reference, Lucy Fanning Watson (1803) explains her experience with Methodist instructed prayer and the body's response to such an act: "Praying on her knees for the first time, '...being formerly used to



What we find in this scene is the literal and metaphorical sense of Marrant being stripped bare of his previous carnal identity. As his body matches his speech, he behaves in complete dependency upon Christ and acknowledges his fallibility as a man. Depleted of nutritional sustenance, Marrant is certainly weak due to this physical issue, but as in his previous interactions with Whitefield, his attempts of communicating to a higher power are ineffective until his body participates in the petition. These acts of lying upon the ground and leaning upon supportive trees represent a complete dependency upon God and the reward of experiencing intimacy with him. Acknowledging his persecutions and adversities, Marrant meets God in an unexpected terrain, outside the markings of civilized society. Furthermore, the shedding of tears represents a physiological response that supersedes what verbal emotion can communicate. Marrant, surely famished and dehydrated, still secretes a part of himself that represents the ineffectual attempts of man. This act of purging, in effect, provokes an overwhelming awareness of communion with God and confidence in his provision, through faith alone.

Weeping plays an increasingly significant role within the text as Marrant begins to substitute physical reactions to stand in the place of words. In other words, as he draws closer to God and embraces his ministerial calling, he leverages the use of his own body, the vessel through which he believes God can move, as a replacement for speech and orality. Taves explains that, for Methodists in the camp meetings of the 1800s, one's personal behavioral responses allowed for a more interactive worship experience:

...Methodists elaborated on the experience of their British counterparts in two ways: by pushing the Methodist performance tradition in a more interactive direction and by interpreting their bodily experiences in light of biblical typologies...[Imperative here is]

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pray[sic.] standing, sitting or lying down,' Watson felt that '[her] heart was very hard, and [her] affections very cold.'...She kept a dark room as her 'place of secret prayer,' and it was here that it [sic.] she '*felt the change to take place*' (15-18)" (qtd. in D. Andrews 88). Because the Watson family collection is only available for physical archival view, I have cited D. Andrews' record of it here.

the shouters' central interpretive act—the association of weeping, crying out, falling to the ground, and shouting for joy with the presence of the power of God—in relation to grassroots pressures to make preaching and worship more interactive. (78)

When confronted by the Indian hunter (who Marrant unexpectedly joins with in the woods for hunting game (19)) about his seemingly unusual interactions with an invisible person, Marrant justifies that God is, in fact, “here present” (20). In the isolation of the wilderness and far beyond Whitefield’s camp meeting with the Charles Town Christians, Marrant continues to fashion himself as the ideal Methodist who offers one’s own body as a performative shell for God’s use. After providing abstract answers to a lengthy list of interrogations, Marrant responds in fear that he will be taken back home and thus discontinues verbal communication, only to react with weeping. When Marrant’s verbal rationalizations fail him, his body becomes the communicator for his internal distress, and the response of tears becomes a type of providential provision within the *Narrative*. Marrant’s individual despondency directly leads to a dependency on his faith that God will prevail, and his refusal to relinquish his “comfort and communion with God” triumphs over any narrative encounter (20).<sup>39</sup> Marrant’s suppression of verbal expression and his freedom of physical response indirectly involves the participation of the hunter. In this moment, Marrant attempts to create a pseudo-worship experience involving God’s spirit, Marrant, and the witness. As Marrant’s tears fall, he rids himself of his own fear, uncertainty, and inability—an emotional surrender to God’s power—while engaging the gaze of the hunter. Even though, in this instance, his witness does not profess a belief in or conversion to Christianity, he does function as a partner, teammate, and teacher to Marrant, and he is inextricably involved in Marrant’s worship experience, enabling him to find nutrition and shelter, despite the dangers of the uncivilized

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<sup>39</sup> Walsh explains that the Methodists of the late 1730s believed “a melancholy people are a religious people” that “[t]he conversion experiences of the first Methodists show many anxiety-producing factors—spiritual yearning, religious doubt, sexual difficulty, social and geographic mobility, pain, bereavement...” (4, 5).

areas, and moreover, instructing him on the communications and languages of the Cherokee peoples. This partnership formed in the forest, like Marrant's time spent in solitary fellowship with God, represents a period of transformation and preparation.

Immediately following this season of spiritual preparation in the wilderness, Marrant notes his change in geographic location by stating that he and the hunter "directed [their] course" toward the Cherokee nation; thus, the previous season of soul-searching, internal scrutiny, and spiritual rejuvenation now becomes Marrant's most valuable asset (21). His transformation from a black man and musician to self-fashioned Methodist Christian provides the premise for Marrant to assert himself as a light-bearer outside his own racial classification. Whereas, historically, eighteenth-century Charles Town society would have certainly erected both racial barriers in social hierarchy and geographical barriers within the city, Marrant's narrative suggests an evasion of these classifications by nearly dismissing his own race, altogether.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, in order to become an inculcated spiritual messenger, he accepts that his time completely isolated with God—separate from society and without the comfortable crutch of his musical instruments—is the source of training that will be needed for hardship faced and conversion among the Cherokees. Marrant acknowledges, upon written record and reflection,

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<sup>40</sup> Lacy K. Ford, Jr. explains that the early American South, at the turn of the eighteenth-century, encompassed myriad voices of exclusion involving both enslaved and free African Americans:

Full-voiced advocates of exclusion sought either to remove African Americans from southern society altogether, or, more realistically, minimize the role of blacks, slave and free, in the civic, social, and economic life of the South, much as had been done in northern society following the postrevolutionary emancipations. To implement their strategy, southern exclusionists advocated pushing free blacks further toward the margins of society and taking some cautious first steps toward putting slavery on the road to ultimate extinction. Thus they favored colonization because it reduced the free black population in the near term and established a working mechanism to facilitate gradual emancipation on a larger scale in the future. In essence, exclusionists wanted to 'whiten' their society by reducing the size and diminishing the importance of the region's African-American population. (138)

Certainly, Marrant would have encountered such racial tensions, as he lived as a free black man in Charles Town in 1785, but his own Christian representation and the authority it granted him through Christ sought to evade or supersede, even if rhetorically, these racial classifications that restricted him and others.

that his lessons on Cherokee language translation and communication “together” with his “sweet communion” with God represented “preparation for the great trial” awaiting him “to pass through” (21). Significant here is the concept that spiritual power requires both training and perseverance through obstacles, and these acquired skills manifest themselves, through continued dependency on God, when Marrant is faced with unknown temptations and tribulations.

As in his earlier interactions with only the hunter, readers witness Marrant shift from dependency on oral performance to the exhibition of his own body: While a Cherokee captive—as this section resembles the traditional captivity narrative culminating in a providence tale—Marrant’s language almost immediately fails him. Brought within the fortification barrier and questioned by the tribesman’s chief, he becomes unable to provide sufficient answer to appease his superiors during the interrogation and examination. Confronted with captivity and further trauma, Marrant “returned no answer, but burst into a flood of tears[,]...calling upon [the] Lord Jesus” (21-22). Most noticeable in this moment is not his verbal incapacities but Marrant’s fallback onto other forms of physical communication. Specifically, his anatomical displays demonstrate that when Marrant’s tongue cannot speak the words to communicate, his body becomes an intercessory instrument for use. When pressed to speak further about his relationship with God, and to provide greater detail about who God is, Marrant “g[ives] him no answer but continue[s] praying and weeping” (22). Stressing, once again, the emphasis upon power made known through weakness, or rather the stripping down of man for the glorification of God, Marrant’s dependency upon his faith and a power greater than himself, accelerates the narrative movement toward freedom. On a greater level, this act of performance shifts the emphasis from Marrant’s individual capabilities; unlike the beginning of the *Narrative*, when Marrant relied upon his own capacity to excel through performance by the implementation of his body and

talents, his captivity calls for another, more spiritual form of performance to ensure his innocence and freedom. His acknowledgement of personal weakness and his complete dependence of God—His power, His might, His sufficiency—intensifies the power made known through total reliance on God, regardless of color and societal status: Ultimately, Marrant gains power through performing weakness.

Faced with the opportunity of the testing of his faith despite his personal weaknesses, Marrant draws strength from salvation through God and his ability to rely upon God’s spiritual power. Like Daniel in the lion’s den, Marrant’s captivity tale mimics the behaviors of those prophetic figures recorded in Biblical history before him.<sup>41</sup> Without any earthly assistance, his “dungeon bec[o]mes[s his] chapel[,] and he insists, within the *Narrative*, that “the Lord Jesus did not leave [him] in this great trouble, but was very present, so that [Marrant] continued blessing him, and singing his praises all night without ceasing” (22).<sup>42</sup> Refusing to become downcast and rejoicing in his condition, Marrant tells us he communes with Christ, via prayer and spirituals, thus facing the questioning from examiners in the morning. Upon his morning of execution, Marrant again behaves with ultimate dependency on God and the physical reaction of tears, as he accepts the test of faith required of him. Interceding on his behalf, God’s providence,

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<sup>41</sup> KJV, Daniel 6:6-28

<sup>42</sup> Taves describes the blend of Euro-American Methodist values and African American influences of spiritual behavior. Singing, in particular, plays a significant role in these performances of worship and ministry:

Where European worship, especially in the Protestant traditions, placed the emphasis on the word, whether spoken or sung, African worship placed the emphasis on rhythmic interaction, whether spoken or enacted in bodily movements. Where the former encouraged a relatively static relationship between leader and people structured around the formal preaching and singing of the word, the latter emphasized a dynamic interaction between leader and people structured by means of music. The effect of this confluence of styles was apparent in singing, preaching, the use of the body, and the level and meaning of interaction in worship. (80)

Marrant, alone in captivity, rehearses and performs these spiritual behaviors, accepting his own weakness and trusting in God’s providential ability not only to release him from his captivity but also to use him as a human instrument for spiritual salvation.

documented by Marrant, becomes the driving impetus within the account, and Marrant is saved from certain danger and impending death. Marrant's response relies little on the effectiveness of his own strength because his faith in Christ leads him to freedom from Cherokee captivity. Crying out, approaching God in prayer, and feeling his conviction to act—all quite physical responses—the insistence on Marrant's execution is thwarted by his capability to communicate in the native tongue (24).

Despite the spiritual victory Marrant details in his capture, he is careful to redirect all the acclaim of such action to the redemptive nature manifested in Christ's power. But never does Marrant take agency of his own talents and abilities or even of the words spoken in this instance; instead he, rhetorically within the text, and historically in the actual occurrence, draws attention toward the spiritual power he experiences: "...the Lord impressed a strong desire upon my mind to turn into their language, and pray in their tongue. I did so, and with remarkable liberty, which wonderfully affected the people. One circumstance was very singular, and strikingly displays the power and grace of God. I believe the executioner was savingly converted to God" (23-24). While Marrant does coerce his captors due to the language he speaks, his reasoning for inclusion of this moment leads readers to perceive an even more dynamic aspect of the plot. In Marrant's terms, it is not the spoken language that provides the means for his delivery but the conviction of God to intercede in a moment of such dire need. In other words, Marrant's dependency on his faith allows the Holy Spirit to move within him so that the voice of God might further speak through him. Moreover, this paralysis of speech transfers to the executioner; after his salvation experience, his oral communication is stilted, "unable to speak for about five minutes[,]" and yet his body continues to respond in powerful ways, reacting with rising from his knees and an emotional embrace (24). This response transforms from that of enemy and captor and becomes a

connection based upon spiritual repentance and redemption. Bridging the gap of both Cherokee Indian/African American, execution guard/prisoner, and native savage/Christian, this act of embrace signifies an eternal brotherhood that crosses cultural and racial boundaries, all made possible through the racial, cultural, and spiritual liberation Christianity offers.

Specifically, Marrant's performance culminates in an astute act that minimalizes his carnal self, elevates his spiritual self, and invokes the use of performance props to aid in the salvation of his peers—only made possible through a presentation of personal weakness that echoes Christ's acclaim. Having escaped captivity and now appearing before the king and his daughter, Marrant reacts in three particular ways: literary performance, intercessory prayer on bended knee, and the physical shedding of tears. Being commanded by the king to read specific textual passages from the Bible, Marrant intrigues the sovereign's daughter with not simply the spoken words but with the material object of the Bible itself. Through the act of holding the Bible, reading from it, responding to the word "Jesus," and gesticulating through body language, Marrant testifies to the power of God, brought forth through salvation, but the action of the king's daughter first prompts transformation among the tribe and the onset of Marrant's spiritual leadership. Infatuated with Marrant's Bible, the princess repeatedly takes the book out of his hand, opens it, and kisses it. Dissatisfied because the book will not speak, the gathered congregation, including the daughter, responds in intercessory prayer upon bended knee, soliciting sanctification through appeal to the heavens. Gates, referencing "the slave," claims that African American oppressed peoples "possessed at most a liminal status within the human community. To read and to write was to transgress this nebulous realm of liminality" (128).<sup>43</sup> As

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<sup>43</sup> Other references in Black Atlantic literature, particularly Equiano's narrative, address this same trope of the talking book, and critics note the ways in which slaves, and, in this case, native peoples, struggled to understand new world print technologies. See Gates, Jr., "The Trope of the Talking Book" in *The Signifying Monkey*.

before, Marrant's *Narrative* moves beyond the use of verbal response and action, signifying a greater direction of the performances of the body. The physical display of holding the Bible and reading scripture arouses the curiosity of both the executioner and the king's daughter, and Marrant uses his body, made "strong[er] in the spirit," to overcome where his words fail or falter (27). Performing even more physical acts, Marrant is held accountable by the king for the sickness of the princess. Being commanded to petition the Lord for her restoration of body, Marrant responds with admission of weakness and fear, yet with greater dependency on deliverance through his faith in God. He initiates prayer, in fervency and sincerity, but acknowledging that God was testing his faithfulness, Marrant pushes through the barriers that were, metaphorically, locking heaven's doors. In finality, it is his act of "cr[ying] again" that provides the spiritual antidote for the tribe's distress, and upon this emotional outpour, executed through his body as the mouthpiece of God, Marrant records that "a great change took place" among all the people (27, 28). While Cherokee tribesman experience salvation, Marrant is elevated to a position of near-royalty among the native peoples; in this case, his ability to function as a spiritual messenger and deliverer for the Cherokee nation not only brings healing to the community, but Marrant is, moreover, promoted from the position of inferior captive to superior leader. Because of his spiritual conversion with Whitefield, his preparatory training in the wilderness, and his steadfast faithfulness while in captivity, Marrant exerts agency and power not simply by coercion of words but in his physical performances. Through the reading of scripture, the shedding of tears, and the act of bended-knee prayer, Marrant's body—no longer limited by the imposed racialized structure of early America—exemplifies the powerful redemption of Christianity, of which the Cherokees Marrant first encounters are skeptical. But Marrant is careful to redirect this attention and newfound acclaim to a higher power: For



instance, he does not position himself in a literary hierarchy of prominence within the narrative but instead remains steadfast that personal weakness and self-surrender to God can be transformed into an eternal superiority that surpasses temporal struggle. Because his identity is now encompassed by his association with Christ and his overall religious renewal, Marrant surpasses his limitations as African American and captive, in order to build a bridge through theological and providential experience, supposedly captivating the hearts and community of the Cherokee people.

The culmination of Marrant's cultural and religious experiences—worship with the Methodists, isolation in the wilderness, and habitation amongst the Cherokees—comes to fruition when he travels back to his home community to revisit family and friends. Reminiscent of the conversion narrative and spiritual autobiography, Marrant's homecoming reflects the death of his old-Charles Town-self and the rebirth of a new being reconciled through spiritual sojourn and progress. In this moment, not only has Marrant's identity transformed since fleeing to the wilderness, but his physical appearances are greatly altered as well. Like the return of the prodigal son, Marrant becomes unrecognizable and hears rumored tales about his madness, disappearance, and reported death, causing much anguish for his family. He reports: "My dress was purely in the Indian stile [sic.]; the skins of wild beasts composed my garments, my head was set out in the savage manner, with a long pendant down my back, a sash round my middle without breeches, and a tomahawk by my side" (30). In addition to these physical descriptions, the *Narrative* provides commentary that one man within the Charles Town community received Marrant as "a wild man...come out of the woods to be a witness for God, and to reprove our ingratitude and stupefaction!" (31-32). The reflection on his physical appearances, in conjunction with the observations concerning his spiritual insight, concisely resolve how both external and

internal modifications have progressed within the text. This return home marks not only a resolution within Marrant but also an increased security and strength for embracing his own religious conversion without feeling inferior or threatened by those surrounding him. Whereas Marrant escaped from town a fearful and insecure adolescent, African American, born-again Christian, he returns representing the blended power of all ethnicities he has experienced. Because Marrant's spiritual identity functions as an inclusive umbrella above all other qualities, his loyalty to his Christian faith becomes manifest in all other individual encounters. In other words, Marrant remains, fundamentally, an African American male, and yet he can layer on (and not reject) other cultural experiences in addition to his foundational uniqueness. He can boldly embody that of the African Americans, Cherokees, and Christians without feeling as if he is limited by racialized confinement: Each identity is not collapsed upon the other, but Marrant, because of his experiences, is able to adopt the African American, Cherokee, and Christian identities both in appearance and in practice. While he cannot literally and physically become all ethnicities at once—nor can he literally and physically evade his genetic racial identity of color—he can relate to and more importantly minister to various peoples, regardless of their imposed identity. He deems his identity in Christ as more powerful than any other classification, and he spreads this message, specifically, through his own self-fashioning. In fact, his actual embodiment becomes the key to this maneuver: Marrant becomes, in the moment, an instrument of God's power, and in the text, an instrument of his own rhetoric. Choosing often not to speak or respond to interrogation and curiosity, Marrant's self-fashioning—in acts of spiritual performance—communicate for him, and finally, Marrant's identity is disclosed through his physical responses—an embrace and kiss with his sister.

Marrant's Return Home: "Made White in the Blood of the Lamb"

In the end, Marrant suggests that the outward impressions of the body are morally insignificant, claiming that metaphorically, the colored become white through Christ just as Christ becomes more colored. In other words, Christian identity, in the text, is not defined by one superior color only but by a salvation experience among diverse peoples: The God of the African American is the same God of the Methodist and the Cherokee. Because of his own redemption and his interactions with people, Marrant becomes the colorless instrument of physicality, where attention is drawn away from external appearances, and the focus is directed toward the interiority of the person. Let us return to the introductory passage, where spiritual language supersedes any racial separations:

...Indian tribes may stretch out their hands to God; that the black nations may be made white in the blood of the Lamb; that vast multitudes, of hard tongues, and of strange speech, may learn the language of Canaan, and sing the songs of Moses, and of the Lamb, and, anticipating the glorious prospect, may we all with fervent hearts, and willing tongues, sing Hallelujah; the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ. (39-40)

By adapting a unique narrative approach—that is choosing to focus upon the performative body in a time and culture where the individual person of color matters very little— Marrant allows significant emphasis on the transfigurations of his actual body; however, in each scenario, readers are urged to push beyond eighteenth-century social and racial stereotypes, in order to embrace the wholeness that is brought forth by Christ and his salvation. Because Marrant does not succumb to one static identity, or as he becomes the transferrable messenger between many, his redemptive experiences of eternal power, despite carnal weaknesses, are made known through his physical behaviors. It is neither his musical talents nor orality that dictates the narration of his account, but instead, his behaviors, his travels, and his faith are guided by Pauline power and self-fashioned performance.

What I have argued in this chapter is that Marrant attempts to revise the manner in which racial identity is constructed in the late eighteenth century through an emphasis on his spiritual relationship with God as it is revealed through physical performances. While readers might expect that in doing so, he would blatantly criticize the southern community of Charles Town—a hub of racial oppression for African American free men and slaves—he chooses to avoid racial labels and instead solely emphasizes the opportunity of growth extended through Christian salvation. This rhetorical method involves the invocation of an extensive literary tradition, including the spiritual autobiography, conversion narrative, captivity narrative, and providence tale, which describes Marrant's geographic and spiritual sojourn as he surrenders his own rights and abilities in order to submit to an eternal calling. The manifestations of this kind of faith, as Marrant presents it in the narrative, transform the Methodist, Cherokee, and African American peoples he encounters.

Specifically, this type of self-fashioning adapts the ways that eighteenth-century Americans are thinking about African American and Native American bodies. Other literary activists such as Ignatius Sancho, Briton Hammon, Equiano, and Wheatley each employ their own methods for representing themselves and a more collective body among whom they lived. This understanding of personal self-fashioning through a religious lens sheds light onto our increased awareness of the sometimes untraditional means by which both African Americans and Native Americans sought to be understood in early American society and represented in their literary productions. While within the early republic, these oppressed people are beginning to read, write, publish, and orate—which overcomes some racial stereotypes and oppression and allows for participation within both the public and private spheres—in Marrant's *Narrative*, it is the redemptive blood of Christ that makes one significant and equal in society. Because of the

limited agency of oppressed peoples due to racial classification in early America, Marrant adopts the rhetoric of Christianity, which is not communicated through use of the voice, as much as it is demonstrated through Pauline power, a complete dependency on Christ for deliverance and representation. Self-fashioning, enabled by Christianity, rises above barriers, classifications, and prejudices of the time, unifying the fragmented and whitewashing with redemptive purity, myriad colors of ethnicity.

## CHAPTER 2

### PURITAN PRINCIPLE AND SAVAGE MAJESTY IN *HOBOMOK*: LOVING LIKE THE GREAT SPIRIT, BEYOND NATURAL HISTORY

As Chapter 1 demonstrates, African American male authors—some free, some slave—began negotiating their own agency within early republican political, social, and religious spaces. In addition to the mass production of slave narratives and autobiographies in the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth centuries, Marrant's literary contributions reveal a hybrid genre that combines various elements from multiple published genres. In doing so, he not only claims that minority populations can possess authority through Christian faith, but he also positions spiritual identity above restrictive constructions of race. Chapter 2 explores Lydia Maria Child's first publication, *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times* (1824), which fictionally reimagines the seventeenth-century Puritan involvement with pre-existing Native American tribes. While Child's novel differs in genre form and subject position—that she is an Anglo-American female writing fiction—it subscribes to the consistent themes of race, religion, and performance examined in this project. Like Marrant and later Jarena Lee (Chapter 3), Elias Boudinot, and William Apess (Chapter 4), Child is a Christian writer who reimagines the racial body in an effort to reshape American cultural attitudes, as she partners with marginalized populations to expose injustice and demand change: In the movement from Marrant, a black man, to Child, a white woman, Child represents a perspective on the outside of racial restriction, yet she is, nonetheless, navigating her own struggle of gendered marginalization. In her first attempt as a novelist, Child sought to revise the absence of the Native American in archival history and, more specifically, reimagine early colonial Native American identity through the creation of a counter-history representing the fictional Hobomok. Like Apess in his *Eulogy of King Philip*, Child

revisited a moment in history when the English colonists and the early Native American tribes (such as the Wampanoags) attempted to coexist together in New England. While Apess offers a defense of the native tribes involved in King Philip's War, albeit rife with extreme violence and dissention between the early colonists and the Native American tribesmen, Child depicts an exceptional alliance formed between Hobomok and the Euro-Americans, predating widespread warfare in New England. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Native American advocacy was limited to a few writers, activists, and speakers, such as Samsom Occom, Apess, and Boudinot, but fiction, as a genre, allowed Child a literary means for reimagining Native American identity that was missing from the historical archive. *Hobomok* thus represents one author's novice attempt of writing fiction of advocacy—which expands the opportunity for taking about political engagement—even though she had not yet grasped a full understanding of the complexities of Indian Removal and American inequality.

#### Child's Childhood: Familial Favor and Authorial Inspiration

Born the youngest of five children, Child's passions surpassed the gendered expectations and standards of her time. Leaning into the advice, experiences, and books of her learned brother, Convers Francis, Child considered herself more capable than traditional nineteenth-century gender roles allowed. In fact, social disadvantages such as her family's laborer background and her exclusion from the sort of elite education that was extended only to boys, fueled her feminist instincts and motivated her more vigorously toward the exertion of her own voice in writing. Child spent the duration of her life burdened by an "insatiable yearning for love" that was absent in her childhood (*The First Woman* 5). While her father focused almost entirely on work and manual productivity, her mother was spent, both physically and emotionally, by the delivery of all her children and the domestic responsibilities they required.

The neglect Child experienced as a child, combined with a deep resentment that led to guilt, never abated even in her adulthood and elder years. Certainly, signs of this psychological frailty, in conjunction with a complicated desire for reconciliation, appear throughout her literary legacy. However, Child's ethics, imprinted within her by her parents, took deep root and remained consistently evident in her life's work: She perhaps valued nothing more than thrift, self-denial, and generosity, and these core values revealed themselves in her many correspondences and publications. National issues such as a callousness toward slavery and an incapacity for sympathy toward Indians disturbed Child, even from early childhood, and her advocacy for such oppressed peoples never waned. Her own spirituality, however, increased in its complexity as she aged, and she desired a faith that she could chose for herself, not dictated by her family; in 1820, she recorded, in a letter to her brother, that she longed for a spiritual identity in which both her "heart and understanding could unite[,]” and she bravely faced the opposition of popular religious doctrine (*The First Woman* 14). A lifelong fighter for racial, cultural, social, and economic reform, Child admitted that while she was “denied the rewards of parental approbation and professional recognition, she learned to seek instead the reward of her own conscience” (*The First Woman* 7); this inner mantra became the all-encompassing maxim for her convictions and written records.

The picture of Child that emerges from *Hobomok* is one of complicated familial conflict, gendered oppression, and a restlessness in search of genuine Christianity exemplified in word and deed. As a result, Child's novel confronts these issues within the larger frame of a racial struggle for Native American representation. While the era of republican possibility carried into early national culture, the freedom it suggested was not yet extended to all people. As a result,



the energy generated within the private spheres of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was channeled in the form of literary expression.

Fiction expanded the range of possibilities for political and cultural engagement and for representing non-white men. Popular first in Europe and then moving across Atlantic waters like the ships of cargo and commodities, the novel as a genre provided an outlet for the expressions of the private sphere to move into the public sphere. No longer only being discussed in hushed parlors and in the meetings of gentlemen, repressed issues of importance to the well-being of a young nation found their place on printed pages for the public, and authors of both sexes and many races began putting pen to paper, for many purposes, but in an attempt at healing national fragmentation. Moreover, the structured conventions established by natural history, reflecting Enlightenment ideals, morphed into a greater range of diversifying genres as the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth. The first American novelists sought a greater freedom of expression, creating characters, tropes, and symbols to represent larger social issues, and, through fiction, attempted to connect what was left in transit from the Old World to the New World.

Brought to light in Cathy Davidson's (1986) scholarly publication of *Revolution and the Word*, the impact of the novel upon late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society has impacted literary studies and the ways in which the private sphere first found its voice. As Davidson notes, "the task of the early American novelist was to find a distinctive voice despite the dominance of British and European traditions[,]" and this "distinctive voice" included the perspectives of those individuals who were not yet represented in American democracy (3). Julia Stern, calling the overlooked members of the republic "invisible Americans[,]" elaborates upon Davidson's work to claim that "the republican novel fancies that, however fleeting, Americans

might imaginatively contemplate if not actually assume one another's political perspectives" (2, 5).<sup>44</sup> Even though fiction writers in America were initially scarce, William Hill Brown, Susanna Rowson, Hannah Webster Foster, and Charles Brockden Brown produced some of the first American novels before the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Twenty years later, authors representing minority voices, like Child, sought to enter the public sphere, and the Native American body appeared, fictionally, in print. What Sullivan calls "the phenomenon of attraction to the Indian" inspired the publication of over seventy Indian novels by white authors between 1820 and 1850 (57).

Child paved the way for her literary contemporaries and, as I argue, inspired a more complex reimagined portrayal of not only the physical and emotional identity of the Native American but the spiritual depth of him as well. Through the creation of fiction, Child integrates more flexible written conventions than were allowed by natural history: Whereas writers such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were guided by restrictive forms of reason, logic, and order—and by violating them, discredited themselves as authorities on the subject—early novelists, like Child, sought literary freedom that allowed for a greater depth of expression and characterization. While natural history failed to account for inconsistencies—neglecting truth because of its stifling structure—the novel provided an imaginative terrain for untangling complex issues of early American identity and racism.

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<sup>44</sup> More recently, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon (2004) and Laura Doyle (2008) have further extended Davidson's original argument, and while Dillon focuses on the ways in which "powerful *public* images of femininity identify women as private[,]" Doyle closely examines "liberty's powerful intertwining of racialism and racism within the English-language transatlantic novel" (5, 13). Dillon's text reassesses traditional readings of the early American canon ranging from colonial to antebellum texts, placing women's contributions at the center of her analysis in an exploration of their unique advocacy of the private sphere within the public sphere. Doyle closely examines a range of genres, including the novel, in order to reassert how race—specifically that of the Black Atlantic—is constructed in literature.

<sup>45</sup> See W. Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), Foster's *The Coquette* (1797), and C. Brown's *Wieland* (1798) and *Edgar Huntly* (1799).

Establishing herself within the literary terrain of the time, Child evoked fiction as a means for asserting herself within the public sphere; although daring and ambitious, she, regardless, faced the opposition that was ever present in the early nineteenth-century. Jane P. Tompkins asserts that “novels and stories should be studied not because they manage to escape the limitations of their particular time and place, but because they offer powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment” (xi). From this perspective, Child—leading the way for other novelists of Native American content—can be seen in her moment of emergence, not in a “degraded attempt...to pander to the prejudices of the multitude, but as providing men and women with a means of ordering the world they inhabited” to assert “the cultural realities that made these novels meaningful” (xii-xiii). Karcher addresses this sensitive time for women by describing the political and economic system they inhabited:

Excluded as they were from the benefits that American democracy conferred on their male peers, middle-and upper-class white women often identified consciously or unconsciously with other excluded groups....In the 1820s it led some of the women writers who helped shape the American historical novel to imagine alternatives to race, war, genocide, and white male supremacy as modes of resolving the contradictions that riddled their society. Child’s career—which as we shall see followed a trajectory from portraying Indians sympathetically in her fiction, to agitating against Andrew Jackson’s Cherokee removal policy...to campaigning for... a more humane Indian policy after the Civil War—illustrates how closely these phenomena are connected. (20)

Even such participation in the public sphere, however, called for a certain level of vulnerability and acknowledgement of one’s “inferior” state. For women, in particular, associating with minorities was a symbol of this marginal state, and while fiction channeled such social distresses, Child internalized not only the heavy burden associated with being a new American novelist but also the female writer delivering a narrative that pressed stubbornly against accepted societal norms.

Through the recreation of historical accounts of Hobbamock, Child uses religion to critique New England Puritanism, calling for a reevaluation of the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual depth and worth of Native American peoples, in her own time.<sup>46</sup> Because *Hobomok* was Child's first written attempt and because her knowledge of Native American political tension was more limited in 1824 than much later in her literary legacy, this novel should be examined with an understanding that she wrote as an unexperienced amateur—that her own understanding of Native Americans was incomplete and novice. Nonetheless, her novel is a landmark in frontier novels from 1820-1850, especially her revision of literary conventions, and, more importantly, of the discourse of racial identity circulating in the early American public and private spheres. By calling attention to the inconsistencies of theories on race—such as Jefferson's and Franklin's—and the structure of the genres of non-fiction and natural history, I argue that Child's novel, published almost thirty years after the appearance of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, looks back toward Enlightenment perspectives of race. As a result, she strategically selects the genre of fiction in order to design a more complex and sophisticated figure to speak for the Native American peoples. Not only was Child more wholly devoted to the Indian cause, but her manners of advocacy were more progressive than Jefferson and Franklin: By using the novel to speak for her—innately allowing more compositional freedom than non-fiction and natural history—Child brings the historical Hobbamock back to life in a critique of not only Puritanism but of widespread oppression in the early republic. In the trajectory of *Hobomok* studies, the novel and Child, herself, have received criticism because of *Hobomok*'s final disappearance, which has generally been interpreted as a total failure of imagination on Child's part.<sup>47</sup> Instead, I

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<sup>46</sup> When referring to the historical figure, I replicate spellings such as Edward Winslow's use of Hobbamock. However, when I discuss Lydia Maria Child's fictional reimaging of this figure, I observe her spelling, Hobomok.

<sup>47</sup> Much of the scholarship that exists is limited to exploration of two central themes within the narrative: gender politics and nation-building within the early republic. In the former instance, critics such as Karcher, Philip Gould,

argue that the emphasis should be on Hobomok's symbolic incorporation into a longer cultural history: The fictional Hobomok and the historical Native Americans he more largely represents are being preserved in a way that readers have overlooked—that while Child's effort is incomplete, it is, regardless, politically progressive for her time. As Child writes a counter-history that emphasizes Hobomok's manners of anti-performance, as a symbol for other natives, the risk is that as she attempts to recreate and preserve native heritage, she potentially positions Hobomok as a melancholic lost object.<sup>48</sup> As this chapter examines Child's authorial attempt, let

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and Ezra Tawil have explored the position of women writers as the champions of social (not romantic) novels; how gender-based novels survived in a patriarchal society; and how male and female authors produced racially similar ideologies in works of literature, under the umbrellas of "republican womanhood" (Gould 97). The second grouping of critics explores the politics at work in *Hobomok* and how the rhetoric of nation-building, so prevalent in the early republic, operates in Child's text. Sherry Sullivan notes the general phenomenon in *Hobomok* of the "Americanization of the noble savage" which is present in fiction and other literary forms, and the guilt resulting from the Indian crisis, without action or resolution, in other words, the nineteenth-century theme of the "disappearing Indian" (58, 72n.4). The literary concept of the vanishing Indian can be traced back to the early nineteenth-century. See also Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence*, which describes the ways in which Old World attitudes and anxieties plagued New World colonists who sought to displace Native Americans. Dippie, in *The Vanishing American*, explains that after pursuing Native American extinction, Euro-Americans purge their consciences with the belief that this race was doomed to disappear, regardless. Sheehan, in *Seeds of Extinction*, claims that it was the republican ideals of improvement that drove Native Americans to extinction, while the only choice given was to assimilate to republican models of benevolence and goodwill. Zolla, in *The Writer and the Shaman*, stresses that Native American heritage has been grossly overlooked due to its absence or misrepresentation in literature, calling for, what he terms, the truth about the Indians. Priscilla Ward's work, redirects attention to laws, legality, and court cases surrounding the politics of the early to mid-nineteenth century, referencing examples in literature and pointing toward the greater republican goal of nation-building. In doing so, she asserts that while Puritanism is critiqued and refined, within the novel, Hobomok must be erased, and Charles Hobomok must fully assimilate, just as nineteenth-century racial ideology would demand. Finally, Gussman addresses the tension between the exclusion of minority people groups who predated and were therefore without the protection of legal documents such as the Constitution and Bill of Rights, in conjunction with the moral, ethical, and religious conviction to advocate for lesser politically and socially represented people. She highlights the belief that if Christianity is achieved by "accepting...doctrine" and "modeling behavior[,] likewise, being a citizen of the republic should have worked synonymously (59). Tracing these tensions within both *Hobomok* and *The Scarlet Letter*, Gussman details the ways in which Anglo-American authors sought to reestablish legal identity for women (Hester Prynne) and Native Americans (Hobomok).

<sup>48</sup> The term anti-performance is used in this chapter to describe Child's literary attempt in creating a more representative character of Native American social, political, and religious potential. Against the native performative traditions of this time, Child strives to give back agency, worth, and life to Native American tribes through the figure of Hobomok. Moreover, the concept of the melancholic lost object pulls from Sigmund Freud's theories on "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), explored more carefully in Chapter 4 of this project. As Native American writers and activists such as Boudinot and Apess wrestle with releasing past violence and mistreatment in order to promote future healing, the act of discarding legacy, tradition, and history creates a potential for melancholic loss that fixates upon the past instead of healing properly. Child's novel illuminates a similar risk: As she removes Hobomok from the text and into the natural landscape, her narrative result is complicated and paradoxical. While

us first return to a historical account of the early colonies and Hobbamock's involvement within them.

### The Colonial Hobbamock and Native American Puritan Representation

In December of 1620, when the Separatists established Plymouth Colony, they not only encountered the harsh terrain of the northeastern coast but were confronted by a people who occupied the land before them.<sup>49</sup> The members of the Wampanoag Indian tribe, like the newly-settling Euro-Americans, struggled to find a balance between protection and self-defense and a demonstration of mutual respect to people who neither looked nor behaved like them.<sup>50</sup>

Hobbamock, the pniese or special warrior of sachem Massasoit, upon appointment, assisted as the go-between to the native peoples and the Pilgrims; less known to us today than Tisquantum (Squanto) but arguably more valuable, Hobbamock provided aid to the New England colonists for language translation, warning of attack, travel through terrain, and discernment of truth and lies, while simultaneously honoring his allegiance to Massasoit. Reimagined often in later American literature, the exchanges between the English colonists and the Native American peoples continue to serve as important markers in American identity, albeit highly volatile and contested. This representative spectrum is inconsistent because of an archival problem of historical accounts: Whereas English colonists such as Edward Winslow and William Bradford document behaviors of and interactions with Hobbamock, a present day interpretation of these

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she attempts to give Hobomok longevity by positioning him alongside of everlasting and eternal nature, this movement to the literary margins also presents a confrontation with emotional psychosis of the lost object.

<sup>49</sup> When referencing modern-day associations of Plymouth Colony, I use the contemporary spelling, Plymouth. When noting quotations or specific textual references to Winslow's text, "Good News from New England," I refer to the colony with the traditional spelling, Plimouth.

<sup>50</sup> As Chapter 4 demonstrates, this struggle extended far into the nineteenth-century, as Native Americans like Boudinot and Apess labored tirelessly, finally resulting in the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and various treaties of removal which followed.

accounts suggests biases and prejudices, as much of colonial record was used for persuasion and continued support for expansion from a European metropole.<sup>51</sup> Winslow's record of Plimoth from 1621 to 1623, perhaps the most indispensable of the historical accounts, was used as European propaganda for justification of the violent attack against the Massachusetts Indians, thus defending Plimouth's previous attempts to exhibit kindness and establish an alliance with the surrounding native communities.<sup>52</sup> Winslow, roughly half-way through his account, records the following observations, as Hobbamock speaks of Massasoit:

And turning him to me said; Whilst I lived, I should never see his like amongst the *Indians*, saying, he was no liar; he was not bloody and cruel like other *Indians*; In anger and passion he was soon reclaimed, easy to be reconciled towards such as had offended him, ruled by reason he governed his men better with a few strokes than others did with many; truly loving where he loved; yea he feared we had not a faithful friend left among the *Indians*, shewing how he oft-times restrained their malice, &c. continuing a long speech with such signs and lamentation and unfeigned sorrow, as it would have made the hardest heart relent (80).

By speaking in defense of Massasoit's benevolence, faithfulness, and gentleness, Hobbamock aligns himself with the reputable qualities of an ally. Similarly, Bradford records that "ther was an other Indean called *Hobamack* come to live amongst them, a proper lustie man, and a man of accounte for his vallour & parts amongst y<sup>e</sup> Indeans, and continued very faithfull and constant to y<sup>e</sup> English till he dyed" (124).<sup>53</sup> Winslow's "Good News" offers the most thorough glimpse into the Pilgrims' first survival attempts in the New World and more specifically, the alliance with

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<sup>51</sup> Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* observes the spelling of Hobamack, differing from both Winslow's and Child's record of the name.

Historians, such as Nathaniel Philbrick, also provide record of Hobbamock's contribution to New England society; Philbrick writes that "Bradford and Squanto had developed a strong relationship over the last year, while Standish and Hobbamock—both warriors by inclination and training—had also become close" (131). Moreover, he asserts that Hobbamock can be remembered as "a warrior of unflinching loyalty to both Massasoit and Miles Standish" (139). David Lindsay notes that the "personal relations between Plimoth and the native Americans...soon became so close that one Wampanoag, Hobbamock, felt free to build a house just outside the plantation" (47).

<sup>52</sup> For insight into motivations behind Winslow's account, see Wisecup, "Good News from New England," "Introduction."

<sup>53</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "lustie" as "joyful, merry, jocund, cheerful, and lively."

Hobbamock, but can readers trust that his record communicates unbiased truth? In other words, these white-authored sources are not simply reconstructions of real persons but are instead only representations of historical knowledge. In this instance, Winslow and also Bradford desperately need the metropole to approve of the early English colonies, not simply for emotional validation but more importantly for endorsements and provisions. Young and unstable, the seventeenth-century Pilgrim settlements were unable to stand alone, as their survival and flourishing depended upon Europe's interference. In this case and in use of Euro-American colonial accounts of Native American experience, history functions as a kind of fiction or rhetorical performance of print. In other words, the record of colonial experience becomes another form of an imaginative construct of experience, including Hobbamock's contributions in print, but inherently guided by the competing New World interests.

Among the innumerable historical representations of Native American violence, treachery, heathenism, and savagery, Winslow's consistent documentation of the friendship and faithfulness of Hobbamock could have resonated with Lydia Maria Child, even two centuries later, when she published her own novel, *Hobomok*, in 1824.<sup>54</sup> Karcher, moreover, records the specific text that we do know, with certainty, influenced Child: "...she took her cue directly from one of the critics who had been calling on American writers to exploit the matchless resources that America's panoramic landscapes, heroic Puritan settlers, and exotic Indian folklore afforded the romancer" (*The First Woman* 20). Challenging American writers, the critic Karcher speaks

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<sup>54</sup> Karcher's biography does not provide concrete evidence that Child read Winslow's or Bradford's accounts of colonial New England, as she inquires "[w]hether in fact *Hobomok* was entirely the fruit of Child's imagination" (21). While Child's choice of the novel as a genre announces her narrative as fiction, she must have drawn partially from historical records, not only in her inclusion of the seventeenth-century Hobbamock but also of his native foe, Corbitant. Child, herself, also gestures toward her intent to revise history as she writes in the "Preface" to *Hobomok*: "Still, barren and uninteresting as New England history is, I feel there is enough connected with it, to rouse the dormant energies of my soul; and I would fain deserve some other epitaph than that 'he lived and died'" (3-4).



of, John Gorham Palfrey, passionately calls for increased authors of frontier fiction.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Karcher also places Child's early literary works into conversation with her later, noting her increased political involvement over time: "At the time she wrote *Hobomok*, Child evidently had a much lower level of political consciousness on the Indian question than [James Wallis] Eastburn and [Robert] Sands did. She had not yet begun to contest the Puritan chronicler's version of the wars that decimated the Indians, as she would five years later in a book aimed at arousing opposition to the U.S. government's 'crooked and narrow-minded policy' toward Indians: *The First Settlers of New-England* (1829)" (*The First Woman* 22). *Hobomok*, then, can be evaluated as Child's first attempt toward activism, a sample of proto-Native American advocacy, without the full knowledge of the Indian problem's dense complications.<sup>56</sup> While *Hobomok* is unable to fully advocate for racial equality in an era moving towards Jacksonian consensus on Native American exclusion, her counter-history of Hobbamock and her recreation of his worth set her apart as an author ahead of her time, one who responded to Palfrey's petition for frontier novels in the best way she knew how, as an amateur female novelist with limited political agency.

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<sup>55</sup> John Gorham Palfrey was reviewing *Yamoyden, A Tale of the Wars of King Philip, in Six Cantos*, by James Wallis Eastburn and Robert Sands (1820), as he claimed that "[w]hoever in this country first attains the ranks of a first rate writer of fiction... will lay his scene here. The field is ripe for the harvest, and scarce a sickle yet has touched it" (*The First Woman* 20). Karcher notes that Child had actually met Palfrey, face to face, through her brother Convers. See Karcher, *The First Woman* (20).

<sup>56</sup> The initial nineteenth-century readership of the novel responded with a range of a surge of popularity to a suppression and critical erasure due to Mary Conant's story being read as "a train of events not only unnatural, but revolting" (*North American Review* 263). Deborah Gussman notes the early responses to *Hobomok* from *North American Review* 19 (1824) and 21 (1825), neither of which reflected favorably upon Child's work. See Gussman, "Inalienable Rights," 78n.6. Despite Child's renown during her lifetime, many of the literary themes directing her work were recast in terms of guilt and shame brought about by the Reconstruction; after lying dormant for much of the twentieth-century, the novel was excavated, once again, by scholars, revitalizing the study of Child's work in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Thus, the last fifty years have witnessed a rejuvenation of her work, spanning a breadth of form in novels, pamphlets, poems, manuscripts, autobiographical novellas, letters, political appeals, and cross-cultural examinations. Karcher, specifically, is credited for the renewal of Child's place in the canon, with her editorial work on the primary document reprint (1991) and with the 1994 publication of an extensive cultural biography of Child, *The First Woman in the Republic*.

## Cataloguing Racism in the Order of the Republic

While seventeenth-century Puritan records of Native American encounter reveal, for the modern reader, a unique form of historical preservation recreated through the imaginative construct, the literature of the late eighteenth-century provides another form of Native American observation, through the lens of Enlightenment thinkers. Under a government quickly accelerating toward implementation of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Child was familiar with early American racial theory, including the commentaries of Jefferson and Franklin.<sup>57</sup> Natural history served the republic's needs in myriad ways, allowing for the assertion of independence in the New World from the Old World and providing a literary means for explorers, authors, scientists, and politicians to classify New World findings and resources that formally documented the flourishing of the early American colonies.<sup>58</sup> Daniel J. Boorstin reminds us that

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<sup>57</sup> Andrew Jackson, seventh president of the United States, signed the Indian Removal Act May 28, 1830, granting unsettled land west of the Mississippi in exchange for occupied Native American lands residing in the border-states.

*Notes on the State of Virginia* was first published by Thomas Jefferson in 1785, in an attempt to catalogue the human, non-human, and environmental inhabitants of Virginia. In his natural history, Jefferson records his perspectives, based on an organized catalogue of observations and findings, of peoples residing in the New World, including both Native Americans and African Americans. *Notes* has received considerable criticism due to its racist attacks, particularly against African Americans. Native Americans, which are the focus here, received ambiguous treatment from Jefferson, sometimes complimentary but, regardless, classifying them as inferior to the Euro-American.

Benjamin Franklin, in his *Autobiography* and in "The Increase of Mankind," considers the worth of Native Americans and people of tawny color. Giving preference to those whom he calls the "Body of White People," Franklin questions whether increase or, on the contrary, extermination would be most beneficial to the new nation ("The Increase of Mankind" 121).

Karcher affirms that Child's knowledge of Jefferson appeared in her own work—that "it was Thomas Jefferson who had given that [deep-seated] fear [of race] its classic formulation" (*The First Woman* 159); she continues: "the contradictions with which Child wrestled...dated back to the very origins of American democratic ideology. No one illustrated those contradictions more tellingly than Thomas Jefferson" (*The First Woman* 152). Furthermore, Karcher details that Child's later work "Hints of People of Moderate Fortune" (1829) would have made Franklin proud, as William Lloyd Garrison claimed it mimicked Franklin's work through the embodiment of "'his wisdom, his sagacity, and his wonderful knowledge of human nature'" (*The First Woman* 173). See also Garrison in *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (1829) for more information concerning his endorsement of Child and her writing.

<sup>58</sup> The genre of the natural history was first made popular by Hans Sloane's *Natural History of Jamaica*. His two-volume collection, officially titled *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbadoes, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica, with the Natural History of the Herbs and Trees, Four-footed Beasts, Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, etc. of the Last of those Islands*, offered a collection of observations acquired from 1660-1753, including an ordering of West Indian plants, insects, shells, fish, and other specimens. Sloane's natural history was predicated upon the

writings from influential thinkers like Jefferson must be evaluated in the context of the indeterminate state of the young nation:

The inward struggle of Jeffersonian thought must be understood in connection with the outward struggle in which the entire generation was engaged—a struggle notable not merely for its magnitude, but for its intensity. In the year of Jefferson’s birth, the English-speaking population of North America consisted of about a million settlers huddled along the Atlantic seaboard. They were a fringe of the economy and thought of Europe, and their political, economic and intellectual focus was London. The unsettled portion of the continent was still viewed more as a barrier than as a treasure house. Its climate, animals, plants and mineral resources were hardly known. . . . The future of North America was still vastly ambiguous. (5)<sup>59</sup>

Ordering his text like Hans Sloane’s natural history, Jefferson attempts to catalogue the species of the New World—animals, plants, geographic formations, natural resources, and even the African American and Native American bodies, by making comparisons to European classifications.<sup>60</sup> He admits that “though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history”; his admission is followed by a plea for understanding, specifically addressed to the “lovers of natural history” (150, 151). Jefferson’s intent, then, is that his account not only defend

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notion that agrarian plantation owners of the West Indies could claim authority over not only land production but also knowledge production.

Robert Ferguson describes the republican momentum gained by enlightenment discourse as “the spread of ideas [that] lift[ed] the chaos of the present into the ordered spaces of the future, all of which the Enlightenment had promised” (33). What Ferguson details as ideas substituted for the messiness of place sheds light onto Jefferson’s, Franklin’s, and other thinkers’ quests for not only creating order and understanding within their current existence but for their needs to claim potential and progress in their current environment (33).

<sup>59</sup> Feeling pressure from the European metropolises to not only defend the value of early exploration but also to protect the reputations of the established territories of the Americas, writers and scientists began collecting concrete evidence of these areas’ flourishings. In *Notes*, Jefferson directly targets assertions made by Francois Marbois; Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon; and Abbé Raynal, who claimed that the Americas were not only unfit for civilization but that they were producing degenerate species. Published first in 1785 and undergoing several revisions thereafter, Jefferson’s *Notes* contains what we, in literary studies, now consider as some of the first theories of racial representation by an American.

<sup>60</sup> Jefferson labels the African American by the use of these nouns: black or African; he labels the Native American, regardless of specific tribal association, by use of the noun Indian. For that reason, in this section, I often refer to these people groups as such, if referencing Jefferson’s writing.

Monticello and the state Virginia but that it also speak for the greater advancements of America, as a whole, through a scientific lens.

Similarly, Franklin also calls upon methods of observation and classification in “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America.” Here, Franklin implements an examination of “the Manners of different Nations with Impartiality[.]” emphasizing the need for objective order (330). Detailing Native American practices, dress, education, language, traditions, rituals, and manners, Franklin impresses upon readers the comparison/contrast method executed by Jefferson; using Europe as a comparative model, Franklin measures normal cultural behavior in relation to Anglo-American behavior. As with Jefferson, Franklin does not aim to suggest that the Native American culture being observed has the same value as the European observer, and yet the restrictive form of natural history, with its dependency on quasi-scientific objectivity, allows insufficient room for any expanded explanation. While differences and contrast emerge as signifiers of inferiority, this method of recording—another form of rhetorical performance—is skewed in its content, as it often suppresses the full picture of the fusion of two cultures.

The classifications and observations which fill these two authors’ accounts, however, lack consistency in their respective representations of Native Americans: Betsy Erkkila labels these slippages in *Notes* as a “complex triangulation and underlying instability of American New World identity as Jefferson seeks to disavow the bodily and the African, embrace the savage and the Native, and affirm the essential superiority of New over Old World man” (40). In other words, while Jefferson provides specific details about the mannerisms, customs, and appearances of the Native Americans, demonstrating their similarities to whites, he spends more energy emphasizing the issues of slavery and opining on the questions of black appearance, intellect, and overall human capacity. Instituting “truth and judgment” as his gauges for classifying

natives, Jefferson praises what he considers to be their admirable qualities—such as bravery, affection, sensibility, and vivacity (63). On the contrary, he offers an explanation for those qualities he views as lacking; for instance, when debating the intellectual capacities of the American Indian, Jefferson wavers: “Before we condemn the Indians of this continent as wanting genius, we must consider that letters have not yet been introduced among them” (68). Franklin’s inconsistencies also signal that Native American identity is being shaped by a genre of performative construct. After primarily defending the natives in “Remarks,” Franklin varies in the racial stance he posited in “The Increase of Mankind.” In the latter, he clearly favors “the principal Body of White People on the Face of the Earth” and feels no impulse to “darken its People” (221). Whereas this classification is meant to adhere to principles of order and systematic approach, Franklin turns from this model as he concludes with candid opinion; he confesses: “But perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind” (221).<sup>61</sup> While natural history vastly differs from the Puritan accounts of Native American experience and establishes a more modern epistemology, this representative form still exacerbated a destructive fictional narrative of native identity. The natural history genre that Jefferson and Franklin employ, what passes for scientific evidence in

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<sup>61</sup> In “Part Three” of his *Autobiography*, Franklin presents another moment of negative reconstruction of the native, recalling a moment of drunken Indian behavior: “They were all drunk Men and Women, quarrelling and fighting. Their dark-colour’d Bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy Light of the Bonfire, running after and beating one another with Firebrands, accompanied by their horrid Yellings, form’d a Scene the most resembling our Ideas of hell that could well be imagin’d” (101). In no favorable terms, Franklin describes his own observation of Native American conduct, and he associates the dark, naked skin and unruly screams with eternal damnation. Taking no responsibility for the natives’ possession of the rum (as introduced to them by the Euro-American), Franklin instead focuses upon the prospect of extinction, sanctioned by a higher power. He concludes: “And indeed if it be the Design of Providence to extirpate these Savages in order to make room for Cultivators of the Earth, it seems not improbably that Rum may be the appointed Means. It has already annihilated all the Tribes who formerly inhabited the Seacoast” (101). In this moment, Franklin seems to forget the classified ordering favored in the enlightenment, not to pass judgment due to emotion or inclination but to ground claims only in reason or proof. In fact, Franklin so abhors the drunken behavior he reverts back to the Christian belief that God had already predestined Native American extinction, thus removing blame from the enlightened man.

this era, leaves little room for emotional responses but, instead, it is ever redirecting the gaze to classifiable observation.

However, perhaps Jefferson's biases, sympathies, and overall inconsistencies can be complicated—traced even further, beyond his public service and political dictations—back to his childhood in Albemarle County, Virginia. In an 1812 correspondence with John Adams, Jefferson reminisces about his adolescent experiences with the Cherokee Indians:

So much in answer to your enquiries concerning Indians, a people with whom, in the very early part of my life, I was very familiar, and acquired impressions of attachment and commiseration for them which have never been obliterated....I was in his [Outassete's] camp when he made his great farewell oration to his people....The moon was in full splendor, and to her he seemed to address himself in his prayers for his own safety on the voyage, and that of his people during his absence. His sounding voice, distinct articulation, animated action, and the solemn silence of his people at their several fires, filled me with awe and veneration, altho' I did not understand a word he uttered. (307)

Unlike Franklin's reflection in the *Autobiography*, Jefferson provides written evidence of his personal, nostalgic remembrances of the native peoples he knew through the reverence of their sacred rituals, undiscernible speech, and relationship with nature. Instead of reciting these memories and recalling them with horror, fear, or disgust—a common perception resulting in impressions of savagery and barbarity of native peoples—Jefferson positions the native as a traveling friend, one who wandered into and out of his family's memories, never threatening violence or domination but instead securing young Jefferson's "attachment and commiseration" for a lifetime. If these fond remembrances, at least in part, justify Jefferson's rhetorical defense of Native Americans, his political stances, remain, at the very least, complex. Karcher, addressing this historical instability, asserts that overall, "Jefferson did not apply these theories of biological inferiority to Indians, whom he defended as symbols of America itself..." (*The First Woman* 652). It seems clear, then, that even though Jefferson and Franklin wavered between sympathy toward the native and advocacy of Indian removal, their choice of genre—

that of the natural history—allowed little flexibility for extension of empathy powerful enough to elicit change. The nature of the genre, in fact, produced results based on fact, observation, and experience, removing Jefferson from any sincere guilt he might have felt for not protecting his childhood Indian friends and alleviating Franklin of his responsibilities as a political advocate. These tensions between the scientific and the sentimental or the realistic and the romantic demonstrate the competing narrative modes of representing natives in the Jeffersonian and Franklinian eras. Moreover, the rise of the American novel, and specifically Child's use of it, provides narrative flexibility for creating a fuller picture of Native American identity.

#### Child's Reimagining of Native American Identity in *Hobomok*

In *Hobomok*, Child undertakes a reimagining of the conflicts in seventeenth-century colonial New England: By use of the sentimental, frontier novel, she recreates not only the explosive tensions between Euro-Americans and Natives that led to King Philip's War but also dynamics within the Puritan colony, the domestic sphere, and the native himself.<sup>62</sup> By emphasizing two central figures, Mary Conant (an adolescent Puritan) and Hobomok (a Wampanoag Indian ally), Child asks readers to consider the validity of the existing bifurcation of the savage versus the civilized. Through the interactions of Mary and Hobomok, and because of their fated marriage predicted in the beginning of the novel, Child deviates from stereotypical Native American identity, as she exposes the hypocritical flaws of religious fanatics and elevates the native, particularly Hobomok, to a position of high-esteem and admiration. As Mary's fated romances range from genuine love, curious infatuation, broken-hearted despair, filial bonds, and sacrificial reunion, readers are asked to reconsider the emotional, intellectual, physical, and

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<sup>62</sup> See Chapter 4 for more on King Philip's War, specifically William Apess's *Eulogy of King Philip*, which elevates King Philip to a position of Christian and political hero.

spiritual depths of Native Americans race. By positioning Hobomok as the most noble, unselfish, and admirable figure in the novel, Child critiques the early republic models of racial ideology, reimagining the native's involvement in colonialist expansion through a more insightful and profound lens. Through creation of a counter-history and in her representation of Hobomok's anti-performance, Child explores early colonial Puritan life through a reimagined lens offering greater attention to Native American character, behavior, and identity. While her novel does not entirely rectify the ways in which natives have been represented in colonial history and literature before 1824, it does offer an invigorated reading that attempts to give voice and spiritual authority back to the Native American community through emphasis upon Hobomok himself. Child's novel, positioned against the works of Enlightenment thinkers such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, achieves more success through the genre of fiction than offered in natural history's ambiguities, blind spots, and inconsistencies.

In her novel, as English ships arrive on the shores of the Salem colony of 1629, Child introduces readers to her leading protagonist, Mary Conant, the beloved daughter of an upper-class white family that includes her father who is a devout but rigid Puritan and her mother who is gravely ill but compassionate and tender. While the plot is driven by colonial efforts to establish a thriving, healthy, religious settlement, Child highlights the emerging romantic relationships of Mary and Charles Brown, a young but tenacious Episcopalian, and Mary and Hobomok, the loyal Wampanoag ally of Salem. Brown, theologically confronting the Puritan leaders of Salem, is sent back to England, and news of tragic shipwreck and his unfortunate death travel back to Mary in Salem. In her despair and in response to her father's cruelty and her mother's death, Mary clings to Hobomok, her devoted friend and companion, as she accepts his marriage proposal and moves away to live with the Wampanoag tribe. Heart-broken by Brown's



death but steadily healed by the faithfulness and kindness Hobomok extends toward her, Mary delivers a son and begins to find strength and happiness again in her new life. Soon following, Hobomok encounters Brown in the forest, traveling to bring Mary the good news of his survival and his renewed intention to marry her. Hobomok, devastated by the news but devoted to his wife's happiness and well-being above his own pain, sacrifices himself in act of divorce decree and departure, leaving Mary and Little Hobomok free to reunite as a family with Brown. The novel concludes with expression of Salem's deepest gratitude and reverence of Hobomok, as the stern and once unforgiving Mr. Conant welcomes Mary, Brown, and his grandson back into the community of Salem.

As *Hobomok* opens, readers are presented with a strange juxtaposition of the Christian God and the Great Spirit, both residing in the New World landscape described as the "perfect Eden" (5). The third-person narrator depicts the early colonies in terms of light and darkness, explaining that while the heritages of other long-established countries are marred by "gloom and corruption[,] New England is certain to flourish in its uncultivated beauty and promise of opportunity (6). Child writes:

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. That light, which had arisen amid the darkness of Europe, stretched its long, luminous track across the Atlantic, till the summits of the western world became tinged with its brightness. (5-6)

Guided by light of the sun, the early exploration that the narrator describes is directed by beams of light from the Old World over to the verdant landscape of the New World. Certainly, this use of light is metaphorical, evoking not only the saving power offered through Christian salvation but also the optimistic light of hope that imperialistic endeavor offered to traveling English

colonists. But the use of light here is also paradoxical: For natural historians, the sun was a fixed, measurable component of natural order, initially created by God but tangibly measurable by man. Moreover, the Deists of the Enlightenment accepted the belief that nature provided scientific evidence for the existence of God or a divine being, and yet God remained disconnected from natural occurrences, refusing interference in natural order and man's involvement in it after creation. Furthermore, the sentimental novel of the early nineteenth century presented a heightened sensitivity to the natural environment and the aesthetic beauty found within. But Child achieves a fragile balance between evoking these forms and distancing herself from them. The content of the frontier novel opposes the systematic ordering of natural history and builds upon what the sentimental novel aimed to accomplish by specifically targeting the Native American population. Through an awareness of these literary forms, but also in her deviation from them, Child seeks to reimagine Hobomok's place, within history, but also within early American identity, in the heightened political arena of the 1820s.

The co-existence of the Great Spirit and the Christian God, in the first chapter of the novel, foreshadows the rhetorical manners in which Child attempts to reconstruct Native American presence in connection to Euro-American behavior and expectation. While the narrator's hopeful anticipation follows the passage of the ship which promised to dock in Salem, expectations are abruptly shattered by the jarring collision of imagination and reality: "[T]he scene was altogether far worse than my imagination had ever conceived. Among those who came down to the shore to meet us, there were but one or two who seemed like Englishmen. The remainder, sickly and half starved, presented a pitiful contrast to the vigorous and wondering savages who stood among them" (8). While readers expect to see the New England establishment, dominated by Christianity and progressively flourishing, Child suggests that

vitality and health are extended to those who worship the Great Spirit. As such, she indicates that Puritanism, heralded as the Christian redemption—the city on a hill—of the new colonies, does not ensure strength, power, and supremacy; instead, the darker-skinned savages, who are ignorant of the Christian God, represent health, vitality, and authority.

While the narrative light manifested by Child illuminates the seascape and guides the ship to shore, another reading of this trope suggests that the Enlightenment era has not effectively accomplished thorough reporting of early American identity based solely on reason and factual observation. In other words, Child's use of light not only guides the ship to its dock—illuminating the raw landscape of New England and standing in for Christianity among the lands of the Great Spirit—but it also elucidates the dark exclusivity of the social landscape of the 1820 readership. Her use of the sun as a symbol represents a more significant and ubiquitous metaphor of the “light of truth”: Child not only aims to demonstrate the optimism offered in fiction—an opportunity to reimagine native identity—but also her personal intention to shine against racism, and to some extent, against religious bigotry. The *Enlightenment* era, calling for an interrogation of preexisting beliefs and a redirection of thought based on reason, logic, and critical thinking, motivates Child to challenge the strict manner in which race and religion were classified in early America. Longing for the freedoms denied her by her community and family, Child's fictional creation of *Hobomok* allows her a space to reimagine the classifications of both Christians and natives.

Before she attempts to renegotiate native identity, Child continues to connect her readership with the Edenic landscape in which the Indian tribes abide. In doing so, she reflects Edmund Burke's theory of the sublime in the novel, as she draws upon multiple representational traditions regarding New World nature. Fixating upon the awe-inspiring natural environment,

Child invites readers to remember a majestic land untouched by progressive civilization. In her evocation of Burke, Child navigates the reader through the environment, magnifying the vastness of creation and the grandeur of the unblemished environment:

The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended....In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that, far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects of admiration, reverence and respect. (Burke 95-96)

Furthermore, the narrator expresses the power of nature in the New World, the space first and primarily occupied by native tribes. He describes the overwhelming nature of his experience and the smallness he feels as a member of the human race: "I was in a new world, whose almost unlimited extent lay in the darkness of ignorance and desolation. Earth, sea, and air, seemed in a profound slumber....The scene around me owed nothing of its unadorned beauty to the power of man" (7). In this instance, nature manifests itself in a way that both adheres to and breaks free from traditional expectation. While exploration narratives of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries documented wonderment and awe of the lands of the Americas, colonists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sent forth a flurry of propaganda pamphlets and recorded documents in defense of the new settlements.<sup>63</sup> Like Jefferson's *Notes*, yet with even more pressure for approval from the metropole, these early publications sought to oppose the wild and unyielding landscape that overwhelms the narrator in its majesty. We, however, should not misread Child's

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<sup>63</sup> For evidence of this wonderment and awe, see Christopher Columbus's complete letters in *Four Voyages*. See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Greenblatt claims that for Columbus, observation oscillated between marvel and monstrosity: "He appears to be distinguishing then between monstrosities and marvels: the former are vivid, physical violations of universal norms, the latter are physical impressions that arouse wonder. Columbus is not willing to rule out the possibility of the monstrous, but he is scrupulous in limiting his claims to have personally witnessed monstrosities; the marvelous, by contrast, he notes at first-hand again and again" (75).

approach as exposing the dangers of the New England wilderness; instead, Child represents Salem in a way that honors the beauty of the American landscape, more powerful than the men who settle upon it.

Child, also in her construction of Mary, is ahead of her time: Like the nineteenth-century heroine of domestic fiction, Child is sensible, sympathetic, and resilient, launching her own social critique and ready to deliver a powerful message, on behalf of the Native American. Juxtaposing Mary with other figures, Child draws connections between her and Mrs. Conant, for instance, in order to exaggerate Mary's strength of youth and affinity to nature. With her body "sprung upon a jutting rock...her sylph-like figure afforded a fine contrast to the decaying elegance of her mother" (16). And then again next to Mary's closest companion, Sally: "But Mary's slender figure, her large, dark eyes, with their deep melancholy fringe, and the graceful carriage of her neck and shoulders, brought before the mind a Parian statue, or one of those fair visions which fancy gives to slumber" (59). Sally, on the other hand, is described by Child as shallow but harmless: Her "rustic coquetry" is magnified by "the true spirit of female vanity" which is often consumed by "her own pretty face[.]" and this trivial depiction establishes Sally as rather mundane and unimportant (22). Thus, Mary's exceptionalism, apart from others in her community, elevates her to a place of importance in the novel. As Karcher explains, "it is because Hobomok feeds her craving for poetry and beauty that Mary prefers him to her fellow settlers, with whom she has nothing in common" (*The First Woman* 29). In other words, Mary's extraordinary nature, juxtaposed with her fellow colonists, is established early to reinforce Hobomok's own exceptionality. Child connects these two, and Mary is often used as a means to spotlight Hobomok, in order to critique the ways in which the early republic categorizes identity

and social hierarchy. In this reading, her female nature matters much less than her capacity to step outside of expected norms and behave in non-traditional, but admirable, ways.

Imperative to the plot sequence of Mary's marriage to Hobomok, two rituals—both set in the forest—demonstrate Child's implementation of the language and structure of the romance. In the first, after an evening of communal religious discussion, the narrator and the reader alike watch Mary slip from the comforts and safety of her home into the darkness of the forest to perform a ceremony meant to predict her marriage partner. Remembering Mr. Conant's declaration of Mary's "beguilement of her silly heart" (13), the narrator expresses unease, and Karcher, similarly, claims that "Mary performs what can only be called a ritual of witchcraft" in its association with "the world of nature" and "Indians cavorting in blasphemous orgiastic rites" (*The First Woman* 26). On the contrary, this reading does view Mary's actions as oppositional to Puritan culture, in the sense that Mr. Conant would have disapproved of such risky, unchaperoned behavior. Still, Mr. Conant, and many of the religious body-politic, are represented, by Child, as argumentative, cold, rigid, and unfeeling. What becomes important, then, is not Mary's act of rebellion but the manner in which Hobomok is represented through her act. Child writes that while in the circle with Mary, Hobomok seems to recite a "short incantation or prayer[,]” and offers a "sacrifice[ial] heap of his God[,]” demonstrating, if even on a small scale, Hobomok's capacity for religious understanding (14). His spiritual actions do not affirm his place in an eternal realm, according to the Puritan doctrine of predestination; however, recitation of prayer, demonstrating communion with God that is unprovoked by another, does show his capacity for spirituality. In other words, his humanness and capacity for "civilization," both of which are important to early American discourses of freedom and equality, are detailed here.

However, Hobomok's identity, problematically, is that it is being constructed on Anglo-American and Christian terms, so the novel may be anti-racist in one sense but romantically racist in another.<sup>64</sup> The complications involved when an Anglo-American author attempts to represent Native American identity include projecting a persona, inaccurate or not, onto the body under examination. For instance, while Child's awareness of Native American struggle and understanding of Christian ethics was rudimentary, her passion for attacking racial injustice propelled her novel into the public sphere. Louise K. Barnett summarizes the early nineteenth-century novelist's authorial intent: "...having no interest in Indians *per se*, novelists would only concern themselves with Indians in contact with whites; having little or no firsthand experiences with Indians and many preconceptions about them, they would invariably create lifeless and narrowly conceived stereotypes in their works" (26). My reading of *Hobomok*, however, emphasizes that through Child's attempt to present Hobomok's multi-dimensional nature—his historic personhood, his racial body, and his spiritual symbolism—she explores native potential and worth, as she reimagines the past and reconstitutes Native American identity for the present moment.

Hobomok's humanness, then, is demonstrated both in his ability to relate through the English language of civilized speech, one on one with a more powerful heavenly being, and in

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<sup>64</sup> This term "romantic racialism" stems from Norman Mailer's essay, *The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster*, first published in 1957, in which disenfranchised white young adults adopt an African American persona. In critical terms, George M. Fredrickson provides the preliminary groundwork for this concept as explored within scholarship; moreover, he defines romantic racialism as a strategy used to predict "the ultimate destiny of American blacks [which] reveal[s] much about essential white attitudes; often they reveal biases that may be obscured by positions taken on immediate issues. Taken together, they suggest the tragic limitation of the white racial imagination of the nineteenth century, namely its characteristic inability to visualize an egalitarian biracial society" (xiii). Fredrickson presents romantic racialism in several ways: "...first of all, a reflection of the general trend of thought away from racial environmentalism and toward an acceptance of inherent diversity; more precisely, it was a way of adjusting to this compelling idea that was apparently compatible with Christian humanitarianism and opposition to slavery....For romantic racialists, the Negro was a symbol of something that seemed tragically lacking in white American civilization" (108). In Fredrickson's terms, there is actually no escaping the internalization of the oppressed person, masquerading as Anglo-American advocacy but in privileged, white terms.

his capacity for protective, unconditional love extended toward Mary without the promise of return. Upon Mary's departure with Charles, Hobomok exhibits "a mournful expression of countenance..." and considers Mary's safety alone in the woods, in addition to her longing for love (14). While readers would have initially accepted, without question, Mary's intent to wed Charles, Child, through the nightly ritual, suggests that perhaps Hobomok is the more appropriate choice. Gould claims that "[i]n doing so, [Child] suggests to her readers through a recognizable rhetoric that he, despite his race, is the right republican man...Hobomok combines the manly vigor and capacity for feeling that Revolutionary culture had validated" (115). Moreover, Child seems to position Hobomok not simply on-level with the republican man but set above him in spiritual and moral terms. Ironically, in both men, Child presents an opportunity to critique specific aspects of her own society: first, Charles resists traditional Puritan tenets and prefers Episcopalian values, instead; and second, Hobomok is neither Christian nor Anglo-American: Child merges Mary's daring rebellion, Charles' independent beliefs, and Hobomok's loving, spiritual nature to establish uncertainty and instability of identity, behavior, and intent. Both a seventeenth-century colonist and a nineteenth-century readership would have valued unwavering masculine superiority, Christian faith, and the whiteness of skin; yet, Child creates a narrative that even, early-on, rejects these sorts of unjust ideals. But Tawil questions Child's intent—an inquiry of whether or not an early nineteenth-century readership would be able to interpret such a reinvention of racial meaning. He writes that "simply to assume that a middle-class readership in the 1820s already understood the racial implications of this kind of story presupposes what must be explained: how an English heroine's marriage to an Indian became a question of a 'white woman' marrying a 'red man'" (100). Child describes Hobomok with a balance of physical strength and emotional tenderness, both throwing "a large bough upon the



heap of rocks” and longing for Mary “with a mournful expression of countenance” (14). This illustration of Hobomok—his rugged masculinity and emotional sensitivity—creates depth and dimension against his otherwise assumed savage state. Furthermore, Child allows her protagonist, Mary, to wrestle with these tensions, pushing against the norm as an acknowledgment that shocking her readership with such a union could destroy her own authorial reputation, paralyze book sales, and push for too much social progress too quickly.<sup>65</sup> But the tension, itself, allows the readership to view Mary’s own struggle, the tortured back and forth of Hobomok and Charles concerning not only their physicality and character but also their suitability for the union of marriage. By taking an entire novel’s length to sort out these complications, Child offers steady commentary, page by page, and argues for a more inclusive republic which acknowledges and even accepts those outside of gendered, religious, and racial norms.

In these moments, readers are alerted to reevaluate the ways in which the native had been previously perceived and represented by the American republic. Jefferson’s *Notes* alludes to the nature of native hunting—his claims dubiously based “somewhat from [Jefferson’s] own knowledge, but more from the information of others better acquainted with him, and on whose truth and judgment [he] can rely”—the American Indian’s “vivacity and activity of mind is equal to ours in the same situation; hence his eagerness for hunting, and for games of chance” (63, 64). Since Jefferson’s record primarily offers a restrictive comparison and contrast of rumored (and

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<sup>65</sup> Karcher explains Child’s acknowledgement (and the risks involved) of presenting natives in a positive light while safeguarding her own literary aspirations and maintaining a relationship with her family and peers. Moreover, she argues that within the Preface, readers sense an “anxiety” that is not gender-related but is charged with an understanding of the enormous nature of the task she set out to accomplish (*The First Woman* 17). And despite the novel’s failures and Child’s amateur naivetés as a writer, Karcher argues that “...*Hobomok* does offer a more progressive vision of race and gender relations than the one ultimately encoded in the American literary canon. Child breaks out of the mold in which American writers had hitherto found themselves imprisoned by the sources they drew on as they sought to create a distinctive national literature” (*The First Woman* 32).

sometimes observation of) behaviors, we turn to Child's fictional reimaginings, which detail in eloquent display the nature of the Wampanoag hunt. Within the more flexible genre of fiction, Child considers the historical plight of the native, with a poignancy that cannot be detailed by natural history. Adhering to the elements of the popular sentimental form and crafting what Sullivan calls the "Indian novel," Child presents Hobomok, Mary, and the hunt in a manner that calls for a reconsideration of not simply gender roles but also the manner in which Anglo-American/Native American and Christian/heathen coexist.

Child first writes of Mary's attraction to seeing the deer under the glowing moon and torchlight of the hunters, noting again the struggle of her modest Puritan nature and the appeal of the wilderness. Mr. Conant resists her intent to travel along with the native hunters and colonial men, claiming that such moments "entice their wandering hearts[,]” and yet he acquiesces at the appeal of Mrs. Conant (87). The night is described as an ideal one of winter, and Child constructs a romantic and even magical tone, before proceeding with the narrative:

Winter seldom presents a night of such glittering beauty, as the one they chose for their expedition. The mellow light of moon and star looked down upon the woods, and as the trees danced to the shrill music of the winds, their light was reflected by ten thousand undulating motions, in all the rich varieties of frost work. It seemed as if the sylphs and fairies, with which imagination of old, peopled the mountain and the stream, had all assembled to lay their diamond offerings on the great altar of nature. Silently Mary gazed on the going down of that bright planet, and tree and shrub bowed low their spangled plumes in homage to her retiring majesty, till her oblique rays were only to be seen in faint and scattered radiance, on the cold, smooth surface of the earth. (88)

Such description conveys a feeling of exceptionality—for Mary, an intriguing moment of adventure not because of the wild dangerousness of such an outing but instead because of its peaceful, enchanting setting. Child depicts Hobomok's and Mary's unique interactions in this narrative moment by setting them apart from the others in the convoy, formulating moments in which a readership can see Hobomok and Mary relate to one another. In preparation for the hunt,

Hobomok is described by his “eagerness to display his skill. His arrows were carefully selected, and the strength of his bow was tried again and again, as he occasionally turned to Mary, and boasted of the service it has always done him, in field and forest” (88). In particular, Hobomok’s reflection of republican masculinity is illuminated, and in response, Mary attires herself with the innocent demeanor of feminine infatuation, probing Hobomok’s instincts for her own protection and pride. No different than an Anglo-American courtship, Hobomok performs the behaviors of the protector and provider, boasting his rugged skills and talents, while remaining acutely observant of Mary’s response to his actions; moreover, Child notes Hobomok’s keenness to behave appropriately before Mary’s father and chaperone, “walk[ing] by her side” yet “silent and thoughtful as he usually was in the presence of her father” (88). Even though Hobomok does not state his romantic intentions for Mary in this moment, he does, indirectly, behave as a suitor would in a traditional courtship, admiring the young woman of his desires but respecting the figure of patriarchy that resides over her. And even more interestingly, Mary reciprocates by moving nearer to her protector, as wolves howl in the background (88). While Child’s literary maneuver is subtle, the behaviors of both the single male and female, although representing different cultural groups, succumb to the expectations of a respectable “civilized” courtship, with appropriate adherence to modest interactions, shadowed closely by the familial witness.

Scholars, in the last fifty years, have established a trajectory of Native American identity, as represented in fiction literature. The foundational concept of the noble savage is concisely articulated by Barnett, and then later, by Gordon Sayre, among others. The first explains that “authors had to create a fictive situation which partially antedated white-Indian conflict: in isolation, in his Edenic wilderness, the Indian could be approved of as a noble savage, certainly

inferior to whites, but suited to the simple and in some ways attractive life of the forest” (87).<sup>66</sup>

This understanding of native identity is directed by the need for Anglo-American defense; in other words, native identity is suppressed by the dominant demands of his white interpreter.

Sayre, moreover, notes that “although the Noble Savage sometimes served to refigure Europeans’ vision of their primitive past, it often served instead to justify a vision of the future in colonial America” (126). Again, the native is represented in purely Anglo-American terms, in a manner that perpetuates stereotypes to justify one’s own imperialistic needs. Child, however, adapts this application of the noble savage in order to redefine Hobomok in the light of the republic. By highlighting his masculine appearance, his physical strength, and even his god-like disposition, Child seeks to strengthen the Native American ethos. Native Americans, in this sense, should neither be dominated nor exterminated; instead, the individual nature of the native is valuable and admirable, possessing potential and demonstrating worth, as an esteemed,

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<sup>66</sup> Dating back to even the sixteenth century, explorers, theologians, politicians, and later novelists described the savage in their works, and circulating perceptions of Native American identity, in part, were defined by these published commentaries. Michel de Montaigne, in 1580, published “Of Cannibals,” evaluating the authenticity of the claims of barbarism, circulating within Europe upon exploration in the Americas. In this essay, he attacks pre-conceived ideals of the barbarous savages, instead labeling such behaviors as simply cultural difference: “They are savages in the same way that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her ordinary course; whereas, in truth, we ought rather to call those wild whose natures we have changed by our artifice and diverted from the common order” (78). Montaigne asserts the persona of the noble savage in his criticism of European practice. In his terms, the European is so distorted in his corruption, advancement, and hypocrisy, that he has no room for accusation upon another’s behaviors: “We may, then, well call these people barbarians in respect to the rules of reason, but not in respect to ourselves, in all sorts of barbarity, exceed them” (84). For Montaigne, who nature has created cannot be corrupt; instead, the influences of man distort the natural being into barbarity. The works of French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau offer insight into native practice and identity, describing his specimen as animalistic and primitive but neither recklessly barbarous nor violent: “Savage man, left by nature solely to the direction of instinct... must accordingly begin with purely animal functions: thus seeing and feeling will be his first condition, which would be common to him and all other animals” (14). He further evokes supernatural interference in his understanding of the savage, as he positions the civilized man above the savage, in intellectual faculties:

...nothing could be more unhappy than savage man, dazzled by science, tormented by his passions, and reasoning about a state different from his own. It appears that Providence most wisely determined that the faculties, which he potentially possessed, should develop themselves only as occasion offered to exercise them, in order that they might not be superfluous or perplexing to him, by appearing before their time, nor slow and useless when the need for them arose. (18)

independent member of society. In her first attempt as a novelist, Child is stretching, re-deploying, and adapting the image of the Native American, finding more progressive political possibilities through fiction, and advocating on a preliminary level for the sanction of racial intermarriage.

Child, before concluding the evening of the hunt, emphasizes the budding relationship of Hobomok and Mary on an even greater level, fixating on their physical features. Consistently, Hobomok is described as strong, handsome, and tenacious, but Child indulges the readership, here, by elevating him to a near god-like state: “Hobomok stood among his brethren, gracefully leaning on his bow, and his figure might well have been mistaken for the fabled diety of the chase” (88). The gaze of Mary, followed by the reader, rests on Hobomok in his image of striking elegance, in contrast to the standard stereotypes of Indian savageness, ferocity, and violence. Child insists that he is the very ideal of not only masculine beauty but also of a desirable mate, attempting to interrogate him for flaws but finding none. In fact, except for his skin color, Hobomok cannot be criticized: He is the most attractive, noble, and enticing of the gathering of hunters and colonists. Furthermore, Child calls into question the stability and importance of skin color. Presenting descriptions of light and dark, Child associates the Christian with darkness, explaining that “the wild, fitful light...streamed back unbroken upon the rigid features of the Calvinist, rendered even more dark in their expression by the beaver cap which deeply shaded his care-worn brow” (88-89). Whereas one would expect the torches to create light to lead the expedition, Child chooses to emphasize the shadow, darkening the countenance of Mr. Conant. The result is that his stern and unrelenting nature, already metaphorically dark in its demeanor, is magnified by the literal darkness of the shadowed features concealed even further underneath his cap. Meanwhile, Mary, her complexion previously associated with even

the purest of marble, transforms from white to bronze: “The pale loveliness of Mary’s face, amid the intense cold of the night, seemed almost as blooming as her ruddy companions; and the frozen beauty of the surrounding woods again flashed brightly beneath the unwonted glow of those artificial rays” (89). Interestingly, Mary’s face begins to physically resemble those of her Native American peers, and her association with nature results in an effect of neither fear nor danger but instead of a “blooming” that gives her more beauty, life, and vitality. Before the kill, Mary does nudge Hobomok to let the deer go free, and yet this moment magnifies the sensitive feminine nature of Mary and the strength of Hobomok. This example is not to suggest that her response is feigned, a feminine show of damsel in distress; however, Hobomok is positioned as the kind of man who can provide nourishment for those he loves, not only because of his poise and reverence but also because of his great skill. What causes Mary to leave the scene is not the death of the deer but instead a squabble among the native hunters. Furthermore, Child offers no evidence that Mary’s feelings toward Hobomok are altered in any way but that the execution of killing the deer is more of a man’s job. Similarly, Hobomok represents two aspects of his true nature: He is courageous and protective, finding food for his own tribe and his friends; yet he is also perceptive and majestic, acting in a quiet confidence instead of terrifying violence. In this sense, Child’s adaptation of the noble savage and her creation of the frontier heroine complement one another, calling for readers to reevaluate the current limitations of racial construction presented in Enlightenment literature.

Child’s narrative motive, in this instance, is two-fold: The importance of skin color fades away by Child’s inconsistent and oscillating description, the ever-changing alterations to complexions, as the Christian patriarch becomes dark, the Puritan maiden becomes ruddy, and Hobomok is consequently and figuratively whitened, thus becoming less savage. Mr. Conant’s

interactions in nature only make him more stern, rigid, and unaccepting, his theological beliefs dark; but Mary's ruddiness, like her native counterparts, once again exposes her exceptional nature. She is not the dainty, Puritan woman who fears difference and fails to survive outside the domestic sphere; she is, instead, adaptable, agile, and alive, comfortable with Hobomok and invigorated in the enclosure of nature. In this way, Child creates performances of display, darkening Mr. Conant and Mary, the first representing the decay of Puritanism and the second reflecting the beauty and value of the native. Moreover, Hobomok becomes a symbol of anti-performance through his rhetorical whitening: He is no longer expected to play Indian but is free to adopt the admirable qualities of character and behavior typically associated with the enlightened Anglo-American. Child's narrator, like an outcast spectator, peers in on the gathering: "There, in that little group, standing in the loneliness and solitude of nature, was the contrast of heathen and christian, social and savage, elegance and strength, fierceness and timidity" (89). Yet, even in picturing the disparity within the group, Child exposes that difference as trivial. By creating binaries, then blending them into one another, she positions herself as a narrative authority to defy and deconstruct difference, elevating Hobomok to a playing field equal with his white peers. Hobomok's appearances are more striking than the remainder of the group, and his behaviors just as civilized. The superiority of the whiteness of skin and the title of Christian, as Mary and Hobomok are observed in nature, are deemed less significant in comparison.

Hobomok, also, is respected within the community due to his appearance and wisdom, resulting in reverence and admiration: Even his critics, skeptical of the native's worth, acknowledge Hobomok's capacity for goodness. Moreover, Hobomok's physique, regardless of his racial and cultural identity, sets him apart as a narrative icon: He is a pinnacle of strength,

beauty, and admiration, especially when compared to others within the novel, and Child calls attention to his exceptional appearance, as she describes his attractiveness:

...and lastly 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 the nature's noblest mould. He was one of the finest specimens of elastic, vigorous elegance of proportion, to be found among his tribe. His long residence with the white inhabitants of Plymouth had changed his natural fierceness of manner into haughty, dignified reserve; and even that seemed to soften his dark, expressive eye rested on Conant's daughter. (36)

The extensive nature of Child's details compels readers to reimagine Hobomok's intrinsic and extrinsic worth. As she does with Mary, Child situates Hobomok among his counterparts to demonstrate the uniqueness of his physical body. Furthermore, she implies that time spent with the English has refined Hobomok's features, as he responds to their prescribed expectations of dignity and cultivation, making his features softer. Later in the novel, after Mary's marriage to Hobomok, Sally, although flighty, petty, and impractical, reinforces this observation: "I always thought he was the best Indian I ever knew," answered Sally; "and within these three years he has altered so much, that he seems almost like an Englishman. After all, I believe matches are foreordained" (137). Notwithstanding his union with Mary, Hobomok is, nonetheless, designated as unique because of his appearance and nature, but after becoming the husband of Mary, these qualities are amplified.<sup>67</sup> And perhaps the most unlikely of all of Child's characters, Mr. Conant, too, testifies to Hobomok's good nature, integrity, and faithfulness: "You must ask Mary about him," replied Mrs. Conant, smiling. "She loves to hear his long stories..." "It's little I mind his heathenish stories," rejoined her husband; "but I have sat by the hour together, and gazed on his well fared face, till tears have come into mine eyes, that the Lord should have raised

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<sup>67</sup> Boudinot's descriptions of the Cherokees, in "Address to the Whites," aims to illustrate the progressive, civilized, and improving nature of his tribe. See Chapter 4.



us up so good a friend among the savages” (98). Child imagines, through these three encounters and others, an Anglo-American population who is capable of responding to difference in a more tolerant way. In fact, she even suggests that with a simple repositioning of perspective, Native American peoples share not only a close resemblance to Euro-Americans but that their capacities for feeling, expression, goodness, and even faith can surpass those actions deemed more superior by the early American population.

Child, more importantly, retreats back into the past to reimagine the liminal spaces of encounter—culturally, religiously, economically, and relationally—within the first Puritan settlements. Perhaps the most piercing inquiry in the novel is Child’s interrogation of what it means to be “Christian.” While colonial New England existed as a Christian foundation for Euro-American peoples, in their escape from persecution and corruption, Child’s fictional reimagining of this settlement unveils tension. Without hesitation, Child confesses the mistreatment of the Native American peoples, persecuted by the white man, as she presents her own version of the history of the May-Pole of Merry Mount:

As for the poor, unlettered Indians, it exceeded their comprehension how buffaloes, as they termed them, could be led about by the horns, and be compelled to stand or move at the command of men; and they could arrive at no other conclusion than that the English were the favorite child of the Great Spirit, and that he had taught them words to speak to them. To these, and similar impressions, may be ascribed the astonishing influence of the whites over the untutored people. That the various tribes did not rise in their savage majesty, and crush the daring few who had intruded upon their possessions, is indeed a wonderful exemplification of the superiority of intellect over mere brutal force. At the period of which we speak, the thoughtless and dissipated Morton, whom we find mentioned so frequently in our early history, had done much to diminish their reverence for the English. Partly from avarice, and partly from revenge of Governor Endicott’s spirited proceedings against his company at Merry Mount, he had sold them rifles, and taught them to take a steady and quick-sighted aim; so that they now boasted they could speak thunder and spit fire as well as the white man. Of late, too, their councils became dark and contentious, for their princes began to fear encroachments upon their dominions, and their prophets were troubled with rumors of a strange God. (30)

The interpersonal relationship, or the cause and effect relationship, of the colonial and Native American people is imperative to Child's purpose, as she carefully details first the intrigue and respect of the native peoples extended toward the Euro-Americans; second, the humility and generosity of the native tribes, layered over their own suppressed strength to conquer; and lastly, the mistreatment, mistrust, and misuse of the native peoples—corrupted and contaminated by the Puritans and Separatists. While Child addresses the growing agitation and skepticism of the Indian tribes, she blames the Christian people and their ensuing behavior for the volatile reaction. Initially in awe of the colonists, not because of their barbarous and inhuman behavior but because of what Child calls their “unlettered” interactions, the natives, in their impressionable state, could have been instructed in the way of both education and civilization; instead, there was impending warfare, accelerating toward King Philip's War (1675-76).<sup>68</sup> This historically grounded, reimagined passage advocates for a broader understanding of the Euro-American and Native American interactions in the seventeenth century and beyond and echoes the trajectory of scholars including Helen Tiffin, Deborah L. Madsen, Yaacov Shavit, and Nancy Peterson, who call such a literary move a “counter-discourse” or counter-history.”<sup>69</sup> Child revises Native American identity through rewriting colonial history by use of Hobomok's iconicity and, as a result, advocates for the native population of the nineteenth-century.

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<sup>68</sup> William Apess's *Eulogy* also returns to the past through mourning to reposition King Philip to a place of high-esteem, while inventing an attitude of nineteenth-century acceptance of Native American peoples. See Chapter 4.

<sup>69</sup> Madsen, in *Beyond the Borders*, building upon Tiffin's post-colonial theories of “counter-discourse” argues that this literary practice becomes a means “to engage and deconstruct the oppressive cultural narratives that are a legacy of...America's colonial past” (5). Shavit, in *History in Black*, explains a “counter-history” through an Afrocentric view: “...in order to achieve their goals modern African-Americans must abandon white Western heritage altogether. Only when a new and all-embracing genuine black-African and historical alternative to conventional history – an Afrocentric counter-history – constitutes an act of baptism for the Afrocentric perception of the world, bringing about the rebirth, indeed the resurrection...then will bondage end...” (xii). And Peterson, in *Against Amnesia*, defines “counter-history” as the practice of using “literature to tell the other side of history and to refashion the narrative so that history comes out right this time” (183).

In totality, Child represents the Puritan population of colonial America in a negative light. Filled with judgmental and tumultuous arguments over theological doctrine, the church houses of *Hobomok* are often associated with discord between the Puritans and Anglicans. Even Child's physical descriptions of eminent spiritual leaders reflect these severe, unrelenting disputes: "In immediate contrast were the stern, hard features of Mr. Conant, and the singular countenance of Mr. Oldham, which reminded one of gleams of light through a grated window, for the deep furrows of passion, and the shadows of worldly disappointment, were in vain cast over its natural drollery of expression" (36).<sup>70</sup> These men, in conjunction with others in the community, "complained loudly of the spirit of the times" and, at least through Child's representation, focused more upon the theological doctrine, itself, than the execution of such Christian attributes within the community (46). Child provides this passage, in concise summation, of the spiritual discourses within Puritan New England:

Various were the discussions which were held that day. Some sat apart and talked of state policy, in dark hints and mysterious insinuations; while others loudly and boldly deprecated the high-handed course of the second Stuart. Some dwelt on the great goodness of God in raising them up from their low estate, to the enjoyment of outward comfort, and gospel privileges; or entered into theological controversies, in which a penetrating eye might discover the embryo forms of Familism, Gortonism, and divers other long forgotten sects, which in their day and generation had a reason for the faith that was in them. (68)

Consistently in debate and often in strife with one another, the Puritan leaders—and, in particular, Mr. Conant—are contrasted with the simple, yet faithful, *Hobomok*. On the narrative periphery of such discourse, *Hobomok* exhibits a spiritual belief more consistently maintained than the quarrelsome Puritans, and his communion with God, or the Great Spirit, is regularly situated within nature: "...but there was within him a voice loud and distinct, which spoke to him

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<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Apess accuses Increase Mather of hypocritical behavior and slanderous conduct toward the seventeenth-century Native American people. By doing so, he aims to invert the long-established categories of Native American heathen and Anglo-American Christian. See Chapter 4.

of another world where he should think, feel, love even as he did now. He had never read of God, but he had heard his chariot wheels in the distant thunder, and seen his drapery in the clouds” (34). Here, Child writes of faith, not learned or expressed through literacy, but revealed in more ordinary natural occurrences.<sup>71</sup> Normally quiet and observant around Mr. Conant, Hobomok chooses to engage on a deeper level with Mary and her mother; in fact, these short episodes of dialogue most often lead to exceptional eloquence and discussion: “Hobomok seldom spoke in Mr. Conant’s presence, save in reply to his questions. He understood little of the dark divinity which he attempted to teach, and could not comprehend wherein the traditions of his fathers were heathenish and sinful; but with Mary and her mother, he felt no such restraint, and there he was all eloquence” (85). Here, gender discrepancies and religious critique work together simultaneously to advocate for not only the equality of women but also Native Americans.<sup>72</sup> Conant’s teaching of “dark divinity” repels Hobomok: But this reaction does not hinge on Mr. Conant, himself, but instead on his regard for undistinguishable religious rhetoric. Hobomok cannot perform, spiritually, on the same intellectual level as Mr. Conant, but his faithfulness, exhibited daily, rivals that of his Puritan counterpart because of his simple, genuine, natural state. Therefore, by associating Hobomok with the women, Child feminizes and whitens him, establishing new premises for Native Americans and females—both oppressed—and for spiritual critique: The lofty language of Puritanism, delivered by the religious patriarch, fails to inspire belief and Christian fellowship. As these same tenets, patriarchy and religious zeal, were elevated in the early republic, Child asks readers to examine themselves and their own set of

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<sup>71</sup> Apess performs a similar move by asserting that the seventeenth-century Native Americans embodied Christianity in deed and action, not in only title. See Chapter 4.

<sup>72</sup> Melissa Ryan asserts that the construction of “the ‘Indian Problem’ in terms of the ‘Woman Question’ helps to reveal the ways in which [frontier] novel[s]” can be viewed in a more radical light than before (26).

values. When the accepted norms of religion and gender collapse, Child redirects attention in another direction, to a place where a softer, more genuine form of religion is practiced, and women are exalted within the domestic sphere, not for their maternal worth, but for their theological knowledge and compassion. Likewise, Hobomok is valued for his “simple” spirituality and his common sense practices; in this light, Child demands that the republic evaluate the existing ideals that govern politics, religion, and the presumed hierarchy of humanity.

Several moments within the text, furthermore, elevate Hobomok’s faith in light of Puritan demise. In their concerns about attack from surrounding native tribes, Hobomok explains, specifically to Mr. Conant, the ways in which God works through man to bring certain victory: “But though the rattlesnake’s death be on its feather, the wise man must aim it, and the Good Spirit must wing it to the mark. When you pray to the Englishman’s God, he send your corn drink, and you say he makes the waters in two tribes, for the white man to pass through. Is he not bigger than the Pequods and the Mohegans, the Narragansetts and the Tarateens?” (37). In this moment, Hobomok again reflects a manner of anti-performance: He does not act as a dark-skinned, uncivilized, savage, and uneducated being; instead, he engages in religious discourse and inculcates the superior Christian leader of the community. Furthermore, Mr. Conant responds with acknowledgement and remorse over their collective lack of faith: “It is a shame on us that an Indian must teach us who is ‘our shield and our buckler,’ observed Mr. Conant. ‘To my mind there is more danger of Satan’s killing us with the rat’s bane of toleration, than the Lord’s taking us off with the Indian arrows’” (38). Even in this passage, while Conant confesses the faltering Puritan faith, his language still degrades another race. Conant’s haughty tone and arrogance hinder his contrite confession, and moreover, his comparison of Euro-American and

native beliefs devalues one culture in order to elevate the other. Conant expresses two sets of emotions: first, embarrassment and shame, then invincibility and vanity. Who are the Indians to teach the Puritans anything at all, especially in the realm of religion? And, assuredly, God would not allow an Indian attack on such a pious people; to consider this type of violence as a possibility was absurd. The novel's spiritual reexamination of colonial America asks the nineteenth-century reader to reconsider how genuine faith is derived. Hobomok's simplistic faith does not equal that of his educated peers, and yet the exercise of his faith is more valuable on a practical, behavioral level. Through this unexpected literary reversal of spiritual strength, Child challenges an early nineteenth-century readership to consider the ways in which spirituality is enacted and the ways in which outside populations are received within the white community. Through her creation of an unlikely protagonist, Child uses Hobomok as the icon for pointing toward a failing racial structure within American society.

At the apex of Child's critique on religious inauthenticity, Conant rejects Mary, upon her mother's death and in her marriage to Hobomok, demonstrating not only his failure as a father but his failure as a Christian leader. After having lost his wife to sickness, he is left with Mary, as his only family in the New World. Fearing the worst of her disappearance, Conant is comforted by affirmation of her safety; however, Child writes that when he learned of her marriage to Hobomok, Conant reacts with extreme despair: "I find I could more readily have covered her sweet face with the clods, than bear this; but the Lord's will be done" (133). With pride stronger even than love for his child, he continues: "'I had made up my mind to her watery grave,' said he; 'but to have her lie in the bosom of a savage, and mingle her prayers with a heathen, who knoweth not God, is hard for a father's heart to endure'" (133). Child, as before, offers an opportunity for criticism here, calling for readers to examine the Puritan state. As readers witness

Conant's behaviors in dire and unexpected situations, his demonstrated faith is limited to prayer and isolation. He is not only unable to interact with his Puritan friends and associates, but he is also unable to accept Mary's betrothal, preferring death to interracial marriage.

Indeed, Conant's spiritual failures are enhanced when placed beside Hobomok's selflessness in word and deed. Through Child's representation of Hobomok's spiritual authenticity, questions are raised about whether or not Christian behaviors can only be determined through Biblical truth. It seems, in this case, that Child values authenticity over hypocrisy or performance, as Hobomok's candidly unlearned but faithful state stands apart from the cruel judgments of the Puritans. Whereas Conant rejects Mary (first in her desire to marry Charles Brown; then in her marriage to Hobomok), Hobomok's sacrifices for Mary, from the beginning of the novel and culminating in the end, are acts of unconditional love. In fact, it becomes clear that Hobomok is the most Christ-like figure represented within the novel, despite his "heathen" nature. Child acknowledges that Hobomok is not schooled in the understanding or practice of biblical law; instead, he is a natural Christian. For instance, she writes that "'Love your enemy,' was a maxim Hobomok had never learned[,]" and still Child suggests that even though Hobomok is not educated in scriptural knowledge, he personifies genuine Christianity. Through her critique of Puritanism, Child justifies Hobomok's seemingly savage behavior by his faith demonstrated in a sacred reverence to God and a devoted love for his community.

More enduring than any other quality of Hobomok's character is his capacity for love. As natural histories briefly gesture toward the strong and faithful friendships of North American natives and their affectionate, careful, indulgence with children, Child, intentionally, intensifies Native Americans' love in the same way, or perhaps better, than Anglo-Americans. By using Hobomok as an unconditional, untiring narrative icon who loves not only faithfully but also

sacrificially, Child makes a strong connection between not only Euro-American/Native American relationships but also Native American/spiritual relationships, the two intentionally working together to define the value and depth of the Native American:

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. In minds of a light and thoughtless cast, love spreads its thin, fibrous roots upon the surface, and withers when laid open to the scorching trials of life; but in souls of sterner mould, it takes a slower and deeper root. The untutored chief knew not the strange visitant which had usurped such empire in his heart; if he found himself gazing upon her face in silent eagerness, 'twas but adoration for so bright an emanation from the Good Spirit....' (84)

The descriptions used here to illustrate Hobomok's budding affection for Mary are anything but shallow. Not only does Child chronicle the penetrating depth of his feelings for Mary, first slow, then deeply rooted, but the mention of the Good Spirit is evoked once more to ensure that readers understand Hobomok's love was of the purest form. Just as Child presented him at the introduction of the novel, Hobomok remains steadfast in his good nature, behavior, and faith, much more admirable than the unforgiving, bitter, and dark Puritan model of Mr. Conant. Whereas Child raises up a Puritan leader within the community, his behaviors are, in fact, not admirable but deplorable. Tenderness, love, and grace ironically reside within the savage, minority figure—who the Puritans call heathen—and yet continued acknowledge of God, his "Great Spirit," and an unconditional love for Mary resists even early republican beliefs condemning Native Americans for their weaker, inferior state.

Child, elucidating the value of genuine Christianity, draws an explicit parallel between not simply Hobomok and Christian charity but Hobomok and Christ himself. Upon the return of Charles Brown, Hobomok willingly sacrifices his happiness, his marriage, and his life for the delight of Mary, in an act of laying down himself completely for another. In the woods, in



dialogue with Brown, Hobomok acknowledges that “[t]he sacrifice must be made to her...the Great Spirit only knows how much I have loved her...Hobomok will go far off among some of the red men in the west. They will dig him a grave, and Mary may sing the marriage song in the wigwam of the Englishman” (139). Dissolving their marriage by a signed, witnessed paper, fastened to the horn of a deer, Hobomok delivers the sacrifice so “that Mary may be happier” (146). Reminiscent of Christ’s crucifixion, Hobomok’s departure selflessly ensures the marriage union of Brown and Mary, despite his personal loss. Child orchestrates this sacrifice as a declaration of not only Hobomok’s goodness but also as a commentary for the readership: This literary move, in fact, encourages the reevaluation of Native American identity.

As a deviation from the rigid form of natural history, Child employs a different genre that attempts to transform the underdeveloped figures of scientific observation to more dimensional characters in the novel. After his encounter with Hobomok in the forest, Brown even testifies to Hobomok’s depth and worth: “I have a story to tell of that savage, which might make the best of us blush at our inferiority, Christians as we are; but I cannot tell it now” (145). Perhaps Charles, as a white man, is able to recognize the corruption of his own people, in contrast to the unconditional, Christian love of Hobomok, and yet he is unable to fully articulate the meaning of such an encounter. The reform Child is calling for has not yet come to fruition, as Charles is able to recognize but not articulate the story of Hobomok in its fullness. On the other hand, perhaps Child’s method is to critique the Puritans, emphasizing their racist manners and shallow faith while requiring the participation of the reader in response to the novel—to stand in for what is lacking in Charles’s response through evaluation of nineteenth-century social and racial reform. Charles, affected by Hobomok’s behavior, is assuredly convicted of his own sins and prejudices, and as a result, confronts his own people with Hobomok’s renown. But Charles’s silence is an

invitation for early nineteenth-century social critique and adjustment of racial and religious values. This inversion of superior versus inferior, Christian versus savage, calls into question the very epistemologies of religion and hierarchy in both the early colonies, historically, and in the early republic of Child's time. The most elite of Christian figures—Mr. Conant, Charles Brown, even Mary—are trumped in both emotional capacity and Christian charity. It is not the most learned, refined, or elite who exhibit consistent Christ-like qualities; instead, it is the natural Christian; the worshipper of the Great Spirit; the chief provider for Massasoit, the Wampanoags, and the English who signs away his existence for his wife's happiness. This exchange of life for happiness, again, resembles the Christian sacrifice of the crucifixion. Under no obligation to relinquish his family and bearing no fault of his own, Hobomok, in his great love for Mary, willingly steps aside in order to make a way for Charles' and Mary's reunion. Even as Child attempts to illuminate the cause of the Native American by joining Hobomok and Mary through marriage, the dissolve of this union denotes not an absolute narrative or political failure but a trepidation is confronting native extinction full-force.

What complicates the reception of Child's narrative, and further, her elevation of Native American identity, is the fact that Hobomok disappears from the narrative and little Hobomok is reared as an educated Euro-American, despite his mixed lineage. It seems that most *Hobomok* scholars focus on gender discourse and discussions of nation-building, because the act of the disappearing Indian, despite the interracial marriage, threatens to wipe clear all of Child's narrative claims or her advocacy for marginalized peoples. Indeed, there are limits to what the narrative can present. How, then, can we make sense of Hobomok's disappearance and little Hobomok's apparent loss of Wampanoag heritage? This chapter's attempt to unpack and illuminate this complication points to the constraints of early nineteenth-century publication and

the imperative role that nature plays within the narrative. Critics such as Sullivan, Karcher, Gussman, Gould, Tawil, and Hildegard Hoeller elucidate the contradictions raised by Child's conclusion, with Gould concisely summarizing the consensus among early American literary scholars: "The ending...it would seem, disappoint[s] just about everyone....[It] lament[s], for example, that Hobomok disappears in the end (and with him the possibilities of a new, radical American marriage)..." (122-123). However, as Sullivan notes, what Child is doing is innovative in its time: "[t]he first kind of association, Indianization through blood ties or marriage with an Indian, is, as one might guess, not particularly common" (59). While Child's work is cutting-edge in its reconsideration of ethnic identity, it is regardless difficult to completely resolve all of the narrative complications. Even so, her narrative stands apart as a testimony of a her own tenacity and courage, willing to oppose the norms of her time by publishing a novel that gave increased voice to Native Americans in two ways: Child returns to the historical archive to revise the manners in which seventeenth-century natives were remembered. In doing so, she, like Nathaniel Hawthorne later, critiques Puritanism and explores how a more genuine faith—modeled by Hobomok—is exposed in action, not only in voice. Moreover, by repositioning Hobomok as an equal to his Euro-American peers, Child encourages a reconsideration of continued native inequality post-Enlightenment. The limitations of this novel have been widely explored by literary scholars, but Child's political and social contributions remain preeminently ahead of later American authors involved in this same movement. Tawil, moreover, warns that this kind of work, sensitive in content and controversial in print, must be presented carefully to a readership. Moreover, Child's novel, published in 1824 inspired an outpouring of many innovative Indian novels and short stories to follow, such as Washington Irving's "Philip of

Pokanoket,” James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*, and Robert Strange’s *Eoneguski*.

In a sense, *Hobomok*, and its themes, are experimental; Child destabilizes the categorical social and cultural boundaries restricting native peoples that have existed before—those of gender, religion, and in particular, race—and she imagines a world where these prescribed labels fade away. And certainly, while the form of the novel surpasses any previous attempts to knowledgeably represent the Indian “other,” Child, as a young, novice, female writer, struggles to reconcile all the complex issues raised by the text. Gould praises Child’s novel, as it “becomes a site of a specific kind of cultural criticism in which women played upon the inconsistencies of republican political culture and recreated a republican language of their own[.]” noting that women, like other oppressed peoples, began using fiction, in particular the novel, to create a language that authorized a space for minority representation (95). This rhetorical move does not suggest that the 1820s novelist could reconcile centuries of fragmentation, oppression, and underrepresentation, but the growth of the novel did signify a new era of thinking differently about race, within representative literature and within the changing American mind.

As Karcher’s biography explains, Child’s creation of *Hobomok* was spontaneously inspired, at the age of twenty-two, then quickly recorded and sent to publication. In fact, when she wrote the novel, she was not as learned in Indian affairs and politics as she was later in life. Karcher reminds readers that “[n]ot only did [Child] devote much of her early short fiction to arousing sympathy for Native Americans, but by 1829, when the crusade against the expatriation of the Cherokees was getting under way, she had already repudiated the myth of the vanishing race and come to the conclusion that it was ‘decidedly wrong, to speak of the removal, or extinction of the Indians as inevitable’” (“Reconceiving” 786). But as Gussman warns “[i]n her

first attempt at writing about interracial marriage for a decidedly squeamish and frequently hostile nineteenth-century audience, Child is careful not to sound too enthusiastic...”( 67). The balance between revelation and acceptance, for the early nineteenth-century (female) writer, was difficult to control, so accepting *Hobomok* as a beginner’s initial commentary in a life-long endeavor of activism helps to resolve the uncertainties associated with Hobomok’s acts of first divorce and then disappearance. Child’s literary potential, for both Native Americans and also African Americans, steadily progressed from *Hobomok* in 1824 to *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* in 1833 to *An Appeal for the Indians* in 1868, as she gained political potency and more confidence in her authorial voice.

Even when compared to other, more progressive texts published later in the nineteenth century, *Hobomok* secures, at the very least, small victories over racial inequality. One involves the mastery of Mr. Conant, the most stoic, stern, and prideful character—albeit Puritan—within the novel. In the end, as Karcher describes, “...Child brings him to his knees by forcing him to accept his daughter’s successive marriages to two men his religion brands as outcasts: the Indian Hobomok and the Episcopalian Charles Brown” (*The First Woman* 23). More imperative than even Mary’s life or death, religion and race controls Child’s recreation of the Puritan community of Salem, coldly directed by the spiritual leadership of Conant. However, ultimately, he is transformed by time and Hobomok’s sacrifice: ““Come to my arms, my deare childe; maye God forgive us both, in aughte wherein we have trangressed”” (149). Broken by the acceleration of loss—first the dissention, disapproval, and relocation of Charles Brown; the death of his suffering wife; the disappearance and rumored suicide of Mary; the revelation of Mary’s marriage to Hobomok; and the dramatic exile of both Mary and his grandson—Conant is eventually humbled by increased despair. Ultimately, as Brown overcomes shipwreck to return

to Mary and, more importantly, as Child aligns Hobomok's sacrifice with that of Christ, Conant's deposition as Salem superior asks readers to reconsider the established early American hierarchy that idolized Euro-American identity and behavior. Yet, Karcher argues that "[t]his resolution...conspicuously excluded Hobomok himself....As several critics have pointed out, Child ultimately succumbs to the familiar white fantasy that the Indian will somehow disappear" (*The First Woman* 31-32). However, a closer analysis of Hobomok's departure suggests that his disappearance guaranteed the integration of the Native American into Euro-American community. As it stood before Hobomok's sacrifice, Mary and Hobomok were forced to live in the exile of the Indian wigwam, but the sacrifice of Hobomok allows for the relocation of Little Hobomok into white society. Even though he is reared in this white culture, the Puritan and Episcopalian are forced to find compromise, as Puritanical religion is destabilized, and the otherwise white society is now infiltrated with darker blood by his presence there within.

A more concrete reconciliation of Child's narrative turn and her greater advocacy for Native American representation is illuminated by a return to the conclusion of the novel. Because placement within nature appears everlasting, especially as the novel concludes, Child evokes the immortal essence of the land and nature to secure Hobomok's permanent presence within literary history. While the settlements of New England provide a promise of civilization, the land—which provided complete sustenance for the Native Americans and existed long before the arrival of European explorers—outlasts those who now walk and work upon it. In a sense, the natural landscape accomplishes what Child attempts to do in revising Native American identity: In the conclusion, Hobomok does not meet death but instead, as the "sun was verging towards the western horizon," he "[w]ithout trusting another look... forever passed away from New England" (141). Hobomok, the admirable figure of reimagined Native identity, does not

wither away or take his own life, but instead, he simply returns to the land that existed before colonial contact.

Upon Hobomok's removal, nature mourns this loss, as Child writes: "The brightness of the sun had already gone beyond the view, and a long train of sable clouds were gathering in the west, as if mourning his departure. The conflicting feelings of the young man [Charles] were settled in deep melancholy; and the aspect of nature 'suited the gloomy habit of his soul'" (142). Both historically and within the Indian novel, the established Euro-American communities promised enterprise and opportunity for eventual success, but the natural landscape and the unrestrictive territories of Native American land offered freedom. In Child's novel, Hobomok is idealized not only as the chief leader of these lands but also as the sacrificial liaison between what had always been and what would be. He is the marker of heritage and the extension of what is pure, noble, and altruistic, despite a selfish and invasive people. While early American culture, after European settlement, was certain to evolve, the land itself, at least in Child's imagination, remained constant.

So why then was the everlasting presence of nature so important to Child and other novelists who followed? Perhaps the answer to this question is obvious—that nothing mattered more to the Euro-American than the land. Even though many scholars view Hobomok's disappearance into nature as perpetuating the Jacksonian principles of the disappearing Indian, this reading of Child asserts that novel is, perhaps, more politically progressive than previously accounted for. The use of land in literature, not beholden to the white man who always gets the last word, extinguishes the absolute power of the Anglo-American readership and elevates figures such as Hobomok. Hoeller explains these power exchanges as she asserts Hobomok's importance to the conclusion: "And while Charles Brown urges his wife Mary at the end of the

novel no longer to mention Hobomok's sacrifice, Child counters his voice by devoting her entire novel to its recognition and remembrance" (49). Preserving his presence on the novel's cover, in the child's name, and in the conclusive last sentence, Child asserts Hobomok's ultimate authority as keeper of Mary and Salem, the Wampanoags, the land, and early America: "But the devoted, romantic love of Hobomok was never forgotten by its object; and his faithful service to the 'Yengees' are still remembered with gratitude; though the tender slip which he protected, has since become a mighty tree, and the nations of the earth seek refuge beneath its branches" (150). In this moment, powerful natural description dominates the European hope for civilization, as Hobomok is centrally positioned in American history. While the Puritans will pass away, and the marriage will dissolve, Hobomok—the pure blood Native American and Child's most admirable character—remains front and center. Those white observers who intersect his presence throughout the narrative fade into the background, and Child ensures that the Native American legacy will outlast all others.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE LIBERTY OF A PEN IN HAND: CONTROL OF LANGUAGE

#### IN JARENA LEE'S JOURNAL

Since Marrant's *Narrative* (1785), other African American authors of the nineteenth century emerged from the margins, in continued attempts to advocate for their own personal rights but also to speak in a more representative fashion for others who were discriminated



against through widespread oppression. For some adopting a voice enabled by religious critique—in this sense, not unlike Child—allowed for not only a sense of belonging and thus authorial presence but also an asserted leveling of worth through eternal inheritance. As salvation was a personal experience, extended by God and received through his followers, the redeemed documented this spiritual relationship through testimony from the pulpit and in record on written pages. Moreover, the encroaching Civil War and the subsequent strife in its path enhanced the production of slave narratives, as experience gave rise to authority and another type of testimony that aimed to point fingers at an accuser through literacy, thus damaging an antebellum system which was restrictive of the enslaved in the South but was bleeding over into economic, social, and political struggle for those free men and women in the North. As these writers reclaimed verbal agency through an entrance into the public sphere, most were forced to contend with the actual presence of an Anglo-American editor, controlling the content and presentation of the narrative, or at the very least, the peripheral judgement of the Anglo-American consumer.

Perhaps the most iconic example of editorial influence over the classic slave autobiography is found in the well-documented relationship of William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. At the Anti-slavery Convention in Nantucket in 1841, Douglass was called to the stage to share a poignantly personal testimony, not only as a truth-teller about his experiences in bondage but also as the living embodiment of one who had endured a cruel and oppressive system and had, nonetheless, survived and escaped. Because of his natural gift for communication and his zeal for publicly condemning the slave system, Douglass, especially through the eyes of the spectators on this day, became an asset for the abolitionist movement. No longer was the traveling abolitionist circuit limited to the rhetoric and philosophical opinions of white men, but Douglass, in living form, had resurrected the broken and bruised body of many

slaves, forcing the audience to stand accountable for what they each saw and heard. Although, in his 1845 autobiography, Douglass claims he felt the burden of stepping outside his former slave condition to address a white audience, he proceeded with reluctance but sincerity. Among this audience, the keynote speaker—a powerful abolitionist and a white man—listened intently and was moved by Douglass’s authentic and riveting portrayal of his life in bondage. Because of the spectacle of the slave body, Garrison was never the same; he testifies in the preface to Douglass’s 1845 autobiography: “There stood one, in physical proportion and stature commanding and exact—in intellect richly endowed—in natural eloquence a prodigy—in soul manifestly ‘created a little lower than the angels’—yet a slave, ay, a fugitive slave,—trembling for his safety...” (6). Upon Douglass’s conclusion and exit, Garrison took the stage, urging the onlookers to consider whether the brave and intelligent declaration was portrayed by only mere property or a man, indeed.

This aspect of the abolitionist circuit—the partnership of Garrison and Douglass—stands as the cornerstone of Anglo-American editorial influence in African American testimony of oppression. But restricted by Garrison’s guidance and eager to tell his own version of the slave experience, Douglass eventually severed ties with Garrison: A landmark in early American literary studies, Douglass disengages from the influences of Garrison and amends his 1845 autobiography with a revised account in 1855. Remembered in literary studies as one of the first of his kind to revise his narrative without the influence of a white editor and tell the story in a manner of personal, albeit African American, authority, Douglass functions as the canonized icon for recording the independent slave narrative.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Douglass aimed to write more

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<sup>73</sup> I use the term “icon” here (and “iconic” on the first page of the chapter) to demonstrate the isolated nature of Douglass as a literary representative of independent writing and publication. Because Douglass’s influence is so wide-spread in the American literary terrain, I argue that authors such as Jarena Lee have been eclipsed by his more iconic presence. However, Lee’s literary efforts are quite valuable, as they provide insight into the feminine,

broadly in philosophical, political, and psychological terms, while Garrison insisted that Douglass talk, look, and act more like a slave, growing increasingly uncomfortable with Douglass's assertiveness, success, and determination to be a race leader.<sup>74</sup>

However, as this chapter demonstrates, antebellum preacher Jarena Lee has been largely overlooked in her efforts to act as Douglass did, first publishing her *Religious Experience and Journal* in 1836, followed by an expanded edition in 1849. Neither her first nor second account was influenced or endorsed by an Anglo-American editor, as she presents her autobiography as “written by herself,” but previous to Douglass's 1855 attempt, she writes from the perspective of a woman.<sup>75</sup> Even though Lee was born into freedom, unlike Douglass's enslaved birth, she was still restricted by the racial and gendered barriers of her time. Like Douglass, she must establish and negotiate her racial authority, but unlike him, she must also contend with the limitations of gender. While Douglass has been esteemed as the quintessential literary representative of African American authorial presence, unrestricted by Anglo-American influence, Lee, through her journals written before Douglass, acts as a powerful independent voice for minority and gendered oppression.<sup>76</sup> While she has been valued as a trailblazer for African American

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religious presence within the public sphere. While Douglass's contributions were beneficial in their attempts to reform the system of slavery, Lee, through her sermons and in her written records, offers insight into the ways in which an African American, free woman attempted to negotiate a space for herself within the realms of ministry and publication.

<sup>74</sup> The primary textual differences between the 1845, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and the 1855, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, include the replacement of the prefatory notes by white abolitionists Garrison and Wendell Phillips with an introduction by the prominent black abolitionist Dr. James M'Cune Smith. While the appendix to *Narrative* serves as a clarification about Douglass's views on religion, the appendix to *Bondage* includes a letter to former master Thomas Auld and various excerpts from Douglass's abolitionist lectures. These prefaces and appendices provide the reader with a sense of the larger historical movement(s) in which Douglass plays an imperative role. Moreover, Douglass appears much more analytical, both of the system of slavery and of his intrinsic interiority. He additionally clouds the issue of his paternal background, gives women greater prominence in the narrative, and reflects a maturation of frankness and political agenda.

<sup>75</sup> See Lee's preface for textual notes about publication. Lee's first 1836 autobiography was published nineteen years before Douglass's 1855 revision, and her expanded edition was published six years earlier, in 1849.

<sup>76</sup> I do not mean to indicate that Douglass is the only African American writing independently at this time. In fact, authors such as Olaudah Equiano were publishing, unrestrained from white editors and endorsers as early as 1789;

evangelical women, she has rarely been placed alongside writers such as Douglass, in her use of not spiritual agency, but literary agency through the possession of knowledge and control of language.

Her journals largely describe her religious encounters in ministry, including the mileage on foot that she accrues as she moves from town to town and also the types of people she interacts with along the way. Lee is not timid in announcing denominations, poor behavior, unrepentance, and unusual occurrence, but she also includes spiritual victories, baptisms, conversions on death beds, and the specific text that she evokes when preaching. Born in the Northeast, Lee was a housemaid and was not instructed in Christianity by her parents. Later in life, however, Lee repented of her sins (1804) and accepted what she believed to be a distinct calling by God into full-time ministry (c. 1811). The remainder of her life honored this commitment, specifically to the nineteenth-century Methodist congregations, and Lee is now recognized as the first African American woman to publish a spiritual autobiography and one of the first women authorized as a minister in the Methodist church. Both her life and journal detail for witnesses and readers the ever-pressing gendered and racial discriminations in the nation, as a whole, and, more specifically, in the churches of the antebellum period.<sup>77</sup>

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however, Equiano's efforts to acquire literacy and generate funding for publication were rare and prodigious. Most authors, for instance Phillis Wheatley (1773), were only published due to the endorsements of various elite members of the Anglo-American society—often with a jury of witnesses' signatures, in a preface attempting to dispel doubt, or in tangible amendments to the body of the text. As for the antebellum period, most literary scholars maintain that Douglass was generally the first of his kind to take back authority from the Anglo-American, overriding his influences, and rewrite his account from an independent slave perspective.

<sup>77</sup> W. Andrews recalls that upon Lee's recognition of her ministerial calling, Reverend Richard Allen, "founder and minister in charge of the Bethel Church" initially discouraged her intent to preach due to its deviation from Methodist theological and gendered principles. Seven years later, Allen, having risen to the position of "bishop of the first denomination in America[.]" gave his blessing to Lee when she appealed once more to publically preach in the church (*Sisters of the Spirit* 5). As to how Lee's sermons were received, her journals indicate that after some initial resistance, primarily from the male leadership in the church, her teaching gained widespread acceptance: "In 1835 she traveled over seven hundred miles and preached almost the same number of sermons" (6). Aiming to transcribe her experiences of evangelism from the pulpit to paper, in 1833, Lee began working alongside an unnamed editor.

This chapter considers the relationships among language, emotion, and identity, specifically how Lee attempts to navigate the particular pressures she faces as both an African American writer and minister in order to develop rhetorical strategies to manage her presence both within the text and in front of a congregation. An evaluation of the latter must examine how Lee demonstrates interpretive authority over the text of the Bible, while still opening herself as a mere instrument of divine language. Moreover, as evangelical language is meant to heighten emotion, Lee must attempt to elicit such a response from her listeners, all the while repressing emotion (so as not to appear overtly female) within her written text. As a writer of the spiritual autobiography, Lee must also present herself as one who is not so domestic as to lack the proper standing for religious authority in the public sphere. Doing so implies a tighter form of control over the language of the autobiography and a different register of persuasive discourse: Readers are not addressed in the way that her congregations are addressed but rather with an awareness of what I call the invisible witnesses—or the absent body of people beyond the text who read it and then use their power, due to a social, political, or racial hierarchy in the community, to make judgments; thus, the invisible witnesses indirectly constrain Lee or influence her self-representation. Furthermore, consumers of her journal are not addressed in the same manner as the readership of a sentimental novel: Indeed, the emerging tradition of sentimentalism seems to be avoided at certain autobiographical points in the text—as Lee responds casually in highly

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Three years later she spent thirty-eight dollars to have a thousand copies of her *Life* printed; she distributed her book at camp meetings, quarterly meetings of the Methodist church, and even on the streets. While in Cincinnati in 1839, she oversaw the reprinting of a second thousand copies of the *Life*. In 1844 Lee tried to secure the support of the A.M.E. church's Book Committee for the publication of a new expanded edition of her autobiography, but the committee refused....Despite the fact that the church had already forbidden traveling preachers to publish books and pamphlets without formal approval, Lee financed the printing of her *Religious Experience and Journal* in 1849, carrying the story of her life up to her fiftieth birthday. (6)

After the publication of her second autobiography, the remainder of her life is omitted from history.

emotional episodes—even though it surfaces in relation to other emotional events—in accordance with the currents of evangelical language.

I interrogate, in the expanded 1849 edition, Lee’s use of narrative control which is implemented in various ways in the progression of her journal. First, I address her narrative evasions, the textual moments where Lee briefly mentions her personal experiences while neglecting the detail that characterizes her descriptions of her professional and evangelical experiences.<sup>78</sup> This narrative strategy is explored by many scholars, including Katherine Clay Bassard, Carla L. Peterson, Joycelyn Moody, and Chanta M. Haywood, as they detail the gendered restrictions Lee faced; as a result, she often distanced herself from the personal domestic sphere, offering only a scarce record of her familial experiences.<sup>79</sup> Most critics answer the question of why Lee avoids personal experience in her attempt to defy racial and gendered barriers. For instance, by offering limited personal detail about the domestic sphere (and by being geographically displaced from it), Lee hopes to position herself as one willing and able to share the gospel of Christ, despite being a black female. A critical inquiry missing from the

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<sup>78</sup> I refer to the 1849 edition, under the same premise as posited by Bassard:

...the edition we have come to know as the 1836 *Life and Religious Experience* was, in fact, an excerpt from the *Journal*. When we reconstruct *Life* as a ‘portion’ of a larger writing, at the time of its publication (rather than as a complete work to which Lee penned a ‘sequel,’ as [William] Andrews’ ‘Textual Note’ implies), the relationship between the two ‘editions’ becomes more complicated. Lee’s intertextual reference, which embeds *Life* within *Journal*, not only produces a ‘text within a text’ effect but figures the writing and publication of the earlier narrative as an *event* within the narrative line of the second text. (*Spiritual Interrogations* 90).

In other words, because W. Andrews excavated Lee’s *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* (1836) in 1986, many scholars have only explored the condensed version, simply following-suit and largely ignoring Lee’s expanded journal; instead, I have chosen to analyze the longer, more thorough version of Lee’s travel journal and experiences, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, Giving an Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel* (1849).

<sup>79</sup> See Bassard “Gender and Genre: Black Women’s Autobiography and the Ideology of Literacy;” Peterson, “*Doers of the Word*”: *African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830-1880)*; Moody, *Sentimental Confessions: Spiritual Narratives of Nineteenth-Century African American Women* and “On the Road with God: Travel and Quest in the Early Nineteenth-Century African American Holy Women’s Narratives;” and Haywood, *Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers and the Word, 1823-1913*

current scholarly discussion is what Lee risks by implementation of strategies of narrative control. In other words, while scholars have thoroughly identified what she hoped to gain, Lee's attempts to control the narrative sometimes reads as suspicious and restrained. While she offers expanded commentary about, for instance, others' deaths and salvations, she appears disconnected from her own personal life.

This inconsistency in use of emotion is also, in part, Lee's revision upon the sentimental literary tradition.<sup>80</sup> Julia Stern claims that the early novel "conjoins the efforts of individuals blending their voices *with* each other—whose experiences of identification become a form of democratic fellow feeling...with the practices of those who would speak *for* each other—whose acts of representation degenerate into tyrannical usurpation" (5). Lee, representing both women and African Americans, seeks to speak—both at the pulpit and within the pages—along with the other members of the Methodist church, in a united spiritual voice. Nevertheless, she must also navigate the "tyrannical usurpation" of the Anglo-American male voice which dominates the social and political spheres of early America. In doing so, Lee competes against the sentimental literary traditions of the woman at the hearth and the all-consuming responsibility of motherhood: Lee resists these tropes within her narrative as much as she asserts her own voice as minister.

As a result, much of her journal demonstrates an interior and exterior awareness of the writer as a strategist. While Methodism encouraged a relinquishing of the self (a loss of control) in order to allow for invasion of the spirit, Lee refuses to surrender personal control within the narrative. Her journal reads as ever-aware of the state of the antebellum nation: As Lee attempts

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<sup>80</sup> Lydia Maria Child's evocation of the sentimental tradition in *Hobomok* is detailed more specifically in Chapter 2. While Child draws heavily upon the sentimental form in her descriptions of Mary and, in particular, Hobomok, Lee's autobiography demonstrates a paradoxical and inconsistent distancing from but occasional (and perhaps unconscious) subscribing to the form.

to forge her own path through religious ministry, she is also representing other oppressed members of nineteenth-century America who lack agency in national discourses. Furthermore, her journal is a reflection of her internal awareness as an African American woman and an external narrative negotiation of her complicated state.

This chapter also explores the literary cost of providing space within the narrative for the Devil and hell, which, in my terms, serves to destabilize the narrative: Since Lee's autobiography carried with it an intent for redemption and salvation, allowing an overwhelming narrative space for damnation and evil diverts attention from its very mission. Additionally, within the narrative, Lee panders to the weak and instable female stereotype: Even as she distances herself from her domestic duties and her family and friends at home, she, simultaneously, exacerbates her tendency toward sickness, mental instability, and suicide, qualities often associated with the inferior, nervous female. By fully disclosing her physical struggles, she dismantles the very authoritative ethos she attempts to create by evading the domestic sphere and her own gender. Whereas Lee downplays her femininity and her responsibilities at home (in order to distract readers from viewing her as insignificant simply because she is female), she ironically draws attention to qualities often associated with the nineteenth-century female with poor physical and mental health.

As a result of this evaluation of narrative control, I argue that viewing Lee as an empowered agent only due to her spiritual authority—the current trajectory of Lee scholarship in the field of literary studies—is only part of the importance of her narrative. In fact, as an African American female author, Lee overcomes her place in society, by entering the public sphere not only through religion but also through a command of language. Lee, like all authors of the antebellum era, represents the movement toward a national literature, but because she is



marginalized due to her race and her sex, her efforts toward publication are all the more powerful.<sup>81</sup> Within the *Religious Experience and Journal*, Lee possesses language, as she implements the Bible as a material object and calls out her “text” in order to preach to populations; she wants listeners and then readers to believe that it is the power of God enabling her to speak and write, but her experiences, moreover, elucidate the power of language. In other words, most critics argue that Lee calls only on the authority of God in order to be heard through evangelism. Instead, I argue that she declares her right to enter the public sphere on the same level of white writers around her due to her power of language: She takes the authority from God and declares it for herself.

#### The Second Great Awakening: From the Hearth to the Pulpit

Lee’s spiritual and literary activism must be considered within the context of the Second Great Awakening, beginning in roughly 1790, gaining momentum within both Baptist and Methodist congregations by the 1820s, and reaching an apex in the 1840s. Robert J. Patterson elucidates the tension between being empowered by the Second Great Awakening and yet restricted by racial and gendered obstacles of the time. Writing of Lee’s case, he claims that “[w]hereas Lee’s introduction to Methodism through the Second Great Awakening had assured her of her rightful place as a preacher of the gospel, social norms that limited women’s roles to the domestic sphere made it difficult for her to fulfill this role” (62).<sup>82</sup> Peterson calls this

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<sup>81</sup> For more on the antebellum call for national literature, see Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870; the Papers of William Charvat*; Michael T. Gilmore, *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*; Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-century America*; Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form*; Grantland S. Rice, *The Transformation of Authorship in America*; and Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853*

<sup>82</sup> Moody also offers an explanation for women being bound to the domestic sphere and therefore not expected to travel:

Chiefly, the dominant cultural postulate that women were innately moral and pious, and the resulting requirement by patriarchy that (white) women bear responsibility for the spiritual health of everyone

newfound spiritual freedom a part of the “religious evangelical activities...unleashed by the Second Great Awakening” (“Secular and Sacred Space” 39). Even though Lee’s ministry and journal must combat the restrictions associated with being an African American female minister, the Second Great Awakening did begin to allow for a greater inclusiveness, both for females and minority races. David Hempton explains that Methodism, during the Second Great Awakening, was “predominantly a movement of women, who formed a clear majority of society members almost everywhere Methodism took root. It was also a movement in search of a voice, which is why it was so noisy and so devoted to singing. It became first a transatlantic and then a global phenomenon....[and] thrived on the margins and frontiers of race and class...” (30-31).<sup>83</sup> As to the racial inclusiveness of the Second Great Awakening, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. writes:

Between 1770 and 1820 Africa Americans in the North, as evidenced in their participation in the Second Great Awakening and the formation of independent black churches, imbibed the symbology of Exodus primarily through religious experiences. During this time a distinctive sense of group consciousness took shape among northern blacks, situating independent black churches at the center of a developing political culture. (58-59)<sup>84</sup>

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around them, served to keep women confined within the private, domestic sphere. Although black women were generally bound by patriarchal codes of conduct for the ‘womanly’ woman differently than were white women, no woman, Northern- or Southern-born, was at liberty to leave home without arousing suspicion. (“On the Road with God” 37)

<sup>83</sup> Specifically, the myriad sects of Methodism appealed to these marginalized members of society as they searched for community and the empowered agency of speech and behavior. In describing this religious wave, Dee Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800*, writes:

In its years of greatest triumph, those coinciding, indeed often interchangeable, with the Second Great Awakening, Methodism reflected many of the attributes of the world in which the circuit riders and ever-rising numbers of followers found themselves. But the Americanization of Methodism was as much about the survival of Methodism’s eighteenth-century roots—its household origins, missionary call, experiential appeal to the heart, and the ability to outcompete all and sundry denominations in a diverse, even chaotic, religious economy—as it was about an expansive, democratic republic. (220)

Daniel Walker Howe explains the inter-connected nature of religion and politics, as he details that “[w]omen, African Americans, and newly arrived poor immigrants were all participating in religion, often in leadership roles, before they participated in politics. The churches and other voluntary associations nurtured American democracy” (166). Jon Butler’s, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*, also describes the connection between Methodism and early nationalism (239-240).

<sup>84</sup> Glaude, Jr.’s book-length concept of “Exodus” is described as “a metaphor of slavery and the insult of discrimination—the psychological and physical violence of white supremacy in the United States—and evolves into a set of responses on the part of a people acting for themselves to alleviate their condition” (6).

In the case of Lee and other non-white Christians and ministers of her time, the Second Great Awakening allowed for a religious inclusiveness that developed over the nineteenth century. As with Marrant in Chapter 1, Lee searches for first belonging and then a platform of agency within the Methodist populace and finds a community which not only offers instruction on the manners of Christian salvation but also empowers believers, whether male or female/Anglo-American or African American to submit to God's calling for ministry and travel. This sense of denominational belonging and even a God-appointed purpose does not completely overcome the struggles of the oppressed within the early republic (Marrant) and the antebellum era (Lee), but the Second Great Awakening, especially, provided a preliminary space for exerting such agency of faith and expression. As such, readers see Lee negotiating these tensions within the narrative, both in her assertion of authority and in her steadfastness in travel away from the domestic sphere.

The Second Great Awakening was also defined by charismatic behavior, including enthusiastic worship and expression. Haynes describes these spiritual celebrations and revivals:

The structures that fostered this expressiveness included call-and-response preaching, which encouraged listeners to testify, shout, sing, pray, and sob; love feasts, during which participants shared a ritual meal and spoke about the ways that God's love affected their lives; and class meetings, which were intimate and ordered gatherings where members were counseled about their soul's condition, and where they prayed aloud and told of personal difficulties, conflicts, and hopes. (96)

Specifically, in terms of music and collective response, African Methodists acted upon "spirituals, spontaneous and antiphonal singing, and the ring shout, a holy dance adapted from African sacred dance ritual....That spirituals were a contested cultural form attests to their ability to critique and disrupt conventional narratives of piety and religiosity" (*Spiritual Interrogations* 94). As various other scholars, theologians, and historians have noted, African Methodist

Episcopals believed that an outpouring of emotion reflected a genuinely repentant heart. In the textual record, Lee certainly depends on this type of response from her listening body, and this reliance upon emotion provides Lee an assurance of proper execution of her spiritual gifts and declarations of scripture. By using the written text to elicit the congregations' responses, Lee creates a record not only of her spiritual quest for heavenly supplication but also of her own presence in the public sphere, an able minister and an able author.

Paradoxically, while Lee gauges her congregations' receptiveness on their emotional responses to her sermons, she limits her own emotional expressions within the text. Unlike Marrant who often erupts with emotions such as weeping, Lee encourages such responses from her congregations but primarily remains poised and controlled herself.<sup>85</sup> Certainly, as she describes her family and friends, Lee communicates only the facts and removes her emotions from the domestic sphere almost entirely. Such action becomes a consequence of attempting to emphasize one's profession, while drawing attention away from the woman's expected place in the home.<sup>86</sup> Hempton explains the acceptance of women within Methodism and the feminine emotional response which followed: "As the movement grew, women were encouraged to 'speak' in ever widening spheres....Methodist emphases on liberty, orality, and communalism facilitated women" (138). Moreover, Hempton asserts that Methodism became the woman's church because of its feminine expressions, as women "wept, trembled, groaned, melted, softened, and sank into God" (138). As a writer, Lee is comfortable with expressing this sort of

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<sup>85</sup> See Marrant, Chapter 1, for more on religious emotional responses and expression.

<sup>86</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, in *The Democratization of American Christianity*, explains the shift from a "whole range of rootless and visionary preachers" in the First Great Awakening to the "set of popular leaders who proclaimed compelling visions of individual self-respect and collective self-confidence" in the Second Great Awakening (55-56). Furthermore, he explains that this religious movement represented "the demand of religious insurgents to be recognized as the latest advance of Christ's kingdoms" (56). Lee, despite being an African American woman, attempts to assert this same manner of authority in her ministry along the northeastern coast.

emotional intimacy, as long as the response is fueled within her congregation; however, her autobiography deviates from expected Methodist norms as it lacks in personal, emotional descriptions.

In part, Lee claims authority both within the written text and in her spiritual ministry, through a stage of salvation: sanctification. Especially for the Methodists, sanctification represented being “[e]mboldened by the power of God” and “possess[ing] a ‘Mouth-Almighty’ that was capable of articulating divine truths to people from all walks of life” (Haynes 89).<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, framing her work upon John Wesley’s theological beliefs, Haynes explains that “[o]ne who is fully sanctified completely surrenders one’s will to God, and wholly devotes one’s life to Him. Moreover, people who are fully sanctified are believed to be completely liberated from sin; they do not commit inward sin (harbored in the heart or mind) or outward sin (reflected in acts and words)” (89). Detailed in Lee’s journal, spiritual growth reflects the Christian process of conviction of sin, justification from sin, and finally sanctification.<sup>88</sup> By achieving this triad in spiritual purification, Lee moves forward with a self-confidence that “rejected the societal construction of a weak female self and posited, in its place, a strong sanctified self” (Stanley 203). Involved in Lee’s movement toward sanctification is first, her interior discovery, “in the centre of the heart, *one* sin[.]” followed by a struggle and then acceptance of her own salvation.

The Second Great Awakening, and more generally, the mid-nineteenth-century, represented a wave of African American writing, including the works of authors such as David Walker (1829), Nat Turner (1831), Maria Steward (1831), and David Ruggles (1835). Even

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<sup>87</sup> See also Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*

<sup>88</sup> See W. Andrews, *Sisters in the Spirit: Three Black Women’s Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century* and Bassard, *Spiritual Interrogations: Culture, Gender, and Community in Early African American Women’s Writing*

though the writing styles varied, as did their purposes for writing, this movement of African American narrative experimentation was an indicator of the state of a young nation edging closer to the Civil War. Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* sparked controversy due to its provocative jeremiadic nature, warning oppressors and slave holders of wrath and vengeance and calling for African Americans to unite in forceful and violent opposition. *The Confessions of Nat Turner*—recorded and printed by Anglo-American attorney, Thomas Gray—provides a detailed report concerning the notorious slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia, led by Turner. While *Confessions* is often read with skepticism, due to the authorial influences of Gray, it remains a reflection of an era of racial empowerment fueled by religious impetus. Steward, a northeastern house servant who delivered lectures and public appeals to both men and women, published "Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality," which is sentimental in nature, advocating for qualities such as virtue, knowledge, and politeness, which she believes are generally restrained by corruption of religion and morality. Ruggles, a printer, abolitionist, and contributor to the Underground Railroad, published an "Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of New York and Elsewhere in Behalf of the Press" which reads as enlightenment rhetoric and models a logical debate advocating for liberty and freedom. This sampling of nineteenth-century literature demonstrates the range of strategies employed by authors, advocates, and Christians alike. Lee's journal, then, represents its own style of agency: Not as fanatical as Walker and Turner, not as sentimental as Steward, and not as devoutly political as Ruggles, Lee blends sentimental influences, religious experiences, and personal agency within a compiled spiritual journal and autobiography. Unique in nature, Lee and her work courageously respond to the unjust demands of the antebellum era, using both ministerial sermons and the written records of them to demonstrate her gender's and race's intellectual, social, political, and religious capacities.

## Jarena Lee's Placement in Criticism and the American Canon

While other African American autobiographies, including those of Olaudah Equiano, Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Ann Jacobs have been studied more, Lee's text has not been ignored altogether.<sup>89</sup> Since W. Andrews revived the works of Lee, Zilpha Elaw, and Julia Foote in *Sisters of the Spirit*, both literary and theological scholars have engaged, primarily, with Lee's sense of God-ordained spiritual authority and her struggle for ministerial rights as a female.<sup>90</sup> W. Andrews explains:

Afro-American autobiography underwent a period of experimentation during which time two modes of reading and writing about personal history were explored....Black spiritual autobiographies of the early nineteenth century do not depart from [a] syllogistic mode of persuasion. However, because the careers of narrators like Jarena Lee...extended well beyond the boundaries of spiritual experience posited in earlier black spiritual autobiography, the genre adopted an increasingly metaphorical, or tropological, reading of scriptural language. (*To Tell a Free Story* 61)

Even though much of Lee's autobiography documents travel, locations, events, and redemptive results, scholars like Bassard, Peterson, and Moody distinguish the shifting differences between genre classifications, such as the slave narrative and the spiritual autobiography; Moody, specifically, evaluates the ways in which gendered autobiographical writing connects with sentimental tropes.<sup>91</sup> W. Andrews' assertion that Lee's journal moves beyond only a record of spiritual experience accounts for the narrative tensions that exist within the text, as Lee wrestles

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<sup>89</sup> See Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*; Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave*; and Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave girl*

<sup>90</sup> See Elaw, *Memoirs of the Life, Religious Experience, Ministerial Travels and Labors of Mrs. Zilpha Elaw* and Foote, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch by Mrs. Julia A.J. Foote*. Most scholars, including the ones mentioned above, call Lee's ministerial strategy "spiritual authority." Margaret Cullen, however, notes Lee's use of "biblical authority[.]" which is referenced more specifically later in this chapter (145).

<sup>91</sup> See Moody, *Sentimental Confessions*

with what she feels and experiences, internally, and how she most effectively combats these struggles, externally.

The majority of Lee scholars, including W. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, Peterson, and Michael G. Ditmore assert that Lee's ministerial and narrative authority is fully appointed by God. For instance, Peterson claims that "Lee grounded her authority in her firm belief that it was God himself who had singled her out, sanctified her, and appointed her to preach the gospel" (*Doers of the Word* 75).<sup>92</sup> But then Bassard presses "beyond historical and thematic treatments of Lee's writings by scholars...to interrogate the structural and theoretical narrativizing within and around Lee's spiritual writings" (*Spiritual Interrogations* 88). Her "intertextual reconstruction" between the first and second narrative emphasizes musical and conversion-related occurrence and what Bassard calls "self-revisioning" that encompasses both the involvement of the actual moment and the reflecting upon that moment to include it within her text (88, 93). Despite Lee's obvious dependency on a God-ordained purpose for both speaking and writing, I assert that the gap within Lee scholarship allows for the exploration of other authoritative forms. Specifically, Lee more often references the "text" instead of the "Bible," allowing for a question of whether her authority is grounded only upon God's appointment of her as a minister or also her possession of literacy and language.<sup>93</sup> More recent scholarship by Patterson does instigate a discussion of Lee's evocation of knowledge and language as he connects her use of literacy to progressive feminist thought. While Patterson focuses upon Lee and others to "make more explicit how...black women's writings were a part of the larger

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<sup>92</sup> See W. Andrews, "Introduction" in *Sisters of the Spirit*; Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892*; Peterson, *Doers of the Word: African American Women Speakers and Writers in the North (1830-1880)*; and Ditmore, "Autobiographical Acoustics: Hearing/Speaking Voices in Elizabeth Ashbridge's Account"

<sup>93</sup> Lee's negotiation of the text as a suggestion of literacy versus the Bible as the foundation of spiritual authority varies within her journal and is noted accordingly.



dialogue in which the more vocal and visible activists participated [,]" this work more closely explores Lee's text to illuminate both her narrative strategies and her assertion of authority not simply through God-ordained appointment but more so through control of language (56). More significantly, Lee as a writer and minister presents intriguing textual moments on her own account, but she also functions as a transitional, representative figure, pointing toward larger currents within African American texts of the progressing nineteenth-century public sphere.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to the attention given to Lee's spiritual authority illustrated in the text, literary scholars have also interrogated the ways in which gender affects Lee's travels and the publication itself, as she recognizes a white, male readership's innate distrust and negates both gendered and racial stereotypes.<sup>95</sup> Bassard claims that even "form is not merely a matter of free choice or appropriate models but a function of how a writer perceives her/himself in the social order" ("Gender and Genre" 119). Patterson describes the journal's textual tensions and Lee's quest for narrative control as the examination of "how black women contest not only the religious justifications of racial subordination, but also ones of gender marginalization" (56). Certainly, Bassard and Patterson inform the argument at work here, in the evaluation of the myriad ways in which Lee seeks to speak and write with authority while remaining ever-aware and incessantly responding to outside pressures. Unlike writers such as Phillis Wheatley, whose

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<sup>94</sup> Joanna Brooks venerates Lee as the exception in a nearly collective failure of "entrepreneurial authorship" in "early African America" (50). Publishing two thousand copies of her autobiographies total from 1836 to 1849 and self-promoting her own work even more than it was backed by the African Methodist Episcopal, Lee is recognized as "a leader of a movement of unlicensed black women preachers[.]" and she "apparently did not pay too much mind to institutional sanction. She was, as her long itinerant career shows, virtually a one-woman social movement" (50). For this reason, Lee's life and work is worth reflecting upon and valuing in terms of her important contribution to nineteenth-century ministry and the public sphere.

<sup>95</sup> See Bassard, "Gender and Genre: Black Women's Autobiography and the Ideology of Literacy;" Moody, *Sentimental Confessions: Spiritual Narratives of Nineteenth-Century African American Women*; Haywood, *Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers and the Word, 1823-1913*; and Foster, "Neither Auction Block nor Pedestal: 'The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee, A Coloured Lady'"

poetry was framed by eighteen Anglo-American endorsers documented in her preface, Lee was unrestricted by forcible authorial and editorial interference; however, possessing the knowledge that both her gender and race created a threat, Lee writes with the awareness of the invisible witnesses.<sup>96</sup> While she is not subject to another man's formal approval in order to record her experiences, she, regardless, possesses an awareness of catering to the collective congregations and a readership, in order to communicate what she believes to be spiritual truth while establishing credibility as an African American female. This awareness, then, suggests an abstract presence of racialized or gendered judgment—the invisible witnesses—present in the churches she ministers to and in the public sphere which receives her printed text. As such, Lee utilizes narrative control to continually deflect the emphasis from her femininity (and less frequently her race) in order to highlight her ministries. But in doing so—and as existing scholarship has neglected—she invalidates her authority, destabilizes the narrative order, and allows for general inconsistencies in her role as writer/minister and in her dependency on the power of God working within her.

In order to understand Lee's specific involvement within nineteenth-century discourse, various scholars have offered individual interpretations of Lee's narrative, asserting to which genre it belongs. Michael Warner, a foundational scholar of the public sphere, explains the function of printing in early America as a "system of ownership that made printed artifacts available in the form of property and thus inappropriate to blacks and Indians; its coidentity with educational institutions that socialized whites into the community of learning whereby their status as civilized Christians was defined; and its content, which referred of course to issues in

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Fanuzzi, *Abolition's Public Sphere*, explains the abolitionist writers' relationship to "an imagined community" (xxvii). He includes the "ambivalence of the abolitionists' appeals to founding fathers, the anachronism of their historical model, and the awkwardness of their comparison between the disenfranchised and the enfranchised of another time" within his definition of this term.

the white world” (13). Lee, however, by personally funding and publishing her journal and by circumventing the societal constraints placed upon her, redefined the nature of print by not only calling upon the authority of God, divinely appointed, but also by mastering verbal language execution and production of the text itself. Michael Newbury asserts that even though some antebellum authors were able to rise to literary celebrity status, “[f]igurations of authorship could, of course, be used to structure the emergent literary realm as deeply fragmented and hierarchized along the lines of class, gender, and genre” (82).<sup>97</sup> For an author such as Lee who strove for ministerial and authorial success, being both African American and female demanded ingenuity from the pulpit and behind the pen. Bassard, calling Lee’s publication a “spiritual journal,” details its function “as the sign of the believer’s consistent examination of her/his ‘inner life’ in the Spirit...however, Lee was being not only dutifully Christian but dutifully *Methodist*” (*Spiritual Interrogations* 90).<sup>98</sup> By subscribing not only to her faith in God but also her commitment to John Wesley’s instruction, Lee demonstrates that she is able to conform to spiritual leadership on a hierarchical scale, first on the eternal level, by following God’s laws and submitting to his commands but also on the temporal level, as she commits herself to the Methodist methods of discipleship and personal improvement.

Perhaps most beneficial is the more recent work of Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein which illustrates the burgeoning need for examination of authors like Lee in the context of the African American printing circuit which has been previously understood as an insignificant aside to a (un)stable print technology which “subtend[ed] the establishment of

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<sup>97</sup> Newbury’s concept of the “celebrity” in Chapter 2 of his book includes imagining “the act of very literal self-presentation and the audience’s pure pleasure and valuation of the act of consumption” (95).

<sup>98</sup> Bassard details John Wesley’s directive for the Methodist sect to journal: “For a black Methodist woman with ambitions to publish, then, the spiritual journal was a literary form already sanctioned by the founder of the denomination, and such authority would come in handy for Lee as her text met with opposition from black male religious leaders” (*Spiritual Interrogations* 90).

African American identity” (2). As a result of this misconception and negligence in the scholarly field of literature and history, Cohen and Stein assert that “[i]n colonial and antebellum America, African Americans figured prominently in literary production both on the page...and off...The sheer breadth and diversity of their experiences has a great deal to tell us about American print culture, while their omission from critical accounts renders even the freshest reconsiderations of the field inevitably partial” (3). The “reconsiderations” that these editors demand—and the primary texts appearing in their own collection—only briefly include the nineteenth-century contributions of Lee; therefore, this chapter explores her life and ministry, in light of the public sphere of her time, more directly.

Because authors such as Lee were functioning more as “free agents” than the (ex)slaves writing under the oppressive guidance of white editors and Anglo-American power, their productions of texts denoted a higher likeliness of authentic voice and freedom of expression. W. Andrews and Bassard describe the differences between the spiritual autobiography and slave autobiography, as Lee was born free in the North and geographically removed from the Southern system of slavery.<sup>99</sup> In her discussion of the political nature of both of these types of texts, Bassard posits that, in fact, spiritual autobiographies are more politically charged than slave narratives because of the “*politics of language itself*” (“Gender and Genre” 122). Moody, even, revises upon this classification that Lee was writing under the traditional spiritual autobiographical form, as she claims that in the special “attention to race, gender, and nation, Lee’s...narrative...depart[s] from traditional early American spiritual autobiographies. Reflecting the Puritan resistance to individuality, ...[she] resists distinguishing [her]sel[f] from

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<sup>99</sup> Richard Douglass-Chin asserts that Lee was probably familiar with the published autobiographies of writers like Marrant, Solomon Bayley, and Richard Allen, in conjunction with the “eyewitness slave narrative” such as the works of Allen, Charles Ball, Moses Roper, and James Williams (39).

other members of the religious community, the African American community, and the women's community to which she belongs, to assert instead a collective identity" (*Sentimental Confessions* 54).<sup>100</sup> Both the slave narrative and spiritual autobiography, before Lee, emphasized personal experience and individual struggle, but while Lee slightly deviates from these forms, I argue that the action she employs is not achieved without risk: Her sense of narrative control creates textual obstacles, risks for the readership, and a distraction from its intended function.<sup>101</sup>

#### Finding a Place Amidst and Beyond the African Episcopal Methodist Church

Lee's loyalty to the African Episcopal Methodist Church aligns with her struggle to find her place among the myriad denominations of the northeastern United States.<sup>102</sup> Visiting the churches of the African Episcopal Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Deists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, and others, Lee writes that "...it appeared that there was a wall between me and a communion with that people, which was higher than I could possibly see over, and seemed to make this impression upon my mind, *this is not the people for you*" (5). Even after she concludes that the African Episcopal Methodists were "the people to which [her] heart unites[.]" Lee denounces other denominations or, at the very least, announces their presence within the text, calling attention to difference in doctrine, belief, or behavior (5). Ironically, Lee seeks to adroitly distance herself from other associations of identity, that of being female, especially;

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<sup>100</sup> Foster establishes this concept that appears in later scholarship such as Moody's, that "Lee's narrative is especially important because it controverts the tendency to consider nineteenth-century black autobiography as synonymous with the slave narrative and the black autobiographer as synonymous with the male slave" ("Neither Auction Block nor Pedestal" 126).

<sup>101</sup> Other less popular claims about Lee's genre of writing include Susan J. Hubert's insistence on "testimony rather than a spiritual autobiography" (47). She argues that Lee's text is primarily representative of the struggle to keep the African-American church alive.

<sup>102</sup> Lee calls her own denomination the African Episcopal Methodists; however, this sect is represented in literary and theological scholarship as the African Methodist Episcopalians (AMEs). When referring to Lee's narrative, I call the church or denomination African Episcopal Methodist; when referring to literary scholarship, I use the AME terminology, unless otherwise stated within the specific criticism itself.

however, her religious affiliations, not of being a Christian alone but of joining a community of a particular sect, repeatedly appear in the text. Perhaps Lee wishes to establish her intellectual and spiritual abilities in order to choose for herself a body of believers by exerting her own ability to discern where she should belong. Or, by giving space to other denominations other than her own, Lee hopes to illuminate the superior nature of her own denomination (including the practices and tenets) while indirectly denigrating those to which she does not belong. Her journal does issue a definitive warning to all denominations as they threaten to disregard a woman's spiritual calling: "O how careful ought we to be, lest through our by-laws and church government and discipline, we bring into disrepute even the word of life. For as unseemly as it may appear now-a-days for a woman to preach, it should be remembered that nothing is impossible with God" (11). When it works to achieve her purposes, Lee relies upon her affiliation with the Methodist denomination, but when even her own religious community fails her, she writes herself outside of discrimination by claiming authority over her narrative. Moreover, by traveling to other churches of external denominations, Lee positions herself as the authority which is above all others, as she achieves this aim by delivering a sermon but more importantly through the power of her pen for all her readership.

Historically, Lee's own denomination empowered minority races by their inclusiveness in worship: The African Methodist Episcopalians reorganized from the African American Methodists of the urban North mainly due to concerns about segregated worship and religious leadership and autonomy.<sup>103</sup> John H. Wigger writes that American Methodism took rise after the American Revolution "...[as] the population flowed from, and contributed to, the cultural ethos

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<sup>103</sup> See Pamela E. Klassen, "The Robes of Womanhood: Dress and Authenticity among African American Methodist Women in the Nineteenth Century" (41)

of the early republic, and allowed evangelical Christianity to become a far more vital force in American society than it had been before the revolution. Within this context, American Methodism was the largest social movement of middling and artisan men and women in the early republic” (173). Wigger continues with an explanation of how Methodism, in particular, appealed to oppressed and marginalized populations concerned with the rise of democracy:

The enthusiasm of early American Methodism appealed to a broad spectrum of Americans for at least two reasons. First, its self-validating quality gave those furthest on the peripheries of organized American religion, particularly women and African Americans, the means with which to exercise greater influence than they had even been allowed to command in more established churches. Second, it answered the yearning of many for a more direct contact with the supernatural in everyday life, for the freedom to work out their own salvation outside the confines of traditional ecclesiastical structures. This was particularly appealing in an age enamored with democratic ideology, in which traditional religious institutions seemed to be crumbling and failing on every hand. (173)

Empowered not only by the sect itself but also by its theological implementation of the Bible, Lee, in her commitment to the American Methodist Episcopalals, was allowed to function as one capable of interpreting the word of God. Cullen explains the concept of “biblical authority” rooted in the Methodist sect: “all persons with the leading of the Holy Spirit could interpret the Bible for themselves and also share that interpretation with others. Because the Bible acted as the high-tension power line providing much of the intellectual, ethical, and artistic energy of the era...[it] authorized cultural outsiders...to interpret confidently the Bible itself and view the dominant culture through the lense [sic.] of that interpretation” (145, 146).<sup>104</sup> Cullen continues with insight into the specific ways in which females and minorities were aided by the religious doctrine: “Through Methodism’s appropriation of Scripture, Africans Americans such as

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<sup>104</sup> Butler describes the importance between literacy and religion in two ways: “First, literacy expanded significantly in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America...[as it] climbed [in New England] to 90 percent for men and 60 percent for women by the 1790s....Second, American independence and denominational proliferation encouraged religious groups to use printed literature even more vigorously than before” (277). Lee, possessing more control of language than most females and steadfast in her commitment to the AMEs and her independent ministry, asserts authority through language, literacy, and religion.

Lee...learned that God could be on the side of the persecuted....Arguments along these lines by African Americans were given particular strength and rhetorical conviction in American postrevolutionary society, an era of intense national self-examination” (147). For Lee, then, authority and power was two-fold: While she certainly demands the rights of spiritual authority and the appropriation of power through a heavenly appointment, she uses the Bible as a powerful object of literacy as well. Even though the Bible was a sacred object, providing the blueprint for Christian behavior and eternal reward, it also represented a power locked away for the illiterate. Because Lee can read, write, and speak, she channels God’s power as a justification of her calling while exerting her own responsibilities to this calling through the use of verbal and written language. Moreover, Methodist spiritual authority is granted first through salvation and then through conviction of a specific calling; however, if Lee had been one of the many illiterate African Americans in her time, her agency and authority would have been undoubtedly limited. As endorsed by African Episcopal Methodist belief, the use of the Bible (and the conviction it implied) helped safeguard Lee from attack due to race or gender. But the Bible also represented not simply the authority given by God, due to the calling of his people, but instead the protection of self-interpretation of knowledge through literacy and the product of this interpretation through the spoken and written word.

“Taking a Text”: The Power of Literacy, Liberty, and Light

Control of language within Lee’s text takes shape in several ways: through her distanced relationship with her family; in her exhaustive descriptions of the Devil and hell; in her portrayals of both physical sickness and mental instability; and in her need to appear blameless and justified before her readership. The first of these has become a fixation of most of Lee’s literary scholars, as collectively, they argue that Lee avoids including her personal life within the



journal in order to redirect attention from her gender to her spiritual authority, given to her by God. While I would agree with these scholars that the impetus behind her narrative strategy is to suppress her femininity, and thus inferiority, more attention should be given to the narrative risk involved in such a strategy.

Not simply through her spiritual authority but to a greater extent because of her control of language, Lee commands the attention of her congregations and readership. Before even words appear, Lee coyly insists, through the careful crafting of her journal, that the readership fixate not upon her gender but on her mastery of narrative control. Her first attempt is through the placement of the frontispiece in the narrative (see Figure 3.1.):



Figure 3.1.  
Frontispiece to Jarena Lee's *Religious Experience and Journal*

Scholars, including W. Andrews, explain that Lee's narrative "reveals black spiritual autobiography's increasingly radical challenge to traditional systems of naming" (*To Tell a Free Story* 69). He describes the "tradition of rehabilitating alien names into the area of gender, as well as social and racial, signs. Her autobiography claims... a spiritual essence that abolishes the privileging power of male over female and qualifies her for the androgynous identity she adopts at the end of her narrative" (69-70). While most critics have detailed the feminized qualities of

her frontispiece, I would argue against this depiction and align myself with Andrews' analysis of the text and its prefatory materials. In the above image, all feminine curvature of Lee's body is doubly concealed. The long, baggy sleeves of the muted gown are made even more cumbersome by the dual-layered white shawl that rests across the breasts. These multiple layers of fabric subdue any trace of the female anatomy, and by dressing this way, Lee creates a barrier for the reader to place judgement upon her work simply because of her gender. Furthermore, due to the comprehensive covering of her bonnet, Lee's hair is fully tucked away. Parted in the middle and combed carefully away from her face, her hairstyle depicts not simply a tidiness of hygiene but a more masculine appearance. By viewing Lee's face, alone, it would be difficult to discern whether the present countenance is male or female. Only by the indication of the dress and tied bonnet—notwithstanding their homely and humble design—would a viewer or reader detect the feminine authorial presence.

This use of the frontispiece, then, becomes a narrative strategy to speak, even before using the words of the text. Lee's image commands a readership to take her seriously as a writer, despite her race and gender. Furthermore, the props appearing on the frontispiece function as symbols representing spiritual authority but, more so, the power of literacy and control of language. In the lower, left corner of the image, the Holy Bible rests at the bottom of a stack of books, papers, and quills, representing only one-fifth of the materials present within the image. More significantly, the smaller text (perhaps literature but certainly not a Bible), the paper, and the inked quills symbolize Lee's personal ability for literacy. Empowered by God but employing her own attained skills for speaking, writing, and publishing, Lee opposes the standard belief-system imposed upon African Americans and women during her time. Predating the far-more-recognized writers who adopted a distinctive, personal narrative voice, such as Douglass, Lee

takes possession of the pulpit and more prominently, her pen, speaking and writing her way out of the system which threatens to oppress her.

The action of “taking a text” appears repeatedly within the narrative, and in many cases, Lee acquires power only by possession of her “text.” Bassard explains that the “battle for the pulpit centered on the right of women to ‘take a text’—select, interpret, and publicly preach from passages of Scripture. Thus, for black women spiritual autobiographers, textuality, reading, and interpretation were central concerns, and their own texts reflect this extraordinary sensitivity to the power relations of written language” (“Gender and Genre” 122). As for her spiritual calling, Lee confirms her appointment to preach the gospel through a vision of not God himself or of converted multitudes but only by a solitary Bible on a pulpit: “...there appeared to my view the form and figure of a pulpit, with a Bible lying thereon, the back of which was presented to me as plainly as if it had been a literal fact” (10). Whereas many documented spiritual visions include figures, such as angels or even God, the physical text of the Bible itself stands alone. For Lee, authority and power are not derived in some vague sense through God-appointed authority, but the possession of the text—thus command of language and the power of literacy—enables Lee in ministry. This moment, in conjunction with many others which follow, asserts that the actual book—that is, the ability to read, write, speak, and thus, control language—empowers Lee to circumvent her gender and race and publish before her oppressed peers were doing so. Certainly, as many other scholars have noted, her authority is partly derived from the appointment she maintains is ordained by God, but numerous specific textual moments confirm her possession of the actual text and her control of language, empowering her in her travels and illuminating the passage of liberty for other oppressed peoples. Furthermore, the narrative control she employs denotes risk and the destabilizing of her narrative intent and ethos, but Lee’s text should be

valued as an attempt to assert the authority of literacy despite confrontation with the social and political restraints of antebellum America.

Following her inspired calling, Lee notes that she is too excited to sleep: “I took a text and preached in my sleep.... So violent were my exertions and so loud were my exclamations, that I awoke from the sound of my own voice, which also awoke the family of the house where I resided” (10). By a demonstrative exercise of her calling, the act of bringing the text to bed fuels Lee’s desire to be heard among a northeastern people needing spiritual guidance. More intimately, any indication of Lee’s feminine nature is missing from the bedroom; even though within the narrative, she is not yet married and does not yet have children, the presence of a book in the bed with her seems unusual. Within the domestic sphere, the bedroom would seemingly be reserved for primping and beautification, the marriage union, or the feeding, rearing, and instruction of children, but Lee remains isolated within her chambers, with only one material book as her companion. This partnership of woman and book (but ironically, not God) symbolizes Lee’s greater dependency on the power of literary: She does not need the domestic sphere to empower her, and she does not need a translator for reading within her Bible; instead, by simple possession of the book, Lee retains the right to advocate for herself, in her calling as minister; to represent the antebellum female, restricted to the domestic sphere; and to overcome the discrimination of races, through the power of spoken and written word.<sup>105</sup>

As she demonstrates her empowerment through language, Lee utilizes the “light” and “liberty” tropes to introduce moments of spiritual conversion, to defend herself against abrasive or apathetic populations, and to build confidence before speaking and writing freely before an

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<sup>105</sup> Most scholars focus more narrowly on Lee’s dependency upon spiritual authority, not the authority granted to her by spoken and written language. I argue that she acts more independently than one might expect, certainly empowered by God but also intimately engaged with the text that allows her to preach the gospel and the text that she writes for herself.

antebellum audience.<sup>106</sup> In this case, light and liberty signify her unrestraint in the textual moment but also as she represents an oppressed population, as a whole; specifically, Lee evokes these tropes in her experiences with other denominations or strangers, among the most oppressed of her race, and as she looks to God through verbal and textual expression. For instance, in the first example, Lee writes that “[i]t was a solemn time, and the Lord attended the word; I had life and liberty, though there were people there of various denominations” (19). Here, “liberty” is extended to an unknown people, and even though Lee clearly values her own African Episcopal Methodist denomination above all others—and she emphasizes this acknowledgement within the text—she explains that the text she evokes is great enough to speak for numerous denominations of various Protestant beliefs.

On another occasion, Lee’s use of the term “light” illustrates the power of knowledge for God-fearing women: “We talked together about Jesus—she had a strong and abiding evidence of her new birth, and in a few weeks went home to heaven. Here she was long deprived of the light of the sun, and the privilege of reading God’s blessed word; but there her eyes are unsealed, and the Sun of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings” (26). The literal light missing from the account manifests itself in several ways: the victim is sick and therefore secluded inside her home; she is also blind and unable to see or read. By stressing her deprivation of “light of the sun,” incipiently followed by “the privilege of reading God’s blessed word,” Lee interchanges the unveiling illumination brought forward from knowledge of literacy, for this woman, found only in eternal rest and the restorative discovery of mind and spirit.

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<sup>106</sup> The online *Oxford English Dictionary* explains “light” to be “illumination or enlightenment, as a possession of the mind, or as derivable from some particular source, *light of nature*, the capacity given to man of discerning certain divine truths without the help of revelation” (first observed in text in 1422). The *OED* also denotes that “liberty” represents a “freedom from arbitrary, despotic, or autocratic control; independence, esp. from a foreign power, monarchy, or dictatorship” (first observed in text c.1405) or “the condition of being able to act or function without hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes” (first observed in text in 1393).

At Snow Hill, Lee instructs a dual population fully representing the system of power and oppression in America; she writes: “I preached in the Old Methodist Church to an immense congregation of both the slaves and the holders, and felt great liberty in word and doctrine” (37). Again, liberty is partnered with access to the written word, a paradox for those listeners who possess neither knowledge of literacy nor agency for “doctrines” of American laws or ideals. Lee demonstrates, in her position in the church and in her command of the text and language, that an African American (woman) is not only able to educate the oppressor within the pews of the church but also to speak for those in bondage—who if allowed to read and write, they too could contribute to society not just simply through practice of religious discipline but moreover, in leadership of religious teaching. Bassard asserts that “[i]n linking literacy and freedom, critics of Afro-American literature inevitably make the connection, implicit in the ideology of literacy among reading, writing, and economic success....” (“Gender and Genre” 120).<sup>107</sup> In fact, Lee represents this shift quite appropriately: In preaching to a slave population—the physical commodities of slave owners—Lee’s freedom, knowledge, and production of textual commodity confront the system of oppression through language. Behind the pulpit, she imparts Biblical wisdom to the listeners, but in doing so, she offers hope to fellow African Americans and a reproach to Anglo-Americans who limit the abilities of their human commodities by upholding the system of slavery.

The African American slave populations are not the only oppressed peoples who appear within the journal; in fact, in three instances, Lee notes the presence of Native American tribes.

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<sup>107</sup> Bassard draws upon the scholarship of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. who claims that “the production of literature was taken to be the central arena in which persons of African descent could, or could not, establish and redefine their status within the human community. Black people, the evidence suggests, had to represent themselves as ‘speaking subjects’ before they could even begin to destroy their status as objects, as commodities, within Western culture” (129). See also Moody, *Sentimental Confessions: Spiritual Narratives of Nineteenth-century African American Women*, where Moody argues that Lee defends slaves by including them within the narrative (61-64).

The first of these accounts is the most thorough and represents another incident in which readers discern Lee's emphasis upon the power of control of language and possession of literacy. Even though she faces a language barrier, as the natives surrounding Buffalo village pray to God in their own tongue, she nonetheless confesses to feeling "the power of God in [her] own heart" (50). As importantly, she emphasizes the sincerity of the worship experience which, seemingly, does not deviate from the standard practices of the African Episcopal Methodists. When the "old chief" prays "very devoutly, [with] tears running down his cheek[,]" Lee interjects with the intent to worship with the tribe (51). Briefly, she interrupts the narrative with expository description of the appearances and behaviors of the native children and tribesmen:

The teachers bring them up in the English language and dress some of them in the English style, but the greatest number are clad in the Indian style; those of the old Indians in their blankets....I commenced by giving out the hymn in our language, and the interpreter spoke in their tongue. Hymn thus, O for a thousand tongues to sing, &c. They sung it beautiful,--two long benches of them sung by notes (their books printed in their own language) a very familiar note tune, such as we use in congregations. I spoke plain and deliberate and very pointed, the interpreter spoke it after me in the Indian tongue, and one of the women cried out Amen. Much weeping among them, dear reader, take notice, notwithstanding they are a nation revolted from Israel, and would not be governed. Yet they can be civilized and Christianized. We might call them heathens, but they are endowed with a Christian spirit" (51).

Peterson describes this account as a moment in which Lee's "description positions the Indians as cultural Others, different and inferior because of their pagan beliefs. Yet in her initial focus on the village's children...Lee also envisioned the Indians as children who, despite their appearance as 'heathen,' are capable of being 'civilized and christianized'" (*Doers of the Word* 86).

However, in her positive reaction to the prayers and emotions of the natives, it appears that Lee, in fact, does not distance the natives as "cultural Others": Instead, control of language unites both African American and Native American (86). Because of the presence of the interpreter and due to the translated hymn books, Lee proceeds by speaking with "plain" language, "deliberate



and very pointed” (51). The controversial politics of assimilation appear in this passage, as Lee discusses the company of Christian missions and the adaptations to the tribe’s clothing and language; however, as Lee notes that most of the children still dress in the “Indian style[,]” they seemingly all acquire the English instruction (51). For Lee, it is not the Indian culture that calls for change and refinement but simply the need for all to acquire the skills of literacy—reading, writing, and speech—which have empowered her to complete God’s work.

Furthermore, this evidence for Lee’s advocacy of native literacy appears within her second account of natives. Unlike the first encounter, the “interpreter had gone to conference” and was unable to establish the comprehensive lines of communication between Lee and the tribesmen. She records that she “spoke to them in English, [and] was entertained in an Indian family[,]” but she soon “shook the dust off [her] feet and left them in peace” (59). Lee’s worship experience, void of tears, singing, and shouting, is certainly abbreviated and less fruitful than before. Couched within her narrative details is a tangible discomfort and apprehension at the Lord’s work in the worship service. Without her interpreter and the translated hymn books, Lee feels inadequate in the delivery and reception of her message and in the transfer of knowledge and language. While she does not precisely state her frustration with the lack of present resources, she does mimic the Biblical command that “whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (KJV, Matthew 10:14). And yet, the miscommunication is not denoted by the hearers’ resistance or defiance; Lee, however, places full responsibility upon her lack of language control: Unable to establish the “endow[ment] with a Christian spirit” and the preceding sense of “calm and serene” reception, Lee leaves quickly and moves forward to her next opportunity of ministry (51).

The overarching importance of Lee's dependency upon the text is her need to assert agency through execution of literary; in fact, the narrative is filled with one account after the other of her engagement with "a text" to facilitate personal empowerment through instruction of others. In several of these moments, spiritual books stand in for Lee's failure to communicate. Describing the power of the book, Lee writes: "My heart beat, my limbs trembled, and my voice was faint, but I spoke from Eccles. xi, 9; 10. After I took my text, it appeared to me as if I had nothing to do but open my mouth, and the Lord filled it, consequently I was much encouraged: it was an immense assembly of people" (45). As her physical body and intrinsic abilities fail her, Lee simply reads from the text, and the words, independently, evoke the intended response.<sup>108</sup> Certainly Lee, young in her ministry, understands the implications of speaking from the pulpit as an African American female, so she utilizes the text as a means for redirecting emphasis from her physical body and gender. In this sense, the text becomes a shield that empowers her message and prevents judgement from the congregation. Peterson explains Lee's approach as the belief "that the act of composition itself allowed Lee both to deflect a curious public's gaze away from her bodily self and to discourage invidious speculations about her gender, as well as to assert her possession of a narrative authority and power of interpretation sanctioned by God" (*Doers of the Word* 76). While this particular narrative moment enacts not simply Lee's written composition but her revisiting of a historical moment by reliving it within the text, Lee, reaching for her "text," redirects the watcher's and reader's gaze back to the emphasis upon literacy. Of course, her intent is spiritual, as she preaches for the conversion of sinners and collective worship of God's followers, but her text plays an imperative role within the process.

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<sup>108</sup> See Chapter 1 for details concerning how Marrant presents himself as an instrument for Christ's use. While Lee evokes this trope briefly in her journal, Chapter 1 more comprehensively addresses the discarding of Marrant's musical instruments that promote self-worth and vanity in order to become a spiritual instrument that God can use solely for himself.

In another similar narrative moment, Lee resorts to her Hymn Book as a stand-in for her failing body. Her journal entry reads: “April, 1827. My health having been bad, I have not travelled so largely, and in this, as in some other moments of reflection, I felt somewhat oppressed, and I resorted to the Hymn Book for something to suit my feelings; the poetry as follows” (46). By printing the full body of the poem, Lee provides no further commentary or spiritual insight. Instead, as she lets her own physical and emotional body rest and restore itself, she allows the poetic words to completely occupy the narrative gap. The inclusion of this poem confirms that Lee is able also to submit to the word as merely a mouthpiece: In this case, letting the words speak for themselves is stronger than her own physical identity. Cullen asserts that such an act proves that Lee is “capable of interpreting the word, need[ing] no institutional authority to justify her interpretation...[,]” not even an Anglo-American male (146). By selecting a spiritual poem from the Hymn Book to appear in print, Lee proves that she is able to intellectually understand the written material and make appropriate literary and thus spiritual choices for her audience of readers.

Furthermore, Lee’s journal records her near-ministerial-failure because of the absence of a text within the church. Concerning her travels in Brooklyn, Lee notes: “When entering the pulpit, the Bible being torn, I was deprived of finding the Text. A young gentleman of the Episcopal Methodist Church being present, took occasion on my next appointment to present the Church a large new Bible. So much for the principles of Christianity” (65). Because the first text is torn, Lee provides no details at all about the delivery of her message or the nature of the congregation’s reaction, inferring that either the spiritual appointment does not manifest itself in the current moment or is postponed until the replacement of the church’s Bible. Stressing that her message is communicated by “principles of Christianity” residing within the text itself, Lee must

hesitate without speaking until given possession of the book. Often, the Bible is used in ministry in order to reinforce a spiritual message, but for Lee, the text itself appears as the primary facilitator for language and empowerment. Without the text, she is either subjected to nervousness and trepidation, or she unable to effectively communicate altogether.

While details concerning Lee's personal life and family are scarce, she nonetheless provides a moment describing her son's ability to learn through possession of a book. She writes of his first "religious inclinations" with a hymnal: "Once he got up in a chair, with a hymn book in his hand, and with quite a ministerial jesture [sic.], gave out a hymn" (21). Like his mother, who is most moved by the spirit with a book in her hand, James obtains power through possession of a text, in this case the hymnal. Furthermore, Lee asserts that James's spiritual progress is rooted in the seeds sown in childhood—that his mother "had given [him] the Bible as Haman gave Samuel to god in his youth, and by his gracious favor he was received" (22). In this moment, no grand act of God promised salvation to James, but instead the gifting and ownership of another spiritual text, in this case the Bible, grants him access to literacy. Following his mother's lead, James possesses books as instruments of knowledge and thus authority.

Ever Subject to the Invisible Witness:

Narrative Evasion, Interruption, Disturbance, and Instability

Before detailing her ministries at all, Lee confesses that her own childhood—oppositional to James'—was void of Christian influence, as both her mother and father were "ignorant of the knowledge of God" (2). This brief passage sets the precedent for Lee's unconscious need to remove blame from herself or to feel justified in her actions and behaviors.<sup>109</sup> As she explains

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<sup>109</sup> Not all African American autobiographies, whether slave or religious, follow this same narrative strategy, while most do detail either a fixed presence or rather a disconnect from Christian influences at a young age. Nat Turner's account (1831), for instance, depicts him as a prodigy or prophet, uniquely set apart as ordained by God, even upon birth.

that she received no instruction of spiritual doctrine, Lee positions herself as a victim of misinformation but also a vessel through which God can miraculously move. The absence of her family aligns with other missing personal details in the text, establishing that Lee's autobiography addresses needs beyond the domestic sphere. While only bits of information are provided about her relationship with her family and thus her intimate interactions with friends and loved ones, one of the more revealing moments within the text is her marriage to her husband; she writes:

In the year 1811, I changed my situation in life, having married Mr. Joseph Lee, pastor of a Society at Snow Hill, about six miles from the city of Philadelphia. This was a great trial at first, as I knew no person at Snow Hill, except my husband, and to leave my associates in the society....None but those who have been in sweet fellowship with such as really love God, and have together drank bliss and happiness from the same fountain, can tell how dear such company is, and how hard it is to part from them. (13)

Upon a first glance at this passage, it appears as if the "sweet fellowship" Lee experiences is an indicator of the love manifest in the newly joined marriage union; however, even though the reader might expect such a response, Lee redirects the attention upon man and woman to the spiritual congregation of "sweet fellowship" (13). Problematically, Lee presents her adjustment to marriage and her relocation as a "great trial" which interrupts her comfort and calling in ministry, offering not even a brief narrative moment for celebration or marital bliss. Furthermore, Lee chooses not to cast her marriage in terms of a symbolic representation of man taking a bride in order to mirror the eternal relationship between Christ and his church. Instead, Lee's disappointment in the marriage and in her husband's denomination, specifically, are described as "discontented" and "afflicted" (13). Obviously, Lee's intent is to remain ever-focused on her spiritual calling, careful to place all earthly relationships behind the eternal one, and yet this marginalizing of her marriage seems unnatural and inauthentic. At the age of twenty-eight and a newlywed, one might expect that a marriage would not simply appear as an annoyance or

detractor; therefore, Lee's attempt to marginalize her new marital relationship actually distracts from her persistence upon only spiritual matters.

Only two pages following her marriage description and six years after, in historical terms, Lee details that she was 'called to suffer in [her] family, by death—five, in the course of about six years, fell by his hand; [her] husband being one of the number, which was the greatest affliction of all' (14). While she does briefly describe her fear of being "left alone in the world" and her children being left "fatherless," she again emotionally detaches from her mourning (14). Through an insistence upon God's providence in her life, despite the hardship, Lee overlooks any traditional steps of coping with loss.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, perhaps this omission of personal detail would not appear unusual if Lee did not provide extensive narrative descriptions of other, impersonal losses of those she served in her congregations. For instance, Lee carefully details the deathbed scene of a generic woman, who she does not even call by name. She records that this woman "knew that she must die in a very little while, and could not get well, and her agony of soul, in view of its unprepared state for a judgment to come, awoke every feeling of sympathy within [her]. Oh! how loud such a scene calls upon us to be 'faithful unto death'—then shall we 'receive a crown of life'" (31). In this moment, Lee not only provides specific details concerning the person, the place, and the affliction, but she also extends "sympathy" toward the scene, guiding the women to remain patient and faithful" (31). Another scene of death involves that of a "young Christian[']s" burial, as Lee explains that she "felt as solemn as death; much weeping in the Church, tears stole down the faces of the people" (41). Here, mourning is evoked and expressed within the collective spiritual community witnessing the burial. Ironically, no evidence

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<sup>110</sup> Chapter 4 more specifically deals with the ways in which Native Americans, Elias Boudinot (Cherokee) and William Apess (Pequot), cope with loss and move from melancholia to mourning in an effort to achieve national unity and progress.

of sympathy, sadness, mourning, or ceremony succeeded Lee's family member's deaths. Neither were their illnesses nor afflictions depicted, nor their relationships with God described, and such narrative evasion contradicts the extensive detail provided for the nameless woman. In one moment, Lee mirrors the traditional deathbed scene common in sentimental literature which aimed to arouse intense human emotion; however, when her husband dies, she rhetorically evacuates his deathbed and circumvents sentimentality in order to firmly establish herself as a serious minister and writer, not wife and mother.

In comparison to the death of her "little grandson" near the end of her travel journal, the impersonal deaths noted before are allotted much more narrative space and explanation (88). In fact, Lee notes her "great disappointment" in the "startling news" of her grandchild's death, but she abruptly evades the solemn moment by feeling "perfectly resigned to his will, with a heart full of gratitude for [her own] protection and safe arrival at home" (88).<sup>111</sup> In this case, God's will becomes the stoic and almost immediate fix-all for a tragedy as finite as death; yet, Lee only mentions it briefly while quickly transitioning back to her own ministry and travel. It would not be unreasonable to consider that perhaps Lee did not mourn her grandson's death, because she shared no intimacy with him due to geographic separation. But regardless of the level of closeness she shared with him, Lee would have us believe that her devout faith trumps a very human response.

Several inquiries emerge through the use of such a literary technique: Does Lee care more for her ministry, and thus her own ministerial success, than for her own family? If so, should we trust a narrator who claims spiritual authority but neglects those closest to her,

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<sup>111</sup> This moment of resignation to God's will is reminiscent of the literatures of Puritan writers such as Anne Bradstreet (e.g. "Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1666) and Mary Rowlandson (e.g. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 1682). As loss is subscribed to Christian ideology, these authors surrender to God's sovereignty, regardless of hardship and tribulation, while remaining hopeful of his eternal purposes for good and prosperity.

including a husband and children? Or, is Lee afraid to share personal details of her home, in order to avoid being valued only because of her role within the domestic sphere? If so, why include detailed descriptions of others' deaths while abruptly mentioning the immediate family members who are deceased? If Lee's goal was to distance herself, indefinitely, from her maternal presence with her family, then why mention them within the text at all? The question of authenticity occurs often in production and consumption of the African American autobiography, as these writers were forced to negotiate, consciously or unconsciously, their lower positions and their often lesser socioeconomic statuses. For Lee, her gender and race created certain hindrances as a nineteenth-century writer, as she attempted to manage her relationship to her imagined readership with the inevitable tradeoffs of authenticity/inauthenticity and full disclosure/narrative evasion. Foster addresses Lee's uncomfortable position as an African American female writer:

From the opening lines of her narrative...Lee established herself as an independent woman who decided to work outside the home not only to support herself but also because it was the right thing to do. She refutes the notion that the ultra-feminine lady by the hearth is the only one deserving respect....Although her characterization does not indicate a revolt against the established virtues of womanhood, she essentially argues for a more liberal interpretation by demonstrating that even when her activities appeared unseemly to others, she did not abandon domesticity, submission, purity and piety. ("Neither Auction Block nor Pedestal" 128)<sup>112</sup>

Foster's assertion that Lee believes distancing herself from her family and home is "the right thing to do" certainly justifies her actions based on a spiritual calling; however, Lee was seemingly called by God to this duty before marrying and having children: In other words, if she knew she would solely submit to her calling—thus ignoring her husband and children—she could have chosen to remain single and chaste. By minimizing the importance of her family members, Lee's approach toward ministry can be viewed as negligent and even reckless, at

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<sup>112</sup> For expanded commentary on Lee's marginalization of the domestic sphere, also see Moody, "On the Road with God: Travel and Quest in Early Nineteenth-Century African American Holy Women's Narratives" and Haynes, *Radical Spiritual Motherhood: Autobiography and Empowerment in Nineteenth-Century African American Women*



times. Even so, Foster believes that Lee did not reject the responsibilities and qualities associated with antebellum womanhood. In the textual evidence provided within the journal, Lee undoubtedly acquiesces to piety, through devoted spirituality and purity, as readers witness only clean living and no expression of sexuality, even with her husband; however, her commitment to domesticity and submission to her spouse seem less stable. Patterson also believes that “Lee, however, never renounces women’s roles in the domestic sphere, but rather insists that women also have access to the public domain”: But by evading the domestic sphere and completely detaching herself emotionally from it, how is a reader to know that Lee values what is waiting for her back home? (65). By neglecting the domestic sphere, Lee risks raising alarm that her duties are not being properly cared for, which affects her credibility as a narrator. But as she imagines her readership and makes rhetorical choices about how to present herself within the narrative, Lee chooses to risk receiving judgement from the readers who firmly value domesticity and fostering one’s home when she decides to assert herself more permanently as a traveling evangelist responding to the pressing needs of God’s family.

Perhaps her narrative evasion is only a rhetorical strategy to make readers view her in a more androgynous manner—neutral in gender therefore a powerful voice for the kingdom of God. Whether conscious or unconscious, Lee’s text demonstrates an awareness of the invisible witnesses who watch her preach or read her text, passing judgement due to her race and gender. Within the autobiography and as she preaches to congregations, Lee must elude the pressures of the observers, either negotiating their expectations against her own ministerial or narrative intent, as a direct rhetorical strategy or as a subconscious awareness of nineteenth-century expectation. But maybe readers should take the textual events as presented, with Lee devoting exhaustive energy toward a geographic religious mission while pushing her familial responsibilities to the

margins. For example, even though Lee notes, in one sentence, that she “visit[s] an aged Parent, whom [she] had not seen for eleven years[,]” she infers that she only traveled out of “duty,” and she provides no description that would typically accompany a parental reunion denoting an absence for over a decade (61). Her rhetorical approach which provides expansive emotional encounters with others and only jarring technical descriptions of her family creates a complicated result from the narrative evasion. Perhaps, even, Lee is entirely too preoccupied with her own quest for self-gratification, albeit in a spiritual terrain, that she neglects those typically cherished the most. The risk of being perceived as lacking in her domestic responsibilities while dutiful in her professional obligations points to the nineteenth-century expectations of the woman, in which she is expected to be isolated in the home, tending to the needs of her family. Because Lee contests these expectations as she considers her societal function—whether she does, in fact, neglect her family or whether she simply chooses to allow them only a cursory presence in the text—her authenticity is subject to debate. Already, slave narratives and African American spiritual autobiographies were read with scrutiny, but because Lee writes without Anglo-American input and because she presents herself as independently professional (and therefore not domestic), she risks scrutiny because of her radical attempts in preaching and composition. Even so, Lee aims to position herself as not only willing but able, despite her African American womanhood, because she is literate, writing, and publishing independently.

Even though Lee’s journal is meant to primarily detail her religious travel and spiritual victories, like the narrative evasions, Lee makes other rhetorical choices which threaten to destabilize the narrative’s purpose. Often, narrative interrupters appear within Lee’s text, including the presence of the Devil or hell and other persons or sounds of intrusion. As she writes a narrative of spiritual victory and experience, Lee gives as much or more narrative space

to the Devil as she does to God. For entire pages at a time, Lee describes in detail hearing sounds from or seeing visions of hell, including an ability “to hear the howling of the damned, to see the smoke of the bottomless pit, and to hear the rattling of those chains, which hold the impenitent under clouds of darkness to the judgement of the great day” (6). While jeremiadic in their content, these interjections do not always follow the current of the narrative itself; instead, they often interrupt or detract from the content aiming to document salvation and redemption. Cullen’s depiction of the role of Methodist women illustrates the risks involved in such a narrative maneuver; she explains:

The Methodist interpretation of sanctification appealed to many women because it gave them an escape from the burden of being daughters of Eve. Institutional theology usually asserted that women were more susceptible to Satanic wiles than were men because Eve sinned first. However, according to Methodist radicalism, the power of sanctification would free women from their essential weaknesses.... Thus freed from the power of their sinful female selves, sanctified women could boldly follow God’s leading without fear of deception. (155).

The juxtaposition of Methodist doctrine and Lee’s narrative, however, provides a conflict of belief and practice, due to Lee’s extensive descriptions of Satan and the spiritual attacks launched from hell. Whereas minor inclusions of death, hell, or Satanic influence could have demonstrated Lee’s control or mastery over such forces, instead, their presence within the narrative becomes overwhelming, as they dilute the lesser depictions of heaven and eternal goodness. Defining sanctification, Cullen describes the “process of spiritual growth that springs from the biblical command to achieve perfection. Methodist biblical theology asserts that after conversion the stranglehold of sin is gradually loosened on the individual soul.... Although Methodism stressed the lifelong process of sanctification, it also recognized important moments... [with] roots of sin being overthrown” (155). It seems then that Lee would have certainly included descriptions of the presence of Satan previous to her own salvation; yet, their

narrative presence is not terminated after her conversion. On the contrary, while the devil is distressing to Lee's congregations, he also persecutes her, individually, throughout the narrative. She writes that "[t]his interruption was, doubtless, also the work of Satan" (7); that "Satan had hidden the very object from my mind, for which I had purposely kneeled to pray" (9); and that "Satan tempted me while on the way, telling me that I was a fool for walking so far, as I would not be permitted to preach" (21). On many occasions, Lee appears overwhelmed and subject to the presence of the devil within the text, and certainly her narrative purpose suffers by the impeding inclusions.

While descriptions of Satan and hell distract from Lee's spiritual record of salvation, physical interrupters (people within her congregations) disturb the textual account. Increasingly throughout, Lee is concerned with bad behavior and an unholy presence within the prayer meetings, many of which are not resolved with conversion or salvation. In one of the more extensive moments, Lee writes: "I cannot but relate in this place, before I proceed further with the above subject. . . . He was a colored man, who had generally attended our meetings, but not for any good purpose; but rather to disturb and to ridicule our denomination. He openly and uniformly declared that he neither believed in religion, nor wanted any thing to do with it" (15). While this particular scene did eventually result in his conversion, many other interruptions within the text do not. My suspicion is that Lee would have us compare sinful behavior, before salvation, to that of the purified and sanctified. And yet when the interruption does not result in conversion, the narrative attempt is unfulfilled and futile. The text is simply stalled, and the reader is left with only Lee's fixation upon those who demonstrate wicked or unruly behavior. For example, as she preaches in Newhope, Lee recalls "some very ill-behaved person, who talked roughly, and said among other things, 'I was not a woman, but a man dressed in female

clothes” (23). No other closure is provided, as it becomes clear that Lee has drawn attention to her gender, behind the pulpit, unable to defend her profession with an account of salvation or the movement of God’s power among the people who disturb worship. These inconclusive narrative moments reflect back upon the nature of nineteenth-century society and the discourses of the public sphere—that while Lee seeks to rhetorically overcome racial and gendered restrictions that impede her personal and professional life, she is still subject to the prejudices of the larger early national system at work around her.

These narrative disturbances also include appearances from ill-behaving African Americans. On a racialized level, moments within Lee’s journal draw attention to the early American treatment of the inferiority of other minority races in her interactions with others. For instance, she notes she “was desired to speak in the colored meeting house, but the minister could not reconcile his mind to a woman preacher—he could not unite in fellowship with me even to shaking hands as christians ought” (24). In this case, even the African American minister disregards Lee’s request to preach within his church, simply because she is a woman. On a hierarchical level, racial minority (the African American church) surpasses gender minority (Lee), and this exchange between the two represents a fractured discrimination within America that includes race and gender. While many women in the early republic aligned with oppressed peoples in order to strengthen the minority voice, collectively, Lee’s narrative deflects this approach.<sup>113</sup> She not only records her experiences of gendered oppression, but, in this moment, she places blame (even if justifiably so) at the meeting house of the African Americans. By

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<sup>113</sup> See Lydia Maria Child’s influence, in Chapter 2, for specific descriptions of the alignment between oppressed races and other marginalized populations, including women.

doing so, her narrative hinders the joint political and social advocacy of all oppressed populations, as a woman ranks lower than the African American male.

As Lee's journal includes narrative evasions, interruptions, and disturbances, it also frequently describes her own tendency toward poor physical health and mental instability, which conflate the temptations of the devil with her own bodily symptoms. In her recurrent contemplations of suicide and in the similar cases of her son, she destabilizes the authority that she attempts to establish for herself as a woman. Moody explains Lee's episodes of weakness in the context of African American women and slavery:

Lee seems purposefully to draw on nineteenth-century notions of womanhood as a social and biological construction in order to garner sympathy from those who might otherwise have disdained her as unfeminine and thus unnatural. In the 1840s, the black woman was generally believed to be biologically different from her white counterpart, especially in the southern United States. . . . Lee's careful self-designation as a 'coloured lady' in her subtitle momentarily supplants the image of the black woman as field hand with the image of her as 'the angel in the household.' Thus, Lee is able to include herself in the societal conception of women as frail, sickly creatures. (*Sentimental Confessions* 67)

The problem with this depiction is that Lee does not only present herself as dainty, feeble, and weak, in terms of her physical strength. Instead, her mental sickness detracts from the invented ethos she establishes for herself as intelligent, discerning, holy, and capable. Lee explains that she "could never be happy in this life" being "tempted to destroy [her] life by drowning; but suddenly this mode was changed—and while in the dusk of the evening, as [she] was walking to and fro in the yard of the house, [she] was beset to hang [her]self with a cord suspended from the wall enclosing the secluded spot" (5, 6). Her continued temptation to "extinguish the life which God has given" evokes fear and distrust in the mind of the reader (6). Moreover, she insists throughout the duration of the narrative that she hears invisible voices, often battling between heaven and hell. Like Marrant, whose friends and family accused him of being a man gone

insane, Lee's mental stability is also called into question.<sup>114</sup> This sort of perception affects the credibility of the author, especially in the context of religious ministry. As in the case of Marrant, his family and much of the Charles Town community thought him to be a mad man, thus overlooking his salvation and fixating only upon his state of mind. Similarly, Lee repeats her suicidal thoughts and behaviors over and over again, conflating her salvation experience with mental sickness.

Furthermore, mental illness seems transferable through her genetic, familial lineage.<sup>115</sup> Much later in the narrative, Lee is informed that her only son is also hearing internal voices of God and the Devil. Ironically, this passage provides the most extensive glimpse into Lee's own personal life; she details her son's "distress of...mind[,] the "severity of which had caused him to seek opportunity to put an end to his own existence" (72). In a direct appeal to "O Reader[,] she illuminates the great victory in God after her son "was very ill which made [her] cross seem very heavy[,] following his journey, but only through the text, to conversion (72). She rejoices in celebration—in the same manner reserved for only impersonal salvation experiences earlier—and upon her son's conversion begins to feel that her "mission [was] somewhat complete as regards to distance" (73). Because her acknowledgement of her family, and particularly any intimate connection to it, had been almost completely evaded, this moment of personal celebration appears abnormal and out of place. After having shown little emotion or attention toward her son for the majority of the journal, why allow him this moment of attention now? Possibly Lee felt the urgency to defend her family's tendency toward depression and suicidal

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<sup>114</sup> See Marrant, Chapter 1, for more detailed commentary about whether conversion denotes erratic behavior, or whether Christianity is uninvolved in such mental instability.

<sup>115</sup> In early America, mental illness was directly associated with the workings of the devil. Colonists believed that people who demonstrated symptoms of mental instability had personally allowed Satan to move within them and guide them to act accordingly. As a result, mental illness was often treated with secluded religious instruction for the purpose of righting the mind toward healthy spirituality.

thoughts, but by calling attention to a lineage of suicidal behavior, Lee's authority as a narrator and minister is called into question. Her autobiography works to circumvent this issue through a command of spiritual authority, but in order to evoke religious agency, a minister's reputation should stand above reproach. While Lee would have readers believe that salvation wipes away mental distress, her own testimony of faith derails the line of argument, as she confesses to hearing voices during most of her ministry. Furthermore, as this mental instability is transferred to her son, Lee is subject to a doubled risk of narrative scrutiny.

In her various rhetorical strategies, Lee desperately needs to appear blameless before her readership. Unlike authors of collections of works supervised by restrictive editors and endorsers, Lee is still subject to the "invisible witnesses." While these moments are subtle, they seem to follow textual encounters of spiritual failure, insecurity, disruption, or helplessness. Specifically, in preaching "with difficulty to a stiff-necked and rebellious people[,]" Lee claims that she almost immediately left that church "without any animosity for their treatment" (23). She follows with false self-burden, that "[t]hey might have respected [her] message, if not the poor weak servant who brought it to them with so much labor" (23). This acceptance of responsibility appears completely ironic: Lee does not hesitate to give a thorough log of her mileage traveled on foot, the number of converted souls saved, and the joyous manner in which she is accepted into most churches. Moreover, her personal belittlement as a "poor weak servant" who labors heavily in bringing the message illustrates embedded duplicity.<sup>116</sup> Laboring "much" would typically indicate a fruitful harvest, but in this case, the humble servant who works diligently toward achieving a successful end remains unsuccessful. Furthermore, Lee sets readers

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<sup>116</sup> This type of language, which panders to the Anglo-American expectation of the lowly "servant" who is "poor" and weak," is reminiscent of the manners in which Native Americans were often described. See Chapter 4 for a more direct discussion of this trope of the "poor" or "lowly" Indian.



up for the disappointment of lacking spiritual gain, as she describes the congregation negatively on the onset. By evoking one of the more negative spiritual qualities—rebellion—Lee indicates that neither the persons nor their hearts were prepared for the accepting of willful obedience and submission to God. As she places insincere blame upon herself, she demonstrates an awareness of the invisible witnesses and indirectly seeks vindication in her attempt to serve an unfit and unrepentant population.

Similarly, Lee describes her disappointment with the Baptist people of the Gallopeler quarterly meeting: “I was astonished at the situation of the church—after which time the Elder came. A Baptist society occupied the house in the morning, and in the afternoon the Elder preached—it was a dull time indeed, none joined. At night I tried to preach, but could not tell what the Lord had done for them [sic.] people, for they seemed both barren and unfruitful” (87). Because the African Episcopal Methodists favored emotional response—in the forms of crying, shouting, singing, and testifying—Lee feels the congregational response, if any at all, is stoic or unprofitable. As with the “rebellious” people, Lee leads with the negativity of the congregation before revealing that no one converted to Christianity. Undoubtedly, blame is placed at the feet of those refusing to receive the message and not the one verbally delivering it. In order to continue her tenure of ministry and in order to promote her autobiography, Lee must be well-received by her hearers and readers. It seems that she makes a rhetorical choice to acknowledge congregations who failed to receive God’s salvation in an attempt to defend herself before the invisible witnesses. From Lee’s perspective, it is not her preaching that fails to induce a redemptive response but instead the hearers’ passive and hard-hearted reactions.

Since Lee’s mission of evangelism was primarily self-promoted, she would not have been subservient to one specific governing church body but, in practicality, in order to be heard, she

needed to establish a reputation of sound mind and doctrine, with a success rate of conversion. Moreover, this established opinion among northerners would help sell the two editions of the narrative brought to press and in circulation. The principal critic of her time was the Anglo-American male, holding political and social influence and also the power of monetary payment. Ever-conscious of this invisible witness, Lee must have knowingly shaped and altered her journal to appease the critics listening to her preach and reading about her journey. This awareness is manifested in her narrative control: her distanced connection to her immediate family, both geographically and in print; her narrative interrupters or the generous descriptions of the Devil and hell, illustrated to a greater level than the textual allowances for God and heaven; her narrative inclusiveness of physical sicknesses and mental imbalance; and her blameless, defensive response to evangelical failure. While all the attempts detailed above reflect Lee's literary quest to please the invisible witnesses, they paradoxically serve to destabilize the account. Ultimately, they read as insecure and apprehensive, confident enough to move from place to place preaching the word of God—as an African American female—but careful to depict these experiences, within the text, in a manner that pleases a wide-spread readership.

#### A Narrative Benediction: “This is True Methodism”

In conclusion, Lee's textual strategies function on two-levels: first, she employs strategies of narrative control within the text as a way to oppose judgements that suggest she is inferior due to her gender and race. By neglecting the domestic sphere and providing minimal space for her family and loved ones within the narrative, Lee distances her gendered identity while emphasizing her literary and spiritual strengths. Furthermore, she confronts the gendered stereotypes of the weak, instable, unhealthy female with the weaker body, susceptible to the ploys of Satan; however, I have argued that these attempts are not entirely successful, as Lee

destabilizes the text by appearing negligent and by falling victim to the specific gendered stereotypes of her time. Moreover, Lee uses the actual text, typically in the form of the Hymn Book or Bible, as a way to exert power and authority. While, in part, the agency she claims is predicated upon what she claims as her God-ordained calling, she, to a greater extent, relies upon her possession of literacy and control of language to convince both her listeners and readership that her viewpoints and teachings are to be valued and endorsed.

Late in the text, Lee claims this exertion of agency more directly than before: On three separate occasions, she writes: “Glory to God for what my heart feels while I use a pen in hand” (56); “Oh! that I had language to express my mind while I hold my pen in hand” (65); and “Praise God, for I feel the unction from on high, while I hold my pen” (79). The physical possession of the pen is representative of Lee’s control of language, strengthened by her faith in God. But Lee would not have us to believe that she is a fragile female, incapable of fulfilling her ministry with only God alone; instead, she endeavors to instruct many diverse populations of denominations, ethnicities, ages, and geographic populations. Upon an appointment in Columbia, Pennsylvania, Lee writes that “[t]he people united, temptations and clouds were vanished away. Then we sung, prayed, and spake, and shouted in the spirit, this is true Methodism” (52). For Lee, a commitment to Methodism was the defining discipline of her life, and she did not proceed in ministry as an African American female, without ability or ambition. While her literary strategies are not consistently successful, they, nonetheless, reflect the conflicted state of antebellum American politics. Lee’s legacy carved a preliminary path for other oppressed visionaries of the nineteenth century, as she stepped beyond the social and political restrictions confining African Americans, Native Americans, and women. By positioning herself as a

possessor of literacy, Lee evolves beyond the domestic sphere into a burgeoning democratic nation of print and power.

## CHAPTER 4

### MELANCHOLIC MEMORY, REPUBLICAN FRAGMENTATION, AND CHRISTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN ELIAS BOUDINOT'S AND WILLIAM APRESS'S SPEECHES

*We are a nation at ease with grievance but not with grief.*  
-Anne Cheng

While free African Americans, such as Marrant and Lee, entered the public sphere to resist systems of oppression, illustrate their own intellectual and religious abilities, and argue for social representation from the early republican to the antebellum eras, Native Americans engaged their own struggles within individual tribes and across other Native American nations. As many of the northeastern tribes had already faced extinction due to Euro-American warfare and disease, tribes which remained from other geographic territories were forced to shoulder the burden inherited through such an extensive loss while courageously countering the politics threatening to destroy their homelands and heritage, displacing them to the west.

In the spring of 1826, a Cherokee Indian, born Gallegina Uwati but called Elias Boudinot, appealed to the population of Philadelphia, lobbying, generally, for Native American representation, and specifically, for financial support of the first Native American newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, with a speech titled "An Address to the Whites."<sup>117</sup> Boudinot was attractive, in both appearance and in composure, and his refinement confronted the Anglo-American expectation of savagery and ignorance. At another speaking obligation of Boudinot in 1832, William Apess, a member of the Pequot tribe, concluded the evening with a final

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<sup>117</sup> Gallegina Uwati was also called Buck Watie, by the Cherokee community. He adopted the name Elias Boudinot after meeting the president of the American Bible Society, former president of the Second Continental Congress, Elias Boudinot.

presentation and, one spectator, Louisa Jane Park, candidly described her first impressions with a mixture of surprise and awe but also latent condescension:

The other of our ‘red brethren’ mounted the pulpit stairs...He was dressed like his companion, and at the distance I was, both resembled Mr. Sam Houston!—begging his pardon for comparing him to savages....This man was evidently not quite so well educated, had not the same familiarity with choice language, and was not so *civilized* as his companion, but there was more native eloquence in his address; his earnestness was evidently sincere, and I felt the difference between hearing an actor on the stage, or even a lawyer defending his client—and listening to a patriot engaged bona fide, with all his heart and soul, in stating the wrongs and pleading the cause of his oppressed country. (*Writing Indian Nations* 99)<sup>118</sup>

Ten years later, in January 1836, in the rented Odeon Theatre in Boston, Apess offered a moving oratorical performance, now known as *The Eulogy of King Philip*. While members of the Pequot, Mashpee, and other scattered tribes certainly traveled to hear Apess speak, a large number of white skeptics also gathered, some simply to observe a real “Indian” who denounced the white colonial perpetrators involved in King Philip’s War and the continued persecution of the native peoples.<sup>119</sup> While Apess’s return to the memory of the past condemned the immoral behaviors of the white people, specifically the seventeenth-century English settlers for their cruel mistreatment of the Wampanoag nation, his appearance—including his skin color, clothing, and disposition—revealed the merging of his own experiences and perspectives with those of the Anglo-American peoples. These complexities, both in speech and appearance, attracted crowds and offered Apess the platform he needed to publically condemn oppression, violence, and hypocrisy.

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<sup>118</sup> Louisa May Park to Agnes Major Park, cited in Maureen Konkle’s *Writing Indian Nations*. See Park Family Papers (1800-1890), American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

<sup>119</sup> Philip’s War, from 1675-1678, was also called Metacom’s War, the First Indian War, Metacomet’s War, or Metacom’s Rebellion. I reference it, in this chapter, as King Philip’s War.

The guiding questions of this chapter focus on what it means for Christian Indians, like Boudinot and Apess, to captivate a listening audience of mixed peoples—especially when their oratorical practices employ the rhetorical conventions of the enlightened republic. What can we make of early American identity when the language of the republic fails to achieve the unity that it communicates in principle, and where does this failure place the Native American, in terms of both intrinsic worth and extrinsic gain? Moreover, how and why does a rhetorical movement into the past, the journey of Native American mourning, allow for a social and religious redemption in the present? Lastly, what can religious belief, expression, and performance do for the oppressed Native American body that republican rhetoric cannot do?

This chapter analyzes how both Boudinot, in “An Address to the Whites” (1826), and Apess, in *The Eulogy of King Philip* (1836), incorporate the rhetoric of the republic into their verbal performances. More specifically, I view their oral performances through a lens of mourning and memory—a direct strategy that calls upon the historical past in order to seek closure and reimagine the current native identity. By returning to the past, both Boudinot and Apess present a full, personal emotional disclosure, a poignant act of mourning for the historical brokenness of the mid-nineteenth-century society. In their efforts not to dwell in the past and fixate on suffering, inducing psychosis, these authors employ the republican rhetoric of their era as they attempt to personify progress, advancement, and intellect. By adopting the language of the republic, specifically what defines an enlightened man, Apess and Boudinot reveal that this rhetorical strategy does not bring unity as one might expect. In fact, the rhetoric of the republic mirrors the fractured nature of the early American society: As the young nation accelerated toward the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the concrete *form* of America emerged as unstable. Because the actual land, doctrines, and founding

principles of the republic represented a false equality and insecure premise of strength, the language that Boudinot and Apess adopt is also conflicted, as it aims to assert freedom and liberty but instead resembles instability and fracture. I argue, then, that these two authors evoke mourning and sometimes melancholia of the past as they knowingly rely upon the rhetoric of the republic to expose such insufficiency to the listeners. In other words, they acquiesce to the white listeners' expectations, through physical and verbal performance, to confront them directly with their own weaknesses, encompassed in early American ideologies. Since the nation's language fails to reinforce the unity Boudinot and Apess seek, they invoke a more powerful, religious rhetorical strategy to address their audiences: What Boudinot and Apess assert will restore the Native American nations and the Anglo-American populace is a return to devout religion—not the corrupt Euro-American form that sought to rob Native American peoples of their rights and homelands—but a purer form, not racially conditional, depicted within these two speeches and represented in the Native nations—a form that is able to unite all colors in an eternal realm.

The scholarly bifurcation, then, is extreme: The literary field is submersed in the criticism of Apess's *Eulogy* and yet hardly acquainted with that of Boudinot's "Address to the Whites."<sup>120</sup> Apess's *Eulogy* has garnered its share of critical attention since Barry O'Connell unearthed and compiled it in his 1992 collection of the complete works of Apess, but while Boudinot scholarship has adequately addressed the historical implications of Cherokee political activism and the signing of the New Echota Treaty in 1835, it has seemingly overlooked Boudinot's

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<sup>120</sup> Philip F. Gura accuses the literary field of "exhaustively stud[ying] Apess's writings" but in an effort that commonly "aim[s] such works at scholarly communities rather than at the larger public, which needs a straightforward account of Apess's life and times" (xvi).

Many scholars have written of Boudinot's historical influences and the manner in which he served as a powerful advocate for Cherokee tribesmen, but his "Address," specifically, has been explored less.

Theda Perdue published a collection of Boudinot's writing (1996), *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, which places his works into context and offers scholarly insight into his advocacy.



individual participation in the public spheres of literature and orality, especially in his speaking tour in the 1820s.<sup>121</sup> Daniel Heath Justice, however, asserts that, collectively

Cherokee literature in English is deeply rooted in Indigenesness, by the sheer act of Cherokees asserting their nationhood and cultural continuity through whatever means have been available at the time... Literature is more than just a concession to the linguistic violence of an oppressive invader culture; instead, it—like the Cherokee language itself—is a powerful reflection of self-determination and agency by people who are deeply invested in the historical, genealogical, geographic, and cosmological significance of all that it is to be Cherokee. (13)

As a whole, the existing field of Cherokee scholarship focuses upon Boudinot's and John Ridge's voice of defiance and activism but inevitable movement toward the surrender of Cherokee lands.<sup>122</sup> Justice, however, seeks to evaluate this conflict and eventual conclusion through a more nuanced approach, honoring what has been lost from the Cherokee struggle.

There has been a rather extensive tradition of evaluating Apess's *Eulogy* and *A Son of the Forest* in terms of the negotiation of his own voice; moreover, scholars such as Arnold Krupat, David Murray, and O'Connell argue that in order to attire himself in one identity, other aspects of his nature are lost, that if Apess calls himself Christian, he is only identifiable by his conversion and no longer by his inherit native identity.<sup>123</sup> Specifically, these critics and others also look at how Apess uses his own individual voice in conjunction with the complimentary and conflicting voices of others (mainly, the Anglo-Americans) to establish a space for himself within both the private and public spheres.<sup>124</sup> This interrogation has focused, largely, on how Apess was able to negotiate his rightful place as a minister within the Methodist sect, as reported

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<sup>121</sup> See O'Connell, *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*

<sup>122</sup> William G. McLoughlin explains that in the end, upon the Cherokee signature on the Removal Treaty of 1835, "the educated, young leaders of the nation had gotten too far ahead of their people and yet still claimed the right to speak for them" (450).

<sup>123</sup> See Gustafson, "Nations of Israelites"

<sup>124</sup> See Krupat, *The Voice in the Margin*; Murray, *Forked Tongues*; and O'Connell's extensive works on Apess studies

in his autobiography. But more recent criticism, like that of Hilary E. Wyss and Lisa Brooks, complicates claims that isolate native identity and Christian conversion; Wyss claims: “Like Christian Indians before him, Apess not only found personal salvation through his religious affiliation but came to envision it as the means through which all Natives could come to terms with their racial identity” (157). Similarly, Brooks asserts that Apess “asked his audience to act as brothers within a familial network: to think and act in a way that would benefit the whole rather than allowing the Puritans’ perilous quest for power to determine the future of the space shared by all” (200).<sup>125</sup>

Gordon Sayre and Laura Mielke explore the concept of “authenticity,” whether or not identity is located on an unforgiving split spectrum, one either being Indian, and thus representing a pan-Indian identity, or losing the Indian self entirely, acculturating to the Anglo-American.<sup>126</sup> Murray, Peyer, Carolyn Haynes, and Wyss look closely at the various modes of genres within *Son of the Forest*, how readers observe the personal, conversion, slave, and captivity narratives at work.<sup>127</sup> Additionally, Eric A. Wolfe redefines Apess’s rhetorical behaviors as more politically active due to their melancholic resemblances, as he claims that Apess resists Eurocentric models which mourn Native American loss.<sup>128</sup> In a more recent publication, Desirée Henderson emphasizes the formulation of form and genre, and the popularized nineteenth-century obsession with death and dying—as she examines the “history

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<sup>125</sup> Brooks also claims that Apess’s vision suggested that “the biblical God and ‘the Indian’s God’ are one and the same, and the ‘noble work’ of this ‘great Spirit’ can be seen in, and...enacted by, the inhabitants of earth” (200).

<sup>126</sup> See Sayre, “Defying Assimilation, Confounding Authenticity” and Mielke, “Native to the Question.” Peyer, in *The Tutor’d Mind*, also comments on Apess’s pan-Indian identity, that he is not necessarily drawn to only his tribe but instead a collective community in which he can relate (164).

<sup>127</sup> See Murray, *Forked Tongues*; Peyer, *The Tutor’d Mind*; Haynes, “‘A Mark for them All to...Hiss at;’” and Wyss, “Captivity and Conversion”

<sup>128</sup> See Wolfe, “Mourning, Melancholia, and Rhetorical Sovereignty in William Apess’s Eulogy on King Philip”

and significance” of Apess’s *Eulogy* (47).<sup>129</sup> Collectively, Apess scholarship, in general, takes interest in his uncertain mixed blood descent and whether or not his lineage asserts or derails his authorial claims in *Eulogy*.

As Karim Tiro, Joshua Bellin, Krupat, and Gustafson do, this chapter aligns with Mielke’s stance that Apess’s “religious conversion entails a critique of racism in the church and greater society[,]” but this summation only lays the groundwork for the argument put forth in this chapter (“Native” 252).<sup>130</sup> In fact, the religious hypocrisy and racial discrimination, as Haynes asserts, “give[s] voice to his outrage...an outrage that is as justified after as before his conversion” (34). Therefore, the goals of this chapter are trifold: first, to trace the movement of mourning into the past, drawing from the theoretical frameworks established first by Sigmund Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917) and then building upon the previous work of scholars such as Anne Cheng, Wolfe, and Henderson; next, to demonstrate the effectiveness of republican-self-fashioning, as Boudinot and Apess evoke these forms of orality and performance in a targeted effort first, to demonstrate an intellectual awareness of republican progress, and second, to expose the national fragmentation of the republic; and finally, to view Boudinot and Apess’s Christian nature as agency which advocates for national unity, as eternal submission allows for a spiritual sovereignty that restores racial separation and inequality.

Many scholars, including Deborah Gussman and Gustafson, have shown an interest in the ways that Boudinot’s and Apess’s speeches intercede, primarily, through their religious expression.<sup>131</sup> Gussman draws upon Sacvan Bercovitch’s concept of the American jeremiad,

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<sup>129</sup> See Henderson, *Grief and Genre in American Literature, 1790-1870*

<sup>130</sup> See Tiro, “Demoninated ‘SAVAGE’”; Bellin, *Demon of the Continent*; Krupat, *The Voice in the Margin*; and Gustafson, “Nations of Israelites”

<sup>131</sup> See Gussman, “O Savage, Where Art Thou?” and Gustafson, “Nations of Israelites”

detailing the ways in which the original form has evolved over time and within literary scholarship.<sup>132</sup> This progression includes a movement from the European jeremiad, to the American, followed by the Native American jeremiad, and then the counter-jeremiad. Gussman posits the latter as a participation in the discourse of the American jeremiad, while rejecting the Puritan errand. Certainly, this strategy makes itself known in both Boudinot's "Address" and Apess's *Eulogy* as they, in their own individual manners, publically denounce the hypocritical Christian and warn against a false faith. Gustafson argues that Apess gives rise to what she calls "the prophetic voice": "Redeeming his intervening body through a perfectionism that authenticates himself as divine agent, he then insists on the multiple sources of prophetic expression, American Indian and Judeo-Christian.... Apess then seizes its other major rhetorical property, the power of social critique enhanced by divine authority" ("Nations of Israelites" 43-44). I fully agree with Gustafson's claim that it is Apess's spiritual connection that facilitates his exertion of power within the *Eulogy*: In this chapter, I evoke my own term Christian sovereignty, that builds upon Gussman's and others' claims. While assuming spiritual authority, Boudinot and Apess place themselves, directly under the sovereignty of God and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the Anglo-American, while drawing power from a devoted submission to God who trumps the republican social standards of the elite. Moreover, their Christian states, brought forth from spiritual conversion, give rise to their divinely inspired message which provides a platform from which to speak. While this behavior was a common rhetorical posture for Anglo-Americans in the nineteenth century, Boudinot and Apess adopt the approach in order to reflect

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<sup>132</sup> See Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*. Other forms of jeremiadic expression are evaluated in Chapter 3 within Lee's dramatized descriptions of the devil and hell.

back republican fragmentation upon the body of witnesses. As a result, Christianity is then posed as the solution to provide reconciliation and collective national unity.

Boudinot's and Apess's acts of mourning one's history—generally, as Boudinot calls for a reinvention of the term “Indian” and Apess seeks to vindicate King Philip—allow for a personal self-fashioning of the ideal republican man. By returning to the past, Boudinot and Apess portray a counter-history of how the Pequots, Wampanoags, and Cherokees have been represented, and in doing so, they reveal that the republican model of American identity is fractured when they reflect it back upon the audience.<sup>133</sup> Freud's “Mourning and Melancholia” offers the necessary framework for understanding Boudinot's and Apess's act of mourning in order to revise one's history: Freud explains that even though the acts of mourning and melancholia are often complicated and over-lapping, the outside influences causing such responses are typically the same, emphasizing that “mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, or so on” (243).<sup>134</sup> One of the more significant differences between melancholia and mourning is that “although mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a pathological condition and to refer it to medical treatment” (243-244). Even though Boudinot's and Apess's vision more accurately represents an act of mourning rather than melancholia, the speeches evaluated here reveal complications in separating the two approaches to dealing with loss. For instance, while

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<sup>133</sup> See Chapter 2, as Lydia Maria Child also creates a counter-history for the historical figure, Hobbamock. In doing so, she revises the nature and character of the seventeenth-century Puritan and Native American, recasting these revisions into nineteenth-century social, religious, and political discourse.

<sup>134</sup> Matthew Bell details that the “idea of melancholia is around 2,500 years old at least. Its earliest surviving appearance is in the writings of Hippocrates of Cos (c. 460—c. 370 BC) and his school” (2). After Hippocrates melancholia enjoyed a long and unchallenged reign within the terminology, nosology, and practice of mental medicine, until it was eclipsed by depression in the early twentieth century” (2).

Freud notes that in mourning “the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object. [But this act] can be so intense that a turning away from reality takes place and [the result is] a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis” which results in melancholia (244). Boudinot’s “Address” and Apess’s *Eulogy* exhibit significant contradictions between mourning and melancholia, as they each advocate for the progress of the present while looking backward into the past. Specifically, Freud depicts mourning as the more healthy process, but acting in this way involves a relinquishment of the object of attachment. On the contrary, melancholia is pathological but implies a refusal to acquiesce to loss. Boudinot and Apess seemingly occupy a space in between the two, invoking the past to pay respect to an otherwise marginalized moment in history while advocating for progress and reasserting the importance of Native American heritage and culture.

Henderson traces the origins and scope of the act and genre of mourning in the republic and offers a concise definition of its use and impact:

Grief is also generic in the sense of the literary term ‘genre.’ The words ‘generick’ [sic.] and ‘genre’ derive from the same Latin root, *gener-*, that means ‘genus,’ ‘race,’ or ‘kind’ (*OED*). The close relationship of grief to genres of speech and writing becomes particularly evident when we consider the large number of literary genres inspired by loss: elegy, funeral sermon, funeral oration, eulogy, obituary, epitaph, tragedy, tribute, lament, dirge, requiem, monody, threnody, encomium, panegyric, obsequies, thanatopsis, and *memento mori*. As this catalog suggests, death is an event that calls for ritualistic and formal genres, particularly those that promise to restore order in the face of the rupturing force of loss. Yet, the many genres of grief underscore the magnitude of the challenge of making death meaningful, as the unique and individual nature of loss runs up against the dominant conventions that shape memorial traditions and practices. (4)

Boudinot’s speech and Apess’s, even in title, signal a demonstration of the genres of republican mourning, and scholars such as Gustafson and Fliegelman, just to name a few, have widely explored the ways in which the late eighteenth-century populace used performative oral methods

for public communication but further as an indication of eloquence, sophistication, and intellect.<sup>135</sup> As responding scholarship has demonstrated, minority populations, including African Americans, Native Americans, and women learned to negotiate their places in the public sphere through participation in oral display.<sup>136</sup> Speech, and more specifically, the eulogy, aligned oppressed peoples with the popular communication styles of the dominant sphere; without negating their own personal identities, these minority populations adopted the communicative manners of the Anglo-Americans. Developed here is an understanding of how Boudinot and Apess are adapting discourses of grief, mourning, and melancholia in order to honor their own cultural histories while attempting to secure the Cherokee and Pequot futures.

Cheng's scholarship on "racial melancholia," predicated upon Freudian models of mourning and melancholia, calls for social activism to combat modern racism but also sensitivity to the healing deemed necessary from previously inflicted trauma: "We need to take on the task of acknowledging racial grief in a theoretically and socially responsible way. A sustained focus on the intangible wounds that form the fissure underneath visible phenomena of discrimination should be taking place in *addition to*, not in the place of, the work of advocacy" (x). She continues that "[r]ather than prescribing how we as a nation might go about 'getting over' that history, it is useful to ask what it means, for social, political, and subjective beings *to grieve*" (7).

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<sup>135</sup> See Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, and Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence* for more on orality in the public sphere. In describing the impact of orality upon antebellum America, James P. Warren explains that "[m]ost fundamentally, speakers mediate between their own moral convictions—the truth they seek to tell—and the audience's ability to hear and understand that truth" (5). Due to the nature of Boudinot and Apess's racial identities, this negotiation between (racially inferior) speaker and (racially superior) listener not only denotes increased conflict but also demands increased ingenuity and skill by the Native American orator.

<sup>136</sup> Chapters 1, 2, and 3 extensively address the ways in which minority peoples were negotiating a personal voice through participation in the public sphere. See Chapter 1 for exploration of the ways in which Marrant fashioned himself in word and action in order to minister to a diverse population. See Chapter 2 for an understanding of the ways in which Child, an Anglo-American female, sought to reimagine Native American worth in fiction through a religious critique of New England. And see Chapter 3 for a demonstration of the ways in which Lee, an African American female residing in the North, implemented a distinct narrative voice through ministry and literacy.

Henderson argues that “[m]ourning is an affective experience that dissolves the boundary line between public and private[,]” which, by definition, provides the necessary mouthpiece for the oppressed victim to speak (7). Since minority populations, Native Americans, African Americans, and women, were only given verbal agency in the home and among peers, the act of mourning, especially in the public arena, communicates the otherwise restricted expression to the Anglo-American oppressor: Mourning, then, granted resonance to the silenced cry in the social margins.<sup>137</sup> This chapter presents the view that Boudinot’s and Apess’s strategies included candid acts of returning to the historical past through memory, in Boudinot’s case, to pre-contact with colonialization and in Apess’s case, to King Philip’s War. But such an act did not function as a call for the white flag of surrender; instead, the verbal acknowledgement of past contact and even warfare establishes forthright communication between the Euro-American and the Native American, a moment where facts are no longer perverted, and memory is met with sorrow. Yet this very act does denote a rhetorical risk: While Native American mourning establishes direct reverence and indirect empowerment, melancholia signifies an unhealthy and unprofitable attachment to the past. However, Wolfe asserts that “[w]hile Apess insists on a sustained melancholy that refuses to let go of the losses of the past, he also links with this political project of reclaiming Indian sovereignty in the future” (15). Perhaps this “sustained melancholy” is not as consistent as Wolfe hopes to portray; in Freudian terms, the act of mourning does not involve “an extraordinary diminution of...self-regard” in which the “ego,” not “the world” has become

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<sup>137</sup> This claim is not to suggest that Native American speakers, like Boudinot and Apess, were not at least on some level, valued in the early national period because they could represent “Indians” to audiences interested in seeing savages or observing the curiosity of a civilized, Christianized native speaker. This chapter acknowledges such instances while asserting that both Boudinot and Apess were using moments of spectacle to model republican manhood in order to demonstrate the troubling hypocrisy of early American rhetoric, ideology, and politics. Furthermore, the very nature of their converted religious states granted authority from which to speak to fellow Christianized audiences on an equal playing field.



poor and empty, such as melancholia does (246). For this reason, Boudinot's and Apess's responses seemingly represent the ambiguity between Freudian mourning and melancholia. Racial melancholia, then, does not have to signal only the loss of agency; instead, the combined act of mourning calls for action and addresses the foundational impetus for American racial reform.

As Wolfe suggests, the theoretical basis for African American and Asian American mourning, loss, and trauma often has been addressed within current literary scholarship; Native American tragedy, however, along this same vein of study, still remains to be explored and considered. Building upon traditional Freudian principles, Wolfe suggests that "Apess constructs an openly melancholic relationship to Philip, one that internalizes Philip's loss as a way of keeping him alive and that refuses to justify the losses of the past. To put this in a psychoanalytic register, what Apess engineers is a shift from 'mourning' to 'melancholia'" (7). But Wolfe's understanding of Apess's *Eulogy* fails to consider the many moments in the text which signify Freudian mourning, instead of melancholia; these moments are recognizable by their aim to promote progress through Christian reconciliation. The paradox of mourning and melancholia, and the risks involved, become clear: An act of Native American mourning could have perpetuated what Brian Dippie calls the "vanishing Indian" problem, saddened over the past but relinquishing all heritage and culture by moving forward into a future primarily constructed by Anglo-Americans and their republican politics.<sup>138</sup> On the contrary, melancholia could demand the respect that Native American history deserves, but an unhealthy fixation upon the past threatens to evoke psychosis; as the present moves into the future, the Native American remains traumatized in the past and therefore overlooked in the present. This imperative shift in terms,

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<sup>138</sup> See Dippie, *The Vanishing Indian: White Attitude and U.S. Indian Policy*

from mourning to melancholia, denotes an important modification in mindset, further highlighting the complex rhetorical activism of Boudinot and Aposs. While melancholia allows for a freedom to return to the past, in order to acknowledge or celebrate one's origins, tribal honors, individual bravery, or even Christian nature, one should not fixate there. Instead, as the speeches demonstrate, a return from the past and also a transition from melancholia to mourning, reinforce the opportunities for healing and advancement within the present.

#### Elias Boudinot and Christian Cherokee Progress

Let us return to Boudinot's presence on the Boston stage in 1832: Louisa Jane Park's letter continues with more description of Boudinot:

a swarthy, independent-looking gentleman, drest [sic.] like *other people*, to the great astonishment and disappointment of Caroline Knowles and her companions....mighty was her wrath at not beholding a 'real wild Indian with his hair streaming down his back, a tomahawk in his hand, and a wampum belt, making a speech to us in Cherokee'....Mr. Boudinot was educated at Yale College, is the Editor of the Cherokee Phoenix, and talked like a man of sense and education. He has a fine command of language....(Gaul 282)

This conflicting record of observers' perspectives reveals that Boudinot, disappointing the crowd or not, did not satisfy the Anglo-American expectations of Native American appearance and behavior. Refusing to be costumed in Native American dress, Boudinot forces observers to hear his words and move past what only the eyes can physically see. In this live account, he replaces the tomahawk and wampum with sense and education, and, as Gaul claims "refuses to play Indian" (283).<sup>139</sup> What he chooses to personify, then, is the nature of progress, at work not only within the American republic, but emerging, steadfastly, within the tribal populations of the Cherokee nations.

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<sup>139</sup> See Philip Deloria's, *Playing Indian*, for further explanation of this performative move.

Six years earlier, Boudinot embarked upon a performative circuit, delivering a speech, “An Address to the Whites,” in the hope of soliciting much-needed funding and committed support. In his speech, Boudinot presented the evidence of progress and used himself as a live example of civilization and adoption of Anglo-American practices, and most importantly, the redemptive nature of Christianity.<sup>140</sup> While his speech remains hopeful throughout, it is tinged with sadness and recalls not only the long-ago past of his childhood but also an uncertain future, in which the mercy of the white man will be needed for survival. Reflecting Freudian modes of mourning, Boudinot portrays a memory of the past and casts a vision for the future.

As Boudinot begins, he not only places his body on exhibition in front of his peers, but he also candidly acknowledges social tension through his speech. He immediately calls attention to ethnic labeling, in this case, the use of the term “Indian” that is “pregnant with ideas the most repelling and degrading” (3). Crafting a divide between “infant prejudices” that gave rise to “great injustice[s],” Boudinot demands that his listeners reconsider the ways in which they have confined the Cherokees by use of one-dimensional terminologies (3). This act of Anglo-American corralling, in speech, perception, and behavior—beginning even before first contact, through European imagination of the New World—as Boudinot claims, caused trauma and despair for his people.<sup>141</sup> Mary Louis Pratt has presented what she calls “contact zones” or “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (7). Even though Boudinot’s adoption of an Anglo-American appearance in dress and presentation does not mean complete

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<sup>140</sup> McLoughlin claims that in Boudinot’s political involvement, he was always “thoroughly devoted to the process of acculturation and Christianization” (403).

<sup>141</sup> Europeans imagined unusual New World species, including disfigured humans, ferocious cannibals, and mysterious sea creatures. Upon first contact, explorers such as Christopher Columbus record confusion about rumors and speculations of what they hoped to find in connection to what they were actually observing and witnessing throughout their exploration.

assimilation, Pratt's contact zone theory assists in identifying the original points of encounter and the myriad complications that resulted in the very coexistence of two cultures. As these initial racialized impressions from the contact zones stretched into the establishment of American ideologies, the European's previous beliefs of difference, inferiority, and ignorance were confirmed and exacerbated, eventually leading to destructive labeling of identity. Justifying their misrepresented beliefs, burgeoning in the colonization of the seventeenth century, Europeans set out to dominate and conquer the tribes in surrounding territories. By the 1820s-1830s, at the apex of Jacksonian discussion of Indian removal and the calamitous results which followed, these deeply rooted racial restrictions demanded resolution, and Native American leaders such as Boudinot, stepped forward to represent the Cherokee nation.<sup>142</sup>

Boudinot demands, however, that his listeners and observers acknowledge their past and repent of the mistreatment of his native community; he appeals to his audience "who... would throw back their imaginations to ancient times, to the ravages of savage warfare, to the yells pronounced over the mangled bodies of women and children, thus creating an opinion, inapplicable and highly injurious to those for whose temporal interest and eternal welfare, I come to plead" (30). His use of the noun "imaginations" highlights the skewed dissonance between reality and disillusion, and he makes clear the disastrous results of such fallacious remembering. Not only does Boudinot remind his audience that warfare implies the involvement of two sets of willing people, both of whom share the fault and consequence associated with brutality, but his

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<sup>142</sup> Daniel Walker Howe notes:

Indian Removal constituted the major substantive issue that Jackson administration addressed in a first year otherwise largely preoccupied with patronage and personalities. Although Jackson had avoided committing himself on the tariff or internal improvements, his strong stand in favor of rapid Removal was well known and accounted for much of his popularity in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The issue involved Indian tribes all over the country, but the ones with the most at stake were the Five Civilized Tribes of Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole (342).

description of an “ancient time” denotes a moment predating the conflict of the present moment (3). In other words, indeed there is shared culpability with the ancestors of the white man and the Native American, but even so, such recollection should not be fixated upon indefinitely; such an action would denote only an unproductive melancholic psychosis. On the contrary, Boudinot asserts that placing blame solely on the Native American ancestors is “highly injurious” to the pressing needs of the Cherokee people (3). Consequently, he reflects upon the past moments of bloodshed—the shared culpability of Anglo-Americans and Native Americans—while inviting the Anglo-American listener to participate only in a memory of the past but the power of the present moment. Boudinot’s rhetorical strategy, then, serves two purposes: By allowing a return to the past and by mourning that moment, he illustrates the violent nature of colonialization, but he only allows this remembrance for a brief moment, refocusing their joint-perspectives back upon the “temporal” and applicable.

Granting respect for those Cherokees who had fallen before, Boudinot provides a pause for solace and respect for those resting in “oblivious sleep” (5). In this moment, Boudinot reveals, again, a conflicted balance between the past and the present, not wanting to dwell too long in reminiscence but refusing to ignore it altogether. As he interrupts his own rhetorical efforts to move forward into the present, he intrudes with his own defense of past action: “But let me here say, that however guilty these unhappy nations may have been, yet many and unreasonable wrongs they suffered, many the hardships they endured, and many their wanderings through the trackless wilderness” (5). Boudinot explains the “deeds at which humanity must shudder” and demands visibility as he insists the listeners be alert visionaries: “to place before your eyes the scenes of Muskingum Sahta-goo and the plains of Mexico, to call up the crimes of bloody Cortes and his infernal host; and to describe the animosity and vengeance

which have overthrown, and hurried into the shades of death those numerous tribes” (5). Here, it is not enough to listen and yet not see—but this act of visual perception involves the invocation of the mind, as well. The bloody view within the past pervades the present, and this exercise of mourning is a lesson for the present time—that sometimes what we perceive as truth, in the moment, appears as distorted and shameful in retrospect. Through a different perspective and through the eyes of the Native American, the vestiges of conquest reappear as dishonorable and issue a warning against perpetual discord in the present. But, ultimately, Boudinot must balance his demand for a confrontation with what has been lost in the act of relinquishment required for moving forward.

Before approaching the specific needs of the Cherokee peoples, Boudinot blames early colonial historians for misconstruing the truth concerning Native American identity. He believes that their careless records “overshadowed the character of the ignorant and unfortunate natives,” but despondency never overwhelms his hope for restoration (5). In fact, Boudinot’s mourning provides the opportunity for healing, as he claims that “some bright gleams will occasionally break through, that throw a melancholy lustre on their memories” (5). While Boudinot, here, combats the notion that natives are responsible for their own disappearance—as Wolfe articulates, “the result of ‘a law of *their* nature’”—he shrouds his appeal for accountability in eager anticipation of Euro-American support (5).<sup>143</sup> Of course, as Wolfe notes, Boudinot is well aware of the counter-mission at work, that if natives are seen as “vanishing,” then this perspective “justifies the political existence of the United States...[which] sanctions continued expansion into Native-held territories” (5). His attack on these approaches, however, is at first

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<sup>143</sup> Wolfe’s article mainly addresses rhetorical power in Apess’s *Eulogy*, but portions of the work deal with general, collective Native American communities.

subtle and compassionate. The use of “melancholy” cushions the transgression, that although history is colored with “prejudice and bigotry” the facts “will be dwelt upon with applause and sympathy when prejudice shall have passed away” (5). A complete act of melancholy would have perpetuated sadness, depression, gloom, or even rage, but by enclosing his movement into the past in the redemptive, albeit uncertain, power of the present, Boudinot strategically announces the misconstrued history of the Cherokees while remaining ever-attentive to the power of the moment. Sympathy, however, is only made possible by the dissipation of prejudice, so the very nature of mourning calls for the onlookers’ response. Boudinot, however, remains steadfast that his purpose is “to offer a few disconnected facts relative to the present improved state” as he retreats from “the remnants, of those who have fled with time and are no more” (6, 5). His sense of memorial, moreover, offers reverence to his predecessors who lost their lives, but even so, Boudinot describes them in a manner that denotes permanence “as monuments of the Indian’s fate[,]” a metaphorical refusal to surrender the Cherokee homelands (5). The threat of severity, however, is in the extinction that would require they “move off the earth[,]” erasing a historical presence and the richness of Native American heritage (5). Here, the tedious paradox between mourning and melancholia reveals itself: While Boudinot advocates for movement and the progress of the future, he refuses to renounce the memorials of his heritage. While he requests that the “fallen” Native Americans be allowed rest without disturbance, he, equally, does not want to dwell too long in the past moments. His defiance, however, to disregard the ancestral “monuments” presents a dual demonstration of both mourning and melancholia.

Boudinot’s melancholic retreat is not limited to only the past; instead, he implements the same rhetorical strategy to warn of the projected damages into the future, if policies, laws, and behaviors are not amended. In fact, Boudinot concludes with blurred melancholic imagery,

serving the purposes of both warning and empowering the Anglo-Americans who watch him. In particular, without governmental care and the American peoples' aid, the Cherokees threaten to "vanish like a vapour from the face of the earth, their very history will be lost in forgetfulness, and the places that now know them will know them no more" (15). Only within the conclusion does Boudinot morph mourning into melancholy; the transition takes place at the moment of futuristic annihilation:

There is, in Indian history, something very melancholy, and which seems to establish a mournful precedent for the future events of the few sons of the forest, now scattered over this vast continent. We have seen every where the poor aborigines melt away before the white population. I merely speak of the fact, without at all referring to the cause. We have seen, I say, one family after another, one tribe after another, nation after nation, pass away; until only a few solitary creatures are left to tell the sad story of extinction. (16)

Boudinot's use of "melancholy" here signals the ceaseless disappearance of his tribespeople, not only as graves scattered under the earth but of Cherokee nations and other tribes melting away in disappearance or being literally scattered in Indian removal. Boudinot appears resigned to the past nature of warfare, willing to share blame and extend reverence to the past, while embracing forgiveness and advocating for improvement. However, the "future events" he witnesses unfolding, the enduring disappearance of his fellow men, threatens to interrupt his call for progress and acceptance. This passage, marred by poignant sadness and exhausted struggle, elucidates the finite nature of "extinction." Boudinot, even in his expressed despair, still refuses to call names or place blame; however, his omission is largely rhetorical. By calling attention to "the facts," without pinpointing "the cause," Boudinot indirectly accuses the Anglo-American listeners who are involved in Indian removal.

As the past threatens to merge into the future, Boudinot illustrates not simply the loss of one body but the destruction of familial community. The great anguish associated with such calamity can hardly be articulated, as the collective voice is diminished into "a few solitary"



accounts “of extinction” (16). Even though Boudinot is careful in the reflections, only recalling the past with a paralleled promise of optimism and forgiveness for previous trauma, mourning, regardless, permeates his account. Whereas mourning implies restorative purpose, melancholy robs both his speech and the future of preservation of heritage. In this sense, the threat of melancholic response serves as a warning to white listeners, as Boudinot pleads for their assistance in the present moment so that the Cherokee nation can possess a future.

Because Boudinot’s speech reveals the complication of offering reverence to the past while promoting the progress of the future, he transitions from expressions of mourning and melancholy to precise invocation of republican language. This shift in manner and speech promotes a progression from the past to the present, reminding both Boudinot and his listeners that while the past record of warfare and bitterness cannot be mended entirely, the present moment offers an opportunity for restoration. Even though, as a representative for the Cherokee nation, Boudinot feels he must embody his own heritage, he also must negotiate his place within Anglo-American discourse of politics. In doing so, Boudinot evokes the language of the republic, through practice of orality, in order to first be heard on equal footing with his peers, while also inverting the language of the enlightenment in order to reveal the deep fissures of the republican model.

Performance in the early republic, as earlier chapters demonstrate, included a steady public practice of the invocation of orality; moreover, enlightened speakers who could exhibit eloquence, intelligence, and refinement were more likely to earn the respect of a listening audience. In fact, as many scholars have claimed, oral performance arose as an art form, in the late eighteenth century, and both African Americans and Native Americans, especially by the turn of the century, were actively participating in such public discourses. While both Boudinot

and Apess evoked republican rhetoric within their speeches, the motive was two-fold: first, they sought to prove a like-minded intelligence with their listeners, as they were aware of the limited stylistic choices one could adopt to be heard by an Anglo-American audience. And second, this rhetorical choice was actually a motive for power-play: By incorporating the language of the republic within their oral performances, both speakers sought to expose the insufficiencies of this communication form. In other words, republican rhetoric, ironically, misrepresented the very nation it described. The form of language was unable to function as a stable verbal tool, because America, itself, was unstable.

This use of rhetorical agency, an act of self-fashioning as the republican man, stretched back at least fifty years previous to Boudinot's attempt of it. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Native Americans began actively taking back the agency that had been lost upon Euro-American contact (through written and oral discourse), they struggled to survive and wrestled with how to protect Native traditions while adapting enough to survive Euro-American conquest. Gerald Vizenor has called this act "survivance," implying "an active resistance and repudiation of dominance...creat[ing] an active presence, more than the instincts of survival, function, and subsistence" (11). This term, then, is a helpful guide toward understanding what we, as readers, see at work within the life and voice of Boudinot—not simply assimilation but instead survivance. One aspect of this agency involved participating in the rituals of republican discourse, both in verbal and written form. In this sense, Boudinot adroitly manipulated the rhetoric of the republic, mastering the language and style, all the while turning its power upside down. By mastering this rhetoric in his oral performance, he demonstrates the failures both of the young nation, itself, but also of the national language. As freedoms such as liberty and equality were consistently denied to marginalized groups, the

enlightened language promising such rights neglects to follow through in granting them to all peoples. Scholars such as Scott Lyons and Cheryl Walker address Native American participation within the public sphere by the use of certain terminologies. Nineteenth-century Cherokees and Pequots, Lyons claims, mimic a blend of cultural actions and speech, not simply because they inevitably inherit certain traits of those who surround them but also because biological systems become mixed and less “pure” over time. Thus, the discourse of the Native American, what Lyons calls mixedblood rhetoric, reflects a hybridity of cultural, linguistic, and behavioral modes immersed into social and political interaction.

“An Address to the Whites” reveals this dual rhetorical and social struggle in its assertion of republican ideals, as Boudinot, almost instantly, addresses “the enlightened assembly” of listeners (3). Certainly, he seeks to appease his associates, and in their appeasement, to remind them of their culpability. He elevates the manners and prestige of America’s European ancestry above the native inhabitants of the Americas, as he recounts his own birthplace “on a little hill, in a lonely cabin, overspread by the forest oak...[speaking] a language unknown to learned and polished nations” (4). Nonetheless, he positions himself on par with his listeners, as one having “greater advantages than most of [his] race” and therefore inheriting a greater responsibility for racial advocacy (4). Establishing an initial rapport, he presents himself with humility and mutual respect, and yet he aligns his speech, his presence, and his behaviors with those of the Anglo-American audience. Mielke addresses the advantages and risks of this construction of presentation: “...Indians actively performed Indianness that often directly challenged the spiritual, scientific, legal, and aesthetic narratives animating European colonialism. And when they resisted, revised, or forcefully rejected the category of Indian, they challenged a binary.... The result of those entwined performances of Indianness was a developing, transformative sense

of what it meant to live in and be of North America” (*Native Acts* 5). Like Mielke, I aim for this reading to elucidate not the loss of Boudinot’s Indianness but, instead, a further gain of Native American agency. His motivation to incorporate the practices of the Anglo-American does not deny him his sense of pride in his own heritage; moreover, his purpose behind the “Address” is to advocate against continued oppression and to labor for increased funding for tribal literacy.

For instance, Boudinot’s stylistic methods of speaking infuse his own rhetorical skill with the Anglo-American principles of performance; in doing so, he initially departs from the belief that rational reasoning is necessary for demonstrating to an Anglo-American audience the Native American’s need for improvement. Through an expert use of negation, Boudinot is able to affirm his control of language by shifting attention from the use of lofty Anglo-American rhetoric back to the Native American’s control: He claims that “[i]t needs not abstract reasoning to prove this position [that the Cherokees can be civilized]. It needs not the display of language to prove to the minds of good men, that Indians are susceptible of attainments necessary to the formation of polished society. It needs not the power of argument on the nature of man...” (4-5). By disavowing “abstract reasoning,” “display of language,” and “the power of argument,” Boudinot reveals his ability to comprehend and practice the verbal discourses deemed so valuable to an enlightened republic, while also illustrating that Cherokees are, in fact, above the language itself. They need no convincing of the ways in which they should improve themselves with education but are instead able to interpret the transparent facts which present themselves.<sup>144</sup> In other words, in this moment, Boudinot insists that facts, or unarguable proofs, will speak for themselves. This deviation from the standard republican form validates not only Boudinot’s level of comfort with

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<sup>144</sup> Boudinot, however, was the exception to standard Cherokee acceptance of education. While he was eloquently schooled in language and academics, many of his fellow tribesmen resisted these efforts of Anglo-American improvement.

language inducing the “minds” of the “polished society,” but it demands a level of superiority above the enlightened man/woman; Boudinot is capable of embedding such language within his speech, and yet, this sort of verbal leverage is unnecessary because of the very facts of the current condition of the Native American. The state of the country—its bloody history and its current civil struggles—were the concrete evidences needed to justify Boudinot’s approach, and he calls for simplicity, not lofty rhetoric, to achieve his purpose.

Seemingly, Boudinot provides a chronicle of the many ways in which the Cherokees have progressed as an “industrious and intelligent” nation—detailing their professions, both agrarian and industrial; their technological advancements; their educational systems; and their religious conversions (7). Within that list of advancements, Boudinot explains that Cherokee progress is a reflection of perseverance and resiliency: “In defiance, however, of these obstacles the Cherokees have improved and are still rapidly improving” (8). Boudinot stresses the republican ideals of self-improvement and development, but he continues with a numerical list of recent occurrences which also advocate for support from the listening audience. As he lists the evidences of literacy, including correspondences and the translation of the New Testament, he claims that the conjunction of these two secures both educational advancement and an unwavering commitment to Christ. With the facilitation of Cherokee governmental policy, Boudinot guarantees a rise in “information and refinement” that will promote admittance “into all the privileges of the American family” (10). And with the use of the term “family,” Boudinot calls for his hearers to cast aside prejudices and unjustifiable perceptions. Appearing, in bodily form, as a model republican gentleman and evoking the language an American would embrace, Boudinot does not simply play the role of the sophisticated gentleman, because he embodies it in front of witnesses. And yet, this performance perhaps seems forced. It appears that Boudinot

does not altogether doubt the execution of republican politics, as history documents his speeches which record his active promotions of literacy advancement and adoption of progressive ideals and behavior. But he presents his record of progress with trepidation toward Anglo-American response. His act of “survivance,” then is one of self-fashioning himself and his tribe in light of the republican model. By speaking the language, Boudinot does not claim to fully assimilate; however, he does fashion himself in a specific manner to be received by and respected by his listeners, deflecting their tendency to only view him as racially inferior and thus unworthy to be heard. Cheng describes this strained in-tandem relationship as follows:

There are still deep, seated, intangible, psychical complications for people living within a ruling episteme that privileges that which they can never be. This does *not* at all mean that the minority subject does not develop other relations to that injunctive ideal which can be self-affirming or sustaining but rather that a painful negotiation must be undertaken, at some point if not continually, with the demands of that social ideality, the reality of that always-insisted-on-difference. (7)

Regardless of Boudinot’s execution of republican language and appearance, he, in-part, feared the skeptic in the crowd—the man who reaped secure benefits from American doctrines but failed to succumb to its framework of equality for all peoples. Insecurity, couched in his very language, is exposed in his reinforcement of speech. Boudinot compulsively stresses the deserving nature of the native and the actions taken to deserve fair treatment, but he also commands the response he deems appropriate: “You will, however, be convinced of three important truths” (11). Boudinot does not risk the responses of inference, that the audience can and will be convinced of the worthy state of the Cherokee nation, thus supporting native existence through both word and deed. Instead, he emphatically dictates the appropriate response to listeners through his implementation of strong, future-tensed verbs. Boudinot’s adoption of republic language in oral and textual performance reveals the conflicted struggle of Native American oppression. The option to remain untouched, as the tribes were before European

control, had been eliminated by hazardous health epidemics affecting Native Americans and by loss of political power through land treaties endorsed by Anglo-American leadership. Thus, Boudinot, in an attempt to salvage the remaining heritage of his people, advocates for republican principles of enlightened behavior. By attempting to occupy a middle-space, clinging to his heritage, while behaviorally modeling what was acceptable before Anglo-American listeners, Boudinot's speech depicts the uncomfortable divide facing the Cherokee peoples.

Desperate to elicit monetary funding and support made known through improved, revised, political doctrine, Boudinot reviews the republican attributes found within the Cherokee nations, that "they may exhibit specimens of their intellectual efforts, of their eloquence, of their moral, civil and physical advancement, which will do quite as much to remove prejudice and to give profitable information" (15). Angela Pulley Hudson explains Boudinot's apprehension and consternation as a dependence upon a control that is unstable, that is the "mythic American union" (54). She elucidates that "the founding fathers 'tantalized' the Cherokees with the American ideals of republicanism, literacy, and prosperity, and then betrayed those ideals in their Indian policies" (55). As if making one final push, in relying upon enlightenment rhetoric, Boudinot appeals with emphatic petition, soliciting future rewards of present circumstances. Using the feminine pronoun, Boudinot promises Cherokee service, a reciprocal obligation stemming from the privilege of exercising freedom and liberty:

She will become not a great, but a faithful ally of the United States. In times of peace she will plead the common liberties of America. In times of war her intrepid sons will sacrifice their lives in your defense. And because she will be useful to you in coming time, she asks you to assist her in her present struggles. She asks not for greatness; she seeks not wealth; she pleads only for assistance to become respectable as a nation, to enlighten and ennoble her sons, and to ornament her daughters with modesty and virtue. She pleads for this assistance, too, because on her destiny hangs that of many nations. If she complete her civilization—then may we hope that all our nations will—then, indeed,

may true patriots be encouraged in their efforts to make this world of the West, one continuous abode of enlightened, free, and happy people. (14)<sup>145</sup>

He conveys a relationship of Native American nations and Anglo-Americans citizens in community; based on a system of needs versus rewards, he appeals for the relief of the oppressed native peoples while promising the unceasing repayment of loyalty in return. Boudinot advances the feminine and masculine personae of the enlightened citizen, valuing learned, noble sons and chaste, upright daughters, promoting republican identity. Through a candid manifestation of benevolence and devotion, Boudinot discards the quest for earthly gain—that is wealth, success, and pride. Instead, by presenting the qualities of “greatness” and “wealth,” Boudinot confronts his listeners with an interrogation of their own intrinsic motivations (14). Hudson, in fact, claims that Boudinot was up against certain obstacles, that he “found that his carefully crafted arguments based on reason and moral obligation no longer carried much weight with an American public in love with its frontiers” (64). Mary Young addresses this corruption as well: “If, as Jackson’s opponents believed, Cherokee improvement demonstrated the improbability of all Native Americans, and if the president’s policy of Indian removal fatally damaged that progressive Nation, then the Cherokee migrants’ Trail of Tears symbolized the tragic destruction by the United States of its own cherished work” (503). By the nation’s refusal to relinquish power, land, and money—especially those properties that were not rightly theirs—the very structure of American policy threatened to collapse in upon itself. The doctrine of American politics falsely promoted ideals such as equality, freedom, and liberty, while robbing Native

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<sup>145</sup> McLoughlin discusses the Cherokee awareness of self-progress, advocacy, and promotion:

The essence of Cherokee renaissance was to establish a distinct national identity, firmly grounded in economic self-sufficiency and political self-determination....Much of the Cherokee’s early progress was made by learning from their mistakes and discovering that the agents and the federal government were not always looking after the Indians’ best interests. They learned that if they did not look out for their own economic advantage, there were plenty of whites who would enter their nation to enrich themselves. (277)



Americans who occupied the space first, of these very God-ordained rights. Boudinot's final republican dig is directed toward the conscience of the listener: "Is there a soul whose narrowness will not permit the exercise of charity on such an occasion? Where is he that can withhold his mite from an object so noble? Who can prefer a little of his silver and gold, to the welfare of nations of his fellow beings?" (14-15). Searching for the genuine embodiment of the ideals the Anglo-American professes, Boudinot demands an answer for the apathetic corruption that reinforces persistent selfish behavior. And yet he seems to acknowledge the failure of such a quest. In retaliation, Boudinot relies on a form of Christian sovereignty to exert agency over his oppressors and their failed republican ideals.

After establishing a presence with his listeners, as a republican man in both physical appearance and formal speech, Boudinot challenges his listeners to consider the impetus behind Native American mistreatment and removal. Were their actions deemed by a higher spiritual force, or were they motivated simply by selfish gain? He ponders whether "it is the purpose of the Almighty that the Indians should be exterminated?[,]" as both the white man and the red man must answer to the "Common Parent of us all" (5). Within the context of the speech, perhaps this is the first moment where we, as readers, see Boudinot invoke his own Christian sovereignty. As the republican rhetoric of the present fails to account for the trauma of the past, Boudinot claims greater agency inspired by a higher power. Lyons discusses his understanding of "rhetorical sovereignty" which "requires above all the presence of an Indian voice, speaking or writing in an ongoing context of colonization and setting at least some of the terms of debate" ("Rhetorical Sovereignty" 462).<sup>146</sup> The term "sovereignty" is especially useful to understanding

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<sup>146</sup> Robert Allen Warrior, in *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*, presents another form of sovereignty, "intellectual sovereignty," in which he focuses largely upon the intellectual capacities and traditions that have been overlooked in academic scholarship.

the purposes of Boudinot, then Apess, but I adapt Lyons' use of it in a shift toward Christian purposes. Both Boudinot and Apess appeal to an Anglo-American audience, and yet, their most powerful lines of defense are enacted through their commitment to the Christian faith. While soliciting a response from the Anglo-American, Boudinot elevates the authority of a power greater than any race of man. Moreover, Boudinot casts negative attention on man's attempts to justify racial hierarchy; as he inverts the discourse of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century race theory, he inquires: "What is an Indian? Is he not formed of the same materials with yourself? For 'of one blood God created all the nations that dwell on the face of the earth'" (3).<sup>147</sup> Where republican language has failed—reflecting a deeper wound and instability within the nation (both the body of land and the doctrine that governs it)—spiritual language intercedes.

Imperative within his address, Boudinot emphasizes the spiritual progress of the native peoples, the "inculcat[ion of] moral and religious principles into the minds of the rising generation" by Christian missionaries (8). His record of Christian conversion first begins with an acknowledgement of the dedicated service of the Anglo-American, detailing the missionaries who "regularly preached and explained" with patience and wisdom; yet, Boudinot calls attention to the manner in which these ministers and servants were received (8). The response of the Cherokee nation was neither violent towards nor negligent of missionary discipleship; instead, the tribes met these travelers with open arms and receptive minds and hearts. Boudinot, however, compares this receptive Cherokee behavior with other resistant people groups who have been offered the same knowledge for conversion: "It is worthy of remark, that in no ignorant county have the missionaries undergone less trouble and difficulty, in spreading a knowledge of the

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<sup>147</sup> KJV, Acts 17:26 was used as the standard anti-racist and anti-slavery scripture in both literature and within the political abolitionist circuit. Boudinot evokes the same strategy here by slight adaption of the scriptural language: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Bible, than in this....Indeed it may be said with truth, that among no heathen people has the faithful minister of God experienced greater success, greater reward for his labour, than in this. He is surrounded by attentive hearers, the words which flow from his lips are not spent in vain” (8-9).<sup>148</sup> This strategic record of receptivity emphasizes the hearers instead of the messengers of Christianity. Not only does Boudinot detail the successful conversions of his people, but he elevates their capacity for polite and civilized behavior and, more importantly, their capacities for sound minds and intellectual reasoning. While the Cherokees remained “ignorant” before the message was received, they responded with acceptance and repentance which should place them, Boudinot argues, in “a fair light” in terms of their rights to land territories and requests for literacy funding (9).<sup>149</sup> This subtle sleight of hand grants just enough credit to the Anglo-American in order to illuminate the Cherokee nation. In other words, the arguments made about crude, ignorant, and uncivilized Indian nations can no longer hold true; instead, as Boudinot argues, the Cherokees have willingly acquiesced to the educational, governmental, professional, and spiritual practices of the early American peoples.

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<sup>148</sup> Peyer describes the manner in which the Cherokee nations received Christianity, within the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

Protestant missionaries had been visiting Cherokee villages sporadically since about 1740 but had aroused little interest among the inhabitants. At the turn of the century, however, disruption in Cherokee religious practices in the course of the social upheaval outlined above the rise of an influential mixed-blood minority in favor of acculturation made them more receptive to missionary fervor of the Second Great Awakening, particularly in the realm of education. (172)

McLoughlin, too, illuminates the complicated nature in which Christian missionaries and Cherokees interacted:

After 1824...there was no way to escape confrontations with avid Christian proselytizing....Inevitably some Cherokees were persuaded to join the new religion and a permanent preaching station would be established in the area; the Christian preachers would come back regularly, their members increased and became a source of disagreement within the community as the old and new religions competed. (383-384)

See McLoughlin, “Chapter 18,” for more concerning Christian evangelism and Cherokee salvation/resistance.

<sup>149</sup> Boudinot claims that three evidences of progress should place the Cherokees in fair light: letters, the translation of the New Testament, and their organization of the government.

This model implemented by Boudinot appears as one of classic double-consciousness, established by W.E.B. Du Bois: "...this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness...two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (12). Faced with the diminishing of his tribal heritage, Boudinot's choice in rhetoric must acknowledge the Anglo-American power-holding population. Possibly Boudinot is exhibiting an internalization of awareness and cultural self-denial, which develops into this duplicitous state of identity. As such, the evidence of double-consciousness can create a problem for the modern, progressive reader, as it can become difficult to take Boudinot on his own terms. The conflation of the genuine Cherokee identity and Anglo-American expectation complicates Boudinot's true expression of the self versus what listeners/readers expect him to say and how they expect him to behave. Furthermore, modern readers might question whether the Cherokee conversion to Christianity is indeed a triumph, evoking sovereignty over the nineteenth-century listener, or rather cultural suicide. Does the acceptance of the Anglo-American Christian God denote a loss of one's Cherokee heritage and spiritual belief? In other words, does Boudinot feel he must implement the Christian rhetoric of the time, only because he possesses no other access to power? These complexities emerge in conjunction with the issues of forsaking one's past in order to secure one's future: While Boudinot would have his listening body believe that his Christianity is only one personal testimony which reflects his own nation's progress, a modern reader might view this claim with skepticism, as Boudinot is forced to discard his own cultural heritage as a consequence of Christian conversion.

In beautiful imagery, Boudinot depicts the progressive Cherokee, and while the primitive ignorance of his people fades away, the presence and worth of them is only compounded: “The shrill sound of the Savage yell shall die away as the roaring of far distant thunder; and Heaven wrought music will gladden the affrighted wilderness...But has not God said it, and will he not do it? The Almighty decrees his purposes, and man cannot with all his ingenuity and device countervail them. They are more fixed in their course than the rolling sun—more durable than the overlasting mountains” (10). While “man” appears within this illustration, he is allowed no access to humanity’s fate; instead, Native Americans, equalized through creation, must bow down to an overruling authority that ordains man’s path and secures his well-being. Man, in this case, has no color at all: Instead, all men are subservient beings, provided for by one heavenly father.<sup>150</sup> Additionally, in this passage, Boudinot keenly eclipses Anglo-American attempts to exert dominance over the native tribes. By incorporating verbiage such as “ingenuity” and “device[,]” Boudinot bookends his criticism of the listening populace in a discourse denoting Christian sovereignty. Christian conversion, unlike social and civic rights, is not exclusive for only the Anglo-American man; rather, the spiritual realm aligns the Native American body with all others and promises security, more certain than even the processes of nature.

In his proposal to establish a seminary for the Cherokee peoples, Boudinot again negates the use of language to demonstrate that rhetorical communication is not necessary for the study of God’s word. He explains: “Need I spend one moment in arguments, in favour of such an institution; need I speak one word of the utility; of the necessity; of an institution of learning; need I do more than simply to ask the patronage of benevolent hearts, to obtain that patronage” (13). While Boudinot maintains that all his previously provided examples, pleading for support

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<sup>150</sup> See Chapter 1 for a depiction of Marrant’s implementation of a colorless messenger and a colorless God.

through use of republican rhetoric, still hold true, he nonetheless affirms that spiritual progress is beyond the jurisdiction of the Anglo-American. The establishment of the seminary requires significant funding; thus, Boudinot appeals for the monetary resources of his hearers. However, he seems to indicate that the sacred nature and success of religious study is prescribed and mobilized by God alone.

By the end of his speech, Boudinot rises above the restriction of the Anglo-American through the expression of Christian sovereignty, as he exerts the agency of God alone, unrestricted by any man. While he again advocates for their aid, he presses forward into the future of his race, as he imagines “rising from the ashes of her degradation, wearing her purified and beautiful garments, and taking her seat with the nations of the earth... behold[ing] her sons bursting the fetters of ignorance and unshackling her from the vices of heathenism. She is at this instant, risen like the first morning sun, which grows brighter and brighter, until it reaches its fullness of glory” (14). In part, the elevation seen here is through intellectual knowledge and progress, and yet, Boudinot’s greater dependency hinges upon his faith in God alone. As Boudinot’s people metaphorically rise, they are no longer held hostage by the Anglo-American doctrines of the nineteenth century. In this space, no man has hold over the enduring nature of the Cherokee, as conversion to Christianity assures eternal improvement.

Indeed, through this implementation of Christian sovereignty, Boudinot indirectly warns listeners of the consequences of excluding the Cherokee peoples from the kingdom of God which is freely offered to all people. In classic jeremiadic expression, God, albeit one of love, threatens to enact his anger and vengeance upon the disobedient. Boudinot cautions his listeners of the detrimental consequences of their insubordination in the Cherokee cause: “But if the Cherokee Nation fail in her strength, if she die away, then all hopes are blasted, and falls the fabric of

Indian civilization. Their fathers were born in darkness, and have fled in darkness; without your assistance so will their sons. You see, however, where the probability rests” (14). The repetition of “darkness” is not only a symbol for unproductive struggle and eventual extinction but also the loss of Christianity among all of God’s people. If Boudinot can convince his listeners that his belief system encompasses the Anglo-Americans and Native Americans, then their eternal earthly missions should align: to share the gospel of Christianity with all peoples and thus unite in brotherly love.

Stressing the futility of human pride and posturing, Boudinot relocates his spiritual lens beyond only the Cherokee peoples, uniting even his oppressors within a common Christian community in an eternal realm: “When all the kingdoms of this earth shall die away and their beauty and power shall perish, his name shall live and shine as a twinkling star; those for whose benefit he done his deeds of charity shall call him blessed, and they shall add honor to his immortal head” (15). While Christianity provides the believer reassurance of eternal life, Boudinot reminds his listeners that “charity” is the responsibility of all Christians. What endures? Is it land, or riches, or power, or supremacy? For Boudinot, only one’s eternal inheritance is certain, and his reliance on everlasting spiritual worth reinforces his power as a rhetorician, making clear, without having to say it, where appropriate blame is to be placed.

In his final statements, Boudinot blends enlightenment rhetoric with Christian sovereignty. In an appeal to the republican society, he acknowledges the mercy necessary for Cherokee advancement, asking: “Will you push them from you, or will you save them?” (16). Young explains Boudinot’s approach as an appeal to the Christian commonwealth: “[W]ould not the good people of the country rush to the aid of the beleaguered and the oppressed?...Or, had the United States become, in truth, a nation of thieves and hypocrites—or squatters and rapists and

drunkards specializing in felonious assault?” (506). Boudinot’s narration ends not with confident closure but with a pending question. Both the humanity and Christianity of the Anglo-American are called into question, while Boudinot stirs the conscience of the audience. Moreover, he refuses to lift the ponderous burden of responsibility but rests with a command to “Let humanity answer” (16). The Christian ideal, far superior to American government, should encompass certain triumphant qualities: Boudinot summons the power of Christianity to bestow a unifying sovereignty upon a broken republic.

#### William Apess: When “Every Eye was Fixed on Me”

In Apess's autobiography, *A Son of the Forest* (1829), he describes his first public encounter of delivering a sermon before his Anglo-American peers. Detailing both the observers’ intrigue and disrespect, Apess documents his mixed emotions, as a consequence of his supplication before the Lord:

I now thought I was in a sad predicament—I had never preached; but I called mightily upon God for assistance. When I went in, every eye was fixed on me, and when I was commencing the meeting, it appeared as if my confidence in God was gone; my lips quivered, my voice trembled, my knees smote together, and in short I quaked as it were with fear. But the Lord blessed me. Some of the people were pleased, and a few displeased. Soon after this, I received an invitation to hold a meeting in the same place again. I accordingly went, and I found a great concourse of people who had come out to hear the Indian preach, and as soon as I had commenced, the sons of the devil began to show their front—and I was treated not with the greatest loving kindness, as one of them threw an old hat in my face, and this example was followed by others, who threw sticks at me....Now I can truly say that a native of the forest cannot be found in all our country who would not blush at the bad conduct of many who enjoy in a preeminent degree the light of the Gospel. But so it is, that in the very center of Gospel light and influence thousands of immortal souls are sitting in the darkness, or walking in the valley of the shadow of death! It is the truth, and a melancholy truth indeed!” (44-45)

While historical documentation does not provide such a detailed response to Apess’s speech at the Odeon Theatre in 1836, similar threads of analysis can be traced between both *Son* and *Eulogy*. As in Boudinot’s speeches, Anglo-Americans gathered en masse not only to listen but



also to see a live Indian. In both cases, Boudinot and Apess fail to represent the stereotypical savage—fully clothed in feathers and war paint and bearing wampum and weapons—in front of the crowds. Apess’s own depiction of this event records a range of reactions, some accepting, others violent, but ultimately, this passage directs attention to the shifting and inauthentic Christian nature of the early republic, as seen through the eyes of a Pequot. In order to detect this same kind of rhetoric, as with Boudinot’s “Address,” the following elucidates Apess’s own act of mourning and retreat to the past, his republican critique of language and principle, and his invocation of Christian sovereignty. Apess calls upon his history to remember a great warrior while commanding his Bostonian listeners to not only make revisions to the past but to implement these behavioral and cultural changes within the present. Furthermore, he, more severely than Boudinot, unapologetically confronts the audience with their own hypocrisy and privileged positions, asking them to repent and cling to a God who welcomes all peoples for the restorative purposes of republican unity.

Since his publication of *Son* in 1829 and his final appearance in public when delivering the *Eulogy* in 1836, readers of the texts see a progression from a youthful, timid, and insecure young boy and adolescent, to a confident, unwavering, and compelling man. Apess’s choice of genre and form has been of recent interest for scholars, such as Tiro, Henderson, and Peyer. Tiro asserts that “[i]f Apess’s choice of King Philip as his subject was of particular significance, so too was his choice of genre....The eulogy enjoyed wide currency in New England, and Apess’s audience had recently been subjected to staggering doses of nationalistic discourse....Like the sermon, the eulogy was a convenient vehicle whereby Apess and other religious figures could transfer their religious authority to political matters” (669). Likewise, Henderson’s work examines, more narrowly, the historical lineage and implications of the eulogy in early America:

“Today, the eulogy is thought of as a standard variety of memorial in either spoken or written form, through which the deceased and his or her achievements are remembered and celebrated. However, the eulogy only emerged as a dominant funerary practice in the United States in the later eighteenth century and was regarded primarily as a work of oratory” (47).<sup>151</sup> Peyer, however, emphasizes the myriad stylistic strategies at work in Apess’s oral delivery, as he references his “awareness of cultural intellectual trends by pulling a variety of ideological strings—democratic republicanism, abolitionism, revivalism, romantic primitivism—in what can be considered one of the strongest pro-Indian statements in the history of American Indian literature” (160). Delivered twice, on January 8 and then on January 26 in the Odeon theatre, Apess’s performance marked a day of remembrance for the death of King Philip on August 12, 1676, and the Wampanoag tribes’ losses of land and heritage. Formally, after the defeat, the Puritans declared that the Wampanoag tribe held no more power, and as a marker of the end of the struggle, they resurrected the mutilated corpse of King Philip, both as a warning of encroachment and as a symbol of victory. Jill Lepore describes Cotton Mather’s pilgrimage a few years later, as he journeyed to see what remained of Philip’s head to mark an act of individual agency of his own: “There, with an outstretched arm, he reached up and ‘took off the Jaw from the Blasphemous exposed Skull of the Leviathan.’ Wasn’t this a bit much? Philip had already been shot, quartered, and decapitated. Why steal his jaw? Revenge, perhaps....Perhaps Cotton had a more metaphorical motive: to shut Philip up. By stealing Philip’s jawbone, his *mouth*, he put an end to Philip’s *blasphemy*” (174). Only twelve years old at the time of Philip’s death, Cotton’s remembrance of the event instigated a curiosity that reached back into the past

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<sup>151</sup> See Henderson’s *Grief and Genre*, in full text, but particularly the “Introduction” and “Chapter 2,” for more insight into the history of genre and the manners in which form manifested itself for Apess.

through a journey on foot. In a similar fashion, Apess, on this cold winter day in Boston, evoked the memory of King Philip in order to recast the significance of his death into the context of the nineteenth century. While his listeners would not have intimately related to King Philip's heritage, the remembrance of his death, affirmed through Apess's urgency to be heard in his present time, demanded accountability for the actions of racial injustice, still present around one hundred and fifty years later. As Todd Vogel notes, Apess's appearance in the theatre was proof that "Indians still had something to say" (40).

Apess, even more directly than Boudinot, retreats to the melancholic past in order to restore Philip's memory in a present-day context. In a dualistic appeal—evoking the language of memory and employing republican rhetoric (and before launching the condemnation that will dominate the majority of the remainder of the speech)—Apess metaphorically resurrects the remnants of the body nature has hidden under the earth. In this raising of the dead, King Philip is aligned with "the immortal Washington [who] lives engraven on the hearts of every white in America[,]" as listeners witness the declaration that "every patriot, especially in this enlightened age, [will] respect the rude yet all-accomplished son of the forest, that died a martyr to his cause" (277, 278). His proclamation demands the respect King Philip deserves while interrogating "Where, then, shall we place the hero of the wilderness?" (277). In this early moment, as Apess appeals to "the lovers of liberty" and "the enlightened age," he flatters the intelligence and prestige of the collective, listening body (277). This gleam of flattery lasts only for a moment but is indicative of Apess's resourcefulness, his mastery that establishes an ethos that reflects both his rational capacities and his listeners' motivations. While this approbation is brief, Apess's invocation invites his listeners to come closer and hear of a great man, overlooked by history. As Vogel notes, gaining the listening ear of his audience, beyond simple curiosity of spectacle, was

not an easy task: “If white America defined itself by posing as Indian [through actors in theatres] and distancing itself from Indians, then William Apess toyed with this unstable identity. The sight of the Pequot Indian on stage at the Odeon Theatre must have pressed that fragile equilibrium in his audience’s mind” (48-49). Apess’s choice to appear in Anglo-American clothing, while speaking the Pequot and English languages, solicits not only attention gained by physical spectacle but also a less trivial interest due to his employment of speech.

For Native Americans speakers, political activists, or ministers, like Boudinot and Apess, the gaze of the viewing audience—and the more collective gaze of the representative Anglo-American citizen—mattered significantly: In the nineteenth century, these activists shouldered the great burden of representing their fellow tribesmen in a fair light while also adjusting to the expectation of the power-holding population. Because retention of homelands and social equality hinged on the cooperation of Anglo-American citizens, representatives like Boudinot and Apess were forced to anticipate the expectations of the listeners’ gaze, while posing in a way that did not eradicate their genuine identities and heritages. Tim Fulford explains this barrier between speaker and listener by evocation of the racialized gaze:

[Apess] knows how it is to be subject to what he identifies as the racial gaze, which turns a person into a collection of generic racial features....The Indian, he implies, is subject not just to widespread racism, but also to a racism guided by the science of comparative anatomy. This gaze has moral consequences, leading the white to pre-judge (the ‘mind is made up’) and to see the Indian only in terms of economic worth (‘the price is set’). (226)

Apess’s confrontation with the gaze, however, is not one of meekness. While he fully engages with the stereotypes that create obstructions for the reception of his message, he combats these prejudices in an unapologetic defense. Warrior notes this defiance in his acknowledgement that “[a]nyone seeking an assimilated, cowering William Apess championing the ways of white America will be hard pressed to find him” (“William Apess” 194). Moreover, Fulford claims that

“[n]ot all the Indians so educated, however, simply reflected whites’ hopes back to them. William Apess certainly did not” (224). Instead, Apess sets out not only to revise the way in which history was told but also to amend the present moment in favor of Native American treatment.

Like Boudinot, Apess is faced with creating a Native American counter-history from loss and catastrophe that is predicated upon destruction. Gura claims that nineteenth century Anglo-Americans sought to “excuse whites’ past behaviors toward and current treatment of Native Americans by proclaiming the superiority of Christian civilization and its eventual and inevitable triumph over that of the sons and daughters of the forest” (108-109). Apess, however, attacks this line-of-defense by connecting mourning and history through rhetoric, revising the trauma and violence of the seventeenth century through the repositioning of Native American heroes and the Anglo-American villains. Elisa Tamarkin sheds light onto this inversion of classification by elucidating the Anglo-American sense of loss and struggle for purpose: In her description of “anglophilia,” she claims that “Antebellum Americans staged their deference toward England...allow[ing] for an experience of belonging that was made possible because they had no one to belong to but themselves” (xxiv). Furthermore, she describes the insecurity caused by relocation to early America and by the trauma of the Revolution as a “melancholy return to ‘dependence’ in the nation’s memory,” an opportunity to “worry over wreckage and loss” and fixate upon the “colonial debris accumulating at their feet” (xxvii, 89). This self-doubt manifested itself in the need for possession of land and the conquest of the Native Americans living on that same land upon colonial establishment. Tamarkin’s perspective of these unstable identities certainly reveals the motivations behind a long-standing tradition of Anglo-American behavior, but if Apess can reposition the “white man” as the “villain” in the retelling of an oral

history—profiting from the already-present insecurities—this inversion can allow for the Americanization of the Native American.

In order to achieve his purpose, Apess first dredges up the calamity of the past. In his attempt to “melt the prejudice[,]” of the audience before him, he collapses the Native Americans’ mourning of Philip with the evidence that nature, too, mourned the loss (277). He writes of a violence that is unending “until the fields are covered with blood and the rivers turned into purple fountains, while groans, like distant thunder, are heard from the wounded and the tens of thousands of the dying...; while a loud response is heard floating through the air from ten thousand Indian children and orphans, who are left to mourn the honorable acts of a few—civilized men” (278). Apess, in a more confrontational manner than Boudinot, antagonizes his perpetrator, directly. He places blame, unapologetically, with the “said to be honorable warriors[,]” who feigned high moral character and noble intent, and elevates, with sorrowful reverence, the native survivors who vowed to live in high-esteem, despite near extinction evoked by false “civilized men” (278). As Vogel stresses, “Apess did not flinch in outlining white atrocities [,]” but his denouncement of their behaviors was partnered with a reverent remembrance of the early tribes’ altruistic sacrifices (51).

Furthermore, Apess accuses the earliest English colonists of a lack of feeling, despite the treachery, deception, and great losses their neighbors’ suffered. In his direct condemnation of past practices, he indirectly points a finger at their continued duplicity—the indifferent and selfish nature of looking towards the despondency of a grieving nation, a valuable reflection of humanity—and mocking such mourning in order to hoard the inevitable rights promised by a republic that only represented a small portion of the whole populace. Apess condemns: “O white woman! What would you think if some...should come and carry away from you three lovely

children...and at some future time you should behold them and break forth in sorrow, with your heart broken, and merely ask, ‘Sirs, where are my little ones?’ and some one should reply: ‘It was passion, great passion.’...Should you not think they were beings made more like rocks than men?’” (280). With each declaration of fact, grounded in history’s narrative, Apess asks the listener to answer for his/her crimes, to stand up as the perpetrator of native loss. Moreover, he demands accountability for inhumane behavior devoid of compassion for one’s fellow man. In comparing the Anglo-American to an inanimate material, Apess warns of the risk of continued perpetration of misconduct and sinfulness, causing a corrupt callousness that opposes benevolence and charity for fellow-men.

As Apess recounts the many “crimes” of the Puritans, he calls for an acknowledgement and confession.<sup>152</sup> As he inverts the usage of the terms “savage” and “Christian,” he combats the racial and behavioral biases he knows to be present in both the minds and hearts of his audience. Referencing the starving times of New England, Apess proclaims, “Now let us see who the greatest savages were; the person that stole the corn was a stout athletic man, and because of this [the colonists] wished to spare him and take an old man who was lame and sickly...because they thought he would not be of so much use to them, he was, although innocent of any crime, hung in his stead. O savage, where art thou, to weep over the Christian’s crimes?” (281). While splashing before his audience the darkest moments of Puritan history, he provides no outlet for secrecy or hiding. Instead, he continues with a call for shame, even, but certainly accountability:

Let the children of the Pilgrims blush, while the son of the forest drops a tear and groans over the fate of his murdered and departed fathers. He would say to the sons of the

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<sup>152</sup> Apess’s condemnation also involves the intent to transfer his own mourning onto the consciences of his listeners, the descendants of the Puritan colonists. Bell notes that a “distinctive form of melancholia evolved among the Puritans of New England, who had fled religious persecution in Europe. This and related forms of melancholia were termed ‘religious melancholy’ by contemporaries, after [Robert] Burton coined the term in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*” (109). This sense of religious melancholy is perhaps meant to function as a parallel between Apess and his listeners. As the Puritans experienced melancholy from persecution, so now have the Native American tribes.

Pilgrims...let the day be dark, the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of December 1622; let it be forgotten in your celebration, in your speeches, and by the burying of the rock that your fathers first put their foot upon....We say, therefore, let every man of color wrap himself in mourning, for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July are days of mourning and not of joy. Let them rather fast and pray to the great Spirit, the Indian's God, who deals out mercy to his red children, and not destruction. (286)

Apess's act of remembrance, what Walker calls "history as memory"—albeit memories of crime and trauma—involves a dual act of sorrow, inclusive of both the native and the Anglo-American and extending toward America, as a whole (166). Through confrontation with the darkest moments of history, Apess directs the Anglo-American to humble himself, to acknowledge his wrongdoings, to demonstrate repentance, and to sincerely mourn alongside of those he has harmed. Intertwined within this plea for memorial is the denial of American celebratory acts and the spiritual remorse that should accompany such acts. But this mourning also involves the participation of the offender. As ancestors of the guilty culprits stand before Apess in Boston, he affronts them with his own lamentation. While Apess is certainly a messenger of progress, it is important for him to reconcile the past and present, and this act of healing involves the cooperation of his witnesses.

But while this verbal recognition of historical wreckage provides a moment of rhetorical retribution for Apess, his motivating task is not to pause statically within the present but to gain momentum for an atonement. In fact, Freud articulates exactly this—that melancholia suffocates the desire to move forward, but mourning necessitates reverence of past suffering, while instigating a movement forward toward healing and improvement. In Apess's terms, the first step toward achievement of this vision is to expose the destabilized nature of the American republic, both in language and action. Understanding this complexity suggests a return to Cheng's theories on racial melancholy, as she poses the question of "how does the nation 'go on' while remembering those transgressions? How does it sustain the remnants of denigration and disgust



created in the name of progress and the formation of an American identity?” (11). Apess attempts this feat in a remorseless dissection of both republican rhetoric and behavior.

As with Boudinot, Apess’s oral performance reflects republican influence, both embedding republican ideology within his speech (and appearing on stage, personifying the republican gentleman) but also turning the tables in an unforgiving condemnation of republican politics and abuse. He begins by blurring the lines of American-endorsed terminologies used in propaganda literatures even in early exploration and colonization and in the later establishment of doctrines of independence. Fulford explains this approach as “...the need to turn the language of whites back against them, to possess it rather than be possessed by it” (235). Picking apart labels such as savage, civilized, justice, and humanity, Apess challenges his listeners with their own established frameworks. In his initial appeal, Apess, like Boudinot, uses negation to draw unexpected comparisons between King Philip, who has been long forgotten, and revered heroes among the American people:

I do not arise to spread before you the fame of a noted warrior, whose natural abilities shone like those of the great and mighty Philip of Greece, or of Alexander the Great, or like those of Washington—whose virtues and patriotism are engraven on the hearts of my audience. Neither do I approve of war as being the best method of bowing to the haughty tyrant, Man, and civilizing the world. No, far from me to be such a thought. But it is to bring before you beings made by the God of Nature, and in whose hearts and heads he has planted sympathies that shall live forever in the memory of the world, whose brilliant talents shone in the display of natural things, so that the most cultivated, whose powers shown with equal luster, were not able to prepare mantles to cover the burning elements of an uncivilized worlds. (278)

In this passage, he not only situates Philip alongside of legendary, historical great men, but he also intoxicates his listeners with his eloquence of language. By directly appealing to the ones who value “virtue and patriotism,” Apess reveals an erudite capacity for orality but also the urgency for Native American value. He implants the belief that war does not necessarily equal civilization, but instead, he lobbies for a peaceful negotiation of understanding and empathy

without the continued shedding of blood. And yet—his tone is deliberate and severe. Apess makes his purpose known as he places himself and his fellow tribesman on an elevated platform, in memory but also in the present time, admiring their “brilliant talents,” and competence, despite uncivilized circumstances, enacted by an Anglo-American population. Vogel’s assessment of Apess’s purpose is that “he aimed to do more than construct a new version of the King Philip’s War. He also sought to revise American historical ideology and symbols. Apess used republican ideology...to realign the foundations of American history...[and] constructed a Washington icon who was...rather [a] champion of republican rights.... So Philip and Native Americans, in turn, helped build the country” (52). In his reestablishment of the facts of King Philip’s War and in his resurrection of King Philip, himself, Apess attacks the very foundation of republican ideology and repositions the fallen Native Americans into the hall of fame of American prominence. In fact, he defines and then evokes republican terminologies in a much different fashion than has been used before, by questioning the motives and morality of those who have represented the American ideal. While Vogel asserts that for Apess, Washington and King Philip were parallel in eminence, Apess actually elevates Philip to a position above Washington—as not only a symbol of historical greatness but also as a symbol of historical godliness. And as Walker highlights, when enlightenment rhetoric fails, because the American foundation is failing, Apess must invent a new interpretation of the established rhetoric already in use: “...(and here is the surprising turn), *every patriot (not just Indians) in this enlightened age* should follow the Native Americans’ example....Apess is offering King Philip as a personification not only of Indian America but of the nation America should aspire to become, a nation of justice for both whites and peoples of color” (167). Proposing that his listeners

rearrange the ways in which they think about American identity, Apess replaces the most notable figures and policies of American nationalism with the Native American leaders and values.

Apess further attacks the very principles of republican security and independence, criticizing the colonists' hypocritical ways and accusing them of fraudulence and intrusion. As he recounts the arrival of the European in Plymouth, he interrogates their absence of "liberty" and by placing a moment of the past into the context of the present, he explains that "...if now done, it would be called an insult, and every white man would be called to go out and act the part of the patriot, to defend their country's rights; and if every intruder were butchered, it would be sung upon every hilltop in the Union that victory and patriotism was the order of the day" (280). In this case, the violence of the English is evaluated on a separate terrain than the seventeenth-century native acts of physical defense. In fact, the very notion of "liberty" and "patriotism," in the republican sense, is defined by unrelenting self-defense, pride in one's homeland, and the protection of marked territories. Using these standards as a basis for evaluation, Apess not only defends the actions of his own lineage, but he also elevates them as representations of the very ideals of republicanism, long before such policies were formally established. Like Boudinot's command to "[l]et humanity answer," Apess performs an identical rhetorical maneuver as he demands to "[l]et justice answer" (16, 283). In both cases, the Native American speaker has refused to justify such reproachful actions any longer, and while the Anglo-American is not called forward to present an answer for such wrongdoing, the republican principles, secured by the American populace, collapse under pressure.

Fine-tuning his own argument, Apess's critique of republican rhetoric, in speech, policy, and action is channeled into an individual, personal critique of Increase Mather. In connection with Cotton Mather's sojourn to the skull of King Philip, Apess's oral performance spotlights

Cotton's father's involvement in the matter. Apess verbally condemns Increase Mather's name-calling of Philip as a "cursed memory," claiming that "if the Doctor was present, he would find that the memory of Philip was as far before his, in the view of sound, judicious men, as the sun is before the stars at noonday" (284). Again, Apess not only castigates the actual persons of guilt but also the ideals that he or she represents; moreover, he contemplates before his listeners whether or not vengeance, in equal form as was enacted by the Puritans, would be a plausible solution: "And suppose that, in some future day, our children should repay all these wrongs, would it not be doing as we, poor Indians, have been done to? But we sincerely hope there is more humanity in us than that" (284). A purified form of "humanity," then, is posited by Apess, as honored by the Native American people. Despite the Anglo-American feigned obedience to such honorable doctrines, Apess reveals that even the most revered Puritans, in this case, the eminent Dr. Mather, fail to live up to the standards which the natives have faithfully honored since initial contact with Europeans. In Andy Doolen's terms, the "*Eulogy on King Philip* invokes the sacred doctrine of American civilization only to discard it immediately as the greatest lie[;]" perhaps Apess does not discard these doctrines entirely, but he certainly revises upon the ways in which it they should be implemented in daily practice (181). The Puritan jeremiad also adopted new meaning in Apess's condemnation of doctrines and practices; while the jeremiad, spoken from the mouths of the most religious elite of New England, meant to warn against moral disobedience, Apess's *Eulogy* illustrates that most pious men, including the Mathers, should fear God's wrath caused by not only rebellion but also false teaching. Furthermore, Apess allows for a reinvention of the nation's identity, the new standard as played out through the acts of nobility of the native peoples.

Apess's declaration of Christian sovereignty is a tool, evoked also by Boudinot, to exert authority over the Anglo-American listeners. As republican language and identity are destabilized within the oral performance, Apess presents Christianity as more profound than all other aspects of humanity. The first appearance of this strategy surfaces almost immediately in the *Eulogy*. Apess poses the question: "What then? Shall we cease to mention the mighty of the earth, the noble work of God?" (277). Masked by the dense discourse of enlightenment description and documentation of American history, the Christian rhetoric that Apess retrieves is deemed as most significant to his purpose: The omniscient, everlasting work of God, among all peoples. As he claims, no deed is hidden from God, and his power, made known through salvation, most purely manifests itself through the Native peoples.

For a writer and speaker like Apess, the very nature of divinity—or at least the form of divinity taught from the Puritan pulpit—directly stimulates Pequot mourning. But in his castigation of religious doctrines, Apess does not suggest that the political or Christian principles themselves are flawed or deficient; instead, it is the Anglo-American application of them which causes violence, injustice, and despair. By positioning first King Philip as the model of Christian leadership, and then by appointing himself as the mouthpiece for the Pequot tribe and Native American nations, Apess attempts to leave the act of mourning within the past, grieving the loss of native warriors and the serenity of verdant homelands while reminding Anglo-American listeners that pure, natural spiritual tenets were implemented among the tribes long before seventeenth-century colonization. Furthermore, by encouraging not simply a revision of history but also a revision of the practice of political and religious ethics, Boudinot suggests that the early republic and its many members could live in unity, without inflaming or repeating the dark history of mourning predating them all.

Apess does not emerge as docile, and, unlike Boudinot, he does not reminisce fondly upon the missionary conversion experience of inculcating the tribes of early America. Instead, as Fulford explains, “He accuse[s] white colonists for their immoral actions but never descend[s] to their level by suggesting these actions stemmed from some flaw that is inherent in their race. Rather, he impugn[s] their greed, using the Christian moral code to show how the sin of covetousness led to depravity” (232). Within Apess’s *Eulogy*, race and Christianity are inextricably intertwined. But Apess declares, through his own Christian sovereignty, that the “frail man was made for a nobler purpose—to live, to love, and adore his God, and do good to his brother—for this reason, and this alone, the God of heaven prepared ways and means to blast anger, man’s destroyer, and cause the Prince of Peace to rule, that man might swell those blessed notes. My image is of God; I am not a beast” (278). By listing off the qualities and purposes of the Christian, a catalogue of spiritual fruit, Apess asks that the Anglo-American consider his own spiritual state.

Being Christian, only in a name, bears little weight in terms of genuine faith, and thus Apess raises up Philip, and his father—the sachem, Massasoit—as demonstrations of Christian character and integrity. He describes Massasoit as a “good old chief [who] exercised more Christian forbearance than any of the governors of that age or since. It might well be said he was a pattern for the Christians themselves; but by the Pilgrims he is denounced, as being a savage” (283). Massasoit, as described by Apess, was blameless and compassionate, and although he was not a “Christian,” Apess uses examples of his character and benevolence as the standards by which to measure Anglo-American behavior. Furthermore, like Christ awaiting trial for persecution and upon his crucifixion, Massasoit was also despised by his peers and persecuted by his neighbors. Indirectly, Apess elevates Massasoit and his off-spring Philip to a position of

Christ-likeness and suggests that while sadness and mourning are associated with their remembrances, such despair could transform to only reverence, respect, and admiration—their loss of lives not in vain—if only American citizens would spiritually repent and reform.

Again, Apess hammers upon terminologies and labels, asking the audience in the Odeon to inquire about the true nature of such usage. He challenges them to consider whether or not Christianity is exemplified only within a name or by consistent action. Lisa Brooks writes that “[i]ronically, Apess points out, the heathen ‘sons’ of the Americas ‘naturally’ demonstrated more human ‘virtues’ than those who professed the religion of Christianity[,]” and Apess, again and again, within the *Eulogy*, gestures toward the upside-down categorization of savage/civilized and Christian/savage (204). In recounting the details of King Philip’s War, Apess denounces the “people calling themselves Christians [who] conduct in this manner” ascertaining that there is “no pity at all...to be had for them” (299). However, when describing native practices of warfare, he berates the Euro-American for disrespect to an honorable man, who “would not turn and fight against his own wife and family, or leave them, he was condemned as a heathen” (299). For Apess, labeling of racialized identity only reinforces the immoral practices haunting America’s past and bleeding into the present; therefore, the *Eulogy* calls for condemnation and revision of such malicious exercises.

In specific instances, Apess asserts his own Christian sovereignty on a divinely-appointed level. Calling the natives, “the only instrument in preserving [the white men’s] lives” but labeling whites as the “instruments of death[,]” Apess appears not as a prophet, as Gustafson and Gussman might claim, but as a devout and authentic Christian follower (285, 292).<sup>153</sup> His devoted nature, like African American Christians, Marrant and Lee, means allowing God to work

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<sup>153</sup> See Gustafson, “Nations of Israelites,” and Gussman, “O Savage, Where Art Thou?”

through him as a mere instrument for the spiritual kingdom.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, Miller asserts that when Apess “characterize[es] himself as God’s instrument, [he] announces the triumph of divine word over corrupt flesh” (227). In this case, one’s ethnicity or race holds little significance; instead, it is his spiritual worth that grants power and authority. However, the function of a prophet is much different. While Apess uses Christianity as a power to trump racial injustice, evaluating one based on character alone, he does not position himself as speaking directly to God and departing an anointed word. Instead, he recounts the incidents of King Philip’s War through a spiritual filter, detailing the ways in which natives acted out their faith in word and deed, despite the corrupt hypocrisy of the confessed and “labeled” Christian.

Apess’s invocation of Christianity sovereignty, like his confrontation with republican ideology, is neither hesitant nor passive. He oscillates between the extremes of comparisons between the natives and the Europeans (or the heathens versus the Christians) and then stronger condemnations in the form of jeremiadic appeal:

How inhuman it was in those wretches, to come into a country where nature shone in beauty, spreading her wings over the vast continent, sheltering beneath her shades those natural sons of an Almighty Being, that shone in grandeur and luster like the stars of the first magnitude in the heavenly world; whose virtues far surpassed their more enlightened foes, notwithstanding their pretended zeal for religion and virtue. How they could go to work to enslave a free people and call it religion is beyond the power of my imagination and outstrips the revelation of God’s word. O thou pretended hypocritical Christian, whoever thou art, to say it was the design of God that we should murder and slay one another because we have the power. Power was not given us to abuse each other, but a mere power delegated to us by the King of heaven, a weapon of defense against error and evil; and when abused, it will turn to our destruction. Mark, then, the history of nations throughout the world. (279)

First, Apess maintains that while they were not called Christians in name or title, the Native Americans occupying the land pre-European arrival were, nonetheless, created and protected by

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<sup>154</sup> See Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 for detailed information concerning Marrant and Lee as instruments of God.



the “Almighty Being.” This act of sovereignty aligns Native Americans with an eternal heritage, reminding listeners that the worth of the native was protected upon creation. Thus, Apess, himself, made in God’s image and part of His kingdom, stands as an equal to his lighter skinned audience. Reminiscent of Olaudah Equiano’s famous chastisement in his autobiography, the above lecture addressed to “O thou pretended hypocritical Christian” avoids pointed name-calling.<sup>155</sup> Instead, Apess asks the listener to explore his own heart’s intentions, “whoever thou art.” Moreover, he associates behavior with depravity, and such behavior cannot be classified as Christian. Does it matter, to Apess, anymore what the republic values? While I do not mean to imply that he set out to destroy American politics or American Christianity, he does point to the corruption of the first by applying a sovereign power fostered through his own relationship with God—and not just for himself but for the native peoples. Weaver describes this oral declaration as an “invo[cation of] the language of evangelical Christianity, with its appeal to the Bible. In all his writings, in fact, he is constantly throwing up the norms, language, and tools of Christianity into the face of Amer-Europeans in order to expose their racism and subvert their use of the same material for racist ends” (*That the People Might Live* 56). Thus, Apess has learned, since his initial conversion in the Methodist tent revival, that his redemptive Christianity is universal, but perhaps the confessed Christianity of the Euro-American was only a fallacious tool to subjugate other races.

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<sup>155</sup> See Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*:

O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God? Who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice? Are the dearest friends and relations, now rendered more dear by their separation from their kindred, still to be parted from each other, and thus prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery with the small comfort of being together and mingling their sufferings and sorrows? Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely this is a new refinement in cruelty, which, while it has no advantage to atone for it, thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery. (61)

In legal terms, Apess combats both social law and spiritual law, as executed and acted upon during King Philip's War. He claims that the Native Americans, without even being exposed to or restrained by a governmental doctrine, were able, through their God-given consciences, to choose between right and wrong. He addresses his "dear friends" of the audience with an avowal that "no Indian knew by the Bible it was wrong to kill, because he knew not the Bible and its sacred laws. But it is certain the Pilgrims knew better than to break the commands of their Lord and Master; they knew that it was written, 'Thou shalt not kill'" (289). Does literacy, then, connect to holiness? And are certain sects of Christians exempt from obedience? Apess opposes such blasphemies of God, while maintaining that the Wampanoags, even in their unlearned, primitive, and innocent state—as natural Christians—were able to discern the direction of God, without the classification of converted Christian.<sup>156</sup> But as Wyss affirms, such moments grant authority to the Native American's ability to be both wholly native and Christian; she emphasizes that "Native Christians must celebrate their Nativeness, however that is constructed. By honoring King Philip not as an acknowledged Christian but as a Native hero, Apess aggressively rejects the notion that Native Christians must become White; for him it is specifically as Native Americans that they become good Christians, and King Philip serves as an example of a true Christian who simply does not call himself one" (156). Christian sovereignty, then, as promoted by Apess, encompasses Native Americans, who are inclusively defined by intrinsic ethics and external good will, despite the Anglo-Americans. By illustrating, through orality, past Indian wars and the ongoing racial persecutions of the nineteenth century, Apess offers a hope to rectify the brokenness of the present moment; however, the reconciliation, in Apess's terms, is deemed impossible without the reconstruction of layered Native American

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<sup>156</sup> See Chapter 2 for Child's depiction of Hobomok as the exemplary Native American natural Christian.

identity and an active awareness of the equality of all races, fused through a genuine relationship with an eternal God.

### The (Same) God of the Wampanoags, Cherokees, and Pequots

A defining rhetorical moment is presented at the conclusion of Apess's *Eulogy*. In the Pequot language, Apess prays the communal, Biblical petition of "The Lord's Prayer":

Noo-chun kes-uk-qut-tiam-at-am unch koo-we-su- onk, kuk-ket-as-soo-tam-oonk pey-au-moo-utch, keet- te-nan-tam-oo-onk ne nai ; ne-ya-ne ke-suk-qutkah oh- ke-it ; aos-sa-ma-i-in-ne-an ko-ko-ke-suk-o-da-e nut-as- e-suk-ok-ke fu-tuk-qun-neg ; kah ah-quo-an-tam-a-i-in- ne-an num-match-e-se-ong-an-on-ash, ne-match-ene-na- mun wonk neet-ah-quo-antam-au-o-un-non-og nish-noh pasuk noo-na-mortuk-quoh-who-nan, kah chaque sag-kom-pa-ginne-an en qutch-e-het-tu-ong-a-nit, qut poh- qud-wus-sin-ne-an watch match-i-tut. (308)

In this reverent moment, Apess's audience was confronted with the culmination of Apess's purpose—that any Native American man or woman, in this case a Pequot Indian, was able to master both republican literacy and Christian devotion, without a disavowal of one's heritage. One God heard the prayers of the white, red, and black man, and any suspicion, otherwise, collapsed at this sight upon the stage. Both Boudinot and Apess, in their own manners and for their own purposes, evoke a form of racialized mourning, honoring the past while situating themselves firmly in the present. The two should not be conflated, into a collective pan-Indian identity, and yet many of the Native American Christian intellectuals and activists of the nineteenth-century exerted their authority, granted through God, when an unstable but stubborn republican system rejected them. Walker's commentary provides evidence of a collective and conclusive hope, as expressed within both Boudinot's "Address" and Apess's *Eulogy*, as she writes that "America must become both a white and an Indian nation, the nation of true liberty, respect for nature, and genuine Christian charity it has failed for so long actually to be" (181). Often through innovative methods—taking risks and enacting courage—Boudinot and Apess unite

their peers and include their enemies through the saving powers of American Christianity  
sovereignty.

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