



TROY BICKHAM

Savages within the Empire

Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain

OXFORD HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

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TROY O. BICKHAM

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For Jonathan and Barbara Bickham

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Preface

Because this work is in part about individual, communal, and national identities, and because current scholarship tends to identify these groups largely in terms of what they were not, perhaps it is best to begin by explaining what this book is not. It is not a history of the native peoples of the Americas. Nevertheless, I hope that scholars and students of the Americas' indigenous peoples find this work to be useful and interesting. Although North American Indians figure prominently in this work as actors, both real and perceived, they are not the protagonists of the story told here. This is not to suggest that American Indians were mere victims of Europeans; in fact, as numerous scholars have persuasively demonstrated and will undoubtedly continue to show, responses were as diverse as the European empires they confronted. Britain serves as this work's centre stage, where its inhabitants encountered and considered American Indians in diverse contexts from a wide variety of angles. The representations and discussions that surrounded these engagements tell us much about British society as it shifted into what scholars have since described as a modern, nationalist imperial society. British discussions and representations of American Indians, therefore, are ways to measure and explore that change.

Like many first books, this one began its life as a doctoral dissertation, and during my graduate studies and afterwards as I transformed my thesis into a book, I accrued many intellectual and personal debts. Of course, although credit for the book must be shared, any mistakes or shortcomings are entirely my own. Oxford University and the colleges of Lincoln and Somerville provided both a physical and intellectual home, as well as financial support, throughout and immediately following my studies. Since then my project and I have found homes at the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Southeast Missouri State University and now at Texas A&M University, where my junior colleagues have ceaselessly challenged me to be a better scholar. These and other institutions have financially supported this project at various pre- and post-doctoral stages. Along with Oxford, the Pew Charitable Trust made my graduate studies and the initial pursuit of this project possible. Since then, Southeast and

Texas A&M and its Glasscock Center for Humanities Research have supported further research. A Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant from the American Historical Association and a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society enabled the timely completion of the book.

Throughout my brief career I have benefited from the direction of a diverse and generous group of senior scholars, and several deserve special mention here. Paul Langford directed the early stages of my graduate studies, and Dan Howe has been a wonderful mentor and a continuing source of advice and support. My examiners, Stephen Conway and John Stevenson, were founts of constructive criticism of my thesis, insightful comment for revising and expanding it into a book, and helpful advice on future projects. Joanna Innes has been the ideal adviser, both in a formal capacity during dissertation stage and afterwards as a willing mentor and critic. Every student and junior scholar should be so fortunate, and as I embark on my own teaching career I can but hope to emulate her in her professionalism, encouragement, and patience. I also owe a special debt of gratitude to my friends and family for their tireless support. The love and support of Rhobert, Irene, and Laura Hickman has been surpassed only by that of my wife, whose patience with my scholarly endeavours has been unmatched. Most of all I acknowledge my parents, Jonathan and Barbara Bickham, who may not have always understood but still always supported, and it is to them that I dedicate my first book.

Troy Bickham

October 2004

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Map

1. American Indian peoples and European colonies in North America in the mid-eighteenth century

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Abbreviations

BL	The British Library, London
BM	The British Museum, London
CO	Colonial Office Papers, The National Archive, Kew
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew (now 'The National Archive')
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>SPG Annual Sermon</i>	<i>A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; at their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish-Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow . . .</i> (London, 1702–).
SPG Papers	Papers of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, Lambeth Palace Library, London
WLCL	William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan
WMQ	<i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>

Introduction

There is not perhaps a nation in the world where the people so eagerly calculate events before hand, or so vehemently debate the issue of public operations, as we do on this island. All arts and sciences are to be acquired by a regular method of study, or learnt by serving apprenticeships; but in the art of government, every Englishman is skilled by nature. One would think that there was something in the air of this island, which has the property of infusing political presumption. It possesses men of all ranks, professions and degrees. The Divine, instead of explaining the text of scripture, often preaches a comment upon treaties . . . the physician neglects his patients at home, to calculate the number of sick and wounded abroad; and the tradesmen forgets the business of his own shop, while he is adjusting the operations in Germany.

(Edinburgh Magazine, June 1759)

The American war has so familiarized our ears and tongues to the barbarian names of Indian tribes, towns, or rivers, that we can now attend without laughter to, nay gargle over ourselves the guttural sounds of Ogéchee, Ouagamies, Ticonderago, and Michilimakinac. We are well enough informed too of the customs of the American Indians to want no interpreter, when we read of their taking up or burying the hatchet of war; of their tomohawking or scalping their enemies; and of planting the tree or smoking the pipe of peace.

(London Chronicle, 9 October 1759)

These comments, one from an editor and the other from a reader, encapsulate the context in which widespread British views of North American Indians were formed during the eighteenth century. The first represents the British as a people with a uniquely high level of interest in national and international affairs, an enthusiasm that infiltrated their daily lives and concerns. The second half of the eighteenth century saw the growth of public interest in domestic and overseas transactions, itself in turn a product of an expanding communications infrastructure, the

rise in national wealth, and the building of the British Empire. One consequence of these developments is evident in the second extract, in which the reader proclaims his and fellow readers' awareness of American Indians and dismisses the need for any editorial explanations in accounts relating to them. Although the majority of Britons never left their island, the empire was nevertheless an important enterprise that both overtly and subtly infiltrated the daily lives of most Britons. Discussions and representations of the empire, which I define to include the range of peoples and trading relationships that comprised and interacted with it, reflected British territorial and economic ambitions as well as efforts to explain and justify Britain's meteoric rise as a great world power.

To Britons in the second half of the eighteenth century Indians were simultaneously echoes of Britons' own socio-economic past and major factors in their present prosperity. In the context of the Scottish Enlightenment, the woodland Indians such as the Iroquois became contemporary equivalents of ancient Britons, Gauls, and Scots. Their pagan societies reminded the Church of England clergy of the European gentiles at the time of Paul the Apostle's entreaties for the expansion of the Christian Church. In more practical circles, Indians were represented as significant obstacles to British hegemony in North America, as consumers of British goods, and as potential allies in checking the expansion of rival European powers and American colonists.

This book is not a history of American Indians. Instead of playing a central role, Indians, or rather British perceptions of them, provide a means to understand how eighteenth-century Britons understood and engaged with their empire and the non-Europeans who lived at its peripheries. Nor is this book primarily a quest to determine how Indians were in practice treated in the British Empire. Historical truth certainly includes the events that transpired, but it also must encompass how people perceived them to have transpired. After all, it was through imagery and representation that the vast majority of Britons engaged with American Indians, and their perceptions had significant implications for both Indians and other non-Europeans over whom the British would claim sovereignty.

American Indians were not, of course, the only non-Europeans living under British rule or the threat of it. During the second half of the eighteenth century the American Indians, Africans, Asians, and peoples of the South Pacific came to greatly outnumber the whites living in the

British Empire. Within this motley collection, the American Indians were numerically tiny, yet they commanded a disproportionate share of British interest during the crucial empire-building years between the eve of the Seven Years War and Britain's defeat in the American War of Independence (1754–83). American Indians loomed larger in the eighteenth-century British imagination than any other non-Europeans. Their artefacts peppered auctions and filled museums; their conversion to Protestant Christianity and European civilization dominated the missionary endeavours of the Church of England; their management absorbed government ministers; and descriptions of their cultures sculpted Britons' understanding of human socio-economic development. All of these actions and endeavours were played out in a relatively free newspaper and periodical press before a watchful, interested national public. Nevertheless, they have generally been neglected in British history.

Although British–Indian relations stretched back to the sixteenth century, the period between the eve of the Seven Years War in America and the end of the American War of Independence (1754–83) marked a new chapter that contrasted sharply with the prior century-and-a-half. First, the Indians themselves had changed. None of the original seventeenth-century Indian nations in the east and midwest existed in similar form by the mid-eighteenth century.¹ Disease, war, and alcohol had decimated the native population to such an extent that the eighteenth-century nations were generally collections of refugees and survivors. Furthermore, Indians increasingly saw themselves in broader ethnic and racial terms. After all, this period saw the first large-scale, pan-Indian rising in the form of Pontiac's War (1763–5). Although the war was fought predominantly in the midwest and north-east, and Indians fought on both sides, the conflict revealed to both Indians and whites the potential power of Indian unity. Another significant change was the increasing Indian dependency on European goods.² The ability of certain Indian

¹ Philip Morgan, 'Encounters between British and "Indigenous" Peoples, c. 1500–1800', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850* (London, 1999), 42; Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (London, 1998), 92–3.

² George Irving Quimby, *Indian Culture and European Trade Goods: Archaeology of the Historic Period in the Western Great Lakes Region* (Madison, Wisc., 1966); Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge, 1995), 11–13; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees,*

communities to survive was founded on their adoption of European technologies and goods, which at the same time was to some extent their Achilles' heel. Besides weapons, Indians adopted European textiles, luxury goods, tools, and—detrimentally—alcohol. Even the most prized Creek war-paint by the mid-eighteenth century was a Chinese product that the East India Company exported to Britain, where it was repackaged for American Indian consumption.³

The British had also changed since the initial English attempts at settlement in North America. To begin with, the English Empire had become British in 1707 with the Act of Union. The eighteenth century also saw the rise of the middle class in Britain, which substantially affected its political, social, and economic landscape.⁴ This in turn aided the birth of cross-class, commerce-based imperialism, giving the elite opportunities for increased wealth and the blossoming merchant class the chance to gain political influence and social prestige.⁵ The eighteenth century also witnessed the growth of reading.⁶ When William of Orange reached Exeter in 1688 there were no local printers to produce his manifesto, and he had to bring one in from York.⁷ By the end of the century each major provincial town had at least one newspaper, several booksellers, a lending library, and a multitude of book clubs. The developing infrastructure allowed successful London newspapers to achieve national distribution,

and Navajos (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983); Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 268; Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 14–5.

³ Kathryn Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1993), 123.

⁴ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727–1783* (Oxford, 1989).

⁵ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas: I. The Old Colonial System, 1688–1850', *Economic History Review*, 49 (1986), 501–25. For the broader argument, see their *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (New York, 1993).

⁶ See esp. John Feather, 'The Power of Print: Word and Image in Eighteenth-Century England', in Jeremy Black (ed.), *Culture and Society in Britain, 1660–1800* (Manchester, 1997), 51–68; James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996); Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton, 1998), 51–71; Jan Fergus, 'Women, Class, and Growth of Magazine Readership in the Provinces, 1746–1780', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 16 (1986), 41–53; M. Kay Flavell, 'The Enlightened Reader and New Industrial Towns: A Study of the Liverpool Library, 1758–1790', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 8 (1985), 17–35.

⁷ G. A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Press, 1700–1760* (Oxford, 1962), 5.

provincial newspapers to serve both their region and 'expatriates' living in London, and magazines to reach truly national audiences.⁸ The press's proliferation and economic viability also freed it, in practice, from censors and domination by political parties. The debating clubs, coffee-houses, and domestic reading practices ensured that neither class nor illiteracy were obstacles to engaging with print culture.

The empire emerged on the public scene during the mid-eighteenth century, particularly during the Seven Years War.⁹ National, or even sustained, discussions of topics outside Europe were extremely rare before the middle of the century. If American Indians, or even the continent they inhabited for that matter, featured in the British imagination before mid-century, they were certainly at its periphery, little more than exotic curiosities for all but a handful of Britons. During the Seven Years War, Indians became real peoples living in real places. The war started in North America and, although it became a global conflict, in the public mind and according to William Pitt's strategy it was primarily fought to secure North America and the West Indies.¹⁰ Therefore, in this conflict, unlike in previous struggles between Britain and its European rivals, American gains were targets in themselves rather than potential bargaining chips to trade for European losses at the negotiating table. To this end, Britain spent funds on and sent troops to America at totally unprecedented levels.¹¹

⁸ On the press, see esp. John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), ch. 8.; Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1987); Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Press*; Robert Harris, *A Patriot Press: National Politics and the London Press in the 1740s* (Oxford, 1993); Robert R. Rea, *The English Press and Politics, 1760–1774* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1963); C. Y. Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1997); Michael Harris, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1620–1780', in George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London, 1978), 82–97; Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

⁹ See esp., H. V. Bowen, 'British Conception of Global Empire, 1756–83', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26 (1998), 1–27; Bob Harris, '“American Idols”: Empire, War and the Middling Ranks in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Pe&P*, 150 (1996), 111–41.

¹⁰ Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Cultures in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 2000).

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the economic impact and costs of the Seven Years War, see esp. Nancy F. Koehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 3–18; Reed Browning, 'The Duke of Newcastle and the Financing of the Seven Years' War', *Journal of Economic History*, 31 (1971), 344–77; Larry

Moreover, the undertaking was a national effort, which drew resources and manpower from all of Britain's component kingdoms.¹²

Not surprisingly, the public's attention followed the flow of military personnel and resources, and North American affairs became a central feature of national discussion both in and out of doors. Although the conflict spread to a further four continents as the war raged on, North America remained the central focus. Even the conflict's greatest hero, James Wolfe, won his fame in the North American theatre. Access to information and events came via the press. The diary entry which Thomas Turner, a shopkeeper, made after reading the *London Gazette's* account of Wolfe's capture of Quebec in 1759 reflects both the role of the press and people's interest in the American news it reported:

In the even[ing] I read the extraordinary Gazette for Wednesday, which gives an account of our army in America, under the command of General Wolf, beating the French army under General Montcalm (near the city of Quebec) wherein both generals were killed . . . as also the surrender of the city of Quebec, with the articles of capitulation. Oh, what pleasure it is to every true Briton to see with what success it pleases Almighty God to bless His Majesty's arms with, they having success at this time in Europe, Asia, Africa and America.¹³

Major victories in North America, such as the capture of Cape Breton, Quebec, and Montreal, provoked a string of grass-roots celebrations throughout the nation from Brighton to Dundee, where urban middling ranks and local gentry co-operated.¹⁴ Like most of the nation, Turner participated in the impromptu and organized festivities, the largest following Wolfe's capture of Quebec, which included a special dinner at the local great hall for the middling and higher ranks followed by a night of celebrating that took in the lower ranks, who enjoyed a great bonfire and a free barrel of beer.¹⁵

Accompanying the growth in importance of America in reality and imagination was an unprecedented interest in American Indians. In the context of the Seven Years War, Indians moved from backstreet shows

Neal, 'Interpreting Power and Profit in Economic History: A Case Study of the Seven Years' War', *Journal of Economic History*, 37 (1977), 20–35.

¹² P. J. Marshall, 'A Nation Defined by Empire, 1755–1776', in Alexander Grant and Keith Stringer (eds.), *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London, 1995), 209–10.

¹³ *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754–1765*, ed. D. Vaisey (East Hoathly, 1994), 191.

¹⁴ Harris, 'American Idols', 16–19.

¹⁵ *Diary of Thomas Turner*, 191.

to the centre of the imperial discourse. The struggle for control of North America was a four-way conflict. The British were familiar with their two traditional foes, France and Spain, but the American Indians were a grossly underestimated variable. For the first three years of war the British and the American colonists paid dearly for this error, as Indians proved to be the most formidable foes and essential allies in the whole conflict. As a result, the public and government became desperate to know more about these peoples. They had been the subject of sporadic curiosity before the war, but their paramount role in a conflict of great national importance provoked widespread interest. The government swiftly established a department for Indian affairs and, not trusting such an important task to the unruly colonists, placed it under the direct authority of the king's ministers. Newspapers and magazines were packed with descriptions of Indians, and the type of information that appeared—about their prowess in combat, political disposition, and market potential—reflected the pragmatic attitudinal context. Only at this time did Indians significantly enter into popular discussions about British national or cultural identity. Initial encounters may have prompted limited reflection, but it was the sustained flow of accounts of Indians during the mid-eighteenth century that provoked national consideration.

Focused as it is, this book engages and unites several historical currents. A central one is what is commonly labelled 'new frontier history', which compels us to consider borders in cultural, rather than merely geographical, terms. Because new frontier history, along with its parallels and derivatives, emphasizes the implications of sustained contact, adherents look beyond initial encounters and recognize that cultures did not disappear simply because their primary practitioners declined in terms of numbers or prominence. Equally importantly, new arrivals engaged in cultural exchanges—voluntary and forced—with natives and earlier immigrants. In the context of historical studies of the Atlantic world, this approach has been used to explain the creation of the range of racial, ethnic, and tribal/national cultural blends that resulted from European and African colonization of the Americas.¹⁶

¹⁶ For just a handful of examples, see Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America*, 2nd edn. (London, 1982); Frank Shuffelton (ed.), *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America* (Oxford, 1993); Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987); John Thornton, *African and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1998), part 2;

Historians interested in North American Indians have been at the forefront of new frontier history. By demonstrating that survival and prosperity depended heavily on co-operation and compromise between natives and newcomers well into the nineteenth century, proponents have successfully argued that the conquest of 'Indian country' was neither complete nor absolute. James Axtell paved the way, ably arguing that in numerous instances Indians were short-term cultural victors over European settlers and invaders.¹⁷ Richard White's examination of Euro-Indian relations in the Great Lakes region and the formation of what he calls a 'middle ground' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provides a fascinating account of how both sides' cultural frontiers became blurred for purposes of trade and mutual survival.¹⁸ Colin Calloway has taken such assertions a step further by arguing that the mingling of Indian and European cultures created 'new worlds for all', or new and distinctive North American cultures.¹⁹ Despite their efforts to transcend fixed geographical points, practitioners of new frontier history as it relates to American Indians have nevertheless remained physically attached to the North American continent. By examining the development and practices of discussing and representing Indians in eighteenth-century Britain, I aim to redress this shortcoming at least partly, and demonstrate that the middle ground sometimes extended beyond America's shorelines.

While scholars of North American cultural history have been too geographically parochial in their considerations of American Indian history, their British history counterparts have been equally remiss through their overemphasis on relationships between whites in America and Europe. Like early America, Hanoverian Britain has been increasingly viewed as a multicultural society, in terms of both the peoples with whom the British interacted abroad and the ethnic and racial others that lived in

Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1998), esp. 58–112.

¹⁷ See esp. James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial America* (Oxford, 1981), *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1985), and *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1991).

¹⁹ Colin Calloway, *New Worlds For All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (London, 1997).

Britain itself.²⁰ Unlike Africans and Asians, however, American Indians have largely been absent from these considerations. Although the significance of events in North America on the British have received renewed attention, such studies consciously limit their conception of 'America' to the white-dominated eastern seaboard and concentrate too much on the American Revolutionary era.²¹ In the rush to place eighteenth-century British history within a wider Atlantic context, America's native inhabitants have been left out. In sharp contrast, Africans, South Pacific islanders, and the peoples of the Indian subcontinent have all been evaluated within the contexts of both the frontier and Britain, but American Indians have not begun to be sufficiently considered in the context of British society or in relation to the metropolis. Indians' cameo appearances in literature and the streets of London have long since been chronicled, but the wider significance of the British engagement with Indians remains insufficiently considered.²² Even the *Oxford History of the British Empire's* essay on American Indians is confined almost entirely to events on the North American continent, and omits their wider significance in

²⁰ See esp. Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Strangers in the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991); Daunton and Halpern, *Empire and Others*; Norma Meyers, *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain, 1780–1830* (London, 1996); David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth-Century English Art* (Manchester, 1987); Anthony Barker, *The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (London, 1978); Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: Five Hundred Years of Black and Asian History* (London, 1999); Gretchen Gerzina, *Black England: Life Before Emancipation* (London, 1995); Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1995); David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450–1850* (Oxford, 2002), 141–85.

²¹ For just a handful of the examinations of the impact of North American events on Britain, see Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the American War of Independence* (Oxford, 2000); the essays in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the American Revolution* (London, 1998); J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge, 1994); Eliga H. Gould, 'American Independence and Britain's Counterrevolution', *P&P* 154 (1997), 107–41; Paul Langford, 'London and the American Revolution', in John Stevenson (ed.), *London in the Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1977); John Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution* (London, 1976); John Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America, 1769–1782* (Montreal, 1987); J. H. Plumb, 'British Attitudes to the American Revolution', in *In the Light of History* (London, 1972).

²² Benjamin Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1925); Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Indians Abroad 1493–1938* (Norman, Okla., 1943); Hugh Honour, *This New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (London, 1976); Bradford F. Swan, 'Prints of the American Indian, 1670–1775', in *Boston Prints and Printmakers, 1670–1775* (Boston, 1973), 241–82.

the British Isles.²³ Although the essay is an excellent piece in its own right, the *History's* confinement of American Indians to America contrasts strikingly with the substantial attention it gives to the impact of Africans and Asians on the residents of the British Isles. In so doing, it reflects wider historical practices and assumptions.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions. Eric Hinderaker and John Oliphant have separately re-examined the 1710 Iroquois and 1762 Cherokee embassies in attempts to recapture popular British attitudes towards Indians and the empire.²⁴ These studies provide a clear indication of the attention Indians could attract in Britain, but using a visit as a window for a glimpse into general British attitudes has inherent shortcomings that are endemic in micro-histories intended to reflect wider societal attitudes. Above all, such studies cannot register the development of British interest in Indians and fail to differentiate between fads and sustained enthusiasm. Another exception is P. J. Marshall's and Glyndwr Williams's *Great Map of Mankind* which, written over two decades ago, was clearly ahead of its time.²⁵ Their examination of American Indians, Africans, South Pacific islanders, and the peoples of the Indian subcontinent is exceptional in terms both of the diversity of peoples it considers and its exploration of how encounters were interpreted and represented in Britain. With regard to British perceptions of American Indians, its primary limitations are its virtually exclusive focus on published material and its failure to distinguish between the appeals of different materials to different audiences. Printed accounts dominate the study, and different genres are not sufficiently differentiated; travel accounts, magazine articles, and philosophical treatises are intermingled and given equal weight. In consequence, Marshall and Williams represent eighteenth-century British perceptions of Indians as largely sympathetic and focus more on Indians' place on the British intellectual map than on their impact on imperial matters.

An examination of British representations and discussions of American Indians also offers a useful opportunity to engage with the

²³ Daniel K. Richter, 'Native Peoples of North America and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire', in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2: *The Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1998), 347–71.

²⁴ See esp. Eric Hinderaker, 'The "Four Indian Kings" and the Imaginative Construction of the First British Empire', *WMQ* 53 (1996), 487–526; John Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy to London, 1762', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), 1–26.

²⁵ P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982).

renewed historical interest in the impact of empire on Hanoverian British society. Linda Colley's *Britons* exemplified the rejuvenation of eighteenth-century imperial history by constructing the alluring thesis that popular notions of Britishness were forged largely through empire-building and foreign conflict.²⁶ Although criticized on a number of fronts, Colley's enquiry into the meanings of empire for contemporary Britons has nevertheless helped to spark a lasting and widespread interest in imperial history. This new imperial history differs from its predecessors in two important ways: first, it places greater importance on cultural history than on high politics; second, and in consequence of this, it explores how imperial experiences shaped British identities and society. These studies are too numerous and their interdisciplinary influences too diverse to catalogue here; however, the impact on them of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* merit special attention.²⁷

Although poked and prodded by critics and admirers alike, Said's conception of the 'Other' as a catalyst for negativist identity construction has shaped much of the discussion on eighteenth-century British identities.²⁸ The idea that Britons determined who they were according to who they were not has compelled historians to examine closely British attitudes towards groups in the British Isles, Europe, and the world. The argument, as made by Colley in *Britons*, is that the English, Scots, and Welsh forged a national British identity through their intense struggle against France during what has become known as the second hundred years' war. In order to motivate popular support for the costly and ongoing wartime endeavours, the peoples of the British Isles demonized French culture and celebrated the ways in which British culture differed from it. Although scholars' focus on negativist construction has since been rightly criticized for drowning out positivist elements, identity formation continues to be recognized as an important historical force.²⁹

²⁶ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging of the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992). See also her 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), 309–29.

²⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev edn. (London, 1991).

²⁸ Although Said is perhaps the most cited, other influential promoters of the negativist approach are Frederick Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Bergen, 1969), and Peter Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain* (Berkeley, 1989).

²⁹ John M. Mackenzie, 'Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), 15–32.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, along with other works in the extensive literature on nationalism, have provoked scholars to look more extensively at how experiences were shared across social, gender, and geographic boundaries to form a collective identity. The sharing of these experiences, Anderson argues, was enabled and made uniform by widespread literacy and a popular press, which together forged an imagined sense of community identity between people who never saw or directly communicated with one-another. Anderson upholds late eighteenth-century British society as possessing the necessary prerequisites for this proto-nationalism, and historians have rushed to prove his thesis.³⁰ Perhaps the most poignant and persuasive is Eliga Gould's *Persistence of Empire*, in which he ably explains Britons' widespread, intense commitment to winning the American War of Independence as a product of their being persuaded via the press during the 1750s and 1760s that American colonists were indeed fellow nationals.³¹ His work demonstrates the power of the press to persuade ordinary people that shared political and religious ideologies could cross even oceans to bind people together.

After 1754 British interest in imperial matters increasingly transcended divisions of class, geography, and gender. Although lacking the coherence and moral drive of the popular imperialism of their Victorian descendants, mid-eighteenth-century Britons closely followed overseas events, with the shared, underlying assumption that what transpired in America would significantly affect the British Isles. The precise causes for this shift are unclear, although historians have not hesitated to offer a number of persuasive explanations. Among others, Kathleen Wilson has emphasized the changing economy and the rise of a powerful commercial middle class; Bob Harris has stressed the development of a national, relatively free press; and Gould has championed the power of political pamphleteering, as well as William Pitt's popularity and unorthodox wartime strategy of targeting enemy colonies.³² Certainly all three approaches have merit,

³⁰ Anderson is not alone in his assertions that 18th-cent. Britain contained the seeds of nationalism. See also Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997), and E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990). For an alternative view, see J. C. D. Clark, *Our Shadowed Present: Modernism, Postmodernism and History* (London, 2003), chs. 2 and 3.

³¹ Gould, *Persistence of Empire*.

³² Kathleen Wilson, *Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge, 1995); Harris, 'American Idols'; Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*.

and I draw from their arguments about the importance of the middle class and the press. Nevertheless, explanations that rely primarily on examinations of middle-class sentiments and the press have limitations. J. C. D. Clark has overplayed the significance of his case, but his core argument that eighteenth-century England continued to have powerful, influential remnants of an *ancien régime* is undeniable.³³ Although undoubtedly increasingly sensitive to middling interests, the titled elite continued to dominate the national government, and the Church of England held sway over the consciences of a great many Britons. The press was constricted by widespread illiteracy, its price, and the editors, publishers, advertisers, and politicians who sought to influence it. Moreover, during the second half of the century there were so many papers, magazines, and pamphlets, with such a diversity of slants, viewpoints, and specialities, that keeping up with events was a complex, laborious occupation that undoubtedly discouraged many people.

As a result, my approach has been to examine the representations of Indians in as wide a variety of British contexts as possible. Because representations of Indians were so numerous during this period, I have had to be selective. For example, visual imagery and literary fiction have not received their own chapters. Instead, they have been integrated into other sections, where they are placed in a wider context and their implications explored. This is partly because the appearance of Indians in these areas has been explored already, but mostly because images of Indians were not especially abundant in these contexts.³⁴ Indians did not loom large in the art world, and they were not great icons in literary fiction. The environments in which representations and discussions of Indians flourished were print culture, material culture, imperial government, Anglican missionary circles, and the Scottish Enlightenment's discourse on human socio-economic development. In consequence, I have focused on these contexts.

Part I explores the discussions and representations of Indians in the public sphere. Its first chapter considers the variety of ways in which Indians were 'encountered' in the British Isles. Visits by Indians, objects in museums and auctions, travel accounts, and printed histories bombarded

³³ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832: Ideology, Social Structure, and Political Practice During the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985).

³⁴ See esp. Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature*, and Honour, *This New Golden Land*.

Britons with images of America and its native inhabitants. Although many of these venues focused on entertainment, they all carried educational overtones that sought to quench their audiences' thirst for information. During the second half of the eighteenth century they substantially decreased their emphasis on the bizarre to emphasize the accuracy of their depictions. Auctioneers stressed the genuineness of their tomahawks; museum guides critiqued the 'reality' of the exhibits; and travel authors sought to transport their readers virtually to America via vivid descriptions and more intimate styles of writing. Chapter 2 focuses on the newspaper and periodical press between the eve of the Seven Years War, when descriptions of Indians first appeared with any consistency, and the end of the American War of Independence. The press, like those arenas discussed in Chapter 1, charts the dramatic growth of British interest in the Indians after 1754, but unlike other venues its pages offer extensive, detailed insights into how ordinary Britons perceived Indians on a daily basis. London and provincial papers and magazines were the main forum for public debate in the eighteenth century, and the topic of Indians was no exception. The press reveals a public that was intensely interested in imperial matters—particularly security and trade—and it was under these headings, far more than any other, that Indians appeared. In the press, audiences and editors alike agreed that Indians were not mere objects of curiosity; rather they were key players in a struggle that would determine whether or not the British nation would endure and prosper, as well as windows on Britons' past that could help explain their greatness.

Part II considers the development and implementation of a British policy towards American Indians from the Seven Years War to the eve of the American War of Independence. Although this is a topic that has been examined some time ago by others, its inclusion here is necessary to offer a broad portrait of British representations and discussions of Indians.³⁵ Including an extensive examination in this work contextualizes government objectives within the broader out-of-doors views explored in other chapters, and

³⁵ For earlier, comprehensive studies, see Clarence Walworth Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics: A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio, 1917); Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760–1775* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1961); Wilbur R. Jacobs, 'British-Colonial Attitudes and Policies Toward the Indian in the American Colonies', in Howard Peckham and Charles Gibson (eds.), *Attitudes of Colonial Powers Toward the American Indian* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1969).

ultimately emphasizes the extent to which Britons, whether they garnered their information about Indians from official reports or from newspapers, had shared views of Indians after the outbreak of the Seven Years War. Moreover, Part II breaks with other studies of mid-century imperial policy by focusing on the attitudes and aims of the British policy-makers, evaluating their motives and objectives as well as the successes and failures of the British programme for the North American interior. What emerges is the ruthlessly pragmatic outlook of policy-makers whose single aim was to preserve the interests of the British Empire as they saw them. These officials did not allow feelings of admiration or sympathy for Indians to affect their decisions: Indians were only considered in so far as they could threaten or secure the empire's interests. Scholars' descriptions of the humanitarian impulses of imperial policy, at least with regard to American Indians, thus appear misplaced. Although some officials may have had some sympathy for the Indians' situations, they were not prepared to sacrifice British objectives to placate their consciences.

Part III examines how the intellectual elite perceived Indians and how their representations of them interacted with more popular discussions. Chapter 5 considers the role that Indians played in the Scottish Enlightenment's conjectural accounts of human history. Accounts of Indians not only informed Scots philosophers' construction of the first stage of human socio-economic development, but also made their arguments more accessible to the middling audiences they targeted. In this context, images of Indians made their most profound impact on British cosmology by serving as the baseline of human society and providing windows onto Britain's own barbaric past. As Christopher Bayly has argued, the century between 1760 and 1860 was crucial in the epistemological and economic creation of indigenous peoples as a set of comparable types.³⁶ The American Indians figured at the inception of this enterprise. As the *Scots Magazine* remarked in its 1777 review of William Robertson's *History of America*, only through Indians could Europeans witness 'the first footsteps of the human race'.³⁷ Chapter 6 explores how the missionary wing of the Church of England, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) viewed and portrayed American Indians. Supported by elite and ordinary Britons alike, the SPG flourished during the 1750s and 1760s on the basis

³⁶ C. A. Bayly, 'The British and Indigenous People, 1760–1860: Power, Perception and Identity', in Daunton and Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others*, 20–2.

³⁷ *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1777), 434.

of its pledge to end the Indian threat to British interests by evangelizing and 'civilizing' border tribes, thereby ensuring their natural affection for Britain. Although Anglican missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries failed miserably in their attempts at winning large numbers of Indian converts, this consideration of their motives provides key insights into how these influential intellectuals conceived Indians and their future within the British Empire.

The final chapter examines perceptions of American Indians during the American War of Independence. It recapitulates British views of Indians during the period as a whole, emphasizing both the practical character of the central government's objectives as well as the power of the newspaper and periodical press. The consistent representation of the Indians as ruthless, indiscriminate, capable warriors demonstrates how entrenched Seven Years War imagery had become. By 1775 few Britons saw Indians in any other way. This imagery made Indians particularly appealing to government ministers and ardent supporters looking for allies to quell the American rebellion, but popular perceptions of Indians also meant that Indian alliances were publicly denounced by the vast majority of Britons, who had mixed feelings about the war. An examination of public discussions and representations of Indians during the American War of Independence, therefore, offers an opportunity to reconsider wider British attitudes towards the empire in America and the prosecution of the war to maintain it.

Individually and combined, these contexts reveal a British populace which took intense interest in those overseas activities and non-European peoples that were perceived to influence British territorial and economic ambitions. American Indians' power, not their exoticism, placed them at the front of the British imagination for three decades. Depictions of Indians throughout Britain reflected the practical tone of the relationship: combat capability and political dispositions received far more attention than the Indians' comparatively alien lifestyles. Religion and commerce were most widely viewed as tools for the expansion of British influence. After 1754 the British were unwilling to see Indians in romantic, noble-savage terms. During the Seven Years War they rapidly changed in the popular perception, from exotic curiosities into targets for street assaults by vengeful widows shouting 'you scalp'd my husband!'³⁸ Amidst extensive reporting

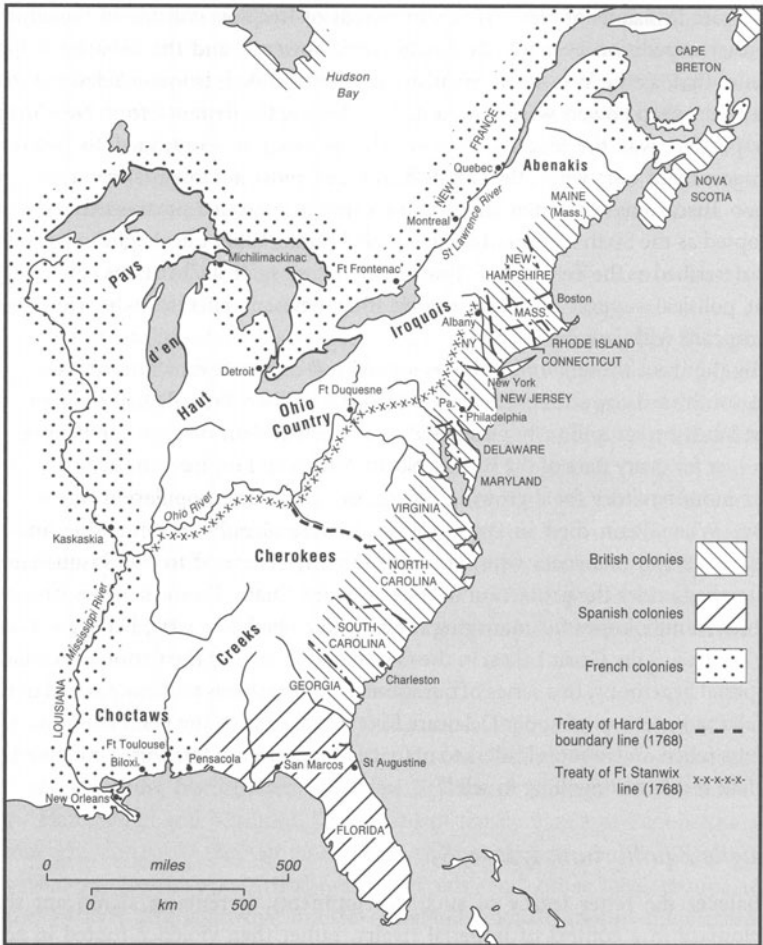
³⁸ The incident was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1766 and is cited in Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature*, 68.

on the Cherokee War (1759–61), the *London Chronicle*, which was perhaps the most widely distributed newspaper in Europe, harshly attacked the idealized savage of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, declaring that 'for all of his productions this is, without doubt, the most insignificant and contemptible. . . the subtle, metaphysical, obscure, and intricate strain of thought and expression that reigns through this book, will render it upon the whole unintelligible to most readers, and tedious, irksome, and disgusting to the most discerning'.³⁹ Such harshness was not the result of a wholesale rejection of the concept of the noble savage, however. The British had regarded American Indians in this way in earlier decades, as they were to do with South Pacific islanders during the 1770s, and American Indians were romanticized once again in the late-nineteenth century, when memories of Indian raids on British colonists had been exchanged for legends of heroic resistance to the ever expanding United States. Between the Seven Years War and the end of the American War of Independence, however, Britons were too acutely aware of Indians to accept anything less than what they believed was a genuine, practical assessment.

³⁹ Boswell claimed that the *London Chronicle* had the highest distribution of any paper in Europe, and could be found throughout the continents, in his *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1970), 225–6; for the review, see *London Chronicle*, 29 June 1762.

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PART I



Map. 'American Indian peoples and European colonies in North America in the mid-eighteenth century', from the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. ii (Oxford, 1998), 335. By permission of Oxford University Press.

1

Encountering American Indians in Britain: Visits and Virtual Journeys

Although eighteenth-century Britons were separated from American Indian homelands by an ocean, hundreds of miles of wilderness, and a colonial buffer, the British nevertheless encountered them on a regular basis. These encounters, however, were largely staged, virtual events that were tailored to the public's interest in the empire, which in the second half of the century Britons perceived as increasingly crucial to their own prosperity, both national and personal. In this context, British desire to learn about American Indians, as well as other alien cultures that were thought to influence the course of the empire, blossomed. British interest was also linked to wider impulses to learn about the world and its inhabitants—age-old desires that became popular endeavours in the context of the Enlightenment. British methods for 'understanding' other cultures, as examined in greater detail in Chapter 5, were based largely on categorizing them into the hierarchy of human civilizations according to established criteria. Such assessments, many Britons presumed, offered a better understanding of other cultures, contemporary British society, and Britons' own pasts.

The scarcity of Indians in Britain prevented regular physical engagements on a personal level, and thus compelled Britons to turn to other media, particularly print and material displays. Through these, they took virtual journeys to Indians' North American homelands. Because participating Britons' interests stemmed from pragmatic and quasi-scientific concerns, they approached printed and material representations of Indians from the start of the Seven Years War onwards with high expectations of authenticity and detail.¹ The efforts of curators and publishers

¹ This emphasis on rational, evidence-based authenticity did not stem only from Britons' desire to engage with Indians; rather, this 'fact culture' can be traced to changes in

to emphasize the validity of their depictions meant that few Britons questioned the accuracy of the representations. Thus, the counter-intuitive representations of Indians as noble or idyllic savages received very little play in Britain outside of marginal literary circles. Limited availability of original depictions of Indians, whether as live visitors or through print and material mediums, also ensured that eighteenth-century British encounters were shared, public experiences. Printed accounts were reprinted among publishers and swapped by readers through either private exchanges or commercial lending schemes. Material exhibitions, whether privately or state organized, were held in public spaces where men and women, from artisans to aristocrats, learned, critiqued, and debated Indian and other imperial issues. Together, these media enabled and promoted the formation of an imperial, globally-minded public that shared common assumptions about alien cultures and their relationships with Britain.

LIVE ENGAGEMENTS

Natives were among Europe's earliest New World imports. The first Indians in Europe were the half-dozen who Christopher Columbus displayed before the Spanish court upon returning from his first voyage. The flood of Indians that followed were mainly sold as slaves, starting with the thirty prisoners of war with whom Columbus returned after his second voyage. Don Bartholomew Columbus estimated in 1496 that he could ship as many as 4,000 Indians a year to Europe.² By the mid-sixteenth century, however, the rapid death of the American natives in the Old World, combined with the depletion of natives in the New, brought a halt to the practice.³ From that time onward, Indians travelled to Europe primarily for purposes of entertainment, education, and diplomacy.⁴

the late 16th and 17th centuries: Barbara Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca, NY, 2000).

² Olive Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Alberta, 1987), 205–6.

³ For a summary of Indian slavery in the New World, see Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge, 1999), 18–30.

⁴ For descriptions of the entertainers and students, see Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, 206–8 and 217–19.

The first people from the Americas to appear in Britain were probably the three Inuit with whom Sebastian Cabot returned in 1502. Shortly afterwards a captured Brazilian 'king' was brought to England, where he fascinated Henry VIII and his court.⁵ These displays also reached beyond London. As early as 1569 natives of North America appeared in sculpture on the Harman Monument in Burford Church in Oxfordshire, and living natives were displayed in Bristol eight years later.⁶ In less formal displays, other Indians were dragged through the streets of London, and then taken to the provinces once metropolitan audiences stopped paying. They were kept in carts or simply placed in a back room of one of the thousands of taverns, inns, and alehouses that peppered the country. By the early seventeenth century displays of Indians were sufficiently familiar to Londoners to figure in popular laments over money wasted on entertainment. In Shakespeare's *Tempest*—whose Caliban is arguably modelled on an American Indian—Trinculo remarks that 'when they [the London public] will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian'.⁷ By the eighteenth century Indian visitors had assumed more formal roles, as Britons sought to draw North America further into the imperial fold. Delegations of Indian headmen were presented as ambassadors for their respective nations and greeted as royal guests.

Despite the regularity with which Indians appeared in Britain, they remained firmly part of the exotic, bizarre, and curious until the mid-eighteenth century. In the public perception Indians generally were interchangeable with most non-European exotics. After all, 'Indian cabinets' referred not to collections of American ethnography, but to miscellaneous assortments of all non-European objects—natural and human-made.⁸ However, this changed remarkably in the mid-eighteenth century when, in the context of the Seven Years War, Indians were transformed in

⁵ Sidney Lee, 'The American Indian in Elizabethan England', in Frederick S. Boas (ed.), *Elizabethan and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1929), 271–2.

⁶ Stuart Piggot, *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination: Ideas from the Renaissance to the Regency* (London, 1989), 73.

⁷ On the modeling of Caliban, see esp. Alden T. Vaughan, 'Shakespeare's Indian: The Americanization of Caliban', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1998), 137–53; on American Indians in Elizabethan drama, see Lee, 'The American Indian in Elizabethan England', 288–98.

⁸ Christian F. Feest, 'The Collection of American Indian Artefacts in Europe, 1493–1750', in Karen O. Kupperman (ed.), *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 3.

popular perception from turban-wearing Orientals into specific ethnic and political groups that influenced the prosperity of the British Empire and nation. This shift is highlighted by the comparison of public responses to two important North American embassies to Britain, the first by the Iroquois in 1710, the second by the Cherokee in 1762.

The 1710 visit by four Iroquois headmen has been the subject of much historical attention as a national awakening to the ‘possibilities of empire’.⁹ However, although the ambassadors certainly captured the nation’s attention, their connection with any nascent popular imperialism is dubious. Represented by contemporaries as ‘kings’ of the Iroquois Confederacy, the ambassadors were in fact all Mohawk (one of the five component nations of the confederacy), and at best regional leaders. They travelled as part of a diplomatic effort led by Francis Nicholson, whose aim was to persuade Queen Anne and her ministers to send substantial naval support for an expedition against New France. The presence of the delegation was intended to emphasize that Nicholson and his



1.1. *The Four Indian Kings*, (printer unknown, c.17—). By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce Ballads 3 (316).

⁹ Eric Hinderaker, ‘The “Four Indian Kings” and the Imaginative Construction of the First British Empire’, *WMQ* 53 (1996), 505. For more on the visit, see Richmond P. Bond, *Queen Anne’s American Kings* (Oxford, 1952), and John G. Garratt, *The Four Indian Kings* (Ottawa, 1985).

comrades had powerful Indian support for the venture, and it was a success. In August 1711 a combined colonial–Iroquois force prepared to attack New France with the support of an English fleet of over sixty ships. However, bad weather and poor leadership turned the venture into a disaster. Ten ships were lost at the mouth of the St Lawrence River, and panic and withdrawal followed.¹⁰

The Mohawk visitors attracted enormous attention from Britons of all social ranks. Among other activities, they toured Bedlam, were presented at court, and reviewed troops. Queen Anne was quite taken with



1.2. Although the text had not changed since the early eighteenth century, the image had become that of the Magi. The Star of David and a pyramid are the background, and the far-left figure appears to make an Egyptian hieroglyphic-like pose. *The Four Indian Kings*, engraved J. Pitts (London, c.1802–9). By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce Ballads 3 (316).

¹⁰ Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701–1754* (Detroit, 1983), 88–90.

the visitors, and commissioned their portraits by John Verelst. The deference shown to them as fellow members of the elite is clear both from the important persons they met and from the way in which they were treated. Verelst's portraits, for example, do not depict them as savages or curiosities, but as country aristocrats. Rather than standing in front of a country estate, as an English aristocrat might be posed, the Mohawk are depicted in parallel American wilderness scenes wearing their native finery. Wherever they went, throngs of Londoners, who had been informed of the visitors' movements by the metropolitan press, flocked to catch a glimpse of them. Printed ballads and stories were produced for popular consumption.¹¹ In short, they were celebrities.

Nevertheless, British interest at the popular level does not seem to have been connected with embryonic sentiments of a national imperial identity. In fact, the popular reactions to the 'kings' underline the limitations of Britons' cosmologies and lack of public enthusiasm for imperial matters. Interest in the 'kings' rested almost solely on their generic Otherness rather than any attachment to British interests in North America. For a number of appearances they were dressed in capes and turbans—reflecting the widespread image of a non-European Other as being Middle Eastern.¹² Verlot's portraits depicted them in a native North American context, although idyllic and purposefully ornate, but mass-producing ballad printers transformed them into royals of a decidedly un-American style and ultimately associated them with the best-known travelling kings—the Magi.¹³ Any reference to North America was soon absent from the ballad's texts as the 'kings' became increasingly Eastern. They were from 'the rich Indian shore' and brought lavish gifts of gold and jewels—commodities found in India and the Middle East, not the eastern shores of North America.¹⁴ Jonathan Swift's remark that the meanest London gang in the 1710s and 1720s referred to itself as the 'Mohacs' is probably accurate, but even its members seemed unaware of their namesake's North American origins. The gang was apparently bent on ruthless cruelty, and hence assumed the Mohawk name

¹¹ For a survey of contemporary texts on the visit, see Bond, *Queen Anne's American Kings*, 93–141, and Garratt, *The Four Indian Kings*, 29–97.

¹² Linda Colley, *Captives* (London, 2003), 162–4.

¹³ Eric Hinderaker, 'Four Indian Kings', 518.

¹⁴ *The Four Indian Kings* (London, c.1710). The ballad remained little altered from its appearance shortly after the visit, and appeared throughout the early 19th cent. in the same form in both London and the provinces. The illustrations varied, but did not depict anything remotely resembling an American Indian.

to add to their ferocity. According to *Spectator*, in 1712: 'Agreeable to their name, the avowed design of their institution is mischief; and, upon this foundation, all their rules and orders are framed. An outrageous ambition of doing all possible hurt to their fellow creatures, is the great cement of their assembly, and the only qualification required in the members.'¹⁵ Despite their name, the London 'Mohacs' evoked references more to Indians of the East than to those of America. The *Spectator* explained that their name was 'borrowed, it seems, from a sort of Canibals in India'. The leader reportedly styled himself a Mogul emperor and had an 'engraving of a Turkish crescent on his forehead'. Neither they, nor anyone else, appeared to have been aware of the contradiction.

Limited awareness was not the consequence of lacking information. Although captivity narratives and travel accounts describing American Indians were not abundant in the early eighteenth century, they were not impossible to find, especially for the likes of Richard Steele, writing as the *Spectator*. The more likely explanation is that most Britons simply did not care where these aliens were from. It was their exoticism, not their connection with the American empire, that captured Britons' imagination. Hence, contemporary critics sometimes styled them as idyllic savages in order to critique British society. The *Tatler* relayed a story 'overheard' in a coffee-house about one of the 'kings' thanking his host after falling ill. Referring to them as 'these less instructed (I will not say less knowing) People', he described how after hearing the story the coffee-house conversation took 'a Philosophick Turn' in which a patron 'began to argue against the Modes and Manners of those Nations which we esteem polite, and express himself with Disdain at our usual Method of calling such as are Strangers to our Innovations, barbarous'.¹⁶

Joseph Addison did the same when writing as the *Spectator*. Like many Londoners that summer, he confessed to a fascination with the alienness of the visitors, and thus 'often mix'd with the Rabble and followed them [the Indians] a whole Day together, being wonderfully struck with the Sight of every thing that is new or uncommon'. The following year he used a supposed bundle of papers left behind by the 'kings' as a thinly

¹⁵ No. 324, 12 Mar. 1712, repr. in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1965). The account was again raised and confirmed by readers in the *London Chronicle's* discussion on clubs and societies, 21 March 1758. The gang, however, had by then disappeared, according to the paper.

¹⁶ No. 171, 13 May 1710, repr. in *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1987), ii. 440.

veiled literary device to critique British society. Addison poked fun at the 'kind of Animal called a Tory' and the 'monster' Whig, who 'would be apt to knock us down for being kings'; he ridiculed the idleness of the aristocracy; and he described the unnecessarily ornate English dress as 'very barbarous, for they almost strangle themselves about the Neck, and bind their Bodies with many Ligatures'. Addison concluded his remarks with a call for his readers to reflect on the humbling lessons the British might learn from these so-called 'barbarous' people:

I cannot however conclude this Paper without taking Notice, That amidst these wild Remarks there now and then appears something very reasonable. I cannot likewise forbear observing, That we are all guilty in some Measure of the same narrow Way of Thinking which we meet with in this Abstract of the Indian Journal; when we fancy the Customs, Dresses, and Manners of other Countries are ridiculous and extravagant, if they do not resemble those of our own.¹⁷

Responses to the Cherokee embassy of 1762 reveal how much British perceptions of Indians had changed and how imperial-minded Britons had become since the 'kings' 1710 visit. At first glance, the popular responses were similar.¹⁸ Crowds followed them wherever they went. When they attended the theatre, the audience refused to allow the performance to begin until the Cherokee were presented on stage for all to see. On their visit to Vauxhall Gardens a crowd swarmed around to see the Indians get drunk. Punch was restyled as a Cherokee.¹⁹ Taverns ran newspaper advertisements announcing when the embassy would visit in order to profit from the public's obsession. Their appearances were so 'productive of much rioting and mischief' that, according to the *London Chronicle*, 'an order has been sent to prevent the Cherokee King and his Chiefs being taken to any more places of publick entertainment'.²⁰ Nevertheless, a reduced schedule did not hinder the more entrepreneurial showmen, who dressed as Indians to hoax crowds into filling their establishments.

¹⁷ No. 50, 27 Apr. 1711, repr. in *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, i. 214.

¹⁸ For the best discussions about the visits, see Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Indians Abroad 1493–1938* (Norman, Okla., 1943), 65–81; John Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy to London, 1762', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), 1–26. The best contemporary account is from the embassy's escort and impromptu interpreter, Henry Timberlake. His journal has been reprinted as *Lieutenant Henry Timberlake's Memoirs, 1756–1765*, ed. Samuel Cole Williams (Marietta, Ga., 1948).

¹⁹ I have not found any contemporary references to this, but see Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 47. ²⁰ *London Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1762.



1.3. *Austenco* [*Ostenaco*], *Great Warrior*, *Royal Magazine* (July 1762). By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Shelfmark Vet.A5 e.286.

As during the 1710 visit, the press extensively chronicled the embassy's movements, but on this occasion, accounts in the London papers found national audiences via the provincial press and national magazines. Even as far away as Scotland, the *Scots Magazine* and *Edinburgh Magazine* updated their readers on the latest news of the embassy.²¹ The content of the articles had also changed, reflecting how much awareness the general public had accumulated in the half-century since the Iroquois visit. The stories were not mere schedules and descriptions, but instead reflected a national discussion. The implications of the visit for North American imperial policy, which in 1710 garnered the attention of a select few, were now public matters, as part of the *Royal Magazine's* discussion of the Cherokee visit reveals:

In short, there is sufficient reason to think that this visit of the Indians will be of very great consequence to the British colonies in America, as at their return they will not fail to inform their nation of all they have seen in England, and extol the kind treatment they have received in this country; by which means false ideas they have conceived of the English nation, by the unjust and artful representations of the French, will be effectually obliterated, and exchanged for others more conformable to truth and justice.²²

The ambassadors were not used to question cultural practices or presented as fanciful beings; rather, they were treated as players in the British Empire. A letter in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* complained that displaying London's grandeur was all well and good, but questioned: 'Should not their Chief be carefully instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion?—Should not he and his Attendants have been taken frequently to our Cathedrals, to hear the grand Service there?'²³ Other readers and editors condemned the Cherokee fondness for alcohol.²⁴ Another complained that the leading Cherokee ambassador was in Britain to raise his own prestige at home, and that his visit would promote instability within the Cherokee nation.²⁵ A more self-conscious reader of the *London Chronicle* lamented the embarrassing accounts he had read

²¹ *Edinburgh Magazine* (June 1762), 309 and (Aug.), 384–6; *Scot's Magazine* (July 1762), 348.

²² *Royal Magazine* (July 1762), 16.

²³ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 10 July 1762.

²⁴ *Saint James's Chronicle*, 31 July 1762; *Royal Magazine* (Aug. 1762), 72. For a survey of reactions in the press, see Foreman, 'Indians Abroad', 71–81.

²⁵ The letter appeared in both the *Royal Magazine* (Aug. 1762), 83–4, and *Edinburgh Magazine* (Aug. 1762), 387, but was probably reprinted from one of the London newspapers.

of 'peoples running in such shoals to publick places, at the [risk] of health, life, or disappointment, to see the savage Chiefs that are come among us'.²⁶

Promoters and commentators aimed to provide the most accurate descriptions of the Indians possible. Newspapers and magazines printed short descriptions of the Cherokee nation, giving population estimates, political structures, and geographic locations. The *London Magazine* printed a fold-out 'New Map of the Cherokee Nation with the Names and Towns & Rivers'. Hidden agendas, both white and Indian, for the visit were rife, and to some extent portrayals undoubtedly reflected these, but the public's knowledge of Indians had developed to the point where the turbans, yellow shoes, and scarlet cloaks in which the Iroquois had been dressed would have been scoffed at. Printers were quick to note that the Cherokee could be seen 'dressed in their own country habit, with only a shirt, trowsers, and mantle around them; their faces are painted of a copper colour, and their heads adorned with shells, feathers, earings, and other trifling ornaments'.²⁷ When ample opportunity to re-clothe the Indians emerged because many of their garments had been ruined during the voyage, the press carefully noted that they would be fitted with new clothes in the 'mode of their own country'.²⁸ The Cherokee seemed to have stayed true to their native presentation when they appeared before the king and queen, as the duchess of Northumberland's private description reveals:

As soon as I had seen the K[king] I went to ye Q[queen] who saw the Cherokees out of the Presences Chamber. The Chief had the Tail of a Comet revers'd painted Blue on his forehead, his Left Cheek black & his Left Eyelid Scarlet his Rt Eyelid Black & his Right Cheek Scarlet, all his teeth were cut through like Rings. He had a Blue Cloth Mantle laced with Gold & a silver Gorget. The second had nothing particular except his Eyelids which were painted Scarlet, the 3d had painted in Blue on his Cheeks a large pair of wings which had a very odd Effect as he look'd directly as if his Nose & Eyes were flying away. The two last were in Scarlet and Silver with Silver Gorgets.²⁹

For those who could not catch a glimpse of the visitors, cheap, detailed prints were produced.³⁰

²⁶ *London Chronicle*, 27 July 1762.

²⁷ *Edinburgh Magazine* (June 1762), 309.

²⁸ Cited in Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy', 12. See also *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1762), 293; *Public Advertiser*, 24 June 1762.

²⁹ *The Diaries of a Duchess: Extracts from the Diaries of the First Duchess of Northumberland*, ed. James Greig (London, 1927), 47.

³⁰ Foreman, *Indians Abroad*, 75.

Perhaps most reflective of the shift in British attitudes towards the relevance of the empire and the Indians' place in it is found in how the Cherokee visit was commemorated. Unlike the ballad prints that were left in the wake of the 1710 Indian embassy, in which the Indians evolved to resemble the Magi, details of the Cherokee ambassadors were preserved as wax models. Possibly 'the shrewdest judge of the popular taste among the eighteenth-century waxwork impresarios', Mrs Salmon was a veteran profiteer of the popular imagination and middle-class leisure, and her exhibition of the Cherokee ambassadors reflects the significance of American Indians in mid-century Britons' cosmologies.³¹ Started by her husband in the late-seventeenth century, the waxwork bearing her name was a landmark until its demise in the mid-nineteenth century, appearing regularly in London guides and visitors' diaries. For a shilling patrons could enter the 'Ingenious' (as Addison called her) Mrs Salmon's Waxwork in Fleet Street and tour its four rooms.³² In 1763 'a new press' of the three Cherokee visitors was unveiled. An impressed James Boswell called the waxwork 'famous' in his London diary, and in July 1763 he visited the Indian display.³³

The exhibits put great emphasis on realness, authenticity, and accuracy, and in so doing were intended to give patrons access to past, distant, or socially exclusive scenes. As the *London Guide* explained, 'if they [the wax models] were seen in any other place . . . they might be easily mistaken for the works of Nature, instead of the productions of Art'.³⁴ In the various rooms, patrons were transported to the scene of the christening of the prince of Wales or to the distant past to watch Anthony and Cleopatra with their children. Most exhibits had a historical relevance. Elizabeth I was depicted, as was 'the late duke of York, lying in state'. So too was 'King Arthur and his Queen and the round table', and the 'chaste nuns of Coilingham, who slit up their noses and upper lips to preserve their virgin vow, when the Danes invaded this land'.³⁵ They could also witness the

³¹ Altick, *The Shows of London*, 52.

³² *Spectator*, No. 28, 2 April 1711 and No. 30, 5 April 1711, repr. in *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, i. 117 and 129.

³³ *Boswell's London Journal, 1762–1763*, ed. Frederick Pottle (London, 1950), 289. The entry is for 4 July.

³⁴ *The London Guide* (London, 1782), 116.

³⁵ For the most complete list of displays in the second half of the century, see *A Companion to the Principal Places of Curiosity and Entertainment in and about London and Westminster*, 6th edn. (London, 1783), 87–9, and *The London Guide* (London, 1782), 116–17. The Cherokee exhibit is noted in both.

moment when Henry VIII introduced Anne Boleyn to his court, 'to the great dislike of queen Katherine and cardinal Wolsey'. As daily news of French atrocities reached Britain in the 1790s, waxwork patrons toured 'the horrible cells of the Bastile', in which 'you see the prisoners in confinement... the queen of France and the Dauphin in distress'.³⁶ The Cherokee exhibition similarly relied on its ability to transport visitors—in this instance to the American wilderness. Thus, handbill advertisements for the 1763 exhibits used such phrases as 'precise scene' and emphasized that the Indians were 'in their Country Dress, and Habitments'.³⁷ The exhibit was among the most popular displays, capturing the attention of patrons at least until the early-nineteenth century.³⁸

The changes in public representations and expectations between the visits of 1710 and 1762 were primarily the result of the growing importance of North America in the British public arena. Emigration, evangelism, greater economic integration, and a more regular flow of communication all helped to bring North America to the forefront of British attention. Armed threats to these aroused the public's interest, and so savvy entrepreneurs made available private letters from colonists, maps, histories, and travel accounts. American colonists were appearing in force to lobby parliament, attend elite schools and universities, and tour the 'mother country'. By the mid-eighteenth century a Londoner could sit in the Buffalo's Head tavern in the Strand, smoke the 'Indian weed' [tobacco], and thumb through a pocket description of America that had been purchased for only a shilling. Perhaps he might hum the tunes from such popular dances as 'America', 'Indian Queen', or 'Beaver', for which the *Universal Magazine* supplied the music and a diagram of the dance steps.³⁹ No matter how much historians disagree on the best way to

³⁶ *A Companion to all the Principal Places of Curiosity and Entertainment in and about London and Westminster*, 8th edn. (London, 1796), 91–2. The Cherokee exhibit is noted in this guide as well.

³⁷ Handbill cited in M. Willson Disher, *Pleasures of London* (London, 1950), 200.

³⁸ The last mention of the Cherokee exhibit in a diary is dated 1793: Altick, *The Shows of London*, 52, n. 17. It is mentioned in guidebooks through the first decade of the 19th cent., but these are new editions of older guides.

³⁹ Bryan Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses: A Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1963), 342 and 637–8; *The Compleat Country Dancing-Master* (London, 1718, 1735), cited in Richard C. Simmon, 'Americana in British Books, 1621–1760', in Karen O. Kupperman (ed.), *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995), 364; *Universal Magazine* (June–July supplement, 1758), 362.

measure public enthusiasm for the North American empire, they agree that during the course of the century a serious, widespread interest developed.⁴⁰ American Indians were an integral part of this awareness, partly as curious subjects but more significantly as groups who could substantially affect what Britons increasingly perceived as their own interests.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Material culture provided an important vehicle for British interactions with American Indians, particularly in the second half of the century. Live engagements were sporadic, heavily orchestrated events in which ordinary Britons might, at best, catch only a glimpse of the visitors. Material exhibitions, such as those at Mrs Salmon's Waxwork and the newly founded British Museum, offered sustained opportunities to engage with Indians. Scholars have focused on the nineteenth century as the birth of organized, popular ethnographic exhibitions; however, these public displays had roots in the second half of the eighteenth century, when British interests in other cultures manifested themselves in grand, pedagogically-minded exhibitions.⁴¹ Annual attendance of London's eighteenth-century exhibitions may have been measured in the tens of thousands, as opposed to the millions who visited the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace during the 1850s, but their organization and construction were similar.⁴² The

⁴⁰ For examples, see the different approaches taken by Jacob M. Price, 'Who Cared About the Colonies? The Impact of the Thirteen Colonies on British Society and Politics, circa 1714–1775', in Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (London, 1991), 395–436; P. J. Marshall, 'Who Cared About the Thirteen Colonies? Some Evidence from Philanthropy', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), 53–67.

⁴¹ For an excellent study of the 'self-conscious' reworking of national and imperial identities in the exhibitions after 1851: Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley, 2001), pp. xiii–xx. For other examinations of nineteenth-century exhibiting, see also Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, 1994); George W. Stocking, Jr., *Objects and Others: Essays on Museum Culture* (Madison, Wisc., 1985); W. David Kingery, *Learning from Things: Method and Theory of Material Studies* (Washington, DC, 1996); and the essays in Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London, 1998).

⁴² On attendance of the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park's Crystal Palace, see Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 1–2.

exhibitions offered opportunities for middling and elite audiences to interact with those geographically distant peoples and places that the increasingly imperial-minded Britons perceived as relevant. Thus, displays emphasized authenticity and accuracy, reflecting and reinforcing the British drive to categorize other cultures into the hierarchy of human civilization that Edmund Burke so aptly described as 'the great map of mankind'.⁴³ This quasi-scientific, public atmosphere separated the post-1750 major venues from their cabinet-of-curiosity predecessors and the various fairground displays.

American Indian-related objects, false and genuine, were not new to Britain in the mid-eighteenth century. Almost anything that was once in the possession of a native of the New World was a desirable addition to the early modern private collections that the virtuosi of Europe amassed.⁴⁴ Although North American items were rare, Mesoamerican and South American items were fairly common.⁴⁵ Some objects could be found in institutions' semi-private collections, such as the Physical Garden and Anatomy Theatre at Leiden in 1678, which maintained 'a most curious collection of rarities' that included 'heathen idols' and 'Indian arrows'.⁴⁶ The extent to which these artefacts were associated with their original American owners is, however, questionable. Usually they were simply lumped together with artefacts from other exotic peoples, which were similarly labelled 'Indian'. For example, the seventeenth-century 'Indian Cabinet' of the Royal Kunstkammer in Copenhagen and Charles V's 'Treasures of the Indies' in Siamancas were broad headings for collections of exotic materials from around the globe.⁴⁷

During the second half of the eighteenth century the organization and audience of American Indian-related objects changed dramatically from

⁴³ Edmund Burke to William Robertson, 9 June 1777, cited in P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982), 1.

⁴⁴ For the best examination of early modern European collection practices, see Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collection in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, 2001).

⁴⁵ Feest, 'The Collection of American Indian Artefacts in Europe, 1493–1750', 324–61. See also his 'European Collecting of American Indian Artefacts and Art', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 5 (1993), 1–11.

⁴⁶ From Ralph Thoresby's diary entry for 20 July 1678, cited in P. C. D. Brears, 'Ralph Thoresby, a Museum Visitor in Stuart England', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 1 (1989), 217.

⁴⁷ Feest, 'European Collecting', 3.

the domain of the private virtuoso to public enterprises. Museums and coffee-house collections proliferated throughout Britain. The most significant was parliament's acquisition of several collections, most notably Hans Sloane's, to create the British Museum in 1753. Nationally operated and owned, it became the archive of the British nation's past and present endeavours, and it was a source of pride for Britons and the envy of other Europeans. As a 19-year-old French visitor remarked during his visit to London in 1786, 'the British museum is a superb collection . . . voluntarily deposited for the instruction and gratification of the public'. 'Here, as in everything else,' he explained, 'the public spirit of the English is worthy of remark: a considerable portion of the exhibits has been voluntarily given and every day new legacies are recorded.'⁴⁸

The British Museum did not monopolize the exhibition of natural history and ethnography in general or Indian-related objects specifically. The Leverian, founded by Sir Ashton Lever in 1773 in Leicester House, Leicester Square, was privately owned, but second in Britain only to the British Museum. The Leverian became a main depository for the objects collected on the voyages of James Cook and a leading destination for Britons and foreigners of middling and higher social ranks, attracting large audiences until its contents were sold in 1806. Lever's efforts merited national applause, as the *European Magazine's* 1784 obituary of him underlined: 'The Collector of a Museum which does so much honour to the English nation as that which belongs to the gentleman we are about to celebrate, deserves the applause of mankind.'⁴⁹ The British Museum, as well as the other London and provincial museums that imitated it, made Indian artefacts increasingly accessible to the vast majority of Britons who did not have their own private collections, or access to the collections of those who did. The weapons and wares of the New World were no longer reserved for the private viewing of elite collectors and their dinner guests. For a shilling or more, or for free in the case of the British Museum, any Briton could see grand Indian collections that included Iroquois calumets, Delaware tomahawks, and Cherokee drums.

The logistics of touring the displays varied, but pedagogical intentions and socially broad audiences were features shared by most. The Leverian

⁴⁸ *A Frenchman in England 1784, being the Melanges sur l'Angleterre of François de la Rochefoucauld*, ed. Jean Marchand and trans. S. C. Roberts (London, 1995), 16–17.

⁴⁹ *European Magazine and London Review* (Aug. 1784), 83.

and other entrance-fee museums were restrictive, based on price.⁵⁰ Entrance to the British Museum was free, but it was still the most socially exclusive of the major venues. On various occasions from its foundation until 1812, when new regulations doubled the number of tickets to 29,000 persons per season, British Museum officials considered limiting access to the museum. In each case, however, such efforts were defeated either by the officials themselves or parliament.⁵¹ Foreign and domestic visitors could, by application, enjoy a free two-hour tour of the exhibition rooms on all weekdays except for public holidays. In winter the museum closed at three o'clock, but in the long days of summer it remained open until eight o'clock. Groups were limited to fifteen people per hour, which allowed a maximum of 135 visitors to tour the collections in a day.⁵² Despite such restrictions and complaints by museum cataloguers of the constant interruptions, the British Museum was a major tourist destination for socially and geographically broad audiences.⁵³ Most London guides included descriptions of the museum entrance procedures and recommended a visit.⁵⁴ The *Ambulator* declared in 1774 that, 'of all the public structures that engage the attention of the curious, the British Museum is the greatest'.⁵⁵ Carl Philipp Moritz, a German visitor to England in 1782, was impressed as much by the diversity of people he saw in the museum as by its exhibits. 'The visitors were of all classes and both sexes, including some of the "lowest class"', he noted, 'for since the Museum is the property of the nation, everyone must be allowed the right of entry.'⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Patricia Kells, 'Sir Ashton Lever', *Oxford-Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁵¹ On the change of admissions in 1812, see BL, British Museum Newspaper cuttings, vol. 'General History', fol. 29. On contemporary concerns and debates over admissions, see Anne Goldgar, 'The British Museum and the Virtual Representation of Culture in the Eighteenth Century', *Albion*, 32 (2000), 205–13.

⁵² *Statutes and Rules Relating to the Inspection and Use of the British Museum* (London, 1768), 11, 13, and 18.

⁵³ On interruptions see BL, Add. MS, 45,874, 'Reports and Diary of Occurrences in the Natural History Departments, Sept. 1764–Feb. 1768', esp. fols. 2 and 5.

⁵⁴ See e.g. *A Companion to Every Place of Curiosity and Entertainment in and about London and Westminster* (London, 1767), 62–109; *The Ambulator; or, the Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London* (London, 1774), pp. xix–xxii; *Britannica Curiosa*, 2nd edn. (London, 1777), 111–37; *A Companion to all the Principal Places of Curiosity and Entertainment in and about London and Westminster*, 8th edn. (London, 1796), 164–185.

⁵⁵ *The Ambulator*, p. xix.

⁵⁶ Carl Philipp Moritz, *Journeys of a German in England in 1782*, trans. and ed. Reginald Nettell (London, 1965), 59.

Besides opening their doors to a socially broad range of men, museums also catered to women and children. Caroline Lybbe Powys, the daughter of an Oxfordshire physician, visited the British Museum for the first time at the age of 21 in 1760. Fascinated particularly by the ethnographic and natural-history exhibits, she visited regularly throughout her life, and twenty-six years later toured the collections with her 11-year-old daughter, which, along with their visit to the Leverian, 'highly entertained her'.⁵⁷ Despite being directly concerned with exhibiting an American mastodon rather than American Indians, the correspondence of the Peale brothers, who were the sons of the American artist and museum proprietor Charles Willson Peale, suggest that youth was a target audience for purveyors of educational entertainments. Writing in anticipation of opening their exhibition in Bristol, Reuben wrote to his father: 'I fondly hope these two weeks to come will be a little more productive, because all the schools will be open next week and the Curiosity of the boys must be gratified.'⁵⁸ When the trustees of the British Museum considered closing its gardens to the local children of parents of 'reputation and character', a debate ensued in which the institution's overall obligation to the next generation was emphasized:

The Consideration of the helpless state of Childhood hath ever induced the World to offer it its protection, that the Blossom might ripen into future Fruit. The Necessity of Air and Exercise, and the Insecurity of Streets in a thronged Metropolis, have been Reflections which have ever governed the Councils of the Wise and the Liberal in its Behalf. . . . It being of far more importance to give the means of Health and security to Children, than to grown Peoples, who can protect themselves.⁵⁹

In all of these permanent exhibits, North American Indian-related objects featured prominently. Although Indian artefacts constituted only 0.2 per cent of the British Museum's total collection (not including

⁵⁷ BL, Add. MS, 42,160, fols. 8–9 and 93: Diaries of Caroline Powys. Officially, the British Museum did not admit children, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it regularly allowed entry to older children of upper-middling and elite ranks when accompanied by their parents.

⁵⁸ 3 Oct. 1803, in L. B. Miller (ed.), *The Selected Correspondence of Charles Willson Peale and His Family* (London, 1983), ii. 460–1. The exhibition had received warm endorsements from both the American Philosophical Society and the Royal Society.

⁵⁹ BL, Add. MS, 31,299, Papers Relating to the British Museum, 1755–96: no date (c.1768–79), anonymous.



1.4. Frontispiece of the *Leverian Companion* (London, 1790), illustrating the Grand Saloon and Gallery of the Leverian Museum. The inclusion of families with children in the illustration further indicates the intended broad appeal of the exhibits. According to the *Companion*, this room alone displayed numerous North American Indian-related items, including a bow and arrows, a tomahawk, a calumet, and three powder horns ‘finely carved by the Indians’.

printed materials and manuscripts), they received grossly disproportionate display space, and with it visitors' attentions.⁶⁰ Objects included Indian wampum in displays on currency, tomahawks among the ancient weapons of Europe, and a Cherokee drum in a collection of musical instruments from around the world. Also appearing were an assortment of other Indian weapons, utensils, ornaments, clothing, and even scalps. The greatest prize, however, was undoubtedly the museum's full-sized canoe. The Leverian was most famous for its ethnographic material from the Cook voyages, but artefacts from the Americas had a nearly equal presence. These included a multitude of the standard pieces, such as weapons, canoes, leather pouches, and clothes. The collection also had unique artefacts, such as 'a real tomahawk, and a tobacco-pipe in one' and a supposed 'similtude [*sic*] of Pondiac [Pontiac] the Indian Chief, cut in stone with his own hands'.⁶¹

The growth of provincial museums in the second half of the century ensured that displays of Indian artefacts were not confined to the metropolis. The Lichfield Museum included a multitude of Indian artefacts in its printed catalogue of 1782.⁶² On display were random snowshoes, spears, and clothing, but the museum also had a special exhibit of artefacts unique to North American Indians in one corner. Included were scalping knives, a tomahawk, purses, a spoon, clothing, moccasins, a 'belt of peace', and a number of 'human Scalps tanned and preserved'. Among the museum's pipe collection, which included specimens from Holland, Persia, Turkey, and Germany, was 'the Bole of an American Savage's Calmet [*calumet*] or smoking Pipe of peace'.

At the lower end of the market were coffee-house displays, which for the most part were public cabinets of curiosities that mirrored the holdings of private virtuosi. Alongside the natural-history and ethnographic pieces one might expect to find in a more refined museum were 'Manna from Canaan', 'petrified rain', and the supposed swords of William the Conqueror and Oliver Cromwell.⁶³ The most famous of these collections

⁶⁰ This figure is based on the numbers of North American artefacts and total items given in King, 'North American Ethnography', 233–4. Many of the items have survived and are displayed in the museum's present ethnography exhibit.

⁶¹ *A Catalogue of the Leverian Museum*, 7 parts or vol. (London 1806), ii, lots 966 and 1684.

⁶² *A Particular, and Descriptive Catalogue of the Natural, and Artificial, Rarities, in the Lichfield Museum* (Lichfield, 1782).

⁶³ These were all listed in *A Catalogue of the Rarities to be Seen at Don Saltero's Coffee House in Chelsea*, 23rd edn. (London, 1765).

was Don Saltero's Coffee House in Chelsea, where the only entrance requirement was the purchase of 'wine, tea or coffee' that 'was sold at the usual prices'.⁶⁴ Its founder, James Salter, was a servant of Hans Sloane, who excelled in collecting items that the public craved to see.⁶⁵ His coffee-house collection grew from its humble origins as a back-room for curiosities to become a metropolitan institution.⁶⁶ Between 1695 and 1799 forty-seven editions of the catalogue for his collection were printed, each listing new items and offering a selling price of only a few pennies. American Indian pieces included tomahawks, a wampum belt, a calumet, scalping knives, hatchets, and various other ornaments and weapons.

Although undoubtedly entertaining, a typical visit to the major exhibitions during the second half of the century had a clear pedagogical focus. Museum guidebooks were abundant, cheap, and essential. They often came as part of larger London guides or as pocket-guides specific to the venue, and they could be purchased beforehand or at the venue itself. In the case of the British Museum, whose tours were notoriously rushed, pundits suggested reading the guides beforehand so as to make the most of a visit.⁶⁷ Moritz located a guidebook for the museum in his native German language and noted how useful it was when faced with the time-pressured viewing.⁶⁸ Guides, along with extensive labelling, offered textual descriptions of the objects' origins and use. For example, *The General Contents of the British Museum*, a popular guidebook, carried a two-page

⁶⁴ *Companion to Every Place of Curiosity*, 175.

⁶⁵ For the best description of Don Saltero's Coffee House, see Kells, 'British Collecting', 271–9.

⁶⁶ For contemporary descriptions of Saltero's Coffee House in guidebooks and histories, see Samuel Ireland, *Picturesque Views on the River Thames from its source in Gloucestershire to the Nore*, (London, 1799), ii. 154; *Kearsleys' Stranger's Guide, or Companion through London and Westminster, and the Country Round* (London, 1791), 39; *London in Miniature: being a Concise and Comprehensive Description of the Cities of London and Westminster, and Parts Adjacent* (London, 1755), 288; *Ambulator: or, a Pocket Companion in a Tour round London*, 6th edn. (London, 1793), 57–8; and Trusler, *London Adviser and Guide: Containing Every Instruction and Information Useful and Necessary to Persons Living in London* (London, 1786), 164.

⁶⁷ The most popular seems to have been *The General Contents of the British Museum: With Remarks. Serving as a Directory in Viewing that Noble Cabinet*, which sold cheaply and enjoyed multiple editions. The remarks here are based on the second edition (London, 1762). This edition of the guide was, according to the editor, 'printed in a Duodecimo, to make it more conveniently portable in the Pocket'. In response to readers' complaints that the first edition 'was too long to be read in the Time allowed to view the whole Museum', it was intended to be perused beforehand as well.

⁶⁸ Moritz, *Journeys of a German*, 59–60.

description of wampum, noting its uses, the types of shells included, the shells' significance, and how strings and belts were made.⁶⁹

During the second half of the century, when the new public museums shifted the focus of displaying Indian artefacts from amusement to pedagogy, even the old coffee-house collections followed suit. Some, such as the collection at the Royal Swan in Kingland Road, began printing catalogues.⁷⁰ Don Saltero, who had been printing catalogues since the beginning of the century, offered more detailed descriptions of the pieces. Prior to mid-century, Don Saltero's Coffee House lumped its objects together without any apparent rhyme or reason—much like the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosities. As customers became more discerning and the market-place for public collections grew fiercer, Saltero's catalogues followed the style of their more refined counterparts by offering descriptions of the appearance and purpose of selected pieces on display.⁷¹ For example, rather than merely listing a 'wampum belt' as part of the collection, the catalogue noted that it served 'as a present from one Indian king to another, as a pledge of friendship'.⁷² As a result, some coffee-house collections gained the mark of respectability. Saltero's ultimately became a landmark that London guidebooks and scientific works alike took seriously, and that Royal Society members, including Benjamin Franklin, visited.⁷³

Exhibitions of ethnography and natural history generally were designed with two purposes in mind: to transport the viewer virtually to the represented people, and to reinforce notions of British cultural and technological superiority. In consequence, authenticity in the post-Seven Years War British depictions of American Indians and other groups associated with the empire was paramount. Guides and labels clearly mapped

⁶⁹ *The General Contents of the British Museum*, 197–8.

⁷⁰ *A Catalogue of the Rarities to be seen at Adams's, At the Royal Swan, in Kingland Road, Leading from Shoreditch Church*, 3rd edn. (London, 1756).

⁷¹ This came into practice between the 1768 and 1785 editions.

⁷² *Saltero's Coffee House in Chelsea*, 38th edn. (London, 1785), 8.

⁷³ Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales* (London, 1773), i, 52, and his *A New and Complete Abridgement or Selection of the Most Interesting and Important Subjects in the Antiquities of England and Wales* (London, 1798), 15; Benjamin Martin, *Philosophia Britannica: or a New and Comprehensive System of the Newtonian Philosophy, Astronomy and Geography* (Reading, 1747), i, 137; James Houston donated a number of specimens to Saltero: James Houston, *Some New and Accurate Observations Geographical, Natural and Historical*, (London, 1725), 37. For Franklin's visit, see *Works of the Late Doctor Benjamin Franklin* (Dublin, 1793), 64.

out the origin and association of pieces, which were so arranged as to maximize instructive and virtual effects. Visitors to the Leverian regularly remarked on the 'reality' of the displays, which exhibited many ethnographic objects according to geographic 'zones'. One awestruck visitor remarked, after visiting the three rooms dedicated to the Cook voyages, that the arrangements 'present a striking picture of the manners and customs of many of the barbarous nations of the Southern hemisphere'.⁷⁴ Reuben Peale was equally impressed during his visit, remarking to his father that their museums in the United States had 'many of the same' objects, but that the Leverian's organization of them had a much more impressive effect.⁷⁵ The *European Magazine* explained in January 1782 that these exhibits were not designed to induce fanciful notions, for here 'all conspire to impress the mind with a conviction of the reality of things'. The magazine remarked that: 'The descriptions of the enchanted palaces of the Genii, the Fairies, and the other fabulous beings of the eastern romance, though they amaze for a moment, have a sameness and an improbability that very soon disgust.' However, it continued, at the Leverian 'all is magnificence and reality. The wandering eye looks round with astonishment, and, though almost willing to doubt, is obliged to believe.' Thus, a trip to the Leverian was a trip around the world:

As he [the visitor] proceeds, the objects before him make his active fancy travel from pole to pole through the torrid and through the frigid Zones. He beholds the manners of men in the forms of their habits; he sees the Indians rejoiced at, and dancing to, the monotonous sound of his tom tom; he sighs to recollect the prevalent power of fear and superstition over the human mind, when he views the rude deformity of an idol carved with flint, by a hand incapable of imitating the outline of nature, and that works only that it may worship.⁷⁶

American Indian primitiveness was an inescapable message to visitors of almost any major exhibition. American Indians were not celebrated in these exhibitions, but instead they were categorized and contextualized unfavourably by the carefully placed surrounding British and other

⁷⁴ *The Diary of Syllas Neville*, ed B. Cozens-Hardy (Oxford, 1950), 295. Neville made these comments after a visit on 12 Aug. 1782.

⁷⁵ *Papers of Charles Willson Peale*, ii. 454.

⁷⁶ *European Magazine and London Review* (Jan. 1782), 17–21. For a more detailed examination of Lever's showmanship see also Clare Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner: Sir Ashton Lever and his Holosphusikon', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24 (2001), 1–14.

European objects. Indians' idolatry was emphasized in such displays as the British Museum's placement of Indian religious ornaments next to 'Articles in great Esteem among many Roman Catholics, as Relics, Beads, &c'.⁷⁷ European musical instruments were placed next to Indian drums; tomahawks and the scalps they had supposedly taken were grouped with early modern European armaments and contemporary firearms. The Lichfield Museum similarly mixed American Indian bows and arrows with the swords and metal helmets of the British in its hallway armoury.⁷⁸ In its 'wardrobe room' the Leverian mingled Indian animal-skin clothing with the lavish garments of Europe and China.

The potential for acquiring Indian objects also changed remarkably in the second half of the eighteenth century, affording individuals the opportunity to purchase artefacts formerly available to only the best-connected collectors. As noted above, Indian artefacts appeared in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosities, but such objects were rare. Hans Sloane, who amassed the greatest British cabinet of his day, probably had the largest number of native American artefacts, but his practice of collecting them was nevertheless decidedly casual. There were 210 pieces of North American origin (forty of which were Inuit) in the collection by the time of Sloane's death in 1753.⁷⁹ This impressive number must, however, be placed in the context of the 79,355 other specimens, which were mostly minerals, coins, insects, and seashells. The donors of 106 of the roughly 170 North American Indian pieces are known, and of the twenty-three names available, nineteen individuals have been identified.⁸⁰ They constitute a mixture of American colonists and traders, whose links with Sloane ranged from trade to botany. There is no evidence that Sloane paid for the items, and given their paucity in his collection, they were most probably sent as part of his

⁷⁷ Although it is not complete, *The General Contents of the British Museum*, 2nd edn., is the best description of the British Museum's displays during the period; for the Leverian, see *A Companion to the Museum* (London, 1790).

⁷⁸ *A Particular, and Descriptive Catalogue of . . . Lichfield Museum* (Lichfield, 1782).

⁷⁹ Many of these items are still on display at the British Museum. For the North American ethnography in Sloane's collections, see esp. J. C. H. King, 'North American Ethnography in the Collection of Sir Hans Sloane', in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosity in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 1985), 232–5; David Bushnell, Jr., 'The Sloane Collection in the British Museum', *American Anthropologist*, 8 (1906), 671–85; H. J. Braunholtz, *Sir Hans Sloane and Ethnography* (London, 1970).

⁸⁰ King, 'North American Ethnography', 234–5.

much larger and ongoing acquisition of American natural-history objects, particularly insects, plants, and birds.

The presence of Indian artefacts in collections and Britons' demand for them changed remarkably during the Seven Years War, as the tens of thousands of British soldiers who fought in North America were sent home or returned with souvenirs in the 1750s and 1760s.⁸¹ Weapons, ornaments, and clothing were the preferred pieces, but model canoes with Indian dolls were so popular among British soldiers that French Canadian nuns began producing them, blending native beadwork with their own carvings.⁸² This flood of objects increased in the 1770s and 1780s, when even more British soldiers poured in and out of North America as war erupted once more. The greater availability of Indian artefacts in the second half of the eighteenth century meant that enthusiasts no longer needed to develop a relationship with a colonial agent to obtain a once-prized specimen. Individuals could simply go to an auction and select from an array of choices. As these public venues grew in terms of popularity and holdings of Indian-related objects, they also became settings where Britons could engage with Indians via material culture.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, up-market auctions had evolved from their seventeenth-century 'inch of candle' origins to reflect perfectly the ambitions and interests of British polite society.⁸³ The birth of modern consumerism substantially increased the amount of household goods among the middling and artisan ranks, and auctions served as ways to dispose of the goods of the deceased and bankrupt. In consequence, most auctioneers were connected to the undertaking trade, but in the second half of the century several firms emerged as independent purveyors who operated in pleasant venues and catered to upper-middling and elite audiences.⁸⁴ Given that auctioneers typically kept 7.5 per cent of the takings as their fee, this could be a lucrative trade for those savvy individuals who regularly reeled in collections that resulted in sales

⁸¹ For an example of a typical collection that has survived, see Ruth B. Phillips and Dale Idieas, 'A Casket of savage curiosities': Eighteenth-Century Objects from North-Eastern North America in the Farquharson Collection', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 6 (1994), 21–3.

⁸² *Ibid.* 24–5.

⁸³ In 'inch of candle' sales, bidding lasted until the candle burned out.

⁸⁴ This is evidenced in the trade cards from the period. See e.g. Sophia Banks Collection, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, box 1, section 5, which includes several dozen metropolitan and provincial auctioneering trade cards, most of which offer 'undertaker' and 'funeral' services.

grossing a thousand pounds or more.⁸⁵ The famous houses of Sotheby's and Christie's, founded in 1766 and 1778 respectively, were two of the higher-end firms.⁸⁶ As auctions proliferated and specialized, the increased availability of goods by auction not only provided Britons with the standard household goods of furniture, books, and linens; they also brought collecting into the mainstream economy.

Auctions were fixtures of polite society. Leading auctioneers such as James Christie moved in polite circles, and popular playwrights such as Samuel Foote and Richard Sheridan satirized auctions and auctioneers alike.⁸⁷ Auctions of the possessions of the good and great were public events, where the levelling rules of polite society prevailed. In these arenas, taste thrived above mere economic means, as true connoisseurs publicly demonstrated their knowledge and wealth before vast audiences, most of whom had attended for the spectacle rather than to purchase.⁸⁸ Aristocrats vied with successful shopkeepers and women competed with men for desired objects. Station did not matter, as Horace Walpole wryly noted after a prosperous grocer purchased several of his father's portraits at auction.⁸⁹ *The Auction; A Poem* (1770), in which a bankrupt 'mummy-hunting' gentleman's collection is sold by the well-known London auctioneer Abraham Langford, offers the best contemporary description of a higher-end auction scene:

Fragments of the pyramids from Egypt,
Fossils and shells long time in sea dipt,
With each exotic by the score
Which would a volume fill and more.
Some natives too, by Langford's art,
Made, of the catalogue a part.

⁸⁵ On auctioneers fees, see Trusler, *The London Adviser*, 9. Although these fees were not universal, Trusler notes that they applied to the established London firms, and lists those of James Christie and Leigh and Sotheby by name.

⁸⁶ On the growth of auctions in the second half of the eighteenth century, see Brian Learmount, *A History of the Auction* (London, 1985), 47–9. For a description of the eighteenth-century origins of Sotheby's and Christie's, see Jeremy Cooper, *Under the Hammer: The Auctions and Auctioneers of London* (London, 1977), 16–17, 42–9, and 84–5.

⁸⁷ Samuel Foote's *The Minor* (London, 1760); Richard Sheridan, *School for Scandal* (London, 1780), first performed 8 May 1777.

⁸⁸ For the best description of late eighteenth-century auctions and their role in polite society, see Patricia E. Kells, 'British Collecting, 1656–1800: Scientific Enquiry and Social Practice', Oxford University, D.Phil. thesis (1996), 219–40.

⁸⁹ Cited in Cynthia Wall, 'The English Auction: Narratives and Dismantlings', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 31 (1997), 2.

The audience—‘hundreds came who could not pay’—watched as men and women competed:

For Clio, the historic muse,
 Two authors bid with equal views;
 The one in femail vestments clad,
 The other wrap'd around with plad;
 Long they contended for the field,
 Too headstrong both and proud to yield;
 At length exclaim'd the bonny Scot,
 Suppose, fair lass! we share the lot?⁹⁰

As in museums, authenticity in the higher-end auctions was paramount, and auctioneers went to great lengths to assure potential clients that the articles sold were genuine. James Christie employed several leading artists, including Benjamin West, as evaluators, and leading firms typically displayed items up to a week beforehand, during which time the public could peruse and assess them. Moreover, leading firms offered extensive printed catalogues, which detailed the rules of the sale and offered descriptions and pedigrees of the lots. In its catalogue for the Portland Museum, the firm of Mr Skinner and Co. assured potential buyers that ‘much Pains and care have been taken to affix the proper classical, or generally received Names to as many Articles as the Time and Abilities of the Compiler would allow’.⁹¹ In most catalogues, words such as ‘genuine’, ‘true’, and ‘real’ abounded.

Through auctions, Indian-related objects became available to consumers of middling and higher means, whose only connection to America was an interest reflected in the purchase price. The auction records from the 1770s and 1780s in the Bodleian Library of the London-based firm owned by John Gerard reveal that North American Indian artefacts were regular features in post-Seven Years War private collections, and were relatively inexpensive.⁹² Ethnographic material certainly did not dominate the auctions; books, quality furniture, and rare coins made up the bulk of

⁹⁰ *The Auction A Poem: A Familiar Epistle to a Friend* (London, 1770), 4, 5, and 6.

⁹¹ Preface to *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum . . .* (London, 1786). The copy used here includes manuscript notations of buyers and prices and is held in Christ Church College, Oxford University.

⁹² The Bodleian Library’s collection consists of four volumes of the printed auction catalogues that were distributed by the auction house, along with unfoliated corresponding lists of the price and purchaser’s surname for each lot.

the sales. However, ethnographic material appears sufficiently frequently during the two decades of records to suggest that such items were neither rare nor confined to the collections of eccentric aristocrats and museums. The Gerard records are unique because they cover an extensive period and note in manuscript the prices received for each lot and the surname of the buyer. His fashionable Soho auction house dealt almost entirely in the possessions of bankrupt gentlemen and heirs of similar social standing who preferred cash to material bequests. In several catalogues the former owners of collections are noted along with their credentials, probably to attract buyers. These indicate that the collections were predominately the work of men from upper-middling and higher ranks—merchants, professionals, clergy, and urban gentry. Buyers probably came from similar socio-economic stations, considering the prices of the objects and the time of the auctions: they took place at midday on weekdays and often lasted all afternoon. Although buyers' surnames are often listed in Gerard's records, identifying most of them with any conclusiveness is impossible. One name that appears frequently, however, is Horace Walpole's.

The Indian-related items were fairly diverse, although weapons were particularly abundant, and cheap. Only a handful of Indian artefacts went for over one pound, and most cost just a few shillings. A pair of snowshoes could be acquired for twelve shillings, a comb from buffalo horn for ten shillings, earthenware for fifteen shillings, a bow for six shillings, a shield for five shillings, and a tomahawk for as little as five shillings. Such prices were at the medium-to-low end of the range of items sold, costing the same as lots containing a half-dozen contemporary copper medals or a handful of Anglo-Saxon coins, but less than a telescope. Interest also appears to have extended well beyond a small group of specialized collectors. The surnames of the buyers for the Indian artefacts are diverse, with no individual listed more than twice as the purchaser of such a lot. Moreover, they bought unrelated lots as well.

Auctions were also integral to museum holdings—both in terms of acquisition and liquidation. Offering rare insights into this are the sales of the Portland Museum, which was a private collection auctioned at the death of Margaret Cavendish, duchess dowager of Portland, in a thirty-seven-day sale starting on 24 April 1786, and the Leverian Museum, which was dismantled into 7,195 lots and sold over sixty-five days in 1806. The auctions were open to the public and drew substantial crowds. Compared to the Leverian's collections, the Portland Museum was small

in its natural-history and ethnography holdings. Nevertheless, artefacts from cultures around the globe constituted the bulk of the thirteenth day of the sale. Items from North America included an array of weapons, clothing, and wampum belts, and purchasers included museum-affiliated individuals. The buyer for lot 1383, which consisted of 'two wampum belts of the Indians in North America, and a European wampum given in exchange for their wampum when a treaty is made with those people', was Richard Southgate, a librarian of the British Museum and proprietor of his own private and much smaller collection, which he called the *Museum Southgatianum*.⁹³ A third wampum belt, along with a number of other lots that contained African, American Indian, and Asian objects, went to George Humphreys, a London-based broker of natural-history objects, whose clients included the British Museum.⁹⁴

Prominently featured in the Leverian sale, as in the museum itself, were the large number of artefacts from cultures around the world. Again, the items from North America were relatively cheap, very few of them costing over a pound.⁹⁵ At eight shillings, the supposed 'Similtude of Pondiac [*sic*] the Indian Chief, cut in stone with his own hands' was at the high end of the range, although a model canoe was sold for fifteen shillings.⁹⁶ Tomahawks and 'war clubs' typically sold for seven to ten shillings, but a 'curiously carved' Indian powder horn was sold for less than five shillings. Unlike many of the other items, the American Indian artefacts all found purchasers in the initial rounds of the sale. As in the much smaller Gerard auctions, purchasers were diverse, and the Indian artefacts ultimately became new additions to private collections and the seeds of natural-history collections throughout Europe, including the Imperial Natural History Cabinet in Vienna.⁹⁷

⁹³ *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum*, lot 1383. Ironically, Leigh and Sotheby sold the Southgate's collection upon his death nine years later, the catalogue of which includes the wampum belt with an almost identical description: *Museum Southgatianum, Being a Catalogue of the Valuable Collection of Books, Coins, Medals, and Natural History, of the Late Rev. Richard Southgate* (London, 1795).

⁹⁴ *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum*, lots 1371 and 1380. Humphreys also bought large numbers of insects and seashells on other days. On the British Museum's use of Humphreys' services, see BL, Add. MS, 45,875, fols. 21 and 22: Diary and Occurrence Book of the British Museum entries for 1 April 1779 and 30 July 1779.

⁹⁵ *A Catalogue of the Leverian Museum*. The copy used here is held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, and includes manuscript notations of the prices for the individual lots.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, lots 1684 and 1682.

⁹⁷ On the connection between the Leverian and other European museums, see Feest, 'European Collecting', 7.

Auctions, like museums, provided a material-culture reinforcement for British presumptions about American Indian cultural inferiority. They also drew similar audiences. For example, as part of their tour of the major London museums, the Powys family included a visit to the auction of the Portland Museum.⁹⁸ Although the full extent of displaying practices of the Indian objects are impossible to determine, major auctioneers typically exhibited the items beforehand in large rooms, where spectators and buyers could peruse them prior to the sale. With the aid of a printed catalogue, which was available in advance or at the door, individuals could easily identify the origins and association of any item. The organization of lots consistently underlined Indian primitiveness. For example, Gerard regularly grouped smaller items associated with the indigenous peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, and Africa, although in each case he meticulously noted which items came from which culture. For example, he grouped into single lots Indian snowshoes and 'sundry articles from Otaheite', and bows and arrows from North America with similar weaponry from Guiana.⁹⁹ The auction of the Portland Museum grouped a 'leather purse from Lapland' with a 'wooden spoon from Madagascar', and a serving vessel 'of Indian workmanship' with a Tahitian basket.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the order of the sale was arranged so that the artefacts from 'primitive' societies, which included American Indians, were clearly separate from those objects with more sophisticated origins. Although less rigidly followed, a similar selling order was followed in the sale of the Leverian collections. American Indian items were not grouped with Chinese or East Indian objects in any of the sale catalogues, and they appeared with European objects only when the latter were of ancient origin, as in the cases of a tomahawk with 'an ancient British stone hatchet', and 'a curious Indian vessel of earthenware from South Carolina, and a fine Etruscan lamp'.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ BL, Add. MS, 42,160, fol. 93.

⁹⁹ *A Catalogue of the Very Valuable Museum of the Late Sir Charles Frederick: Part II* (London, 1786), lot 4; *A Catalogue of the Genuine Library of Printed Books, a Collection of Natural Curiosities, Antiquaries, and other Miscellaneous Articles, of the late Rev. Dr. John Pearkes* (London, 1788), lot 49.

¹⁰⁰ *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum*, lots 1380 and 1370.

¹⁰¹ *A Catalogue of the Entire Collection... of the late John White of Newgate-Street, London, Part II* (London, 1788), lots 25 and 60.

HISTORIES AND TRAVEL ACCOUNTS

Complementing the representations and discussions of American Indians in British material culture were the depictions of Indians in the numerous travel accounts and histories of British print culture. The lengthy, detailed descriptions of Indians in these works provided Britons with a further authoritative pool of information about Indians that ultimately underlined assumptions about their comparative primitiveness. Also like the displays of objects and artefacts, printed accounts were designed and marketed as providing opportunities to encounter distant cultures that home audiences would not otherwise visit. However, printed travel accounts and histories must be handled carefully. For the most part they are prescriptive, and, especially in the case of travel accounts, offer a single viewpoint. Moreover, the mere fact that a work was printed does not imply widespread readership or that readers responded favourably to the authors' descriptions—despite the tendency of many historians and literary scholars to treat selected works as representative of national opinions.

Nevertheless, two broad conclusions can be drawn from an examination of travel and history literature in the eighteenth century. First, the genre's mid-century boom, both in general and specific accounts relating to Indians, is reflective of Britons' pragmatic interests in matters relating to the empire. Readers sought these accounts for their assumed factual, rather than fanciful, value. Second, a wide examination of the travel and history literature and the reading practices associated with it reveals a rather unsympathetic view of American Indians as violent, volatile players in the British struggle for hegemony in North America.

Determining the exact extent of the British public's exposure to the printed accounts of Indians is problematic at best. The cost of most of these works prevented all but a handful of Britons from owning them; however, the practice of borrowing books was firmly established. Borrowing, or sharing, took place informally between friends, acquaintances, and relatives, who traded or simply lent books to one another. Such practices were common even among those who could afford substantial book collections. Commercialized and structured, organized borrowing offered access to these materials on a much grander scale. Lending associations boomed during the mid- and late eighteenth century: the first

commercial circulating library was established in 1740, and by 1760 London had twenty.¹⁰² By 1800 over 200 circulating libraries were dispersed throughout the nation, with provincial cities such as Liverpool having several. By the 1780s even provincial libraries boasted thousands of titles, mostly non-fiction, as well as magazines and newspapers.¹⁰³ Moreover, these libraries were affordable, with the Birmingham library's twelve-shilling annual fee being typical.¹⁰⁴ To better cater to the incomes of the artisan and lower-middling ranks, libraries also enacted quarterly payment structures and second-class memberships that offered more limited access for lower rates.¹⁰⁵ More common than lending libraries were the smaller literary societies and book clubs. Paul Kaufman has estimated that as many as one thousand such clubs existed in eighteenth-century England.¹⁰⁶ In these groups, members pooled their resources and selected titles by ballot, often using review magazines as catalogues. These clubs became features of provincial towns, where they were open to local 'respectable' members of society, usually regardless of gender. At the end of the eighteenth century Joshua Toulmin boasted in his history of Taunton that the Somerset market town had four book clubs, one of which was exclusively for women.¹⁰⁷ Although the extent to which meetings promoted discussions about the latest published works rather than the virtues of ale is questionable—they were, after all, primarily social clubs—literature clearly had the capacity to act as a social rallying point.

As a genre, travel accounts and the compiled 'histories' that relied upon them blossomed in the eighteenth century as a popular educational

¹⁰² James Raven, 'From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading in Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996), 175.

¹⁰³ See e.g. *A Catalogue of the Circulating Library Opened by R. Bliss, Bookseller and Stationer, High Street, Oxford* (London, 1795), which advertised 1,727 items; *Catalogue of the London and Westminster Circulating Library* (London, 1797), which boasted 5,573 titles; and *A New Catalogue of the Large and Valuable Collection of Books, in John Noble's Circulating Library* (London, 1767), which promised 5,535 titles.

¹⁰⁴ Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton, 1998), 67.

¹⁰⁵ e.g. the London and Westminster Circulating Library advertised first- and second-class memberships that differed in order of access to new titles, number of books that could be borrowed at one time, and price of membership. Wise's Circulating Library in Oxford offered discount, novels-only membership.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Kaufman, 'English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History', *Libri*, 14 (1964), 23.

¹⁰⁷ Joshua Toulmin, *The History of Taunton in the Country of Somerset* (Taunton, 1791), 187.

entertainment. They featured prominently in circulating libraries, which regularly advertised the possession of the latest accounts. They also appear to have been the most borrowed books.¹⁰⁸ As their prefaces reveal time and again, their intention was to inform readers about distant places and peoples, or in their own stock phrase, to 'offer a striking picture'. The authors' credentials, or sources from which the works drew, were carefully outlined to maximum effect. For example, the title page of James Adair's *History of the American Indians* notes that he had been 'a trader with the Indians, and Resident in their Country for Forty Years'.¹⁰⁹ When questions of authenticity and authorship arose regarding Jonathan Carver's account of the Dakota Sioux, the second edition included a lengthy 'address to the public' in which he attempted to reassure readers as to the credibility of the work.¹¹⁰

Writing in a familiar, conversational style, many authors tapped into their audiences' imaginations in order to transport them across vast distances in virtual journeys. When describing his travels through Africa, Mungo Park explained that 'the reader must imagine that I found the climate in most places extremely hot'.¹¹¹ When describing Lapland, the author informed the reader that: 'In order to form an idea of Lapland, one must imagine a mass of mountains irregularly crowded together.'¹¹² In his description of Arabia, another travel writer offered these instructions: 'To paint to himself these deserts, the reader must imagine a sky almost perpetually inflamed, and without clouds, immense and boundless plains . . . where the eye frequently meets nothing but an extensive and uniform horizon.'¹¹³ Such instructions were taken to heart by readers, who through reading transported themselves across the globe. As William Cowper explained in a letter to a friend while reading James Cook's account of his first voyage around the world:

I am much obliged to you for the Voyages which I received, and began to read last night. My imagination is so captivated upon these occasions, that I seem to partake

¹⁰⁸ This is based on Paul Kaufman's examination of the borrowing records of Bristol Library in his *Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1733–1784: A Unique Record of Reading Vogues* (Charlottesville, Va., 1960), in which history and travel works were borrowed 6,121 times compared to theology's 607 and jurisprudence's 447.

¹⁰⁹ James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London, 1775).

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (London, 1778) and 2nd edn. (London, 1779).

¹¹¹ Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (London, 1799), 258.

¹¹² John Adams, *A View of Universal History, from the Creation to the Present Time* (London, 1795), ii. 314.

¹¹³ C. F. Volney, *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785* (Dublin, 1788), i. 236.

with the navigators, in all dangers they encountered. I lose my anchor; my main-sail is rent into shreds; I kill a shark, and by signs converse with a Patagonian, and all this without moving from the fire-side. The principal fruits of these circuits, that have been made around the globe, seem likely to be the amusement of those that staid at home.¹¹⁴

The power of the imagination was recognized in the eighteenth century as a force that extended beyond controllable amusement.¹¹⁵ 'Imagination and Fancy are not perfectly synonymous', James Beattie concluded in his exhaustive, volume-length study, rather they were 'names for the same faculty; but the former seems to be applied to the more solemn, and the latter to the more trivial, exertions of it.'¹¹⁶ Closely tied to sensibility, the power to imagine is what many Britons believed separated civilized, tasteful people from savagery and rudeness. In particularly sensitive individuals, the imagination could have physical manifestations, resulting in changes of mood and perception, and in some cases causing nervous disorders. 'The suggestions of Imagination are often so lively', explained James Beattie, 'as to be mistaken for real things; and therefore cannot be said to be essentially fainter than the informations of memory.'¹¹⁷ In the civilized individual, an imaginary experience was expected to engage the senses and prompt action. As Alexander Gerard explained in his seminal 1759 *Essay on Taste*:

Imagination does not confine itself to its own weak ideas; but often acts in conjunction with our sense, and spreads its influence on their impressions. Sensations, emotion, and affections are, by its power, associated with others, readily introducing such as resemble them, either in their feeling or direction... All these are operation of imagination, which naturally proceed from its simplest exertions, and are the principles, from which the sentiments of taste arise. These sentiments are not fantastical, imaginary, or unsubstantial; but are universally produced by the energies of fancy, which are indeed of the utmost consequence, and have the most extensive influence on the operations of the mind.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Cowper to John Newton, 6 Oct. 1783, in *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, ed. James King and Charles Ryskamp, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1981), 168.

¹¹⁵ On the significant role of imagination in British polite society, see esp. John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997); G. S. Rousseau, 'Science and the Discovery of the Imagination in Enlightened England', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 (1969), 101–35; and G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992).

¹¹⁶ James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (Dublin, 1783), i. 87.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* i. 6.

¹¹⁸ Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London, 1759), 171–2.

Consequently, as James Murray explained in 1793 in the preface to one of his many edited travel-account digests: 'Things are not less real, because the fancy colours them, and this journey is not the less true, because the imagination has had a share in It.'¹¹⁹ Such virtual journeys, explained Samuel Johnson, had tangible benefits:

almost every one has some journey of pleasure in his mind, with which he flatters his expectation. He that travels in theory has no inconveniences; he has shade and sunshine at his disposal, and wherever he alights finds tables of plenty and looks of gaiety. These ideas are indulged till the day of departure arrives, the chaise is called and the progress of happiness begins.¹²⁰

Although the genre grew remarkably in the eighteenth century, travel accounts and histories that focused exclusively on Indians were rare. Cadwallader Colden's *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada* was the only substantial work by a British-born author (Colden was a Scot serving as the lieutenant-governor of New York) to be reprinted before the Seven Years War.¹²¹ The early eighteenth-century accounts by French missionaries such as Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix and Joseph-François Lafitau, however, were available in both the original French and English translations, and they were grudgingly endorsed in Britain as authoritative. Editors found it difficult to trust authors who were often both French and Jesuit, but they had few alternatives. The *Critical Review* complained vehemently in 1760 that the French works too often depicted the English as 'fools, knaves, brutes and cowards', but conceded that in the absence of good British accounts, 'the best, and almost the only materials we have for a natural history of North-America, are those published by French writers'.¹²²

In the wake of the Seven Years War two further substantial accounts of American Indians were published in Britain: James Adair's *History of the American Indians* (1775) and Jonathan Carver's *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (1778).¹²³ Both authors were American colonists, who had travelled to London to publish their works because they had been

¹¹⁹ James Murray, *The Travels of the Imagination; a true journey from Newcastle to London, in a Stage-Coach. With observations on the metropolis* (London, 1773), 2.

¹²⁰ *Idler*, No. 58, 26 May 1759, repr. in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, vol. 2: *The Idler and Adventurer*, ed. W. J. Bate and John M. Bullitt (New Haven, 1963), 181.

¹²¹ First printed in 1747, it enjoyed a third edition in 1755.

¹²² *Critical Review* (Jan. 1760), 48.

¹²³ Adair, *History of the American Indians*; Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America*.

unable to arouse sufficient publishing interest in North America.¹²⁴ Together with Colden's history, they are the most detailed and informed British accounts of North American Indians published in the eighteenth century. They also contain some of the most sympathetic descriptions. As Gary Nash has rightly remarked of Adair's history, it is 'the most complete statement of the integrity of Indians' to be found in Britain at that time.¹²⁵

Although not depicted as noble savages or leading an idyllic life in any of these works, American Indians appeared as admirable, heroic, and powerful beings living in complex societies. Their cultures were promoted as meritocracies against a backdrop of European corruption; their hospitality praised; and their liberty celebrated. The authors blamed the most undesirable traits of Indians, such as alcoholism and fighting for plunder, on corrupting whites. 'Instead of Virtues', Colden lamented, 'we have only taught them Vices.'¹²⁶ In one of many complaints about the ill-effects of the massive infiltration of European goods and trading practices on the Indian communities, Adair declared that 'before the Indian trade was ruined by our left-handed policy and the natives were corrupted by the liberality of our dim-sighted politicians, the Cheerake [Cherokee] were frank, sincere, and industrious'.¹²⁷ Colden likened Iroquois warriors to Homeric heroes, their style of confederate government to the Dutch, and their patriotism to the ancient Romans.¹²⁸ 'None of the greatest Roman Heroes', Colden declared, 'have discovered a greater Love to their Country, or a greater Contempt of Death, than these People called Barbarians have done, when Liberty came in Competition.' Carver, who sought partly to refute perceptions of unwavering Indian savagery, remarked that Indian wars were 'in general more rational and just' than European conflicts.¹²⁹ Adair praised the openness of their governments,

¹²⁴ Samuel Cole Williams (ed.), *Adair's History of the American Indians* (Johnson City, Tenn., 1930), pp. xxi–xxvii; Norman Gelb (ed.), *Jonathan Carver's Travels Through America 1766–1768: An Eighteenth-Century Explorer's Account of Uncharted America* (New York, 1993), 29–33.

¹²⁵ Gary B. Nash, 'The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind, *WMQ*, 24 (1972), 224.

¹²⁶ Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, 2 vols., 3rd edn. (London 1755), i., p. vi.

¹²⁷ Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 230.

¹²⁸ Colden, *History*, i. 1–3, 10, and p. v.

¹²⁹ Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America, in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768*, 3rd edn. (London, 1781), 297. See also Daniel E. Williams, '“Until they are contaminated by their more refined neighbours”: The Images of the Native American

declaring that rulers relied on merit to lead, because they 'can only persuade or dissuade the people' through debate and reason.¹³⁰

Despite historians' tendency to rely on these texts for insights into British perceptions of Indians, the case for treating such specialized works as representative of wider eighteenth-century British attitudes towards American Indians is not a good one. This is best demonstrated by a closer look at Adair's history. Because it has been utilized, if not championed, by a large number of historians as a window through which to understand how Indians were perceived in Britain, this work demands special scrutiny. Robert Berkhofer calls Adair's history 'famous'; P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams classify it as one of the generally sympathetic accounts that appeared in the 1770s, noting that it 'sold well'; Hugh Honour suggests that Adair's history even inspired contemporary visual representations of Indians.¹³¹ Further examination of Adair's account and its context, however, does not verify these assertions nor justify the enormous attention historians have given to it. Adair's views were neither forged in British society nor necessarily aimed at it. Instead, he was an Indian trader who had lived in the Carolina backcountry for decades and had travelled to London solely for the purpose of publishing his work.

The notion that Adair's history circulated widely is doubtful at best. The text was expensive, at fifteen shillings, which was about a week's wages for a junior clerk in London, and it appeared in only one edition in Britain. A shortcoming of the work, often ignored by those who cite it, is that the bulk of it consists of a lengthy exposition of the by-then discredited view that the Indians were descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel.¹³² Combined with Adair's difficult style, this provoked universal hostility in

in Carver's *Travels through the Interior and its Influence on the Euro-American Imagination*, in *Indians in Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1987), 195–214.

¹³⁰ Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 428.

¹³¹ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to Present* (New York, 1978), 26; Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, 218–19; Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (London, 1976), 136. The painting is Joseph Wright of Derby's *The Indian Widow* (1783–5). Honour offers no evidence of a relationship, except that the portrayed Indian is in mourning, which is a topic discussed in Adair's history.

¹³² Though maintaining some prominence in North America, most notably with Thomas Jefferson and later the Mormons, this position had lost most of its support in Europe by the American Revolution and had been replaced by the view that the American Indians were the descendants of the Tartars of northern Asia.

the review press, which undoubtedly contributed substantially to the low circulation of the work.¹³³ The *Critical Review* concluded: 'Mr. Adair may continue in the belief of a system originally endeared to him by its novelty... but every unprejudiced reader, we are persuaded, will subscribe to our opinion, that it is whimsical, inconsistent, and totally destitute of foundation.'¹³⁴ In this rare instance its rival, the *Monthly Review*, concurred, declaring that: 'We wish it were allowable for us to pronounce the execution of it as meritorious as the subject is useful and important.'¹³⁵ In consequence, the book appears on only one of the circulating library lists that I have examined.¹³⁶

Adair's work is not singular in its limited readership. Although based on only a limited sample size, Paul Kaufman's examination of the title list and borrowing records of the Bristol Library from 1773 to 1784 suggests that specialized works on American Indians received limited attention.¹³⁷ For the 130 or more middle-class men and women who paid the one-guinea annual membership fee, the Bristol Library was a window on the world. As in most circulating libraries, histories and travel accounts dominated the holdings. Of the five most borrowed works, three were travel accounts or histories. None of these, however, focused on North American Indians. The library acquired books that contained lengthy accounts of Indians, but readers' use of them was marginal. Carver's *Travels* was borrowed only twenty-six times between when it appeared in 1778 and 1784, equal to Charlevoix's translated account for the same period. John Knox's account of the Seven Years War in America fared slightly better, at twenty-nine. The library did not own copies of the accounts by either Adair or Colden. In contrast, accounts describing the South Pacific and its natives were in much higher demand. James Cook's account of his second voyage was borrowed 113 times in the seven years after its appearance

¹³³ Review periodicals, especially the *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review*, were crucial to the sale and distribution of a book, as both individuals and libraries relied heavily upon them for selecting new acquisitions: see M. Kay Flavell, 'The Enlightened Reader and the New Industrial Towns: A Study in the Liverpool Library, 1758–1790', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 8 (1985), 17–20; and Antonia Forster, 'Review Journals and the Reading Public', in Isabel Rivers (ed.), *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London, 2001), 171–90.

¹³⁴ *Critical Review* (June 1775), 459–60.

¹³⁵ *Monthly Review* (Mar. 1776), 261–8.

¹³⁶ This is based on a survey of thirty-two contents lists of circulating libraries throughout the country: *A Catalogue of Books in the Circulating Library at Halifax* (Halifax, 1786), 6.

¹³⁷ Kaufman, *Borrowings from the Bristol Library*.

in 1777, and Johann Forster's account of the same voyage was borrowed forty-six times in three years. John Hawkesworth's compiled account of Cook's first voyage outdid them all, and became the most popular work in the library with over 200 recorded borrowings between 1773 and 1784.¹³⁸

Possible rationalizations for the comparatively low circulation of works focusing on American Indians are numerous, but competition from other sources is the most likely explanation. There were few exclusively Indian-focused works available, and these were hardly written by literary talents. Colden was exceptional for both his prose and formal education; Adair and Carver were backwoodsmen with little formal schooling. Such works, therefore, recommended themselves primarily on the merits of the information they offered. Because Britons so widely represented and discussed Indians after 1755, potential audiences' demands for information were met elsewhere in cheaper, more abundant, and more readable formats. As argued in the next chapter, newspaper editors sifted through these lengthy, expensive accounts to provide readers with the selective details they craved. Other writers, such as general history compilers and the Scottish historians, extracted key information for their more widely disseminated and comprehensive works on human social development. In short, why would anyone but an extreme enthusiast trudge through hundreds of pages of minute details when a digested account with a map was available for a fraction of the cost? Such individuals certainly existed, but the majority of Britons' interests in Indians were attached to Indians' contemporary relationships to the empire, and these concerns could be better addressed in the daily newspaper accounts that shared this perspective.

The general histories, which were compiled from smaller accounts and each other, were cheaper, of greater interest because of their breadth, and far more likely to be carried by circulating libraries. These general histories flooded the British market during and after the Seven Years War, as authors sought to capitalize on a public that was increasingly aware of Britain as an imperial power but still unfamiliar with the territories it claimed.¹³⁹ As the title page of Oliver Goldsmith's *Present State of the*

¹³⁸ John Hawkesworth, *Account of the Voyages...for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*, 3 vols. (London, 1773), was arguably the most popular travel account of the eighteenth century.

¹³⁹ Karen O'Brien, 'The History Market in Eighteenth-Century England', in Isabel Rivers (ed.), *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London, 2001), 113.

British Empire (1768) promised, such works contained 'a Concise Account of our Possessions in Every Part of the Globe'. However, depictions of Indians in these works differed notably from those found in the specialist accounts. Within Goldsmith's work, as in most others in the same vein, the reader could find descriptions of British possessions in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. American Indians inevitably appeared within descriptions of British interests in North America. After all, as the *Monthly Review* later remarked, including embellished accounts of encounters with Indians helped with sales.¹⁴⁰ Treatment of the Indians was confined to a few pages, usually digested from other accounts or simply reprinted from another work. In Goldsmith's case the source was the third edition of William Burke's compilation history, *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, published eight years earlier.¹⁴¹ Like the histories that focused specifically on the American Indians, these more popular works included some favourable comments on Indian culture. Burke's much-cited account noted their hospitality, loyalty to their nations, and oratorical ability. These comments, however, were tempered with substantial descriptions of Indians as a lazy, irreverent people whose sole interest was war and torture. Burke noted that when an enemy was captured, the captor 'exercise[d] the most shocking barbarities, even to the eating of his flesh'.¹⁴²

Even more accessible were the images of Indians in the cheap pamphlets concerned with North America that exploded in quantity during the Seven Years War and its aftermath. Violent imagery dominated depictions of Indians in these works.¹⁴³ The mid-1750s saw a string of defeats for the British in North America, and various groups were anxious to attribute blame. Colonial and British authors alike debated the conduct of the war, the future of Indian diplomacy, and which white group had placed the British Empire in the present mess. Nevertheless, the writers were virtually unanimous in their treatment of American Indians. They depicted them as cruel savages whose prowess in irregular wilderness warfare made them essential to British victory.¹⁴⁴ The points in debates

¹⁴⁰ *Monthly Review* (Jan. 1772), 57.

¹⁴¹ The relevant portions in Goldsmith's work were taken from William Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, 3rd edn. (London, 1760), vol. i, part ii.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* i. 171. ¹⁴³ Colley, *Captives*, 177–9.

¹⁴⁴ See e.g. *A Scheme to Drive the French out of All the Continent in America* (1754), 405; *Two Letters to a Friend on the Present Critical Conjunctions of Affairs in North America*

regarding American Indians concerned not their character but who was to blame for their apparent favouring of the French over the British. Authors found the imagery of Indian brutality particularly helpful when condemning one side or another for inaction. In a pamphlet calling for a regular militia in Pennsylvania, as well as condemning the pacifist Quakers who had opposed it, the author packed his account with massacres of frontier families that were relayed with the most graphic imagery:

Men, Women, Children, and Brute-beasts shared one common Destruction; and where they were not burnt to Ashes, their mangled Limbs were found promiscuously strewed upon the Ground, those appertaining to the human Form scarce to be distinguished from those of the Brute! Nay Stakes were found driven into the private Parts of the Women, and the Men's private Parts cut off, and put into their Mouths; so that the Savages seem to riot and triumph in the most deliberate Acts of infernal Cruelty, and to grow more savage at the Thought.¹⁴⁵

These scenes, the author declared again and again, could have been prevented but for the pacifist Quakers.

Other Britons sought to take advantage of the public's sympathy for colonists who had fallen victim to Indian raids by printing their own captivity narratives. These differed substantially from their late seventeenth-century New England counterparts, which were primarily descriptions of religious experiences. The mid-eighteenth-century narratives were printed for profit or political propaganda, rather than evangelism. The most successful was Scottish-born Peter Williamson's account of his capture in 1754 in his *French and Indian Cruelty*, which first went on sale in 1759 for a shilling.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the captivity narratives of two generations earlier, the work's appeal depended on its political context, and was moulded to profit from this. Its preface, in the form of a patriotic letter from Williamson to William Pitt, encourages the continuation of the war. Williamson's account of suffering was not meant to show the means by which he strengthened his Christian faith, but it was instead to demonstrate, 'in a concise manner,

(London, 1755), 4–5, 12, 34–5, and 53–4; *State of the French and British Colonies in America* (London, 1755), 70–4; *The Expedition of Major General Braddock to Virginia* (London, 1755); *A Brief View of the Conduct of Pennsylvania for the Year 1755* (London, 1756), 5 and 43–50; *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians under the Command of Henry Bouquet* (London, 1766), 37–9.

¹⁴⁵ *A Brief View of the Conduct of Pennsylvania for the Year 1755* (London, 1756), 45–6.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty: Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune, of Peter Williamson* (London, 1759).



1.5. Frontispiece of *The Life and Curious Adventures of Peter Williamson, who was carried off from Aberdeen and sold as a slave* (Edinburgh, 1812). By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Shelfmark 23348 e.22.

a scene of many barbarities, and unheard cruelties, exercised by the savage Indians, instigated by the treacherous French'. The graphic imagery found in other pamphlets and the newspaper press had created a market for Williamson, and he hoped to make a profit by giving a face to the countless anonymous victims described in the contemporary press accounts.

Linda Colley has argued that Williamson himself reflected a post-war British view of Indians as complex peoples.¹⁴⁷ However, despite Williamson's later, possibly ambiguous relationship with his 'Indian' past, his depiction of Indians in the narrative allowed little room for complexity, as he used the most sensational imagery to describe the torture, murder, and cannibalism he witnessed. This is a typical description of an Indian raid:

They soon got admittance into the unfortunate man's house, where they immediately without the least remorse, and with more than brutal cruelty scalped the tender parents and unhappy children.¹⁴⁸ Nor could the tears, the shrieks, or cries of these unhappy victims prevent their horrid massacre: For having thus scalped them, and plundered the house of every thing that was moveable, they set fire to the same, where the poor creatures met their final doom amidst the flames, the hellish miscreants standing at the door, or as near the house as the flames would permit them, rejoicing, and echoing back in their diabolical manner, the piercing cries, ear-rending groans, and paternal affectionate soothing, which issued from this horrid sacrifice of an innocent family.¹⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Williamson seems to have taken a strange pride in his heritage of captivity, publicly dressing in a makeshift 'Indian costume' and decorating his Edinburgh coffee-house with Indian artifacts; but such efforts may simply have stemmed from the showman in him.¹⁵⁰ He certainly profited from his Indian connection. His account went through four editions when it first appeared in 1759 alone, and was reprinted regularly until at least 1812, and he went from pennilessness to become a small business owner.

Visits, exhibitions of material culture, and printed accounts all offered eighteenth-century Britons opportunities to engage with American Indians. In each context Indians might be represented in varying ways.

¹⁴⁷ Colley, *Captives*, 191–2.

¹⁴⁸ At this exact point in the text Williamson reminded his readers in a footnote that, after being scalped, the victim can live up to several days in great agony.

¹⁴⁹ Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty*, 17–18.

¹⁵⁰ Colley, *Captives*, 191–2.

Taken separately or selectively, very different possible British perspectives on Indians emerge. British responses in the newspaper and periodical press to the Cherokee embassy of 1762 reveal a discussion whose participants were apprehensive of American Indian power and anxious to assess how it might affect British interests in North America. Lengthy, first-hand accounts such as those by Colden, Adair, and Carver offer less pragmatic, more sympathetic assessments of Indian cultures. Other first-hand accounts, such as the one by Peter Williamson, are decidedly less concerned with the plight of Indians, and more interested in conveying their brutality in order to provoke public sympathy and outrage for personal ends. Public exhibitions of Indian-related objects, whether in museums or auctions, focused on categorizing American Indians into a hierarchy of civilizations. Quasi-scientific in their approach, these venues lent intellectual support to presumptions of Indian inferiority and barbarity.

Despite such variations, some general points can be made. First and foremost, it is important to consider as wide a variety of contexts as possible. After all, few, if any, Britons relied on just one account to form their views of Indians; in fact, to do so would have been rather difficult. Descriptions of Indians abounded in the books they read, the auctions they attended, the museums they visited, and (as examined in the following chapter) the newspapers and magazines they discussed. In these venues two common, related themes emerged in the second half of the century. First, Britons were acutely aware that their world was expanding, and they were anxious to make sense of it. Linked to this expanding cosmology were concerns about the empire and its connection with British prosperity. Second, they took a pragmatic, studious approach that emphasized fact and authenticity over entertainment and generic exoticism. Eighteenth-century depictions of Indians were hardly exact, but after the mid-century Britons expected these descriptions to be packaged in a manner that appeared to offer detail and accuracy. In this way Indians came to represent not savages in general, but rather themselves, and British concerns associated with North America.

2

American Indians in the British Press

An examination of the newspaper and periodical press underlines the significance of the Seven Years War in the development of widespread, pragmatic British interest in American Indians. The conflict proved to be a watershed for images of Indians, who, like North America in general, had not received the consistent attentions of the press. Once war appeared imminent in 1754, they became a staple of any newspaper reader's diet until the end of the American War of Independence. Two intertwined forces drove this shift. The first was changes in the press itself, which had grown from handwritten newsletters at the start of the century into a relatively free, national medium for news and debate that by mid-century reached audiences whose social and geographic diversity were unprecedented. The second was the war itself. Troops, materials, and funds for an overseas objective were committed for the first time on a large scale, before a national audience that had learned in the previous decades to be both critical of the government and to be anxious about any contest with its arch-rival, France. In consequence, between the Seven Years War and the American War of Independence discussions and images of Indians in the press echo the pragmatic depictions discussed in the previous chapter and further clarify their close association with the wider public's views and concerns about the empire.

Because American Indians were crucial factors in the American theatre of war, the Indians were front-page material in the London dailies and major features in the magazines and provincial newspapers. Campaigns with and against the Indians were serialized. When news of a separate war with the Cherokee reached Britain in January 1760, the *Gentleman's Magazine* quickly pledged its commitment to reporting it. 'As this war is but just beginning,' it declared, 'we shall collect together all the lights we can, in order to give a clear account of its rise; and we shall be no less careful to trace

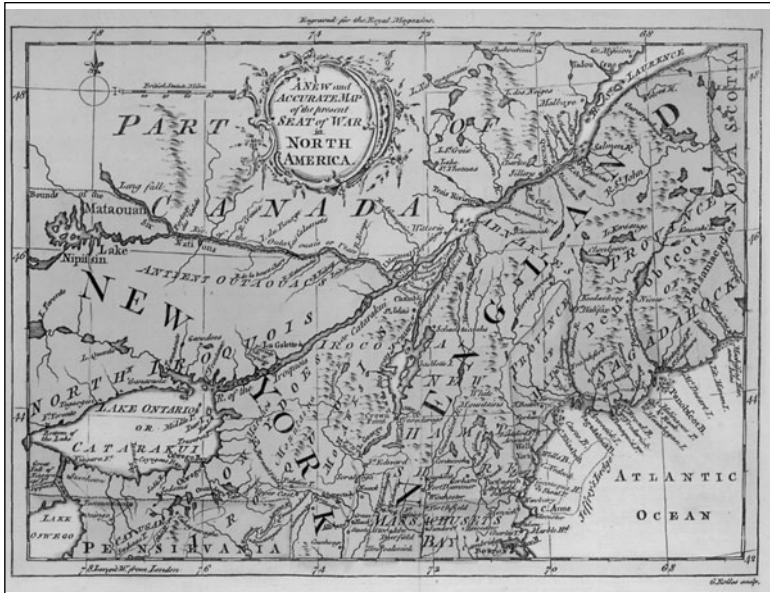


Figure 2.1. *A New and Accurate Map of the Present Seat of War in North America*, *Royal Magazine* (Dec. 1759). By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, shelfmark vet.A5 e.286.

its progress, as successive advices afford us an opportunity.¹ What ensued, as in most magazines, were several pages each month devoted to the war. Detailed journals of British soldiers were also printed alongside official accounts of battles that had been sent by the commander-in-chief in America to Whitehall. Pull-out maps abounded in magazines to offer visual aids.² Among the most successful maps were the shilling pocket maps that were ‘pasted on Canvas so that it will easily go into a waistcoat pocket without wearing in the creases’.³ Thus armed, the individual was ready to enter into a coffee-house debate. No news sold like war news. As one editor

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1760), 33.

² See e.g. *ibid.* (July 1754), 321–2; *London Magazine* (Sept. 1755), 432; *Universal Magazine* (Oct. 1755), 145, (May 1757), 193 (Dec. 1759), 281–3, and (Feb. 1761), 57; *London Magazine* (Sept. 1756), 451; *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1758), 436; *Royal Magazine* (Dec. 1759), 279–80, and its lead article (May 1763), p. 255.

³ The map appeared in advertisements throughout the London press and magazines in August 1755, after news of Braddock's defeat reached Britain.

remarked in 1758, 'Times of war, devastation and bloodshed, tho' the worst to live in, are yet allowed to be the happiest to write in', and as the *Idler* noted when commenting on newsmongering, nothing sold like the gore of Indian warfare: 'Scarce any thing awakens attention like a tale of cruelty,' he declared; 'the writer of news never fails, in the intermission of action, to tell how the enemies murdered children and ravished virgins; and if the scene of action be somewhat distant, scalps half the inhabitants of a province'.⁴ Partly as a result, Indians became part of the nation's daily news diet.

When fighting broke out in 1754, British readers were largely ignorant of American Indians and their affairs. The war was thus an educational experience for all but a handful of Britons, and the press was the nation's pedagogue. Even Horace Walpole, who enjoyed the benefits of one of the largest private libraries in the country and prided himself on a robust knowledge of the world, announced shortly after the outbreak of hostilities that '[the war] has thrown me into a new study: I read nothing but American voyages, and histories of plantations and settlements. . . . Indeed I was as barbarous as any polite nation in the world, in supposing that there was nothing worth knowing among these charming savages.'⁵ He then proceeded to pick a tribe to follow in the press, and recommended that his correspondents do the same.

British awareness of Indians changed remarkably in the three decades that followed. Indians were simultaneously represented as the causes of defeat, keys to victory, and banes of British rule in America. In an effort to educate their readers about these essential allies and formidable foes, editors packed their newspapers and magazines with information about American Indians. Sources included accounts from American colonists, reprinted histories and travel accounts, letters from British soldiers serving in America, speeches from various diplomatic encounters with Indians, and the reactions of readers at home. The result of the press's information bombardment was that at least a crude awareness of American Indian warfare, geography, and culture was hard to avoid. During this period a predominantly pragmatic discussion emerged in which Indians were

⁴ *Edinburgh Magazine*, editor's preface to 1758, p. iv; *Idler*, No. 31, repr. in the *Edinburgh Magazine* (Nov. 1758), 402.

⁵ Walpole to Richard Bentley, 3 Nov. 1754, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis et al. (London, 1937–83), xxxv. 186–7.

depicted and considered in terms of usability, particularly with regard to asserting and maintaining British hegemony in North America. Sympathy, responsibility, and admiration, although undoubtedly felt by some Britons with regard to the Indians, were largely absent from the public printed discourse.

THE BRITISH PRESS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The metropolitan and provincial newspaper and periodical press provides the best material for recapturing and examining widespread, contemporary British public discussions and representations of American Indians. Although encounters through material exhibits, printed histories, and travel accounts were qualitatively significant, in numerical terms such engagements only directly involved a small fraction of the British population, especially when compared to the number who encountered Indians via the newspaper and periodical press. After all, more copies of the *Gentleman's Magazine* were distributed in three months than the British Museum was allowed visitors in a year. A magazine or newspaper was also far more mobile than a collection of artefacts. One did not have to be a private collector, live in London or a major provincial town, or make a special effort to engage with Indians via the press. The comparison of readerships of newspapers with those of other printed accounts is equally unbalanced. Relatively inexpensive accounts, such as Peter Williamson's much-reprinted captivity narrative, could not have hoped for the kind of exposure achieved by a single issue of a leading metropolitan newspaper, whose readership could number in the tens of thousands.⁶ More detailed works, such as those by James Adair and Jonathan Carver, probably had less exposure than a single issue of a poorly circulated provincial newspaper. In terms of quantity at least, the newspaper and periodical press reigned supreme.

The British press experienced a meteoric rise during the eighteenth century. Late seventeenth-century changes in printing laws allowed the metropolitan and provincial press to grow steadily in the first half of the

⁶ Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty: Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune, of Peter Williamson* (London, 1759).

eighteenth century, and the development of a reliable infrastructure and transportation system allowed it to flourish in the second half of the century.⁷ In Derby, for example, the first regular coach service to London began in 1734, leaving once a week and taking five days in summer and six in winter. Three years later a regular post was erected between Derby and Nottingham three times a week. In 1755 the mail left to and from London six days a week, and within the next two decades similar services were established with Birmingham and Chesterfield.⁸ Post from London to Oxford was so regular that by the late 1760s the fellows of Corpus Christi College could wager their bottles of port on the hour of the coach's arrival.⁹ These developments meant that news could be circulated swiftly throughout Britain, either directly through posting the London newspapers or through provincial newspapers, which existed in most major towns.¹⁰ In consequence, by the mid-eighteenth century the press was the wider public's primary source for information and debate.

Accurate, comprehensive circulation figures are unavailable for the entire period, but by the end of the American War of Independence at least 15.3 million newspapers per annum were distributed.¹¹ A typical provincial newspaper could expect to sell about 1,000 copies per week, and the average combined daily sale of the London newspapers in 1775 has been estimated at 41,615 copies.¹² For readers unable or unwilling to work through dozens of dailies, magazines that digested the news were a popular alternative. As early as the 1730s the *London Magazine* boasted print runs above 6,000. The greatest periodical, however, was the

⁷ John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), 158–60.

⁸ Harold S. Wilson, *History of the Post in Derby, 1635–1941* (Nottingham, 1990), 17–18.

⁹ Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Senior Common Room Wager Book, 1745–1810, C/21/4/1 (c.1768).

¹⁰ G. A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Press, 1700–1760* (Oxford, 1962); Hannah Barker, 'Catering For Provincial Tastes? Newspapers, Readership and Profit in Late Eighteenth-century England', *Historical Research*, 64 (1996), 42–60.

¹¹ This estimate is based on stamp-duty records. See Dora Mae Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution* (New Haven, 1930), 7. For other comments on newspaper statistics, see Arthur Aspinall, 'Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), 201–3; Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1987), 105–6; Solomon Lutnick, *The American Revolution and the British Press, 1775–1783* (Columbia, Miss., 1967), App. 1.

¹² Lutnick, *British Press*, 2.

Gentleman's Magazine, which had an estimated circulation of over 10,000 copies per month. The figures are more dramatic when one considers that most newspapers had multiple readers, especially those that found their way into one of over a thousand London and provincial coffee-houses, pubs, and taverns.¹³ There is also evidence that reading was not private, but that instead books and papers were read aloud for evening entertainment and as others went about their daily tasks.¹⁴ In this way the illiterate had access to the literate world. As a result, estimates of the ratio of readers to each copy have been as high as twenty to one.¹⁵

Although such figures are at best good guesses, contemporary anecdotal evidence supports claims of wide press distribution, indicating that readership extended from the elite through to the middling ranks and into the upper tiers of the labouring classes. As one commentator remarked in 1772, 'you will hardly find the meanest peasant, or the sootiest chimney-sweeper so unlettered, as not to be able to spell a Newspaper'.¹⁶ Blacksmiths, painters, and bakers were known to read newspapers in the coffee-houses and taverns they frequented.¹⁷ Artisan readership is confirmed by the advertisements carried in the newspapers, which caught the notice of a reader of the *Saint James's Chronicle* in 1776: 'the great Variety of Advertisements which make their daily Appearance, are a Proof of their Utility to all Ranks of People. The Merchant, the Artist, the Mechanick, have all Recourse to News-Papers.'¹⁸ Part of the appeal of newspapers and magazines was that they had something for everyone. The press carried information on national and international politics, war, gossip, commerce,

¹³ There is no exact account of the number of British meeting-places for the eighteenth century; however, Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses: A Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1963), estimates that in as early as 1739 London alone had 551 coffee-houses, 207 inns, and 447 taverns.

¹⁴ John Feather, 'The Power of Print: Word and Image in Eighteenth-Century England', in Jeremy Black (ed.), *Culture and Society in Britain, 1660–1800* (Manchester, 1997), 61; Naomi Tadmooor, "'In the even my wife read to me": Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century', in James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmooor (eds.) *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996), 162–74.

¹⁵ John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, 157.

¹⁶ *Joineriana: or the Book of Scraps* (London, 1772), ii. 9.

¹⁷ John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), 184; Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton, 1998), 52–60; Steven Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create": Coffeehouses and Restoration Culture', *Journal of Modern History*, 67 (1995), 807–34.

¹⁸ *Saint James's Chronicle*, 27 Apr. 1776.

social etiquette, morality, science, and distant lands and peoples. In short, newspapers and magazines were national pedagogues. As Samuel Johnson commented at a dinner party in 1772: ‘Sir, the mass of both of them [ancient Greeks and Romans] were barbarians. The mass of every people must be barbarous where there is not printing, and consequently knowledge is not generally diffused. Knowledge is diffused among our people by news-papers.’¹⁹ A letter to the *Morning Chronicle* agreed, noting that newspapers were useful to all stations: ‘there is nothing that conveys a more agreeable and rational amusement than a news-paper, the *utile* and *dulce* are happily blended together, and there is no rank or station in life but may receive instruction or entertainment there from.’ An insightful poem by George Crabbe, published in 1786, best summarized the universal fascination with the press:

To you all readers turn, and they look
 Pleas'd on a paper, who abhor a book;
 Those who ne'er design'd their Bible to peruse,
 Would think it hard to be deny'd their News;
 Sinners and Saints, the wisest with the weak,
 Here mingles tastes, and one amusement seek:
 This, like the public inn, provides a treat,
 Where each promiscuous guest sits down to eat;
 And such this mental food, as we may call,
 Something to all men, and to some men all.

The range of content, the poem continued, justified newspapers' appeal:

Next, in what rare production shall we trace
 Such various subjects in so small a space?
 As the first ship upon the waters bore
 Incongruous kinds that never met before;
 Or as some curious virtuoso joins,
 In one small room, moths, minerals, and coins,
 Birds, beasts, and fishes; nor refuses place
 To serpents, toads, and all the reptile race:
 So here, compress'd within a single sheet,
 Great things small, the mean and mighty meet.²⁰

¹⁹ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1970), 477.

²⁰ George Crabbe, *The News-Paper: A Poem by Reverend George Crabbe, Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Rutland* (London, 1785), 15–6.

Evidence of female readership also abounds. Some magazines, such as the *Lady's Magazine* and *Town and Country Magazine*, targeted female readers.²¹ Other newspapers and magazines regularly referred to their female readers when introducing a moral tale or domestic advice. Acknowledged female readers' interests were not confined to this traditional sphere, however. The *Edinburgh Magazine* carried digested 'illustrations of the first principles of philosophy, for the use of ladies', in March 1759.²² The *London Chronicle* printed an amusing, fictitious dialogue between a husband and wife in which they discussed the metropolitan and provincial newspapers over breakfast in 'The City patriot; a Breakfast Scene'.²³ The debate was not over manners, but instead over the reliability of the editors of colonial American newspapers on the eve of the American War of Independence. As in most dialogues of this sort, the editor's sentiments were clearly attributed to the wife.

The press is also the best means of gauging a discourse that transpired in the provinces as well as the metropolis. The press was an essential part of provincial culture, and both linked and defined provincial concerns against metropolitan ones. Horace Walpole poked fun at a friend bound for what he referred to as 'Squireland', asking if he would 'end like a fat farmer, repeating annually the prices of oats, and discussing stale newspapers'.²⁴ The provincial towns were not altogether different from London. By mid-century coffee-house culture had established itself outside the metropolis. Bristol had nine coffee-houses, Liverpool had six, and almost every market town had at least one.²⁵ Newspapers were indispensable there as well. London newspapers and magazines were distributed nationally to the elite ranks by their London agents, and the middling and lower orders obtained them via coffee-house proprietors and booksellers seeking to increase trade.²⁶ H. T. Dickinson provides an example from as early as 1710 of Sir John Verney sending regular copies of the London newspapers to a poor woman running a coffee-house in

²¹ Jan Fergus, 'Women, Class, and Growth of Magazine Readership in the Provinces, 1746–1780', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 16 (1986), 41–53. See also Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (New York, 1989).

²² *Edinburgh Magazine* (Mar. 1759), 130–2.

²³ *London Chronicle*, 13 May 1775.

²⁴ Walpole to Montague, 15 Apr. 1768, *Walpole Correspondence*, x, 258–9.

²⁵ Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics*, 7.

²⁶ C. Y. Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1997), 21; Cranfield, *Provincial Press*, 177.

Stony Stratford to assist her business.²⁷ By mid-century one could regularly receive the *London Evening Post* in most provincial towns and cities.²⁸ In 1777 a Birmingham coffee-house advertised that, in addition to a range of provincial papers, a special messenger enabled it to offer eleven London papers by the afternoon following their publication.²⁹

At the centre of provincial political culture was the local newspaper. The first appeared in 1701, and by the end of the century at least one was established in every major provincial town. Circulation is difficult to determine, but most editors could sell a thousand or more copies of their weekly paper. Successful ones sold many more. The *Newcastle Journal* claimed to sell 2,000 copies per week in 1739, and in 1780 the *Salisbury Journal* claimed a circulation of 4,000.³⁰ Perhaps the greatest success was Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal*, which in 1754 boasted 162 locations of sale across the country.³¹ By the 1770s the flow of newspapers was two-way, as provincial papers advertised for subscribers in the London press and London booksellers and coffee-houses carried a range of them for their patrons.³² By the American War of Independence, the *Derby Mercury*, for example, advertised that it was 'regularly filed every Saturday' at three London locations: the Chapter Coffee-House in Paterson Row, the London Coffee-House near Ludgate Hill, and Peele's Coffee-House in Fleet Street. Although the non-local news content of a provincial paper was largely a digest of the London papers, local editors selectively gleaned articles from the London press to meet their readers' tastes.³³ As a Scottish editor proclaimed in 1758, the greatest advantage of producing a provincial publication was that, when it came to news, editors could separate the wheat from the chaff:

We beg leave, with regret, to observe the great demand among us for the English Magazines; when it is obvious, that we enjoy one advantage which should intitle us to a preference; that is, the opportunity of perusing the various English collections of that kind, and culling from them such essays, and fugitive pieces, as are distinguished for their merit; agreeably to our lot, which we profess to be the rule of our conduct.³⁴

²⁷ H. T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1994), 23.

²⁸ Robert Harris, 'The London Evening Post and Mid-Eighteenth Century British Politics', *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 1132.

²⁹ Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds*, 58.

³⁰ Cranfield, *Provincial Press*, 168–75; Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins*, 19.

³¹ Ferdinand, *Benjamin Collins*, 21. ³² *Ibid.* 21–2.

³³ Hannah Barker, 'Catering for provincial tastes?', 42–60.

³⁴ *Edinburgh Magazine*, editor's preface to 1758, p. iv.

The regular appearance of certain themes and stories in the provincial press, therefore, indicates the likelihood of a national public interest.

The dilemma of whether and how much the press reflected or directed readers' sentiments is just as difficult to resolve in the eighteenth century as it is in the twenty-first. The press almost certainly did both, but the exact balance between the two is impossible to determine. In his poem on the newspaper, Crabbe likened the press in its influence over the minds of the middling and lower ranks to flies dropping maggots in a 'genial soil', where 'they grow, and breed a thousand more'.³⁵ A succession of government administrations certainly believed that the press could influence opinion. Beginning with Robert Walpole's investment of over £50,000 of secret-service money in payments to pamphleteers and newspaper editors in the 1730s, ministries attempted to manipulate the press to varying degrees.³⁶ When taken as a whole, however, the press by the second half of the century was independent, because the bulk of its revenues came from advertisements, not political bribes.³⁷

The press interacted with its readership and provided matter for further private reflection and public discussion. A universally recognized feature of the British press was that it brought issues to the public's attention. In his letter to the *London Chronicle* in 1773, Oliver Goldsmith called the press 'the protector of our freedom'. 'What concerns the Public,' he stated, 'most properly admits of a public discussion.'³⁸ As a letter to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* declared, this national forum was not exclusive: 'There is nothing so easy, or at least nothing that people are so free of, as giving advice to the nation. We have it both from those who have no knowledge of our affairs, and those who have no concern in them. We have it from Foreigners as well as Englishmen, Gentlemen and Tradesmen, and from every corner of England.'³⁹ During the second half of the eighteenth century the British adopted the practices of public discussion and critique as national rights. As the *Edinburgh Magazine*

³⁵ *The News-Paper*, 6–7.

³⁶ Lutnick, *British Press*, 15 and 24; Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press, 1780–1850* (London, 1949), 67; Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (London, 1987), chs. 7–8; Robert Harris, *A Patriot Press: National Politics and the London Press in the 1740s* (Oxford, 1993), 15; Robert R. Rea, *The English Press and Politics, 1760–1774* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1963).

³⁷ On the success of newspaper advertising, see Aspinall, 'Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers', 201–32.

³⁸ *London Chronicle*, 3 Apr. 1773.

³⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 24 Dec. 1774.

explained in 1759, in Britain ‘it is the privilege of the people to scrutinize into all public transactions, and each man pursues the comment which his own understanding, interest, or passion dictates. Though few among them are judges, yet every one is a critic.’ Moreover, it continued, the British practised this public criticism to perfection:

There is not perhaps a nation in the world where the people so eagerly calculate events before hand, or so vehemently debate the issue of public operations, as we do on this island. All arts and sciences are to be acquired by a regular method of study, or learnt by serving apprenticeships; but in the art of government, every Englishman is skilled by nature. One would think that there was something in the air of this island, which has the property of infusing political presumption.⁴⁰

Writing as ‘John Bull’ in an open letter addressed to the king in 1781, a reader of the *Public Advertiser* concurred: ‘it is the Birth-right of all free Britons to study public affairs, it is their duty to lay the result of their enquiries with candour and impartiality before your Majesty, and even the Public, when their views are laudable to your Royal interest, and the Good of their Fellow citizens.’⁴¹

The abundance and availability of the press also ensured that the public discussion was not bound by social status and wealth. The press enabled artisans, shopkeepers, or readers of any station to write scathing open letters to ministers and monarchs alike and publish them for the nation to see. Shrouded by the anonymity of the press, no one need offer the inhibiting acts of deference a personal encounter would require. As one critic complained, ‘without newspapers . . . our Country Villager, the Curate, and the Blacksmith, would lose the self-satisfaction of beings as wise [as] our First Minister of State’.⁴² Another critic lamented in 1772 that just fifty years prior—a time when ‘the Newswriter, or sober Journalist, was a mere abstract and brief chronicle of the time’—readers and editors ‘never dreamt’ of such open criticism. Now, however:

Points of all sorts, many of which were formerly accounted difficult and crabbed; are now discussed by all sorts of people, with the utmost ease and perspicuity—whose attention is taken up, not only with government, continental, colony,

⁴⁰ *Edinburgh Magazine* (June 1759), 291.

⁴¹ *Public Advertiser*, 14 July 1781, cited in Hannah Barker, ‘England, 1760–1815’, in Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows (eds.), *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760–1820* (Cambridge, 2002), 95.

⁴² *London Evening Post*, cited in Lutnick, *British Press*, 1.

company, county and corporation affairs—but they have also their neighbours business to mind, as well as their own:—private domestic occurrences, and particular transactions of individuals, being thought subjects of general curiosity and inquiry, no less than public ministerial measures.⁴³

Thus, despite its limitations, only in the press can one find a sense of anything approaching a truly ‘national’ discourse. The earliest such discussion regarding the empire transpired during the Seven Years War and its aftermath, and through it Indians moved for the first time to the forefront of British concerns.

THE FORGING CONTEXT OF WAR

The Seven Years War was the crucible in which widespread British public interest in North America and its native inhabitants was forged. Substantial public interest in the conflict developed in late 1754, when news arrived that a brash young colonel in the Virginia militia, George Washington, had ambushed a French party in the colonial backcountry near the Ohio river. The press was swift to assess the significance of the events, and within a few months war seemed inevitable. Although only ‘a trifling action’, Horace Walpole later reflected, it was the best, ‘for giving date to the war’.⁴⁴ This backwater clash was not significantly different from previous frontier skirmishes, but the growth and interdependency of European powers with their empires gave it a new context. Shots fired in the Ohio signalled naval battles on the African coast and massive land battles in India. The truly global extent of the conflict was nowhere more apparent than in the press, where such periodicals as the *Universal Magazine* carried news of clashes in Austria, India, New York, Russia, and the West Indies within a couple of inches of print.⁴⁵ In this context of imperial, wartime struggle, British attentions turned to Indians. Not surprisingly, descriptions of fighting styles and strategies took precedence over depictions of family life and architecture. Estimates of populations and the fighting capacities of Indian nations were presented in tables and narratives, and political dispositions of the various nations and the British

⁴³ *Joineriana*, ii. 14–15, 11, and 6.

⁴⁴ Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of King George II*, 3 vols., ed. John Brooke (New Haven, 1985), ii. 18.

⁴⁵ *Universal Magazine* (Dec. 1759), 359.

struggle for favour among them were charted. Although the Seven Years War concluded successfully for the British, Indians were depicted primarily in martial terms until war erupted once more in 1775.

From the first skirmishes that led to the Seven Years War, the conflict in America aroused the British nation's attention. Starting in the summer of 1754, newspapers and magazines carried outlines of competing claims to the Ohio region and reports of the military build-up in it, as well as the consequences if it were controlled by the French. This was not solely a metropolitan concern, as provincial newspapers kept pace with their London counterparts. Richard Latham, a yeoman farmer in southern Lancashire, pooled his resources with several of his neighbours at the start of the fighting in North America to buy a newspaper subscription, which he renewed until the conclusion of the war.⁴⁶ The *Derby Mercury* devoted page after page to the situation. As early as June 1754, after reprinting various extracts from the London papers, it declared that 'it is very easy to penetrate the Designs of the French, and, without the Spirit of Prophecy, to foretell, that if there is not a vigorous and united Opposition effectually to prevent it, they will, in a few years, lay a solid and lasting Foundation for making themselves in Time Masters of all America'.⁴⁷ The following month American Indians moved more firmly into the frame for the *Mercury's* readers, as the editor began intensive coverage of the competition for Indian allies.⁴⁸

North America, according to editors and readers across the country, was worth fighting over. At the beginning of the conflict the *Whitehall Evening Post* argued that America was so important to the future of world trade that, 'whatever Nation remains sole Master of North America, must, in Consequence of that Acquisition, give Law in Europe'.⁴⁹ The *Derby Mercury* concurred, reporting that all Europe was apprehensive about the emerging conflict in America, and then proceeded to print a number of letters from continental sources supporting the assertion.⁵⁰ As the war spread across the Atlantic, North America remained at the centre of the public's perception of the conflict and of Britain's war aims. A key concern expressed in the press throughout the war was that France's

⁴⁶ *The Account Book of Richard Latham, 1724–1767*, ed. Lorna Weatherill (Oxford, 1990), 94, 96, 97, 98, 100, 102, and 114.

⁴⁷ *Derby Mercury*, 14 June 1754.

⁴⁸ A substantial discussion of Indian alliances began in the 26 July issue's attention to the Iroquois disposition.

⁴⁹ *Whitehall Evening Post*, 4 Sept. 1755.

⁵⁰ *Derby Mercury*, 5 Sept. 1755.

success in America would make it, not Britain, the dominant naval power—an aim, claimed the *Ipswich Journal*, the French had held all along.⁵¹ A reader of the *London Chronicle* declared that: ‘Every man who knows any thing of history, must be sensible, that the ambition of France, for upwards of a century past, has been to be a Commercial and Maritime Power.’⁵² In its call for a formal declaration of war in January 1756, the *London Evening Post* turned to America for justification, proclaiming that: ‘The French have invaded our Lands, beat our Forces . . . ravaged the back Parts of some of our Settlements, and murder’d many Families.’⁵³ Even as the tide of war in North America turned decisively in Britain’s favour in 1759, and news from across the globe flooded into Britain, ‘the Affairs of our American Colonies’, as the *Edinburgh Chronicle* maintained, remained ‘so much the object of our general attention’.⁵⁴

American Indians figured as a key element in this intense national interest in the war from the start. This was the dual result of the initial British underestimation of Indian military might and gross overestimation of Indian affection for Britain. In a short span of time, Indians went from being a curious element in the American fighting scene to being vital players in a desperate struggle. Although Britain did not declare war until 1756, it essentially committed itself to one in North America the year before, when an expeditionary force of British regulars arrived under the command of General Edward Braddock. Initial expectations were that Braddock and the British regulars would march swiftly and easily to the forks of the Ohio river and remove the French force that had fortified itself there. A reader’s leader in the *Ipswich Journal* represented the public’s mood of confidence: ‘If War is declared, Quebeck and Cape Breton will fall of Course, as the French have no Force able to resist 12,000 Men [the number Britain was expected to send to North America] that will be at their respective posts in a short time.’⁵⁵ The slaughter of Braddock’s force in July 1755 by a numerically inferior body of Indians and a handful of French dealt a heavy blow to British confidence. Despite the arrival of British regulars, the North American frontier was virtually defenceless—a point emphasized by the loss of 3,000 British civilian colonists along the Ohio frontier to Indian war parties the following year.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Ipswich Journal*, 23 Apr. 1757.

⁵² *London Chronicle*, 18 Dec. 1759.

⁵³ *London Evening Post*, 10 Jan. 1756.

⁵⁴ *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 12 May 1759.

⁵⁵ *Ipswich Journal*, 19 July 1755.

⁵⁶ Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (Oxford, 1995), 198.

The reaction in Britain was one of shock. What followed was intense coverage of the battle and a public debate over its causes and implications. The *Gentleman's Magazine's* reflection encapsulated the dismay that was felt when news of this reversal of fortune reached Britain in August:

It was now expected that the next advices would give an account of the siege, if not the capture of fort Du Quesne [the French target of Braddock's campaign], as every one had been taught to believe, that our force in this part of the world was so much superior to the French, that to march and take possession was the same thing; but in the midst of this impatience and confidence, we were all reamed with a report that Gen. Braddock had been defeated.⁵⁷

The *General Advertiser* printed a diagram of troop layouts; the *Ipswich Journal* devoted most of its 30 August issue to the event.⁵⁸ The *Public Advertiser* and *Evening Post* carried reports from the colonies that the rank and file had fled or rebelled against their officers in the heat of the battle.⁵⁹ Other commentators were ready to blame the fiasco on the poor discipline of the Irish, as the two regiments originated in Ireland, which provoked the *Universal Magazine* to announce that such comments were 'misinformed' and 'very unjust reflections on the Irish nation in general'. 'Regiments on the Irish establishment are not, properly speaking, Irish troops,' it explained, 'but consist of English and Scotch, with a few natives of Ireland mixed with them, and sometimes none at all.'⁶⁰ The *London Magazine* defended the troops' behaviour, 'since any other regiment, in the like situation, would, most probably, have misbehaved in the same manner'.⁶¹

Historians have since constructed a solid defence of Braddock's strategy, but lacking such representation in 1755, the public's outrage focused primarily on the dead commander.⁶² One of the key eighteenth-century accusations was that he had mistreated the Cherokee scouts, who in consequence had abandoned the expedition.⁶³ Without an Indian

⁵⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Aug. 1755), 378.

⁵⁸ *General Advertiser*, 26 Aug. 1755; *Ipswich Journal*, 30 Aug. 1755.

⁵⁹ *Public Advertiser*, 28 Aug. 1755; *London Evening Post*, 28 Aug. 1755.

⁶⁰ *Universal Magazine* (Aug. 1755), 94.

⁶¹ *London Magazine* (Sept. 1755), 404.

⁶² Peter E. Russell, 'Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760', *WMQ* 35 (1978), 642–5; Daniel J. Beattie, 'The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare', in Marten Ultee (ed.), *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Alabama, 1986), 58–9.

⁶³ See e.g. *Derby Mercury*, 10 Oct. 1755; *Ipswich Journal*, 23 Oct. 1755; *Universal Magazine* (Aug. 1755), 94.

escort the British were helpless against the Indian style of ambush warfare. Furthermore, according to the *Derby Mercury*, Braddock arrogantly refused to let his troops engage in irregular tactics, 'finding it much below the Character of a General Officer'.⁶⁴

The lessons to be learned, concluded readers and editors alike, were that the Indians were a major variable in the North American theatre, and that in order to defeat them, Europeans needed both to make them allies and to fight like them. The *Universal Magazine* summarized the position in October 1755:

Since the manner of fighting among the Indians is different from that used by the Europeans, when any war happens, in which the Indians are either principals or auxiliaries, we must have Indians to oppose Indians. They must be fought in their own way. Regular forces, being wholly unacquainted with their way of making war, can be of no service against them; they are only of use to defend a fort, or to support Indian forces against regular troops. Besides, being used to fire from walls, they scorn to shoot from behind trees; and would rather die, than go out of their own way to practise such a low kind of military art; not considering that the nature of the country, which is, as it were, one continued forest, requires that the method of fighting, that is best which is most successful.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the magazine lamented, these were lessons that the French had already learned. As the war progressed, these conclusions were reinforced over and over again for British readers. For the remainder of the conflict, the British public regularly reflected on both Indian military prowess and France's superior ability to exploit this resource.

Considering the context, it is not surprising that post-1754 British depictions of Indians were dominated by images of Indian warfare. Whether the Indians were fighting alongside European regulars, in mixed war parties, or independently did not matter. As far as the newspaper and periodical press was concerned, the Indians were perpetually in arms and a fearsome force. The only consolation was that their tomahawks were sometimes taken up against Britain's enemies. Attempts to downplay Indian 'savagery' in war were scarce, and apologies for seeking Indian allies against the French or enemy Indian nations were virtually non-existent, as such regrets were deemed unnecessary.

Central to the depictions of Indian warfare was its refusal to differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. According to the press, as far

⁶⁴ *Derby Mercury*, 5 Sept. 1755.

⁶⁵ *Universal Magazine* (Oct. 1755), 145.

as the Indians were concerned war was an act of extermination.⁶⁶ For authority on the matter, the *Derby Mercury* turned to the governor of Pennsylvania's speech before the colony's assembly, in which he asserted that Indians 'delight in shedding human Blood, and make no Distinction as to Age or Sex, as to those that are arm'd against them, or such as they can surprize in their peaceful Habitations—all are alike the Objects of their Cruelty—slaughtering the tender infant and frighten'd Mother with equal Joy and Fierceness.'⁶⁷ When British defeats in 1755 had left the frontier open to attack, letters from the ravaged colonies filled the press; scarcely an issue of a newspaper appeared between the summer of 1755 and winter of 1757 without at least one horrific report. The *Ipswich Journal* of 6 September 1755 carried a lengthy account of Indians scalping children; the *Evening Advertiser* of 29 June 1756 described an infant that had been pulled from its dead mother's womb and scalped; and the *Gentleman's Magazine* reprinted an account of a 5-year-old girl who had survived being scalped in its January 1756 issue. Most accounts had prefaces from their senders, a typical example in the *General Evening Post* stating that: 'It is now my Calamity to live in a parched, withering, ravaged Country; a Field of Blood; of which you will see Accounts of in the public Papers I herewith send you.'⁶⁸ Reports from the frontier ultimately became so unpalatable that by 1756 some readers apparently began to doubt their authenticity, believing the French to be too polite to incite their Indian allies in such a way. A reader of the *Gentleman's Magazine* responded to such doubts with outrage. After a lengthy diatribe against the French, the letter concluded with a confident endorsement of the reports' validity:

the reader is convinced, that the French are not at all inferior to the most savage of the Indians, in their inhuman treatment of such of the fellow creatures as have the misfortune to fall under their power; and that a man may believe what is set forth in our American accounts, without any danger of being charged with inhumanity, or with credulity.⁶⁹

The conflict continued and gruesome reports rolled in, and soon no one openly questioned the destructive or indiscriminate style of Indian warfare.

⁶⁶ Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (London, 1998).

⁶⁷ *Derby Mercury*, 10 Oct. 1755.

⁶⁸ *General Evening Post*, 9 Oct. 1755.

⁶⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1756), 227–9.

A major consequence of this wartime coverage was that many readers concluded that fighting was the only occupation of interest to Indians. Warfare was portrayed as the key element of their cultural heritage and woven into every fibre of their being. In its description of the American theatre of the war for 1757, the *Universal Magazine* identified combat as the defining aspect of American Indian culture: 'Almost the sole occupation of the American is war, or such an exercise as qualifies him for it. His whole glory consists in this; and no man is at all considered until he has increased the strength of his country with a captive, or adorned his house with the scalp of one of its enemies.'⁷⁰

Both during and after this decade of conflict, newspapers homed in on accounts that described Indians' preparations for war, conduct of it, and treatment of prisoners. These were the topics that editors excerpted even from accounts that sympathetically described Indians or only devoted a handful of pages to them. The *London Chronicle's* summary and review in 1771 of a translated edition of Bossue's *Travels through the Part of North America Formerly Called Louisiana* focused almost exclusively on the warring habits of the natives.⁷¹ Included in the extract were descriptions of a war feast, a war dance, the campaign, and the return of the warriors with prisoners for communal torture. When commenting on 'Guthrie's new Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar' in August 1770, despite the enormous breadth of the work, the *London Chronicle* chose to extract and adorn its entire front page with what it referred to as 'An Account of the manner in which the Original Inhabitants of America conduct their Wars; and their barbarous Treatment of their Prisoners'.⁷² The extract graphically illustrated Indians' refusal to distinguish between civilians and combatants, noting that 'they trample over, they insult the dead bodies, tearing the scalp from the head, wallowing in their blood like wild beasts, and sometimes devouring flesh'. Sympathetic descriptions or favourable commentary were not sought, and at times they appear to have been consciously avoided. The only extracts from James Adair's *History of the American Indians* that appeared outside review magazines carried the headlines 'An Account of the North American Indians Barbarity to their Captives, and their Manner of devoting them to Death' and 'Instances of the Constancy, Fortitude and Presence of Mind of the North American

⁷⁰ *Universal Magazine* (May 1757), 198.

⁷¹ *London Chronicle*, 2 Nov. 1771.

⁷² *London Chronicle*, 18 Aug. 1770.

Indians, when suffering from the fiery Tortures'.⁷³ The extracted passages that followed were perhaps the most gruesome paragraphs in the 464-page book, which otherwise offers one of the most positive and balanced assessments of Indians found in the period.

Indians were considered to be excellent practitioners of their craft. A widely reprinted account from the 22 September 1755 edition of the *New-York Mercury* described an incident in which a white man's gun broke in the heat of battle, causing him to panic. The brave Indian ally standing next to him 'gave him his, jumped over the breast-work, ran up and took a gun out of a Frenchman's hand, turn'd it, shot the man he took it from, and returned to his post'.⁷⁴ The *London Magazine* readily admitted that 'it may probably be in every war we have with the Indians, that they had the better of us in firing; for as they are obliged to make daily use of their fire-arms... they are much better marksmen than our people'.⁷⁵ Fleeing was useless, explained the *London Chronicle*, because Indians' ability to track their enemies was recognized as unparalleled:

They can trace out their enemies, at an immense distance, by the smoke of their fires, which they smell, and by the tracks of their feet on the ground, imperceptible to an European eye, but which they can count and distinguish with the utmost facility. They even distinguish the different nations with whom they are acquainted, and can determine the precise time when they passed, where an European could not, with all his glasses, distinguish footsteps at all.⁷⁶

Even after the British had defeated the French and successfully invaded the Ohio heartland of their Indian adversaries, the fighting prowess of the Indians was respected, if not feared. The *Scots Magazine* readily endorsed an account from Colonel Henry Bouquet's successful 1765 expedition into the Ohio region, which had enforced a harsh set of peace terms on the Indian communities that had fought against the British in Pontiac's War (1763–6), declaring that the 'work is equally entertaining, instructive, and important'.⁷⁷ In the magazine's summary of the account, it heavily emphasized the fighting capacity of the Indians, depicting them as running for days without resting, steering 'as if by instinct, through trackless woods', and waiting to ambush enemies 'with astonishing

⁷³ *London Magazine*, contents headings for Apr. 1775 and May 1775.

⁷⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1755), 519.

⁷⁵ *London Magazine* (Feb. 1756), 75.

⁷⁶ *London Chronicle*, 18 Aug. 1770.

⁷⁷ *Scots Magazine* (May 1766), 231–2.

patience'. In battle, Indians were 'infinitely more active and dangerous than the Hussars and Pandours'. Britain might win through sheer volume of men and materials, but in even combat the Indians remained superior in North America.

IMPERIAL CONCERNS

Britain's inability to rally significant numbers of American Indians as allies at the beginning of the Seven Years War dismayed Britons. Reports of apparent French diplomatic successes with the Indians and the subsequent news of Indian-ravaged frontiers provoked reflection on how best to correct the situation. British victory did not halt the discussion, but instead propelled it forward, as Britons now contemplated how to maintain hegemony over the American interior and its Indian inhabitants. British discussions were frank and pragmatic. They were quick to compare British efforts and tactics with those of rival European powers. Violence, or at least Indians' potential for it, dominated the public discourse, but warfare was not the only topic to receive attention. Religion, political life, and commerce all received secondary, but nevertheless sustained, attention. However, these representations and discussions in the press were also shaped by pragmatic, imperial concerns. Public discussion was not motivated primarily by a curiosity about Indians as primitive 'others'; rather, interest revolved around determining how various aspects of Indian society and culture could be manipulated for purposes of control and economic gain.

Features of Indian culture that caught the attention of contemporary travellers and historians, such as gender roles and family life, were virtually ignored in the press. If something did not directly threaten or enhance Britain or its possessions, then the press devoted little space to it. For example, the most common appearance of Indian women in the three decades between the outbreak of the Seven Years War and the end of the American War of Independence was in accounts describing how they orchestrated the torture of prisoners of war.⁷⁸ The British were left to

⁷⁸ For examples, see *Universal Magazine* (May 1757), 200–1; *London Chronicle*, 18 Aug. 1770 and 2 Nov. 1771. An opposing view of how women treated one white prisoner mercifully can be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1758), 218–21.

explore 'curious', as opposed to practical, aspects of Indian culture through the more comprehensive travel accounts and histories. And, as argued in the previous chapter, they generally did not.

Although the British regularly contrasted their own handling of Indian affairs with that of France, Spain's policies received little attention in the press. In fact, during the second half of the eighteenth century British discussions about Spain's handling of its American empire were more a part of the intensifying debate on Britain's future in Asia. When the British assumed control of the Floridas in 1763 under the terms of the Peace of Paris, officers' reports of tensions between natives and the Spanish were noted in the press, but these provoked little public comment. Diatribes against the Spanish in South America were more common, but still rare. The Black Legend did not feature prominently in the British public arena until the 1770s and 1780s, when British rule in India was compared by critics to Spanish rule in South America. Popular plays such as the *Tragedy of Alzuma*, which opened in Covent Garden in February 1773, carried scarcely veiled criticisms of British rule in India, which had been intensely and publicly debated the previous year in parliament.⁷⁹ The *London Chronicle* carried large extracts from the play attacking European imperialism in two consecutive editions.⁸⁰ For any readers who were still unable to draw the parallel, the paper printed a letter from 'Rationalis' under the second major extract, who made the point bluntly:

India has ever been, and is a drain to us of our silver; but that not being sufficient to purchase the luxuries of that country, they have lately fallen on a more effectual way to come at them: I mean by rapine and plunder, which we call war, and thereby committing greater violence, outrage, and inhumanity, than ever was practised by Cortez or Pizarro.

The trial of Warren Hastings, which began in 1786, was effectively a trial of Britain's conduct in India, and comparisons with the Spanish in South America were again common. One of Hastings's prosecutors, Richard Sheridan, wrote and produced his own play, *Pizarro*, which heavily emphasized the resemblance.

⁷⁹ On the intense press of coverage of East Indian affairs in 1772, see Jeremy Osborn, 'India, Parliament and the Press under George III: A Study of English Attitudes Towards the East India Company and Empire in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', Oxford University, D.Phil. thesis (1999), ch. 4.

⁸⁰ *London Chronicle*, 25 Feb. and 6 March 1773.

From the outset of the Seven Years War, the press informed the public that the French had won the hearts and minds of the surrounding Indian nations to the peril of British interests. American Indian diplomacy became a hot topic as the prospect of a full-scale war in North America grew and the British realized how important Indians would be to its outcome. The object of printing extracts from these meetings was partly, as the *London Magazine* put it, 'to shew our Readers the manner of treating with these People', but these conferences were highlighted in the press mainly because of their wider implications. As the *Cheshire Advertiser* noted in February 1757:

Some of the Philadelphia Accounts are full of scalplings of the Inhabitants on the Frontiers; others, of the burning of Houses, and destroying Plantations; and some go so far as to mention the Destruction of whole Counties.—Such dreadful Devastations are the Consequence of losing our Indians Allies—and of such Advantage are they to the French.⁸¹

Even outside London, diplomatic meetings received attention in the press that easily rivalled that accorded to political intrigue on the European continent.⁸² Digests of minutes from meetings were printed, and extracts of the speeches of Indian headmen often accompanied them. The conclusion to be drawn from these reports was clear even to a provincial audience in 1754: 'That we have lost, in a great Measure, all the sincere Friendship and Attachment which did once subsist between us and the Indians . . . is notorious to the world.'⁸³

The consensus of opinion in the British press was that the French had been far more successful. Their accomplishments were thought to have been based on two important factors: better organization and an aggressiveness that appealed to the Indians. Although outnumbered by the British in North America by a ratio of 20:1 in 1754, the French were portrayed in the press as benefiting from their more centralized and authoritative government. Such a system was not ideal in terms of personal liberty, but it ensured against inconsistent treatment of the Indians and the playing out of regional rivalries in the context of Indian relations. 'The Strength of our colonies on the other hand is divided,' observed the *Universal*

⁸¹ *Cheshire Advertiser*, 15 Feb. 1757.

⁸² For a handful of examples from 1755–6, see *Derby Mercury*, 5 July, 26 July, and 20 Sept. 1754, 12 and 15 Sept. 1755, and 12 Nov. 1756; *Ipswich Journal*, 6 Sept. and 20 Sept. 1755, and 10 Jan. 1756.

⁸³ *Derby Mercury*, 18 Oct. 1754.

Magazine in May 1757, whereas, 'the French service is not exposed to these embarrassments; and hence they project without discovery, and we scarce collect their designs, till we are attacked and defeated.'⁸⁴ French militarism was also portrayed as key to success with the Indians. The Indians generally perceived the French as the stronger side, and the press reported this. A widely printed extract of an Iroquois headman's speech at the Albany Congress in July 1754 summarized the situation: 'Brethren, you were desirous we should open our Minds and Hearts to you; look at the French, they are Men; they are fortifying every where; but, we are ashamed to say it, you are all like Women, bare and open, without Fortifications.'⁸⁵

Fear of French influence was so great that even after they had been defeated, the British public, like the government, remained apprehensive. Reports from the colonies did little to allay such fears. When war with France in North America appeared to be reaching a conclusion, a report described how two British-allied Mohawks failed to turn French-allied Indians to the British side. Although the French allies admitted 'the English, formerly women, were now turned to men', they nevertheless claimed that the British would not defeat the French, because soon the French king would 'take the little English king, and pinch him till he makes him cry out, and give back what he has stolen'.⁸⁶ The British press blamed much Indian disgruntlement on French diplomatic manoeuvrings. When the Cherokee, who had limited contact with the French, independently went to war against the British in 1759, some Britons blamed the French, rather than the Indian-colonial feuds that had resulted in murders on both sides. As the *Edinburgh Magazine* explained in January 1761: 'The French there, now are, and ever will be, enemies to the English, and have lately stirred up the Cherokees, and other Indian nations, to fall upon the remote western parts of Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia, and to commit so many barbarous and cruel murders on the English subjects.'⁸⁷ When Pontiac's War erupted in 1763, accusations of official French involvement were again rife. The *London Chronicle* declared, falsely, that the defeated French had promised to return if the

⁸⁴ *Universal Magazine* (May 1757), 202. For similar examples of complaints, see also *Gentleman's Magazine* (Oct. 1755), 437; *London Chronicle*, 24 Feb. 1757.

⁸⁵ *Ipswich Journal*, 7 June 1755; *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1755), 252–6.

⁸⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Dec. 1759), 560, and repr. in the *Derby Mercury*, 4 Jan. 1760.

⁸⁷ *Edinburgh Magazine* (Jan. 1761), p. 19.

Indians rose up against the British.⁸⁸ Hard evidence seemed to matter very little in stirring up editors and their audiences against the French.

A major consequence of these fears was the almost universal call for the total destruction of French interests in North America, because, as a reader of the *Edinburgh Chronicle* asserted: 'Whilst any part of the continent is inhabited by the French so long the peace of Britain is precarious.'⁸⁹ Like the imperial government in Whitehall, the British public was not bent on immediate westward expansion or the extermination of the Indians, but rather in securing the present settlements. The Indians could not be removed, but their French instigators could. Some readers called for an invasion of Louisiana, fearing that a continued French presence would eventually make it another Canada.⁹⁰ A letter from a reader printed in London's *Evening Post* in September 1763 best summarized the public's position:

For while there is a Frenchman, or a Frenchman's descendant allowed, either in the character of British subjects, neutrals, or what not, to set foot in any part of North America, there will never cease Murders, Robberies, desolation and death. Though they even swear allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, and shelter themselves under the protection of our most gracious King, they will be stimulated by their countrymen to stir up the Indians, and can easily, under the appearance of trade, furnish them with Fire-Arms.⁹¹

American Indian commerce and attitudes to property entered into the public discussion in two major ways. The first was in relation to the Indians' willingness—or unwillingness, as the case usually was—to detach themselves from their lands and make way for white settlers. Neither the British public, nor the government for that matter, took much interest in the Lockean position that Indians' failure to adequately 'improve' their lands through European-style agriculture precluded them from claiming legitimate ownership.⁹² Far more pertinent was Indians' ability to defend their property.

⁸⁸ *London Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1763.

⁸⁹ For a range of examples, see *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 19 Jan. and 11 Feb. 1760; *London Chronicle*, 22 Dec. 1759 and 19 Jan. 1760; *Derby Mercury*, 30 Sept. 1763.

⁹⁰ For examples, see *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 1 Mar. 1760; *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1761), 15–16; *London Chronicle*, 5 Feb. 1761.

⁹¹ *London Evening Post*, 22 Sept. 1763.

⁹² A very rare example of support for this view can be found in a reprinted letter from America in the *London Chronicle*, 27 Oct. 1763. For Locke's view, see *Two Treatises of*

Territorial expansion was not at the top of the public's agenda for America. The British generally were far more concerned with preserving what they had. At the outset of the Seven Years War, the *Gentleman's Magazine* reprinted a letter from the *Evening Advertiser* that called interior settlements 'a dead weight' and declared, 'the English possess already more land in America, than will be sufficiently peopled in five hundred years. This is time enough to look forward; and let us not covet more, till we have peopled and cultivated our present possession.'⁹³ Even in the wake of victory, the British public did not endorse expansion. No one in the British press advocated the extermination of native populations to clear lands for settlement. Virtually everyone believed by 1763 that Indian wars were costly and pointless. Any territorial gain was recognized as nearly impossible to defend, and Indian retaliation on families across the frontier was feared. In the *Scots Magazine's* summary of 1763, a year which once again saw countless reports of massacres along the American frontier, readers were reminded that Indian power must be taken seriously: 'The Indians along the back of, and, interspersed with, our colonies, are in general a brave and hardy people, benevolent and grateful to those whom they look upon as their friends, not soon provoked, but when once thoroughly so, like most other savages, horridly cruel in their revenge.'⁹⁴ Settling the lands in light of the recent raids, claimed the *London Chronicle*, was simply not worth the cost.⁹⁵ Like the British imperial government (as detailed in Chapter 4) therefore, the public was reluctant to advocate expansion, not out of humanitarian concern for the Indians, but out of a desire to avoid Indian wars.

The other major context in which American Indian commerce and attitudes to property were discussed was that presented by Indian consumption of British goods. Interest in Indian consumerism was rooted in two major concerns: Indian communities as emerging markets for British goods, and the possibility of using Indians' dependence on European goods to influence them. Before 1754 the British public would have been aware of the fur trade, as London fashion often demanded pelts

Government, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 1988), 293–302. Most of the Indian nations involved in the Seven Years War were semi-sedentary, but, with the exception of the Cherokee, this was not widely recognized in the British press.

⁹³ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1754), 504.

⁹⁴ *Scots Magazine* (Feb. 1764), 64.

⁹⁵ *London Chronicle*, 15 Dec. 1763.

and furs, especially those of beavers. Widespread public awareness of the significance of the trade in commercial or strategic terms, or what the Indians wanted in exchange, however, probably did not exist. The press coverage was too sporadic in terms of content and emphasis. Thus, discussions about Indian markets during this period were largely about their potential. Articles on the British campaign to capture Niagara printed in the autumn of 1759 emphasized its strategic importance in usurping Indian trade from the French. The *London Chronicle* and *Edinburgh Chronicle*, for example, both devoted four pages to the site's military and trading significance.⁹⁶ As news of the successful British campaign to capture Montreal reached Britain the following year, details of the city's commercial significance followed. The *Universal Magazine's* description of the city's trading links with Indians was the lead article in its November issue, which also included a large map of the town.⁹⁷ Hopes for gaining a monopoly over the Indian trade led more than one commentator grossly to overestimate its value. The *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Derby Mercury* both printed letters from American sources claiming that, 'if rightly managed, [the Indian trade] may prove richer than the Mines of Mexico'.⁹⁸ A reader's letter to the *Derby Mercury* also described the potential market of the 'innumerable Tribes of Savages contributing to the Consumption' of Britain's goods as 'Sources of exhaustless Wealth'.⁹⁹ A reader's letter to the *Scots Magazine* towards the end of the conflict argued that, now that Britain had vanquished the French, extinguishing the Indians was bad policy. They were much more useful as customers: 'As a commercial nation, we would certainly suffer: no people pay so much for British manufactures as they do; no returns for our course [*sic*] woollens, linens, and trifling baubles, are more beneficial for our trade than their valuable furs.'¹⁰⁰

The potential strategic importance of a monopoly was also important in public discussions. After 1754 readers were informed of the Indian reliance on certain European goods.¹⁰¹ As the *Edinburgh Chronicle*

⁹⁶ *London Chronicle*, 8 Sept. 1759; *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 22 Sept. 1759.

⁹⁷ *Universal Magazine* (Nov. 1759), 226–8.

⁹⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1760); *Derby Mercury*, 26 Jan 1759.

⁹⁹ *Derby Mercury*, 1 Feb. 1760. ¹⁰⁰ *Scots Magazine* (Jan. 1763), 29.

¹⁰¹ On Indians' reliance upon European goods, see George Irving Quimby, *Indian Culture and European Trade Goods: Archaeology of the Historic Period in the Western Great Lakes Region* (Madison, Wisc., 1966); Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in*

explained in January 1760, the range of goods was diverse: 'Every Indian now wears a woollen blanket, a linen shirt, and cloth stockings; besides a knife, a hatchet, and a gun.'¹⁰² In its 1755 description of the Iroquois, who often acted as middlemen in distributing European goods to other Indian nations, the *Derby Mercury* explained that 'they consider these two nations [Britain and France] only in regard to their Merchandize'.¹⁰³ The *Gentleman's Magazine* concurred, noting that they were primarily drawn to the British colonies 'by the advantages of commerce'.¹⁰⁴ By mid-century British weaponry had largely prevailed over its Native American counterparts, to the extent that many Indian communities relied on it.¹⁰⁵ British audiences were informed of Indians' dependence by commentary and extracted speeches. As a speech of a Delaware headman printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in February 1759 revealed to readers: 'You [British negotiators] have, said he, forgot to bring with you ammunition, of which we always used to receive a sufficient quantity, not only to serve us on our journey, but to support us in our hunting season, that we might be enabled to make provisions for our families.'¹⁰⁶ Reporting in March 1762 on a peace conference with the Cherokee the previous December, the *London Chronicle* highlighted the minutes which detailed the Indians' dependence: 'Small quantity of powder and ball was, after repeated applications, given them, as necessaries also; for it was affirmed, that without it, it would be impossible for them to subsist after they should leave the Settlements.'¹⁰⁷ The forceful removal of French competition

Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities (Cambridge, 1995), 11–13; Daniel Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistency, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (London, 1983), 68; Kathryn E. Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (London, 1993), 121–38; E. S. Lohse, 'Trade Goods', in William C. Sturtevant (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4: *History of Indian–White Relations*, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn (Washington, DC, 1988), 198–403;

¹⁰² *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 19 Jan 1760.

¹⁰³ *Derby Mercury*, 10 Oct. 1755. On the Iroquois role as middlemen in the Euro-American trade, see Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), chs. 4–7.

¹⁰⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Aug. 1755), 351.

¹⁰⁵ Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 14–15, argues that by King Philip's War (1675–6) the evolution of the use of European weapons in Indian wilderness warfare was complete.

¹⁰⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Feb. 1759), 115.

¹⁰⁷ *London Chronicle*, 16 Mar. 1762.

meant that the British monopoly could be used to manipulate the dependent Indians—an opportunity the public wanted to exploit.¹⁰⁸ A widely printed letter from ‘Simplicius’ in February 1763, which emphasized the economic importance of Canada over Guadeloupe, even likened the potentially dependent Indians to Guadeloupe’s African slaves: ‘And are we to consider as nothing the many nations of savages that will be reduced to our subjection,’ he asserted, ‘and thereby become, with their posterities, our hereditary slaves?’¹⁰⁹

THE AMERICAN INDIAN AS A NOBLE SAVAGE

The image of primitive man as the possessor of natural virtues, not yet corrupted by modern civilization, was already an old one by the time it was applied to American Indians.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, scholars have exaggerated eighteenth-century attempts to portray Indians either as noble savages or at least sympathetically. This has resulted primarily from their tendency to concentrate on a narrow range of travel accounts and novels, in which Indians are often treated positively, as representative of British sentiments as a whole.¹¹¹ Studies of white–Indian relations have also underplayed the significance and dynamism of European involvement, and instead have emphasized the colonial European perspective to the point of exclusivity. Focusing on on-the-ground relationships is certainly understandable, but this has been done at the price of portraying European societies as monolithic, unresponsive, and wholly out of touch with North American transactions. Given the presumed context of European lack of interest, it has been easy to accept the viewpoints of a

¹⁰⁸ *London Chronicle*, 27 Oct. 1763 and 10 Jan. 1764.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1763.

¹¹⁰ Roger Bartra, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, trans. Carl T. Berrisford (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1994).

¹¹¹ For examples, see Henry Savage, Jr., *Discovering America, 1700–1875* (London, 1979), who relies heavily on the published accounts of Adair, Carver, and the French missionaries; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to Present* (New York, 1978), part 3; Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism* (New York, 1928); William Brandon, *New Worlds For Old: Reports from the New World and the Effect on the Development of Social Thought in Europe, 1500–1800* (Athens, Ohio, 1986); Hayden White, ‘The Noble Savage Theme as a Fetish’, in Fredi Chiappelli *et al.* (eds.), *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (London, 1976), i. 121.

handful of contemporary accounts as representative; however, as an examination of the newspaper and periodical press reveals, the British at least were acutely aware of North American developments after 1754, and they pursued representations and discussions that reflected their own interests. These interests were forged predominately in a wartime context, and thus left little room for counterintuitive concepts such as that of the noble savage.

Because the context of the growth of interest in American Indians in Britain was one of war, the press did not stress their primitive innocence. Instead, readers were bombarded with countless tales of massacres, torture, and brutality. Therefore, it is not surprising that the British rejected attempts to portray American Indians as noble, sentimentalized, or romantic savages during this period. The impact of images from the war was lasting. Even in the relative peace of the 1770s, the *Critical Review* took the opportunity to dismiss any notion that primitive living might have advantages in its review of a translation of Peter Kalm's *Travels into North America*:

The manifold advantages derived to mankind from the invention of arts, and the numberless conveniences for which we stand indebted to the industry of former ages, can be no way so clearly discerned, as by an attentive survey of a people entirely destitute of them. Such were the Indians of North America before the Europeans landed upon that new world. The intolerable pains and labour by which they accomplished what is executed with the greatest ease by a little art, may sufficiently convince us of our happiness in possessing it.¹¹²

Although dating back to Tacitus' *Germania*, the concept of the noble savage in this part of the eighteenth century was most heavily identified with Jean-Jacques Rousseau. English translations of his works were not in short supply, and newspapers and magazines often reprinted extracts and commented upon them. Although his other works and propositions were often admired, the popular interpretation of Rousseau's paradoxical image of the noble savage was firmly rejected in the 1760s. James Boswell was intrigued if not captivated by the concept of the noble savage, but Samuel Johnson's remarks to him best summarize the typical view. While dining out in September of 1769, Johnson and Boswell discussed the argument for the superior happiness of savage life, which Boswell called

¹¹² *Critical Review* (July 1771), p. 49.

one of 'the usual fanciful topics' of the day. Johnson adamantly denied the possibility: 'Sir, there can be nothing more false. The savages have no bodily advantages beyond those of civilised men. They have not better health; as to care or mental uneasiness, they are not above it, but below it, like bears. No, Sir; you are not to talk such paradox: let me have no more on't.'¹¹³ When reviewing Rousseau's *Social Contract* in May 1762, the *Monthly Review* stated:

It is in society only we behold the man; in Mr. Rousseau's state of nature, we see only a mere animal, a brute! And as to happiness, it is absurd to pretend to it. If savage man hath fewer wants, he hath fewer enjoyments; if he be subject to fewer diseases, he hath not the same opportunity of indulging the passion and appetites of health. What is granted to him in the article of pain, is denied to him in that of pleasure; and all his pretended superiority of virtue and happiness, consists in unconscious innocence and stupid insensibility.¹¹⁴

In this rare instance even the *Monthly Review's* arch-rival, the *Critical Review*, agreed, declaring in its opening sentence: 'To such a pitch hath human knowledge arrived, that genius is forced to disclose itself by broaching paradoxes, and weaving subtle webs of speculation, for no other purpose than to confound and entangle the understanding.'¹¹⁵ *Town and Country* attacked Rousseau personally by printing a reader's account of the 'Vanity of Rousseau', which would 'serve as a confirmation of the vanity and self-importance of that unaccountable man.'¹¹⁶ The *London Chronicle* treated him no better.¹¹⁷ The reviewer took aim specifically at Rousseau's proposition of the noble savage, and argued that the worst Christian was better than the best savage:

After all, the meanest Christian must make a better patriot, and a much more social human being, than the model of perfection which John James [i.e. Rousseau] exhibits in his Natural Man, who runs wild and naked in the woods upon his hands and legs, eats acorns, shuns his species, only when the spirit of copulation moves him, and lives and dies among his brother-brutes.

And for more on the noble savage the reader was advised to 'see the *Dissertation on the Causes of inequality of Mankind* by this same John James Rousseau, designed by nature to howl in a wilderness, but

¹¹³ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 405.

¹¹⁵ *Critical Review* (Feb. 1762), 100.

¹¹⁷ *London Chronicle*, 29 June 1762.

¹¹⁴ *Monthly Review* (May 1762), 342.

¹¹⁶ *Town and Country* (Jan. 1769), 30–1.

converted by force and pernicious influence of the social contract, into a citizen of Geneva’.

This is not to suggest that primitives were never used to criticize British society during the eighteenth century. The presumed innocence of the early state of civilization was occasionally deployed in Britain to attack the corrupting power of commerce, the privileges of birth over merit, and the constraints that the state placed on liberty. As noted in the previous chapter, the 1710 Mohawk visit provoked some critiques of British society, such as those in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, in which the Indians were portrayed as idyllic savages. Such critiques were absent during the 1750s and 1760s, and when they re-emerged in the 1770s Indians were not the representative primitives. As discussed later in Chapter 7, the British public’s rejection of the American Indian as a candidate for the role of the noble savage was more a dismissal of the idea of Indians fitting the image than of the concept itself. Tahitians, as will be argued, were readily accepted by the British as quasi-noble savages in the wake of the Cook voyages. Rousseau’s expositions, however, had the poor timing of appearing in Britain at the end of a decade of bloody and vivid conflict with noble-savage candidates. These heavily publicized conflicts had soured Britons on both the concept of the noble savage and, more lastingly, Indians themselves.

Very occasionally, particularly in fiction, a noble-savage-styled Indian was employed as a tool to critique post-1754 British society. A typical example is John Shebbeare’s *Lydia; or Filial Piety*, published in London in 1755, in which the forests of North America are compared to London. In the opening pages the hero, Canassatego, lamented the corrupting influence of the Europeans: ‘He beheld the Indian Chiefs wrapt in European manufactures, as men bearing the badge of slavery. He detested the day which brought them that intoxicating fluid which had enervated their former strength and ancient valour.’¹¹⁸ As a result, the hero was a purist: he never drank liquor, wore only animal skins, and refused to visit the American cities, detesting the colonists for their broken faith and lies. He also assumed that the colonists were nothing more than exiles, due to their dishonest nature, and wondered ‘whether that king and [British] people answered to all the grand accounts which he had heard about them’.¹¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the young Indian travelled to Britain only to experience the

¹¹⁸ John Shebbeare, *Lydia; or Filial Piety* (London, 1755 and again in 1769), 6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 7–8.

severest of disappointments. Canassatego's naive sincerity was used to attack false politeness, hypocrisy, and dishonesty of politicians. At one point he met the prime minister, whom he described as 'faithless'.¹²⁰ Ultimately, Canassatego determined that his own culture was superior and that man was happier in the wilderness, to which the hero returned.

There appears to be little evidence that such occasional uses of American Indians in fiction had a significant impact on the common British perception of actual North American Indians. The Indian of literary fiction was generic and could have been any primitive—accuracy of dress or tribal affiliation usually was unimportant. Moreover, the appearance of Indians in fiction was rare, such works did not sell well in this period, and few of the plays portraying Indians in a favourable light were ever performed.¹²¹ Shebbeare's *Lydia* was exceptional in that it went through three editions during the eighteenth century. Natives of the New World were sympathetically and sentimentally treated on a regular basis only after the focus of the British discourse on empire shifted south and east later in the century. Only then did writers such as Robert Southey and Richard Sheridan manipulate the histories of natives of the New World to critique British imperial expansion. By this time Chief Teyoninhokerawen was lecturing to polite society in Bath.¹²² So long as British battles with American Indians received detailed coverage in the British press, the image of the Indian had little chance of improving.

Representations of American Indians were otherwise employed. Rather than portraying them as a symbol of lost innocence, Britons used North American Indians as a benchmark for barbarity and depravity. Horace Walpole often used references to American Indians to shame and insult those whom he loathed: impolite companions were 'Iroquois', and the rabble were 'Cherokee'. When commenting on London's Gordon Riots in 1780, he remarked that: 'When prisons are levelled to the ground, when the bank is aimed at, and reformation is attempted by conflagrations, the savages of Canada are the only fit allies of Lord George Gordon and his crew.'¹²³ The *Ipswich Journal* reprinted an article from the

¹²⁰ John Shebbeare, *Lydia; or Filial Piety* (London, 1755 and again in 1769), 205.

¹²¹ Benjamin Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1925), 78.

¹²² *The Times*, 31 Jan. 1805, p. 3 col. b and 5 Feb. 1805, p. 3 col. e.

¹²³ Walpole to Lord Stratford, 12 June 1780, *Walpole Correspondence*, xxxv. 354. For other examples of Walpole and his correspondents using the term 'Indians' to insult or

General Evening Post, which used the Indians to poke fun at the Scots. The article reported that when a Scottish regiment landed in New York in the summer of 1756, 'an incredible Number of Indians flocked to them from all Quarters; on which account an Interpreter was chosen on each Side, and from their Dress, and the great Similitude of their Language, the Indians concluded they were originally one and the same People'.¹²⁴ Reporting on a murder at 'a little Public House at Kill y cwm' in Wales in 1772, *Jackson's Oxford Journal* drew on the popular image of Indian brutality as a reference point, describing the crime as:

one of the most shocking Acts of wanton Cruelty and most savage Barbarity ever heard of. It is of so brutal a Nature that Decency will not suffer the most distant Hint of the horrid Deed: suffice it to say, that a Woman was the most miserable Object, and the Perpetrators of it four young Men of the Landover. We shudder at the Barbarity of Indians, who roast their Prisoners alive; but the detestable, the hellish Brutality of these Villains is far more horrible.¹²⁵

An excellent illustration of how critics used the presumed savagery of American Indians to censure British society is a satirical dialogue against duelling that first appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in May 1760.¹²⁶ The dialogue begins with Mercury's arrival at the River Styx with a Mohawk warrior, named 'Bloody Bear', and an English duellist. A conversation ensues, while the party waits for the return of Charon's boat to take them across the river. Each first explains the circumstances of his death. The Mohawk, who had learned English in New York, 'took up the hatchet for them [British] in the war against France, and was killed while I was out upon a scalping party'. Fortunately, he boasts, 'I died well satisfied . . . before I was shot I had scalped seven men, and five women and children'. He also proudly asserts his cannibalism, claiming that his wife 'was the best cook for the dressing of man's flesh in all North America'. Clearly, this warrior was meant to be as brutal as they come. Indignant, the duellist explains that he had died in Hyde Park in a duel with a friend, who had made the mistake of calling in a debt. The duellist

criticize, see Walpole to Stratford, 4 Sept. 1760, xxxv. 306; Walpole to Lady Ossory, 18 Aug. 1792 and 29 Jan 1793, xxxiv. 152 and 177; Walpole to Lady Lennox, 26 Nov. 1790, xxxi. 357; Horace Mann to Walpole, 11 Oct. 1748, xxv. 109.

¹²⁴ *Ipswich Journal*, 16 Oct. 1756.

¹²⁵ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 7 Mar. 1772. I am grateful to Jeremy Osborn for this reference.

¹²⁶ *Edinburgh Chronicle* (May 1760), 235–7.

had no family, but the other man, who had been fatally wounded, had a 'family of seven children' who 'will be undone by his death'. The wife had already died of fright. It was then the Indian's turn to scoff at the Englishman. He had only killed his enemies in war; the Englishman killed his countryman in a time of peace for no good reason. In consequence, the Indian refused to share a boat with such a wretch. An argument then erupts, and Mercury intervenes to conclude the dialogue. The duellist, Mercury declares, must listen to the savage's wisdom, because although 'he is not well-bred he will tell you some truths you must hear in this place'. No matter how brutal the Indian had been in war, at least he had raised his hand in a battle against his enemies. Mercury then turns to the recently arrived Charon and tells him to 'take these *two* savages to your care'.¹²⁷

RESPONSIBILITY AND SYMPATHY

Britons rarely expressed public sympathy for the plight of the American Indians during the eighteenth century, nor was collective guilt a substantial part of the public discussion. There were sporadic statements of concern, but these exceptions were as rare as they were incoherent. Considering that the predominant post-1754 image of the Indian was that of a brutal, merciless hunter who did not distinguish human from animal quarry, the lack of public concern is hardly surprising. Responsibility in any paternal sense was also absent. Within the public discussion, as within the imperial government, the trappings of empire in North America did not yet entail a significant sense of personal or national responsibility to its indigenous inhabitants.

Nevertheless, regard for the Indians' difficult situation was not wholly absent from the newspaper and periodical press. The *Edinburgh Magazine*, for example, carried an article in 1762 on 'A Pleasant Story of An Indian', in which it condemned the universal use of the term 'barbarian'.¹²⁸ Despite nearly a decade of tales of Indians massacring whites, it declared that: 'There is nothing more reasonable than to style the disposition of doing good to our fellow-creatures, merely because they are so, humanity; and at the same time there is nothing so strange, as the vice opposite to this should

¹²⁷ The emphasis is my own.

¹²⁸ *Edinburgh Magazine* (Aug. 1762), 376–8.

be so common even amongst the civilized nations.’ After explaining that the term ‘barbarian’ arose first amongst the ancient Egyptians to describe the surrounding ‘wild’ peoples and then was adopted by the Greeks and Romans, the article complained that: ‘This signification the word [barbarian] still retains . . . and, in consequence of that, set up a right of treating them [peoples labelled barbarians] as if they were little better than beasts.’ The most direct condemnation of European destruction of Indian peoples and cultures came in an extract from a travel account with which the *London Chronicle* adorned an entire front page in September 1770:

The arrival of Europeans in this new world has been productive of the most ruinous consequences to the old inhabitants, who have lost their ancient habitations, and the best of their lands, either by the force of arms, or of trifling presents made to them; but this is not all their misfortune: The new-comers have introduced among them many vices and numerous diseases, the consequences of vice, all formerly unknown to them; by which many populous tribes are already extinct, and their very names forgot; the few that remain daily decrease in their numbers, a circumstance that gives them much concern, however agreeable it may be to the selfish and all-grasping Europeans.

More frequent, although still uncommon, expressions of concern for American Indians can be found in responses to specific incidents. In 1757 the *Gentleman's Magazine* carried a complaint about colonies setting bounties on Indian scalps, declaring: ‘What is the crime these savages are to be charged with? The defence of their country, and of their allies; of their liberties and lives?’¹²⁹ In January 1764 a reader of the *London Chronicle* attacked the British commander-in-chief in America, Jeffrey Amherst, for his poor handling of Indian relations.¹³⁰ Pontiac’s War, the author maintained, was the direct result of the ‘discontent and despair of the savages’ provoked by his treatment of the Indians, that was ‘shocking to humanity, impracticable, and impolitick’. The letter went on to state that Indians ‘fight for their very existence, in a land to which nature gave them the best right, that of first possession’. A letter in the *Scots Magazine* the same month expressed similar sentiments:

It is said, that the policy of the late commander in chief was, to despise these people. But these despicable Indians have proved themselves more sharp-sighted than his Excellency: for they have discovered his detestable scheme of extirpation,

¹²⁹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1757), 254.

¹³⁰ *London Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1764.

and have taken resolute, timely, and patriotic measures to prevent it, or die. Let no person imagine that I go to too great lengths, in asserting this scheme of extirpation to have been really proposed by the late commander in chief in America: for one of the ablest, best, and most unexceptionable of the present ministry, has been heard to declare, that he had a very good opinion of this gentleman's abilities in general; but that he always thought his plan of extirpating the Indians, shocking to humanity.¹³¹

American Indians' fondness for alcohol was fairly well known in Britain, and it was a prominent subject of complaint.¹³² That Indian alcoholism infiltrated the period's humour suggests a widespread awareness. One joke circulating in the 1740s and 1750s went as follows. A Methodist missionary spent a considerable amount of time establishing a church amongst the Huron Indians. When a friend came to visit him, the missionary proudly stated how well he had done in converting the heathens to the ways of Christ. The visitor, much impressed, approached a convert and asked him if he enjoyed taking the Sacraments, to which the Indian responded that he did but wished that the wine had been rum.¹³³ Benjamin Franklin told a similar tale in his *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America*.¹³⁴ In this account a Swedish missionary gave a lengthy sermon on Genesis 2–3 and explained how the Adam and Eve brought about the Fall by eating the forbidden apple. After listening patiently for some time, an Indian arose and responded: 'What you have told us is all very good. It is indeed bad to eat apples. It is better to make them into cyder.'

Most descriptions were devoid of humour but nevertheless underlined the negative effects of alcohol. Colonel Bradstreet remarked in his influential 'Thoughts on Indian Trade' that alcohol 'is their darling passion, nay, they love it so much they will sacrifice their all, at times, to

¹³¹ *Scots Magazine*, Jan. 1764, p. 29; for one of the most infamous episodes from Amherst's mistreatment of Indians, see Bernard Knollenberg, 'General Amherst and Germ Warfare', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 41 (1954–5), 489–94.

¹³² On the ill effects of alcohol on eighteenth-century Indian communities, see esp. Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (London, 1995); White, *The Roots of Dependency*, 72–5; Peter C. Mancall, '“The Bewitching Tyranny of Custom”: The Social Costs of Indian Drinking in Colonial America', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 17 (1993), 15–42; Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 263–7.

¹³³ Walpole to Horace Mann, 30 June 1742, *Walpole Correspondence*, xvii. 477.

¹³⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America* (London, 1784), 31–3, cited in Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature*, 75.

obtain it'.¹³⁵ In 1770 Charles Stuart, an agent in the Indian department, reported that liquor constituted upwards of 80 per cent of goods sold to the Choctaw nation, and at a congress in 1772 Emmitta, the nominal principal headman of the nation, complained that 'when the Clattering of the Packhorse Bells are heard at a Distance our Town is Immediately deserted, young and old run out to meet them Joyfully crying Rum Rum; they get Drunk, Distraction Mischief Confusion and Disorder are the Consequences and this is the Ruin of our Nation'.¹³⁶ A visiting delegation of Wappinger Indians in 1766 cost the British government £26.10s. 2d. in liquor during their five-week stay in Britain, which amounted to over one-third of the total lodging costs, and a further £53.2d. was spent on alcohol for the journey back to America, which was approximately two-thirds of the price of their passage.¹³⁷ At the height of the Seven Years War the *Universal Magazine* plainly described the negative impact of alcohol:

Before we discovered them, they wanted spiritous liquors; but now, the acquirement of these is what gives a spur to their industry, and enjoyment to their repose. This is the principal end they pursue treaties with us; and from this they suffer inexpressible calamities; for, having once begun to drink, they can preserve no measure, but continue a succession of drunkenness as long as their means of procuring liquor lasts. In this condition they lie exposed on the earth to all the inclements of the seasons, which wastes them by a train of the most fatal disorders. They perish in rivers and marshes; they tumble into the fire; and very frequently murder each other; and, in short, excess in drinking, which in us is rather immoral and very destructive, amongst this uncivilized people, who have not art enough to guard against the consequence of their vices, is a public calamity.¹³⁸

The *London Chronicle* painted an even grimmer picture, predicting that 'spiritous liquors, of which they are insatiably fond... will, in all probability, in one century or more, nearly clear the country of them'.¹³⁹

The press, however, was less concerned with the just treatment of the Indians than with how the unjustly treated might respond. The

¹³⁵ CO 5/65, Part 3, fol. 135–41, John Bradstreet to the Board of Trade, 23 Jan. 1765.

¹³⁶ Both cited in White, *Roots of Dependency*, 75 and 72.

¹³⁷ WLCL, Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to the Lords of the Treasury, 25 Nov. 1766.

¹³⁸ *Universal Magazine* (May 1757), 193–4.

¹³⁹ *London Chronicle*, 7 Dec. 1765.

Gentleman's Magazine's opposition to bounties on scalps, noted above, was outlined in an article explaining the French success in gaining Indian allies. The cited letters attacking Amherst concluded with concerns over the potential loss of Indian trade and how Indians' discontent limited the prosperity of the American colonies, 'while every other part of the world is reaping the fruits of peace'. Now that the British 'were likely to become entire masters of that part of the world,' concluded one of the letters, 'we should reap the many advantages of making them our friends. By making them our enemies we can reap none; nay, on the contrary, we must sustain numberless calamities.'¹⁴⁰ Similarly, alcohol's destructive influence on native populations was not a primary concern. In fact, more than one contemporary saw this as a positive process, as it might save the British the trouble of removing the Indians by force. A more common worry was that drunken Indian warriors tended to disturb the peace in trading centres and were easily tricked out of their goods and lands by white traders.¹⁴¹ When they were sober again the Indians sometimes turned on their tricksters. Commentators also feared that Indians who abused alcohol made less robust allies than those who did not. The French, according to a pamphlet extracted in the *London Chronicle* in 1762, limited the sale of alcohol to their advantage, enjoying 'polished, sober, industrious and sensible' allies. In contrast, 'the Indians under our [British] protections, from the use of British spirits and New-England rum, are lazy, drunken, cowardly, cruel, rude savages, that scarcely have the outward form of a man left to them'.¹⁴²

Massacres of Indians evoked little sympathy in the press. A typical case was the reaction to the desolation of the Abenaki mission village of St François in October 1759. Approved by Amherst, the raid conducted by Robert Rogers and 141 of his rangers was an explicit act of revenge.¹⁴³ The village had no immediate strategic significance, and was targeted primarily to demonstrate the adaptive capabilities of the British and that hostile Indians' villages were vulnerable. The dawn raid was brutal and total in its destruction, and contemporary printed accounts were

¹⁴⁰ *Scots Magazine* (Jan. 1764), 29.

¹⁴¹ For examples, see *Edinburgh Magazine* (Aug. 1758), 289; *Universal Magazine* (Nov. 1759), 226; *London Chronicle*, 12 Aug. 1762.

¹⁴² *London Chronicle*, 16 Jan. 1762. The extract is from the shilling pamphlet, *The Proper Object of the Present War with France and Spain Considered* (London, 1761).

¹⁴³ Steele, *Warpaths*, 228.

relentlessly vivid. The *Derby Mercury* summarized one from New York that described a French priest, who refused offers of mercy and ‘perished in the flames’ alongside 200 Indians—most of whom were clearly civilians.¹⁴⁴ Estimates of British losses did not exceed a dozen.¹⁴⁵ The next month the paper carried a first-hand, follow-up account from Boston, which had been circulating through Britain. Burning carcasses and scalped bodies filled the scene, where any orders to spare women and children ‘were little attended to’.¹⁴⁶ Despite the brutality of the attack, there was no outcry in the British press. The public response was that such raids were necessary to quiet the Indians, and justified in the context of an Indian war. As the *Scots Magazine* explained, the Indians were merely reaping what they had sown:

The severe treatment which these Indians met with from Rogers and his party, if upon any occasion such usage can be justified, surely it might be here. For these St. Francois Indians, both in this and former wars, have been a more severe scourge to the frontier-settlements of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire than any other whatsoever; they have been guilty of more inhumanities, bloodshed, and murders, than perhaps any tribe on the continent. For proof of this, when our men entered the town, they saw 6 or 700 British scalps waving in the wind, upon the tops of poles, which were stuck up on their houses and such like eminent places.—Wherefore it seems they have now been punished for their cruelty: and that a just providence never designed that these bloodthirsty Heathen should go down to the grave in peace.¹⁴⁷

PUBLIC PORTRAYALS OF THE MIDDLE GROUND

Discussions in the eighteenth-century press took only a selective interest in cultural adoptions and adaptations in North America. As a reader’s letter in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in 1759 reveals, contemporaries did not

¹⁴⁴ *Derby Mercury* 18 Jan. 1760. The same account also appears in *Edinburgh Magazine* (Jan. 1760), 48.

¹⁴⁵ Pursuing Abenaki warriors forced a horrendous retreat back to the safety of British lines. The British-led force of 200 lost half its men, and survivors were reduced to cannibalism. See Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ *Derby Mercury*, 8 Feb. 1760.

¹⁴⁷ For the full text of the two apologies, both supposedly from Philadelphia, see *Scots Magazine* (June 1764), 297–9, (Oct. 1764), 569–71.

recognize either the extent to which Indian civilization had been altered by the Europeans or the significance of this impact:

Thus upon the whole, you see, Sir, that the Indians of North America live in a state of nature; nor are the innovations that the Europeans have introduced among them very great; for we have done little more than imparted to them the luxuries of blankets and kettles, and furnished them with fire-arms and the means of intoxication.¹⁴⁸

The absence of significant Indian influence on Europeans was likewise assumed. The public was undoubtedly aware that numerous whites adopted elements of Indian culture for purposes of commerce or conquest, but such instances were rarely regarded as having had a significant or enduring impact on Europeans. Captivity narratives of the second half of the century rarely described instances in which whites readily and lastingly adopted elements of Indian culture. After all, even most authors that espoused the values of Indian lifestyles eventually had rejected them to return home. Few examples of interracial marriages appeared in the press, and they received no comment when they did.¹⁴⁹ An exceptional instance of the reporting of substantial white adaptation appeared in 1765, when the press carried lengthy accounts of the forced repatriation of white captives to the British settlements following a British–American Indian peace settlement. Printed letters from British soldiers described the sorrow of many captives when they were separated from the Indians. One printed letter from Bouquet's expedition was particularly vivid in its description of the return of the white captives of the Ohio Indians to the invading British force:

The Indians too, as if wholly forgetting their usual savageness, played a capital part in heightening this most affecting scene. They delivered up their beloved captives with the utmost reluctance; shed torrents of tears over them, recommending them to the care and protection of the commanding officer. Their regard to them continued all the time they remained in camp.¹⁵⁰

Children, whose only memories were of life with the Indians, wailed upon separating from their adopted parents. A number of women who

¹⁴⁸ *Edinburgh Magazine* (Feb. 1759), 72.

¹⁴⁹ The only instances that I have found outside the reports on Bouquet's expedition are passing references in articles on a different subject. For examples, see *Derby Mercury*, 26 Aug. 1763, in which an Indian married to a white woman warned the British of an attack, and also an account of 'Indian Peter', who married a captured white woman, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Mar. 1762), 115.

¹⁵⁰ *Scots Magazine* (Oct. 1765), 552.

had taken Indian husbands had to be removed in chains and escaped at the first opportunity.

Such reports most probably provoked some discussion, but very little of it was conducted in the press.¹⁵¹ A letter from an Edinburgh reader in the *London Chronicle* provides an extremely rare exception, in that it was both British-authored and intended specifically for a newspaper. In it, the author relayed an account of 'twenty [white] boys, who had in two or three years become so habituated to the Indian manners, that after they were delivered up [by the Cherokee at the end of the war] they did nothing but cry, and would not eat'.¹⁵² 'In three days they had all run away,' he claimed, 'and were not one to be found.' Another reader's letter offered a singular attempt to explain the appeal of American Indian culture:

And to do them full justice, I am to acquaint you, that these people possess the blessings of ease and freedom in a very eminent degree; so that, not only our outlaws and vagrants, but even some of the out-settlers and lower traders, sometimes desert our society and naturalize themselves among the Indians. For their wants, of which nutrition is the main, are satisfied without much labour or care in a thinly-inhabited country, where the birds fly against your shot, and the fish juggle for your hook; and liberty cannot be better established than with those who are absolute in private, and in public rather persuaded than commanded; excepting only among a free sensible people, who are governed by equitable laws of their own making.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, the author was quick to note that 'there can be no hesitation about the preference of the European *savoir-vivre* to the American'. 'Is not indeed the difference immense between the ranging of the woods for casual prey,' he continued, 'the intemperate gorging and drunkenness of the Indians, their joyless propagation, and homicidal warfare; and the tasteful amusements of Europe, the delicious feasts of social cups, the transports of love, and glorious achievements of benevolent ambition?' 'The vices too of these uncorrupted mortals,' he concluded, 'if less numerous, are not less atrocious than our own; but their virtues are much fewer, nor rise by any means to equal heights.'

The single exception to the lack of any substantial public discussion of white adoption of Indian culture was Indian wilderness warfare. Indian

¹⁵¹ Recorded private conversations were even rarer, although Boswell recorded one between him and Johnson in 1778, in which Johnson referred to one of the returned women as 'a speaking cat': *Life of Johnson*, 912.

¹⁵² *London Chronicle*, 23 Mar. 1763.

¹⁵³ *Edinburgh Magazine* (Feb. 1759), 73.

allies were sometimes cheered in the British press for their bravery, but the true heroes were the whites, both British and colonists, who modified their combat skills to engage Indians and French irregulars on their own terms. White adaptation of Indian warfare was a major theme throughout the Seven Years War and its aftermath, winning regular praise in the British press when it was successfully achieved. The failure to adapt was widely held to have been the cause of Braddock's disastrous defeat in 1755, and the army's adjustments to wilderness warfare were credited for the successful campaigns against the Cherokee in 1760 and 1761. At the end of nearly a decade of British–Indian conflict, Bouquet publicly reflected that only by the continued use of Indian tactics could the British hope to win in the future. Press reports declared that the tough peace terms that he had imposed on the Ohio Indians in 1765 'may be considered as strong Proof of their Sincerity and Humiliation', but Bouquet was not so confident:

But this [future victories over the Indians] cannot be reasonably expected, till we have troops trained to fight them in their own way, with the additional advantage of European courage and discipline. Any deviation from our established military system would be needless, if valour, zeal, order, and good conduct, were sufficient to subdue this light-footed enemy.¹⁵⁴

The escapades of William Johnson, the British superintendent for Indian Affairs in the Northern District, were closely reported in the press. His small victory at Lake George in August 1755 was heralded in the press as the shining counterpoint to Braddock's defeat.¹⁵⁵ Johnson's force consisted of a handful of British regulars, Iroquois (mainly Mohawk) allies, and colonists, and they had defeated an equally mixed French-led force. The public praised him lavishly, and the king made him a baronet. He was applauded as both a warrior and an ambassador to the Indians, and further campaigns ensured that his image had staying power. In May 1757 the *Scots Magazine* credited Johnson for the tapering off of reports of frontier civilian casualties: 'We have not heard of any ravages having been made on the back settlements all last winter, as in former years. This

¹⁵⁴ *St. James's Chronicle*, 17 Jan. 1765. Bouquet's comment was reprinted throughout the press. This extract is from the *Scots Magazine* (May 1766), 231.

¹⁵⁵ For examples, see *London Gazette*, 30 Oct. 1755; *Derby Mercury*, 7 and 14 Nov. 1755; *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1755), 519; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 27 Dec. 1755; *Evening Advertiser*, 1 Jan. 1755; *Ipswich Journal*, 3 Jan. 1755.

tranquillity is said to be owing to the prudent measures taken last year by Sir William Johnson in reclaiming the rebellious Indians.' The *London Magazine* printed his portrait in September 1756; in 1759 the *Royal Magazine* printed an illustration of the fort named after him, along with lengthy praise for his character and contributions; and in 1762 the *Scots Magazine* listed him in its article on the major figures of the war alongside William Pitt and Fredrick II of Prussia.¹⁵⁶ The *Edinburgh Chronicle* reported in September 1759 that the bravery of Johnson and his men was winning over even those Indians who had formerly labelled all Englishmen cowards.¹⁵⁷

The models for selective white adaptation to wilderness warfare were the rangers. The term 'ranger' signified a variety of British forces, encompassing everything from makeshift groups of former trappers and Indians to specially devised light infantry regiments, such as the 55th Foot. Under the leadership of Colonel George Augustus, Viscount Howe, this regiment underwent substantial alteration. Soldiers' hair was kept short, coats were lightened and shortened, packs were reduced to the minimum, and hatchets and tomahawks replaced swords.¹⁵⁸ Many of these rangers adapted more than the Indian practice of small-party, stealth warfare. Like their Indian allies and foes, many rangers took the scalps of the dead and wounded warriors and civilians as trophies—a practice regularly reported in the British press without so much as an astonished murmur from the public.¹⁵⁹ As distasteful as many contemporaries must have found the practice, it was seen as acceptable in the context of the North American wilderness. These men were heroes, reported the *Derby Mercury* in November 1756, whose efforts caused 'the greatest Blow the Indians have received since the war began, and if well followed, may soon make them weary of continuing it'.¹⁶⁰ The most famous of the rangers

¹⁵⁶ *London Magazine* (Sept. 1756), 431; *Royal Magazine* (Oct. 1759), 167–8; *Scots Magazine*, appendix for 1762.

¹⁵⁷ *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 22 Sept. 1759.

¹⁵⁸ Beattie, 'The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare', 73.

¹⁵⁹ For examples of rangers and provincials scalping for trophies, see *Ipswich Journal*, 6 Sept. 1755; *Scots Magazine* (June 1756); *Derby Mercury*, 31 Aug. 1759; *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 17 May 1759. See also James Axtell, 'The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalping?: A Case Study', in his *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1981), 16–39; Peter Way, 'The Cutting Edge of Culture: British Soldiers Encounter Native Americans in the French and Indian War', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples 1600–1850* (London, 1999), 132–3.

¹⁶⁰ *Derby Mercury*, 26 Nov. 1756.

was Major Robert Rogers, who assumed command of four ranger companies at Fort Edward in 1756 and became a thorn in the French side on the New York frontier. Rogers was an instant hero in the British public arena, and his exploits were heavily covered and commended in the press. Although he slaughtered the Abenaki at St François in 1759, as described above, he was praised. After the war he arrived in London to capitalize on his fame by seeking the command of a frontier fort and publishing his journals for the perusal of an eager public.¹⁶¹ The *London Chronicle*, for instance, devoted substantial portions of two weeks of issues to reprinting extracts from this 'hero's' journals.¹⁶²

The selective interest in the cultural mingling that took place across the North American frontier emphasizes the extent to which the British public discussion was defined by the practical elements of empire. In the press, Indians figured not within a discourse on the exotic fruits of imperial expansion and exploration, provoking reflection and reconsideration, but as obstacles to British political and commercial hegemony in North America. Indians posed pragmatic dilemmas that required equally calculating responses, and countless reports from North America regularly reinforced the view that failure to recognize this would lead to destruction. Calls for admiration and imitation of Indians were not widely voiced by critics evaluating British society. Issues of white adoption and adaptation applied largely to military matters, and even then the discussion focused only upon the American wilderness. No one called for the formation of rangers to disrupt the lines of the French at Minden or to scalp the soldiers who fell there. The tactics of Robert Rogers and William Johnson were fit for the wilderness of North America, not the fields of Germany.

Not surprisingly, as the struggle for supremacy in North America waned, so too did expressed interest in American Indians. When the Indians were not actively threatening British interests in America, they were reduced once more to their earlier status as curiosities. Therefore,

¹⁶¹ Robert Rogers, *Journals and A Concise Account of North America* (London, 1765) and *Journals of Robert Rogers* (London, 1769). On his fame, see *Gentleman's Magazine* (Apr. 1758), 169, (Oct. 1758), 498–9; *London Chronicle*, 6 May 1758; *Ipswich Journal*, 10 June 1758; *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1758), 438; *Edinburgh Chronicle*, 17 May 1759; *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1759), 203–4; *Derby Mercury*, 18 Jan. and 8 Feb. 1760; *Edinburgh Magazine* (Jan. 1760), 48; *Scots Magazine* (Oct. 1775), 553.

¹⁶² *London Chronicle*, issues from 30 Nov. to 14 Dec. 1765.

not long after the conclusion of the American War of Independence they were virtually forgotten in the press. Such a selective attention-span is not surprising, however, as it merely reflects the predominately pragmatic views of Indians and the empire that were expressed in the press: once Britons no longer deemed Indians to be a major threat to the prosperity of the empire, there was little need to discuss them at length. Nevertheless, discussions in the press about American Indians set the stage for the future public discourse on empire. Although images of Indians waned in importance in the British public sphere, the issues of imperial prosperity and advancement that attracted Britons to them during the second half of the eighteenth century remained as the British turned their attentions to other sectors of the globe. Just as Indian objects helped to set the tone for museum displays of non-Europeans, press discussions about Indians set the precedent of the public discussion about the empire and imperial rule as being both pragmatic and perceived to be of interest to ordinary Britons.

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PART II

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3

Lessons from a Decade of Conflict and the Formation of a New Imperial Regime

When a young, amateur colonel in the Virginia militia named George Washington stumbled into an armed confrontation with French forces on the British frontier in May 1754, no one could have imagined either the global conflict it would precipitate or the imperial political shift that would follow. In his journals and private correspondence, which were all reprinted in the British press and read by officials, the young Washington described cannon fire as ‘a most delightful sound’, and remarked that ‘I heard the bullets whistle, and believe me, there is something charming in the sound’.¹ The naivety of youth was lost on an old George II, who after learning of Washington’s comments, tellingly remarked: ‘He would not say so, if he had been used to hear many.’² What followed was over a decade of almost ceaseless conflict in North America that ultimately spread across the globe. Although ending in virtually complete British victory, the conflicts entailed enormous costs. William Pitt’s decision to take the fight to the French Empire by sending unprecedented numbers of English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish troops across the globe was a strategic masterstroke, but the financial demands of this strategy were enormous: the cost of the war for Britain has been estimated at 70 per cent of government expenditures during the war years, or twice its Gross National Product for 1760.³ Not surprisingly, such unparalleled allocations of

¹ Extracts from Washington’s journals and letter to John Augustine appeared throughout the British press. For examples see *Gentleman’s Magazine* (Apr. 1754), 190, (June 1754), 252–5, and (July 1754), 321–2; and *London Magazine* (Aug 1754), 370–1.

² Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of King George II*, ed. John Brooke (New Haven, 1985), i, 18.

³ For a detailed discussion of the economic impact and costs of the Seven Years War, see esp. Nancy F. Koehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 3–18.

manpower and wealth were closely accompanied by matching increases in central government administrative interest and involvement. The long period of Britain's salutary neglect of its mainland North American colonies was at an end. The question that remained was what type of imperial system would take its place.

The new imperial regime for North America that emerged in the late 1750s and early 1760s was born directly from the British experiences during the Seven Years War. Many of its orchestrators in Britain and North America had been directly involved in the American conflicts, either as politicians and bureaucrats in Britain, such as Lords Shelburne and Hillsborough, or as soldiers fighting in the backcountry, such as Thomas Gage, William Johnson, and John Stuart, who together would effectively implement post-war British policy in North America. They had seen at first hand the perils and viciousness associated with Indian war parties and parliamentary factions, and they had a healthy fear of both. Nevertheless, the regime was not simply the vision of a handful of men; rather, it was the negotiated result of a broad consensus of the British political elite that Britain's North American interests would be better served by an interventionist, central imperial authority. The new regime's goals were the protection and betterment of the empire as a whole—a conceptualization that was made possible only by the distance, both in cosmological and geographic terms, of the policy-makers in Britain from the colonial and Indian peoples who lived with its consequences. Historians tend to mislabel the regime as out of touch, inconsistent, and humanitarian.⁴ Instead, as this

⁴ Most recently, Robin Fabel has criticized the inconsistency of the policies and has described imperial policy for the interior as a 'nuisance' for the Crown, in *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759–1775* (Gainesville, Fla., 2000), 9–11 and 206; John Oliphant has described British policy as being based on the just claims of the Indians, in *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756–63* (Baton Rouge, La., 2001), 206; J. Russell Snapp has emphasized how out of touch the British imperial government was with backcountry colonists' sentiments, throughout *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Southern Frontier* (Baton Rouge, La., 1996). See also Peter Marshall, 'The West and the Indians, 1756–1776', in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 1991), 153–60; Wilbur R. Jacobs, 'British-Colonial Attitudes and Policies Toward the Indian in the American Colonies', in Howard Peckham and Charles Gibson (eds.), *Attitudes of Colonial Powers Toward the American Indian* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1969), 81–99; P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982), esp. 209–10 and 221–2; and John Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy to London, 1762', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), 17.

and the next chapter reveal, the system that emerged out of the mid-century conflicts is better understood as one based on consistent pragmatism and the drive for efficiency. The new regime for North America certainly was laden with miscalculations, but a naive tendency towards humanitarianism was not a driving force. It was a flexible system whose administrators never lost sight of their primary goal: to protect British interests by securing a peaceful frontier.

LESSONS FROM A DECADE OF CONFLICT

The Seven Years War was effectively the British government's introduction to American Indians.⁵ Until 1754 they had attracted little attention. The Board of Trade was technically responsible for overseeing Indian affairs, but in practice Indian relations, like most colonial affairs, were left to the colonies.⁶ Directives regarding Indians were extremely rare before the 1750s, because Indians, like America in general, were at the periphery of metropolitan concerns. This all changed after Braddock's defeat in July 1755. The British governing elite learned two harsh lessons from the fighting during the decade of conflict that ensued. First, the Indians represented a formidable threat to British interests in North America. Whether as allies of European rivals or acting independently, they could prohibit expansion and wreak such havoc on the frontier as to send entire colonies into disarray. Second, the colonists were a disagreeable lot: they argued with each other and agitated the Indians. The governing elite blamed segments of the colonists for the length and costliness of the wars, and afterwards feared their threat to the peace more than any other.

When the duke of Cumberland, the king's brother, recommended Braddock to lead an expeditionary force to vanquish the French from the banks of the Ohio, the government fully expected that the unprecedented move of sending a sizeable force of regulars to North America would

⁵ Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (Oxford, 1995), 175–7; Jacobs, 'British-Colonial Attitudes', 84.

⁶ The Privy Council rarely challenged the decisions of the Board, and colonial disputes were argued before the Board not the Privy Council. For the details of the bureaucratic framework, see Franklin Wickshire, *British Subministers and Colonial America 1763–1783* (Princeton, 1966), ch. 1.

nip the conflict in the bud and prevent it from spreading.⁷ Such a show of force, the government leadership surmised, would compel the French to withdraw and humble any allied Indians. They were wrong, and their miscalculations demonstrate how grossly ignorant they were of North America and its inhabitants. Of the 1,450 British regulars in Braddock's force, 977 were killed or wounded, including Braddock himself, who died from his wounds as the remnants of his forces raced for safety. The Virginia regiment accompanying the regulars fared even worse, suffering casualties nearing 80 per cent. Their opponents lost only twenty-three men.⁸

Even worse, the defeat was only the start of four years of humiliation on the battlefield and wholesale slaughter of Britain's frontier colonists. Miscalculations and poor preparation had left the frontier virtually defenceless after Braddock's defeat. In the first year alone, over 3,000 white civilians were either killed or taken captive by Indian war parties.⁹ Another thousand were killed or taken the following year.¹⁰ Far more families were sent into a panic and fled eastward. A letter from Virginia printed in the *London Chronicle* complained of the seemingly never-ending devastation, remarking that upwards of 500 families had abandoned their homes in the past week alone.¹¹ Their hasty departure left them with nothing except their children, creating 'a Melancholy sight' as their poverty forced them to 'lie scattered in the woods'. Like the rest of the reading public, Britain's governors read what must have seemed an endless supply of tragic accounts. Reports from the military offered little consolation during the first four years of the conflict, as Britain's frontier forts proved to be useless in preventing the raids, and their garrisons often became victims themselves. At Fort Oswego members of the defeated garrison were helpless bystanders as Indian allies of the French scalped thirty of their wounded. The scene was even worse at Fort William Henry. After surrendering to the French, the British garrison was given leave to

⁷ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York, 2000), 67–9.

⁸ Steele, *Warpaths*, 188–9; Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (London, 1988), 153–7.

⁹ Steele, *Warpaths*, 198.

¹⁰ Seymour Scharwtz, *The French and Indian War, 1754–1763: The Imperial Struggle for North America* (London, 1994), 81. For the best description of American Indian tactics against Europeans in this period, see Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (London, 1998), 25–31.

¹¹ *London Chronicle*, 16 Aug. 1763.

withdraw, but the nearly 2,000 Indians in the French force were dissatisfied with the lenient terms and proceeded to pillage and make prisoners of the defenceless British and colonial troops as well as their entourage of women, children, Indian scouts, and African slaves. Anyone who resisted was killed.¹²

The Cherokee War (1759–61) and Pontiac's War (1763–5) underlined Indians' ability to undermine Britain's North American interests for Britain's governing elite. Conducted by Indians with minimal European assistance, these separate conflicts painfully revealed that the Indians posed independent threats. Before 1759 the Cherokee nation had been the allies of the British, co-operating with Virginia and the Carolinas to protect the backcountry of the southern colonies and furnishing warriors for General John Forbes's successful expedition to take the elusive Fort Duquesne in 1758. As we have seen, the press blamed the deteriorating relations on the French. In fact, tensions between the colonists and Cherokee had run high for some time.¹³ The Cherokee were upset about white settlement on their lands. Moreover, bounties offered by the colonial governments for Delaware and Shawnee scalps had sometimes been claimed by farmers brandishing those of their Cherokee neighbours. The colonists had long suffered Cherokee raids, losing horses, livestock, and other valuables, and on several occasions colonists had been killed. In August 1759 South Carolina's ambitious governor, Henry Lyttelton, grossly exacerbated tensions by prohibiting the sale of guns and powder to the Cherokee until they delivered the 'murderers' to colonial justice.¹⁴ Knowing that the fate of any kinsman handed over would be death, the Cherokee headmen refused.

¹² Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the 'Massacre'* (Oxford, 1990), 109–21 and 135. Steele estimates that, despite widespread belief in both America and Britain that most of the garrison had been killed, the total dead could not have exceeded 185, or 7.5% of the column. Most were taken captive.

¹³ The sparking incident seems to have been when, on their return home after campaigning with the British through South Carolina, several warriors intimidated a number of farmers and took horses. Lyttelton MS, Letterbook, Lyttelton to Board of Trade, 2 Oct. 1758, fols. 229–34. For the best summary of the origins and description of the Cherokee War, see Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of Revolution* (Oxford, 1993), chs. 9–10.

¹⁴ Two recent assessments of the conflict firmly fix much of the blame for it on Lyttelton: see Robin Fabel, *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759–1775* (Gainesville, Fla., 2000), 206; and Oliphant, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee frontier*, ch. 3.

The British and American colonists responded by deploying regular troops in the region, where they were supported by provincial forces. Campaigns took the form of an invasion of Cherokee lands each summer, leaving a trail of burning crops and villages. In 1761 a British-led force of 2,800 men, half of whom were regulars, conducted Britain's most successful and ruthless campaign.¹⁵ Jeffrey Amherst, commander of the British forces in America, boasted to Pitt that, after defeating the Cherokee in a short battle, the British force 'burnt fifteen of their Towns, destroyed about fourteen hundred Acres of Corn, and sent near five thousand People into the Woods to perish, or to be brought to reason and sue for Peace'.¹⁶ The Cherokee, however, had successes too. In a series of raids and surprise attacks they caused panic in the Carolina backcountry and pushed the frontier back over 100 miles. The Cherokee also further demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining interior forts without the consent of the local natives. In August 1760 Fort Loudoun, whose garrison depended on local Cherokee women for food, surrendered. The garrison of 200 regulars and South Carolina provincial troops were allowed by the Cherokee to leave, but two days later the retreating column was attacked. Most of the twenty-eight survivors were taken prisoner, to be displayed to other Indian nations as symbols of Cherokee power.¹⁷ Nevertheless, without an alternative supply for ammunition—Cherokee trading relations with the French or Spanish were insufficient to meet their needs—the war could not be sustained. The terms reflected both sides' inability to win a total victory.¹⁸ The Cherokee acknowledged Britain's right to build forts on their territory in exchange for a boundary line and normalized trade. Both sides exchanged their prisoners, and the original 'murderers' were left to be punished by their own peoples.

The Indian uprising that took the name of one of its Ottawa leaders, Pontiac, was even more alarming to the British governing elite. Fought by an Indian coalition, it was at once more devastating and more shocking, because it erupted after a presumed peace had been established with the formal cessation of hostilities with France. Victory over the French had resulted in overconfident complacency amongst the British-led forces in

¹⁵ Steele, *Warpaths*, 232.

¹⁶ Amherst to Pitt, 13 Aug. 1761, *Correspondence of William Pitt... with Colonial Governors, and Military and Naval Commanders in America*, ed. Gertrude S. Kimball, 2 vols. (New York, 1906), ii. 464.

¹⁷ Steele, *Warpaths*, 231.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 232–3.

North America. As Sir William Johnson, Britain's northern superintendent for Indian Affairs, observed with dismay in early 1762,

I am surprised to hear that gentlemen of any Rank or sense should give themselves Airs now in talking so Slightly of Indians who before would fly before a handful of them, nay perhaps would do the same now if put to the trial. Those are the kind of people whom the Indians would have least to dread from if ever they were to engage, for brave men would not talk so idly or inconsistently.¹⁹

Writing just before the uprising, Amherst expressed such an unwarranted sense of superiority by ignoring warnings from his advisors that the Indians were upset over the terms of the 1763 Peace of Paris—an agreement which had handed sovereignty of their lands to Britain without consultation. 'I cannot think the Indians have it in their Power', Amherst assured Johnson, 'to Execute any thing Serious Against Us.'²⁰ Yet just weeks later Indians from dozens of nations attacked all the northern British forts west of Niagara with unprecedented co-ordination. They took multiple smaller forts and laid siege to the major forts of Detroit, Pitt (formerly Duquesne), and Niagara. They also attacked supply lines and raided frontier communities. More than 2,000 civilians were killed or taken prisoner and thousands more were driven away, whereas the Indians sustained comparatively few casualties. When the major forts proved resistant to capture, the Indian war effort lost momentum, and in 1764 peace negotiations began. This was hardly a British victory—even the first diplomatic mission sent to accept Pontiac's surrender and re-establish trade was captured en route.²¹ The Indians may not have possessed the technology or social and economic infrastructure to lay multi-year sieges to European forts, but their ability to cut supply lines and defeat reinforcements could turn those forts into prisons. Most importantly, the conflict revealed to any remaining doubters that Britain had not secured its North American interests by vanquishing the French, and that any lasting settlement needed to include the Indians.

The British governing elite and commanders in America with few exceptions perceived the colonists as the major obstacle to victory in

¹⁹ Johnson to Daniel Claus, 9 Feb. 1762, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan, 14 vols. (Albany, NY, 1921–65), iii. 629.

²⁰ Amherst to Johnson, *ibid.*, 29 Mar. 1763, iv. 99.

²¹ See PRO, CO 5/65, fols. 83–114: 'the 1765 journal of George Croghan', Deputy Superintendent for Indian affairs.

North America. Each colony seemingly pursued its own goals and policies, and co-operated with Britain and the other colonies only when it served its own best interests. Lack of clear, western colonial borders had partly precipitated the conflict. Several colonies laid claim to the Ohio River Valley and even more sought arrangements with the crumbling Iroquois empire, which held nominal control over the region. The eviction notice that George Washington served to the French on the banks of the Ohio river in 1753 was issued not by Britain but by Virginia, which was protecting its territorial claims from both France and the other British colonies. The colonists also shared responsibility for the fiasco of Braddock's defeat. In addition to Braddock's innumerable problems with obtaining supplies from colonial governments, colonial rivalries undermined attempts to furnish his ill-fated expedition with sufficient Indian auxiliaries. When the governor of Virginia arranged for the Cherokee to send warriors to accompany Braddock, the governor of South Carolina insisted on calling a congress for the Cherokee, which included gifts and proved far more enticing than a military campaign.²² The colonists' concerns were not based on embryonic sentiments of independence; rather, they were the results of inter-colonial rivalries and distrust.

In view of the impending crisis, the British government had attempted to compel the bickering colonies to co-ordinate a more unified system of defence and Indian policy. In July 1754 delegates from the northern colonies met at Albany to discuss, among other aspects of defence and Indian policy, a proposal for colonial unity. Surface co-operation only thinly veiled intense colonial rivalries.²³ In the public speeches a spirit of inter-colonial co-operation and friendship with the Indians dominated, but in the after-hours discussions competition for Indian lands and alliances ran riot. Although the colonial delegates agreed on a plan of defensive union, only a handful of colonial assemblies preceded rejection of this plan with debate; Virginia and Pennsylvania did not even bother to vote.²⁴ The response in Britain to such laxity was one of irritation. Secretary of State Sir Thomas Robinson sent a harsh circular letter to a

²² Jacobs, 'British-Colonial Attitudes', 94.

²³ Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 141–68; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 77–83.

²⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 84.

number of governors, chastising them for not responding favourably to the proposal:

it was with great Surprize, that the King observed your total silence upon that part of His Majesty's Orders, which relate to the other Colonies, which you must be sensible is now become more essentially necessary for their common Defence, since the Account which you have no doubt received with regard to the Hostilities committed by the French upon the River Ohio . . .²⁵

Colonies failed to support each other even in their shared reluctance to follow a central British command. The lieutenant-governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, wrote separately to General Abercromby, the secretary of state, the Board of Trade, the Treasury, Horace Walpole, and George Montagu Dunk, earl of Halifax and president of the Board of Trade, in May 1754 to complain about the inaction of other colonies in the face of the French threat.²⁶ The following April he complained to Halifax specifically about the Pennsylvanians, concluding that: 'I think there never was such a monstrous ill-conduct from any set of People in Time of so great a Danger.'²⁷ Governors also complained to officials in Britain about other colonies' disagreements. Lyttelton wrote to Halifax in August 1756 to complain about the dispute between Dinwiddie and the governor of North Carolina over the construction of a fort in Cherokee territory. Lyttelton closed by blaming the death of Braddock on the failure of North Carolina to build the fort, concluding that if it were not for the laziness of his northern neighbours, 'our Troops might now have been in the possession of the French Forts on the Ohio'.²⁸ When the fort's construction was finally arranged, Halifax responded with great relief, expressing a hope that the co-operation was a favourable precedent. His hopes, however, proved short-lived. Besides arguing with each other, the

²⁵ CO 5/211, fols. 59, 63, 65 and 67: Robinson to President of the Council of North Carolina, Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania, Governor of New Hampshire, and Governor of Rhode Island, 5 July 1754; to the governor of Connecticut, who had responded, Robinson remarked that 'I am to acquaint you that His Majesty Expected greater Marks of zeal and vigour of your Province than you have hitherto transmitted'.

²⁶ He wrote to them all on 10 May 1754: *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758*, ed. R. A. Brock (Richmond, Va., 1883-4), i. 156-65.

²⁷ Dinwiddie to Halifax, 30 Apr. 1755, *ibid.* ii. 17.

²⁸ WLCL, William Henry Lyttelton Papers (hereafter Lyttelton MS): Lyttelton to Halifax, 12 Aug. 1756.

individual colonies were hampered by internal governing problems that became increasingly apparent to British officials. Governors quarrelled with their assemblies over fulfilling British demands for troops and supplies, and assemblies regularly refused to allow their troops to leave their borders and drastically cut military budgets after their own security needs had been met.²⁹ As Amherst protested to Pitt in June 1760, 'the Sloth of the Colonies in raising their Troops, and sending them to their Rendez-vous' was preventing an early conclusion to the war.³⁰

The British government responded to these problems during the war with unprecedented assistance, instruction, and direct involvement. The colonies had simply become too important to let the infighting, disorganized colonists run their own affairs unchecked. The first step toward a co-ordinated defence was the appointment of Braddock as commander-in-chief in America in 1755, thus placing military operations directly under Whitehall's control. The British government's commitment to centralized operations only increased after Braddock's death, when a succession of new commanders were appointed and then replaced for underperformance. Each new appointment, which often carried with it increased powers over the colonies, reaffirmed the government's belief in the value of its own authority in America. With regard to the Indians, the objective was quite simple: gain allies. As Lord Halifax, who as president of the Board of Trade was perhaps the most knowledgeable person on Indian affairs in government, explained to the House of Lords in December 1755, Indian auxiliaries were far superior to anything Europe had to offer:

for considering the nature of our present disputes with France, if a war should be the consequence, it is evident, that an alliance with any one of the wild nations in North America, would be of more service to us, than an alliance with the powerful empire of Russia; and, I believe we might have purchased the alliance of every one of the wild nations in North America, for less money than we are, by this treaty, to pay the Russians.³¹

²⁹ Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760–1775* (Lincoln, Neb., 1961), 29–35. See also Halifax to Gage, 12 Feb. 1764 and Halifax to Gage, 9 Mar. 1765, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage to the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775*, ed. Clarence Edwin Carter, 2 vols. (New Haven, 1931), ii. 12–13 and 24.

³⁰ Amherst to Pitt, 21 June 1760, *Pitt Correspondence*, ii. 305.

³¹ House of Lords debate, 10 Dec. 1755, in *Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America, 1754–1783*, ed. R. C. Simmons and P. D. G. Thomas (hereafter *Parl. Debates*), i. 115.

The process of winning allies proved more complicated than simply distributing payments to petty chieftains. If Indian were to serve the interests of Britain's North American war effort, rather than the interests of one colony, the practice of colonies pursuing their own Indian affairs had to change. Yet the colonial assemblies jealously guarded their power, and Britain faced an uphill battle against the legacy of distrust and hostility that the colonists had instilled into most Indians.

The change in policy was threefold. First, two superintendents for Indian affairs were created in early 1756, placing Indian affairs directly under Whitehall's control. Sir William Johnson, who was already considered in British circles to be the leading expert on American Indians, was selected for the northern district, and Edmund Atkin for the southern district. They were to be independent of the colonial governments and were to work primarily to secure Indian allies to the British war effort.³² Second, the succession of military commanders in America was given strict instructions to adapt to the American context. They were to treat the superintendents as advisers and seek to utilize Indians and colonists who were experienced in wilderness warfare. Explicit official instructions to Daniel Webb shortly after Johnson's appointment made this abundantly clear:

You are to use your best Endeavours with our Governors in North America to get as great a Number of Rangers as possible, in the Troops . . . You are to press Sir William Johnson to get as great a Body of Indians as possible to march with our Army and to act offensively against the Enemy; You are also to consult with Sir William Johnson in all Matters relative to Indian Affairs, taking the greatest Precaution not to give the Indians any Offense.³³

When James Abercromby was made commander-in-chief in America at the end of the following year, the king's instructions remained the same:

You will not only cultivate the best Harmony and Friendship possible with the several Governors of Our Colonies, and Provinces, but likewise with the Chiefs of the Indian Tribes, and You will keep a constant correspondence with Sir William

³² Johnson had been New York's agent to the Iroquois and was well known to the Board of Trade for his influence. As early as 29 October 1754 the Board had sent a report to Robinson calling for him to manage Iroquois affairs for the Crown. Atkin was appointed 13 May 1756. For a discussion of the creation of these posts, see John R. Alden, 'The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27 (1940), 193–211.

³³ CO 5/211, Part 2, fols. 12–18: Instructions from the King to Daniel Webb, 2 April 1756.

Johnson, Colonel, sole Agent and Superintendent of the Northern Indians, and Mr. Atkin, Agent and Superintendent of the Southern Indians, and assist them in endeavouring to engage the said Indians to take Part and act with Our Forces, in all Operations, as you shall judge most expedient.³⁴

Third, the Board of Trade and secretaries of state assumed greater authority by issuing more frequent and specific directions to colonial governors. Correspondence between the governors and Whitehall was regularized and a clear chain of command enforced. Although vague in terms of implementation strategies, expectations and goals were clearly laid out. Governors were expected to respond to Crown instructions, which came via the king's commanders and superintendents in America or his ministers, and send regular reports to Whitehall detailing progress made towards completing the assigned objectives. The governors were also given roles in improving Indian relations. For example, James DeLancey, lieutenant-governor of New York, was instructed in March 1755 to build whatever forts were necessary 'for preserving the Friendship of the Five Indian Nations [Iroquois]',³⁵ and William Henry Lyttelton, governor of South Carolina, was ordered by Whitehall to assist by 'furnishing us with a large body of Indians to join our Troops next summer in any attack of the French Forts on the Ohio.'³⁶

Aid to the governors dealing with the Indians came in the form of large shipments of manufactured goods from Britain, intended to purchase Indians' assistance. Although gifts in most eastern Indian cultures were traditionally seen as a mutual recognition of friendship among equals, by the mid-eighteenth century exchanges between colonies and Indians had taken on more practical tones. A number of communities, including Britain's most steadfast Mohawk allies, had come to depend on diplomatic gifts from the colonies for their livelihood after the fur trade had collapsed.³⁷ The British saw the exchanges simply as payment, either in the nature of bribes or tribute, for services to be rendered, and thus thought any Indian's loyalty was open to negotiation.³⁸ As Halifax

³⁴ CO 5/211, Part 2, fols. 231–9: Instructions from the King to James Abercrombie, 30 Dec. 1757.

³⁵ CO 4/211, Part 1, fol. 178: Robinson to James DeLancey, 17 Mar. 1755.

³⁶ Lyttelton MS, Halifax to Lyttelton, 13 Aug. 1756.

³⁷ Shannon, *Albany Congress of 1754*, 36–48 and 129.

³⁸ On the British misunderstanding of gifts as bribes, see James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact through to the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1989), 149.

declared in the House of Lords at the beginning of the war: 'Even the Abenakis themselves, the ancient enemies of our colony of New England, might, I believe, have been purchased for a very small sum of money, and there are many Indian nations upon the back of our colonies of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York, whose friendship might have been secured at a very easy rate.'³⁹

As a result, Britain sent unprecedented amounts of gifts for the Indians to the governors' and superintendents' doorsteps. The total amount of funds that were funnelled into gifts is difficult to estimate, especially since they came from a multitude of sources. Johnson alone spent nearly £20,000 between March 1755 and October 1756 and a further £7,000 for the thirteen-month period following November 1758—the vast majority of which was provided by the British government.⁴⁰ In comparison, New York, which took primary responsibility for Iroquois relations in the years leading up to 1755, allocated a paltry £570 between December 1746 and November 1747.⁴¹ The situation was not altogether different in the southern colonies, where British officials perceived the Cherokee as the cornerstone of the southern Indian nations and the key to keeping the Carolina and Georgia frontiers peaceful.⁴² Lyttelton, who as governor of South Carolina had the responsibility of keeping the Cherokee nation favourably disposed, received all sorts of materials until war with the Cherokee erupted in 1759. No expense was spared. The first consignment left London in August 1755, with orders from Whitehall that Lyttelton should distribute the goods as he saw fit. There was something for all tastes, as it included smoking pipes, lace garters, tin kettles, hatchets, saddles, thirty 'second hand scarlet and blue coats and a dozen of a better sort and waistcoats for the Headmen', an assortment of knives, six dozen ivory combs, 160 guns, ammunition, and twenty-six tinsel-laced hats.⁴³ The shipment was the first of many, as British officials sought to increase and co-ordinate gift giving so as to maximize its diplomatic effects.

³⁹ House of Lords debate, 10 Dec. 1755, *Parl. Debates*, i. 115.

⁴⁰ Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers: 1748–1763* (Stanford, 1950), 61–2.

⁴¹ Shannon, *Albany Congress of 1754*, 37.

⁴² Lyttelton MS: [Edmond Atkin], 'Copy of a Paper delivered to Sir Thomas Robinson, his Majesty's principal Secretary of State, in Consequence of a Conference held by Direction of the Earl of Halifax', imposed date of 29 Aug. 1755.

⁴³ Lyttelton MS: John Pownall to Lyttelton, 18 Aug. 1755.

ASSESSING THE THREATS TO
BRITISH HEGEMONY

Britain's victory in North America served to affirm its wartime policies in the eyes of the British governing elite. More British troops, colonists, and allied Indians were in the field than ever, and British church bells rang regularly with the news of victories. As a result, temporary practices became the basis of a permanent programme: although peace presented new concerns and obstacles, the new interventionist philosophy for dealing with them remained. The British government's overriding concerns for post-war America were the establishment of a peace that was beneficial to commerce, and the prevention of costly Indian wars. Perceived threats to the newly won British hegemony came from three directions: Britain's own neglect, foreign powers, and the colonists themselves.

The decade of conflict had painfully demonstrated the devastation hostile Indians could cause and the apparent inability of the colonists either to prevent or counter this by themselves. To a great extent, those in the British government who would shape post-war North America viewed the wars, or at least their protraction, as the consequence of having allowed the colonies too much freedom, particularly in handling Indian affairs. Thus, ministers responsible for American affairs in some measure blamed themselves and their predecessors for the difficulty Britain had experienced with the Indians during the recent conflicts, in so far as they had allowed the ill will between the Indians and colonists to go unchecked for so long. French success in gaining Indian allies, and heavy British losses in a protracted conflict, were thought to represent the price of this negligence. Halifax's private comments to Thomas Gage, Amherst's successor as commander of British forces in America, after learning of the 1763 Indian uprising summarizes the reigning view:

I cannot conclude this Letter without mentioning to you, in Confidence, that I find many Persons of Consideration, as well in America, as here, are of Opinion that the Indians have of late Years been too much neglected, and that the Commencement, and Continuation of Their present Hostilities, have been in a great Measure owing to an apparent Contempt of their Consequence, either as Friends, or Foes. I know not if there be any Truth in this Supposition; But, upon a Point of so much present and future Importance, I have thought it my Duty to apprise you of an Opinion, which is become very general, that if, upon

Reflection, and Examination, it shall appear to you to be, in any Degree just and true, you may avail yourself of the Hint, to the Benefit of His majesty's Service.⁴⁴

British ministers were to blame not for faults of compassion, but for failing to monitor their colonists' malpractice. To prevent colonial mismanagement, the only conceivable choice for the foreseeable future was an interventionist regime centred on a British authority.

The Peace of Paris in 1763 substantially reduced, but did not eliminate, the threat from European powers to Britain's mainland American colonies. Although a conflict in the style of the Seven Years War was no longer thought to be likely in America, the influence that the French and Spanish maintained over the Indians was considered to pose a continued threat of frontier disruption. Although thoroughly defeated, Britain's imperial rivals had not disappeared from North America. French traders and officers continued to operate legally west of the Mississippi river and often illegally east of it. The Spanish had ceded Florida to Britain, but received New Orleans from the French in return. As a result, they could continue to send gifts to the Indians, as well as serve as an alternative source of guns and ammunition. More important was the fear-induced perception that France's influence over the Indians lingered and that it was able to mobilize Indians to attack the colonies.

Early reports from British commanders and agents in America reinforced anxieties. Gage certainly believed the remaining French had something to do with Pontiac's War.⁴⁵ Although he noted that the extent of France's official responsibility was difficult to determine, especially because the 'Savages will throw all the Blame on them [the French], to exculpate themselves', he believed that French influence remained a real factor.⁴⁶ In December 1763 Gage again wrote to Halifax, expressing concern that the French in Louisiana were pursuing their old policy of drawing dissatisfied Indians into their territory. This had potentially dangerous consequences for the vulnerable southern colonies:

It was an Old piece of policy with the Canadians, to draw into Canada, every Indian disgusted with the English; and they at length formed a Body of Barbarians

⁴⁴ See e.g. WLCL, Thomas Gage Papers (English Series) (hereafter Gage English MS), vol. 1: Halifax to Gage, 14 Jan. 1764.

⁴⁵ Gage to Halifax, 7 Jan. 1764, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775*, ed. Clarence Edwin Carter (New Haven, 1931), i. 9–10; Gage to Halifax, 13 Apr. 1765, *ibid.* i. 53; Gage to Halifax, 10 Aug. 1765, *ibid.* i. 53.

⁴⁶ Gage to Halifax, 7 Jan. 1764, *ibid.* i. 9–10.

who, upon so many occasions have laid waste our Northern Frontiers, for such a number of years past. The same policy, unless prevented may produce the same Effects, and Our Southern posts and Frontiers may now become the Objects of Savage hatred: whom I fear will not for many years, be in the same Condition to repel their incursions, as Our Northern Frontiers have always been.⁴⁷

In October of the following year Gage sent a report to Conway, Halifax's successor as secretary of state for the Southern Department, that demonstrated how residual influence could yield tangible results. Apparently rumours of a French return to Canada had prompted 500 warriors to gather at St John's to welcome the warships.⁴⁸ The situation in the south was not much better, as powerful nations such as the Creek were known to have a substantial number of pro-French headmen.⁴⁹

Concerns about foreign influence persisted, but ministers were decreasingly wary since peace, although often fragile, continued. Despite reports from Gage and the superintendents, as well as worries of his own, Wills Hill, earl of Hillsborough and the first secretary of state for the new American department created in 1768, was confident that the French and Spanish threat had been greatly reduced. In November 1768 he wrote to Johnson that he and Gage concurred that the current problems with western Indian nations were the fault of the French subjects of Britain rather than those of France.⁵⁰ In March 1769 he expressed to Gage the view that Indian reports of solicitations from the French were probably attempts to gain better trading rates and gifts.⁵¹ By the time William Legge, earl of Dartmouth, succeeded Hillsborough in 1773, worries about French incursions into the British interior were old hat and largely dismissed. Gage's calm reply to the new secretary's apprehension over reports of French solicitations reflected this reigning attitude of experienced ministers and officials.

I will beg Leave to observe; that tho' we have heard a great deal of the Intrigues of the French amongst the Savage Nations, it has never been discovered that the Government of Louisiana has abetted them; and it seems to be as much consistent with the Interest of that Government as our own, to keep the Indians quiet and Peaceable.⁵²

⁴⁷ Gage to Halifax 23 Dec. 1763, *ibid.* i. 6.

⁴⁸ Gage to Conway, 12 Oct. 1765, *ibid.* i. 69.

⁴⁹ CO 5/214, Part 2, fols. 69–70: Stuart to the Board of Trade, May 1765.

⁵⁰ CO 5/241, fol. 66: Hillsborough to Johnson, 15 Nov. 1768. For Gage's opinion in agreement, see his letter to Hillsborough, 4 Feb. 1769, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 217.

⁵¹ Hillsborough to Gage, 15 March 1769, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 87.

⁵² Gage to Dartmouth, 5 May 1773, *ibid.* i. 349–50.

The greatest perceived threat by far to British hegemony came from the colonists themselves. Official imperial correspondence regularly blamed the American colonists for the poor state of Indian relations. According to the ministers responsible for Indian affairs, traders were the worst offenders of all. Throughout this period they were accused of agitating the Indians by selling them liquor and goods that were inferior or overpriced. They were blamed too for cheating the Indians out of their lands through treachery and deceit, including intoxicating headmen and having them sign contracts to give away lands over which they did not have absolute authority. In his 1763 'Scheme for the Management of Indians', Thomas Boone, Lyttelton's successor as South Carolina's governor, called traders 'the first refuse of the Earth, [who] stick at Nothing to obtain a temporary Advantage, and frequently provoke the Indians by Acts of Injustice, to throw a whole Province into confusion'.⁵³ Halifax asserted at the outbreak of Pontiac's War that one of the two 'principal Causes of their Discontent' was the traders' abuses.⁵⁴ In his report on the main Indian congress in the south after the war, John Stuart, the new southern superintendent for Indian Affairs, explained to Halifax that the lack of regulation allowed the persons of the lowest character into Indian villages, giving a poor impression of the British in general.⁵⁵ In his plan for the 'future Management of Indian Affairs', William Petty, earl of Shelburne, then the secretary of state, reiterated this view, insisting that 'Indian Traders have in general been the most worthless and abandoned Fellows of the Provinces, and such men could not fail of impressing the Indians with bad Sentiments of all White people in general, of whom they took their Traders to be true examples'.⁵⁶ When violence between Indians and colonists erupted in the Carolina backcountry in 1766, Shelburne again blamed the traders in a letter to the new governor of South Carolina, noting that the 'licentiousness and Ill-behaviour of Indian Traders are in fact the cause of all the Mischiefs, which the Savages are stirred up to act'.⁵⁷

In the eyes of the British officials, an equally disruptive problem was colonists' general disregard for Indians. Many colonists wore their disdain

⁵³ CO 5/377, Part 2, fols. 273–7: 'A Scheme for the Management of Indians', written by Boone and sent to Halifax, 24 Nov. 1763.

⁵⁴ Halifax to Gage, 14 Jan. 1764, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 10.

⁵⁵ CO 5/66, fols. 70–1: Stuart to Halifax, 24 Aug. 1765.

⁵⁶ WLCL, Shelburne Papers (hereafter Shelburne MS), vol. 60: 'Shelburne's Observations upon a Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs', Title imposed, no date.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 53: Shelburne to Lord Montagu, 25 Oct. 1766.

for the Indians on their sleeves. In an October 1764 letter Colonel Henry Bouquet forwarded from Fort Pitt a roughly written and spelt letter of John McNeil, a colonel in the Virginia militia, which made clear that Indian affairs could not be run independently by the colonists without severe bias. Although adding the caveat: 'If I desire anything that's not consistent I beg you will excuse me', McNeil freely called the neighbouring Indian nations 'those detestable cut throats', and declared that 'nothing could give me more satisfaction than having the opportunity of abusing those villains'.⁵⁸

Especially problematic was the fact that many colonists, particularly those in the backcountry, had little respect for their own governments, let alone their Indian neighbours with whom they had fought intermittently for generations. One of the greatest problems the Penns, as proprietors of Pennsylvania, faced throughout the eighteenth century was collecting quitrents and payment for sales of land in western regions of the colony. By the end of their proprietorship they estimated that they were owed £118,569 in unpaid rent and land sales.⁵⁹ Further complicating matters was the fact that a clear western border was not established in many colonies until the late 1760s. As a result, encroachment on Indian lands was a regular feature of frontier life. Johnson warned the Board of Trade on several occasions in the early 1760s that encroachment on Delaware and Iroquois lands was making the Indians 'not only very uneasy, but jealous of our growing power', and fearful that the Anglo-American object was to 'in the end extirpate them'.⁶⁰ Despite brutal Indian raids during Pontiac's War, white settlers continued to push westward, and by the spring of 1765 Johnson recommended moving the northern boundary westward in recognition of settlers having long occupied lands in Indian country.⁶¹

Private sales of land further complicated the situation. Whites defrauded Indians of land while Indians defrauded each other by selling land whose ownership was disputed between several Indian nations or communities. The reluctance of colonial assemblies, whose members often had speculative interests in the interior, to remove these settlers or

⁵⁸ BL, Add. MS, 21651, fol. 11: Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet.

⁵⁹ Lorette Treese, *The Storm Gathering: The Penn Family and the American Revolution* (University Park, Pa., 1992), 187–8.

⁶⁰ Johnson to Board of Trade, 20 Aug. 1762, *Johnson Papers*, iii. 865–6. The Board of Trade sent Johnson's warning to the king, 14 Jan. 1763, *ibid.* iv. 18–9.

⁶¹ Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 105–6.

prevent further encroachment was also part of the problem.⁶² In June 1766 Gage complained that colonial militias were refusing to carry out his orders for securing the frontier. He concluded, however, that the assemblies were largely to blame, as they had 'sowed the first seeds of discontent'.⁶³ Assemblies also dragged their feet in complying with British demands to reduce abuses in the Indian trade.⁶⁴ Virginia's governor wrote to Gage in 1767—a letter Gage forwarded to Whitehall—that despite his efforts, the assembly of his colony remained 'jealous of the Liberty of the Subject . . . and will not suffer the Traders to be subject to any Regulations or Restrictions whatsoever'.⁶⁵ But even if colonial governments wished to punish abusers, prosecutors had little hope of finding co-operation in frontier communities that often shared offenders' sentiments.

The inability of colonial governments to prevent either encroachments or the indiscriminate hatred of Indians by frontier communities is nowhere more evident than in the incidents associated with the Paxton Boys.⁶⁶ The Pennsylvania backcountry had suffered terribly from Indian raids during the Seven Years War and the conflicts that followed. Kidnappings, slaughtered children, burning homes, and fleeing refugees were regular features of war in Pennsylvania. Before dawn on 14 December 1763 several dozen white men from the Pennsylvania backcountry, later called the Paxton Boys after one of the communities from which they came, raided a nearby Indian settlement and killed six residents. The Indians were believed to be the last members of the Conestoga Indians, descendants of Indians who had made early treaties with William Penn.⁶⁷ They had long been settled, Christian converts and friendly to British interests, but this did not seem to matter to the backcountry inhabitants, who firmly believed that the Indians in question had either participated in recent raids or harboured men who had. Fourteen members of the tribe had been away from the village and were placed in the Lancaster County workhouse for their own protection. The assembly agreed to their removal and maintenance, but before action could be taken the Paxton Boys rode into Lancaster, broke into the workhouse and murdered the surviving Indians.

⁶² Ibid. 43–4, 107–8, and 176.

⁶³ Gage to Conway, 24 June 1766, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 950.

⁶⁴ Gage to Hillsborough, 17 Aug. 1768, *ibid.* i. 185; Gage to Hillsborough, 1 Apr. 1769, *ibid.* i. 222.

⁶⁵ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 20 Aug. 1767.

⁶⁶ The best account is in Treese, *The Storm Gathering*, ch. 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 35. Among their surviving possessions was a copy of the agreement signed by Penn in 1701.

The British and the Pennsylvanian governments responded with frustrated outrage, fearing the consequences for relations with other, larger Indian communities. Halifax referred to the event as 'the horrid murders committed by some People of Pennsylvania on the domesticated Indians of Conestogoe [sic]'.⁶⁸ He ordered Gage to make every effort to assist the government of the colony in 'bringing to condign Punishment the Perpetrators of those Act of Cruelty, and treachery'. Efforts to identify and apprehend the Paxton Boys were fruitless, despite reward offers of £200. No one in the backcountry would assist. Matters worsened with the removal of the peaceful Moravian Indians, named after the German missionaries who evangelized them, to Philadelphia for their own protection. The Indians wanted to be sent to New York and placed under William Johnson's protection, but the colony refused them entry and returned them to Philadelphia. Outraged that their government would harbour Indians at a time when other Indians were ravaging the frontier, the backcountry men marched on Philadelphia. In response to the impending threat, Philadelphians organized and armed themselves. The situation was defused when the frontiersmen learned first that the Indians were under the protection of British regulars, and second that the governor had pledged to meet with them to consider their demands for increased frontier protection. He also allowed them to view the Indians to make sure they had not participated in previous raids on the frontier.

In the British view, the proximity of British troops had achieved more than the efforts of the Pennsylvanian government. Gage wrote to Halifax that as soon as the frontiersmen had heard that the Indians were in the barracks of the king's troops they halted a few miles from the city, and declared they respected British authority over that of the province:

saying in that case [that the Indians are under the protection of the king's troops], they must look upon the Indians as under the protection of the King, to which they should pay respect and would not on that account offer any violence to them; but declared, if they had been only protected by the Legislature of the Province, that they would have put them all to death: they sent in some demands to the Governor, and then retired peaceably to their Habitations.⁶⁹

Such descriptions confirmed ministers' belief in the colonial governments' ineffectiveness and the colonists' deference to British authority.

⁶⁸ Halifax to Gage, 10 Mar. 1764, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 12.

⁶⁹ Gage English MS, vol. 1: Gage to Halifax, 12 May 1764.

This affirmed growing faith in the effectiveness of British intervention in Indian affairs. Such confidence, however, proved ill-founded.

The post-war regime reflected the assumptions, however false, about North America and its diverse inhabitants that the British governing elite had forged during the decade of conflict. After all, the regime that attempted to run the interior was largely a continuation of the ad hoc system that took shape between 1755 and 1765. Directive control remained in the hands of officials in the metropolis, where the drive for centralization in imperial affairs only increased. In America, the wartime establishment became an imperial civil service made up of Britons and colonists who were independent of colonial governments and answered directly to officials in London. The key posts in this new establishment—the superintendents for Indian Affairs and the commander of British forces in America—had all served the Crown in America during the conflicts. Gage and Stuart had been promoted for exemplary service, and Johnson, who had been a superintendent since the creation of the office, had been made a baronet.

The primary objective to avoid Indian wars was a conclusion born from lessons that started with Braddock's defeat. Indian wars were costly, offered little immediate benefit, and most importantly could never truly be won. Pitt had sold the war to the British elite and commoners alike on the grounds that the colonies were vital to Britain as resources and as markets for British goods.⁷⁰ The main post-war threat to the colonies' smooth operation came from the American Indians, and the primary threat to good Indian relations came from the colonists themselves. Therefore, the post-war regime did everything in its power to defuse the situation by appeasing the Indians and separating the colonists from them, in so far as was possible. For example, the king's Proclamation of 1763, which effectively placed westward expansion in the hands of the Crown, merely confirmed earlier, wartime policies pursued by commanders endeavouring to ease Indian apprehensions over land rights. The new policy was neither impromptu nor casual; rather, it was the considered response of an increasingly interventionist, pragmatic governing elite in Britain that was making the transition from operating as a national government to functioning as an imperial one.

⁷⁰ Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Cultures in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 2000), ch. 4.

4

The New Imperial Regime at Work

The British response to the troubled situation in North America at the end of the Seven Years War took the form of an attempt to assume a more permanent authority over Indian affairs. Broad directional control was given to the secretaries of state, who demonstrated an unprecedented interest in Indian affairs that was matched by a willingness to intervene decisively. Assisting them on the ground were a number of imperial agents, and to some extent elements of the colonial governments themselves. Together they forged a new form of British imperialism, which was directed from the metropolis and claimed sovereignty—and to varying degrees presided—over a multitude of ‘primitive’ peoples. The new regime was authoritative and centralized. Ministers no longer accepted their own ignorance of Indian affairs, nor did they blindly refer matters to their representing agents in America. After all, they blamed the early fiascos of the Seven Years War and its protraction through the Cherokee War and Pontiac’s War in part on the British government’s own neglect.

Whether or not the new regime was successful depends largely upon one’s perspective. Nevertheless, historians have been too harsh, depicting the programme as a failure on the part of a British governing elite that was too wrapped up in its own domestic squabbles to deal adequately with imperial affairs.¹ Such assessments are in part the offspring of the

¹ In his influential *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1917), i. 33–42, Clarence Alvord gives the appointment of Hillsborough as the point when the treatment of the American interior ceased to be interwoven with internal British politics. See also Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760–1775* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1961), 254; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (Cambridge, 1997), 161–3; W. R. Wilbur R. Jacobs, ‘British–Colonial Attitudes and Policies Toward the Indian in the American Colonies’, in Howard Peckham and Charles Gibson (eds.), *Attitudes of Colonial Powers Toward the American Indian* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1969), 94; and Robin Fabel,

ageing, early twentieth-century 'imperial view' of the American War of Independence first articulated by George Louis Beer and Charles McLean Andrews, furthered by Lawrence Henry Gipson and Louis Namier, and most recently argued in P. D. G. Thomas's authoritative, three-volume history of the decade leading up to the conflict.² While such an approach offers clear benefits to understanding the general bumbling of Whitehall in policies dealing with the white colonists, caused by the constant shift in cabinet ministers, it does not work for Indian affairs.

In comparison to Britain's government of its mainland colonies, the programme for the interior was a great success. In terms of its own primary objective—preventing costly, protracted Indian wars that severely disrupted colonies and required British military intervention—the programme was excellent. Large-scale conflicts in the style of the Cherokee War and Pontiac's War did not erupt until Dunmore's War in 1774, by which time the programme had effectively collapsed, although frontier tensions during this period suggest that they most certainly would have done so without British intervention. In fact, the frontier was relatively peaceful. The new regime also managed to prevent Britain's imperial rivals from influencing the Indians on a large scale, and successfully persuaded many Indians that Britain was the best available protector of their interests—a feat best evidenced in the comparatively large turnout of Indian auxiliaries on the side of the British during the American War of Independence.

Nevertheless, the regime was riddled with shortcomings. Strains on British finances and military forces severely impinged upon Britain's ability to implement many elements of the programme satisfactorily, resulting in a failure to address adequately Indians' grievances over irregularities

Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759–1775 (Gainesville, Fla., 2000), 9–11 and 206.

² George Louis Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754–1765* (London, 1907); Charles McLean Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution: Four Essays in American Colonial History* (New Haven, 1924); Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution, 1763–1775* (New York, 1954); Louis Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 1961); P. D. G. Thomas, *British Politics and the Stamp Act Crisis: The First Phase of the American Revolution, 1763–1767* (Oxford, 1975), *The Townshend Duties Crisis: The Second Phase of the American Revolution, 1767–1773* (Oxford, 1987), and *Tea Party To Independence: The Third Phase of the American Revolution, 1773–1776* (Oxford, 1991); P. J. Marshall, 'Empire and Authority in the Later Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 15 (1987), 105–6.

in trade and illegal settlement of their lands. Furthermore, colonists' resentment of British interference in colonial matters grew enormously during the 1760s, and ultimately led to a war of independence that cost Britain more than any conceivable Indian war would have done. The new programme for the interior was a substantial contributor to the tensions. Its initial funding mechanism was the highly contested Stamp Act of 1765, which ignited protests and planted the seeds of discontent that would sprout into armed revolution a decade later. The regime's use of British troops to remove settlements on Indian lands, and its tendency to pardon Indians accused of killing colonists, helped to refocus backcountry colonists' resentment of their colonial governments onto British rule. Colonists' refusal to fund the new programme through British-imposed taxes, and ministers' realization of the true costs of their plans, as well as the intense pressure in Britain to reduce taxes and government expenditures, ultimately placed unendurable financial strains on the programme. The widening anti-imperial movement among the white colonists proved to be the final blow, as frontier garrisons were redeployed to maintain order in the riotous eastern towns and cities. The protection and prosperity of the colonies was at the heart of the new regime, and so when the greater threat came from within the colonies themselves, reassessment and redeployment were natural responses. By the early 1770s the programme for the interior had effectively collapsed. However, belief in the superiority of centralized, authoritative management of imperial affairs endured.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND MECHANICS OF THE NEW REGIME

Respect for American Indian power was the foundation of British Indian policy during this period. By asserting its authority over the interior, the British government hoped to centralize Indian affairs and create a greater degree of uniformity. Long-term proposals were based on preventing Indian wars rather than upon any ethical responsibility towards the natives. This was not charity. The late conflicts had been tremendously expensive for both Britain and the colonies, and the fruitlessness of Indian war was transatlantically known. As William Johnson, one of the

Crown's two superintendents of Indian Affairs, wrote to the Board of Trade in August 1762:

It will be needless to detain your Lordships with a representation of the many ill consequences which must attend an Indian War amongst Scattered Settlements, and the Expences, losses & difficulties to be sustained, together with the time it may require before a Body of Troops can be enabled to restore the Country to a State of Tranquillity, it being a Subject of too much importance to have escaped your Lordships' observation.³

Adam Smith observed in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that 'nothing can be more contemptible than an Indian war in North America'.⁴ If the fruits of victory were to pay off in the form of increased secure trade, peace was essential. In order to prevent conflicts with the Indians, ministers and their agents worked to eliminate the threat in what they saw as the least expensive and most practical manner: limited appeasement. Thus, even after ten years of bloody conflict, orders from the highest levels in Britain demanded conciliation be shown to the losers, as Charles Wyndham, earl of Egremont and secretary of state, outlined in a letter to Amherst:

His Majesty observes, with pleasure, the laudable Gentleness of mildness, with which you offer His Royal Protection, indiscriminately to all His Subjects, recommending it particularly to the troops, to live in good harmony and brotherhood with the Canadians . . . It is needless to observe to you, how much His Majesty's interests may be promoted by treating the Indians upon the same principles of Humanity, & proper indulgence.⁵

The Indians' two primary complaints were unethical traders and white settlement on their lands, and thus a succession of British ministers worked to regulate the Indian trade and prevent further encroachment in order to prevent the Indians being 'alienated from His Majesty's Government'.⁶

A number of officials in Britain expressed occasional sympathy for the Indians, but these fragmented private sentiments do not indicate that a compelling sense of moral responsibility towards American Indians shaped British policy. British and American officials alike lamented the

³ William Johnson to Board of Trade, 20 Aug. 1762, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan, 14 vols. (Albany, NY, 1921–65), iii. 868.

⁴ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London, 1962), ii. 183.

⁵ BL, Add. MS, 21,697, fol. 9: Egremont to Amherst, 12 Dec. 1765.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 10: Egremont to Amherst, 12 Dec. 1765.

massacres committed by the Paxton Boys.⁷ Complaints such as those of Egremont to Amherst in the letter described above about the ‘shameful manners in which Business [was] transacted’ by the traders, who made ‘no scruple of using every low trick and Artifice to reach & cheat’, were also common. Lord Shelburne, like most secretaries of state during the 1760s, recognized that the Indians had regularly been the victims of whites. In letter to Guy Carleton, the lieutenant-governor of Canada, he explained that

It appears to me upon the best Consideration I have been able to give this Subject, that the Disorders and Inconveniences attending the back Settlements and Indian Trade have principally proceeded from the fraudulent Grants and Purchases of Land that have been so long suffered to prevail under the Countenance for the most part of the former Governors themselves, actuated by shamefull Motives of self-Interest, unbecoming of their Stations, and meriting His Majesty’s highest Displeasure.⁸

Nevertheless, there is little to suggest that such sympathies significantly influenced British policy during this period in such ways as to compromise overall objectives. The driving force that compelled British officials to address Indians’ complaints about land and trade came, not from any sense of pity or view that they had been unjustly treated, but instead from an acute awareness of the damage that malcontent Indians could cause. Written after learning of the possibility of a war between the Cherokee and several other Indian nations, secretary of state Lord Hillsborough’s letter in April 1770 to Johnson best describes how moral concern was pragmatically pushed aside. The potentially great loss of human life moved Hillsborough, who recognized that a British failure to intervene was ‘irreconcilable with the principles of Humanity’, but still he thought this was better than even the remotest chance that these nations might pose a danger to legal British settlements. He encouraged Johnson to prioritize British security above the fate of the Indians, but if anything could be done to assist the Indians without infringing upon British interests, then he might act:

the King, however unwillingly cannot but approve of your adopting the Alternative, and making the Security of His Subjects and the Peace of the Frontiers, the principal

⁷ See e.g. Halifax to Gage, 10 Mar. 1764, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775*, ed Clarence Edwin Carter (New Haven, 1931), ii. 12; WLCL, Thomas Gage Papers (English Series) (hereafter Gage English MS), vol. 1: Gage to Halifax, 12 May 1764.

⁸ WLCL, William Petty, earl of Shelburne, Papers (hereafter Shelburne MS), vol. 50: Shelburne to Carleton, 20 June 1767.

Object of your Attention at the Congress, but it would be most pleasing to His Majesty if it could be attained without encouraging the Savages in their barbarous Attacks upon each other.⁹

To facilitate Britain's new desire to direct Indian affairs, new posts were created and old ones were modified. Ultimately, the programme relied on the diligence of a handful of men in Whitehall and the colonies. Other members of parliament were only peripherally interested in Indian affairs, and cabinet ministers who were not directly responsible for Indian affairs happily left them to those ministers who were. The conclusion of the Seven Years War marked the end of the relative independence of the Board of Trade, especially with regard to Indian affairs. The Board was progressively weakened during the 1760s, beginning with the departure of Lord Halifax, its long-time president, to become the secretary of state for the Northern Department.¹⁰ For the next six years it averaged a new president a year, and by 1766 it had essentially become a staff for the secretary of state for the Southern Department. An Order-in-Council in May 1761 deprived the Board of the right to nominate colonial officials; in 1764 it ceased receiving petitions, and soon afterwards lost the authority to investigate issues independently. In 1761 the secretaries of state began to take responsibility for colonial correspondence away from the Board. In one of his first acts as secretary of state for the Southern Department, Shelburne, who had complained bitterly about this during his own short tenure as president, forbade the board from corresponding with the colonies without his approval and handling any matters without his permission.¹¹

The instability of the British government in the 1760s, however, meant that as new governments were formed or cabinets were shuffled, a succession of secretaries were appointed to handle colonial and Indian affairs. Egremont and Halifax were the first secretaries to handle the post-war responsibilities. They operated jointly to some extent, although

⁹ CO 5/241, fol. 136: Hillsborough to Johnson, 14 Apr. 1770.

¹⁰ On the diminishing powers of the Board of Trade, see Alison G. Olson, 'The Board of Trade and London-American Interest Groups in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8 (1980), 33–50; Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 54–5; R. A. Humphreys 'Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763', *English Historical Review*, 44 (1934), 241–58.

¹¹ Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to the Board of Trade, 26 Aug. 1766.

Halifax had primary responsibility for America. In June 1765 Henry Semour Conway replaced Halifax, and the following year Shelburne replaced Conway. Difficulties with the American colonies prompted the Crown in 1768 to create a new post to handle them, because, as Lord Chesterfield remarked, 'if we have no Secretary of State with full and undisputed powers for America, in a few years we may as well have no America'.¹² Hillsborough accepted the position and thus became a third secretary of state, whose responsibilities included British possessions in West Africa, the West Indies, and North America. The new post, usually referred to as secretary of state for the American Department, also had authority over the Board of Trade. Hillsborough resigned in August 1772 and was replaced by Dartmouth. He in turn was replaced three years later by Lord George Germain, who was thought to be better equipped than Dartmouth to handle a colonial uprising.

Although historians have portrayed the relatively swift turnover of ministers responsible for North America as destabilizing imperial affairs, the men who held the imperial posts were largely consistent in their handling of Indian affairs until after Dartmouth's appointment. This regularity was owed in no small measure to the consensus amongst the governing elite that the empire needed to avoid Indian wars and that the best way to accomplish this was through centralized management from London. The consistency in Indian affairs owed even more to the continuity of agents in America. Whereas the turnover of governors was fairly regular, the two superintendents for Indian Affairs and the commander of British forces in America were the same three men from the end of the conflicts until shortly before war broke out in 1775—Thomas Gage being commander-in-chief, and William Johnson (northern district) and John Stuart (southern district) serving as the superintendents. The British government could not have asked for a more competent and conscientious trio. Johnson had long been recognized by the British government as the most capable man in America when it came to Indian relations, and Stuart's exploits in the Seven Years War and the Cherokee War were well known. Gage was a seasoned veteran of American warfare and, having first served in America as part of the British force that marched into the interior under Braddock in 1755, was acutely aware of the Indians' capabilities.

¹² Margaret Marion Spector, *The American Department of the British Government, 1768–1782* (New York, 1940), esp. ch. 1. Chesterfield's remark is cited on p. 12.

Johnson and Stuart each had their own staff, which was paid and supplied by the British government. They were independent of the colonial governments and reported directly to British ministers and Gage, and they were technically part of the British military establishment in North America. Gage disdained the added duties of Indian affairs and was usually satisfied to allow Johnson and Stuart to handle them, stepping in only to enforce the Crown's authority either with the Indians or with colonists when necessary.¹³

All of the ministers responsible for American affairs during the period maintained a regular and detailed correspondence with these three key imperial agents, respecting and regularly following their advice. Agents among the Indians were considered to have been vital to Britain's victory in the late wars and, therefore, crucial to continuing peace.¹⁴ Praise was constantly heaped on Johnson and Stuart. Halifax remarked in a letter to Gage in January 1764 that negotiations with the hostile Indian nations should 'be left to the Care and Abilities of Sir William Johnson, of whose Knowledge and Judgment in Indian Affairs, I have long entertained the highest Opinion'.¹⁵ On other occasions, distance gave the ministers little choice but to limit their own authority to the giving of general directions. As Shelburne admitted to Stuart, 'it is impossible at this Distance, and uninformed of the Measures hitherto pursued, to give positive Directions in what manner these things ought to be effected; it must therefore be left to your Discretion, aided by the Advice of the different Governors, how to conduct yourself.'¹⁶ Nevertheless, Whitehall remained the hub of authority. During the 1760s communications regarding Indian affairs increasingly centred on relevant ministers. Gage always corresponded with the ministers directly. Initially, Egremont ordered the superintendents to correspond with the Board of Trade, which was to send a summary to the secretary of state.¹⁷ However, during the tenures of Conway and Shelburne as secretaries of state, Johnson and Stuart increasingly corresponded

¹³ Gage English MS, vol. 1: Gage to Halifax, 7 Apr. 1764; Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 11 Sept. 1766.

¹⁴ WLCL, William Henry Lyttelton Papers (hereafter Lyttelton MS), Lyttelton Letterbook: Lyttelton to Board of Trade and Lyttelton to John Pownall, both 7 Aug. 1758, fols. 173–192. The letter to Pownall is a more frank summary of the report he sent to the Board of Trade.

¹⁵ Halifax to Gage, 14 Jan. 1764, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 10.

¹⁶ Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to Stuart, 18 Feb. 1767.

¹⁷ CO 5/65, Part 2, fols. 18–23: Egremont to the Board of Trade, 14 July 1763.

directly with them, and by the time of Hillsborough's appointment circumventing the Board was standard practice.¹⁸ Communication became so regular that for the first time it became necessary for all parties to number all of their correspondence, so that each party knew which reports and orders had been received and was thus able to place received letters in their proper context.¹⁹

OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS

The British policy of appeasing Indians in order to prevent armed conflicts took three forms. First, British ministers and imperial agents attempted to impose a system of regulated trade and settlement, thus addressing Indian concerns about abusive traders and encroachment. Second, the British actively pursued the practice of gift giving in order to strengthen Indian leaders with British leanings and to soothe tempers when abuses were committed. Finally, the British followed a strict policy of neutrality when dealing with inter-Indian disputes. Success, however, ultimately depended upon the ability of the British establishment in America to implement these policies, which in turn depended heavily on the colonists' willingness to co-operate.

Assuring Indians that their lands were secure was a key objective from the start. Throughout the Seven Years War colonial governors, Indian agents, and British commanders had attempted to persuade Indians that their lands would be safe if the British defeated the French. In October 1761 Colonel Henry Bouquet officially affirmed this position by issuing a proclamation temporarily prohibiting settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, which Amherst as commander-in-chief in America approved along with the Board of Trade.²⁰ In 1763 The British government made this a pillar of its official policy by placing the Crown in direct control of future settlement. Officials hoped that centralizing authority and organization on Whitehall would ensure a greater coherency in British expansion in

¹⁸ See esp. Shelburne MS, vol. 57: Shelburne to Johnson, 11 Dec. 1766 and Shelburne to Stuart, 11 Dec. 1766.

¹⁹ The numbering system seems to have been initiated by Shelburne in 1766, but was followed by his successors. For his own explanation of the scheme, see Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to Sir Henry Moore, 11 Oct. 1766.

²⁰ Alvord, *Mississippi Valley*, i. 122.

America that would benefit the whole empire. No longer would a handful of rogues operating near a complacent colony be able to swindle the Indians out of huge tracts of land, and thus provoke hostilities. In his May 1763 letter to the Board of Trade outlining the future of Indian affairs in America, Egremont identified this shift as essential for the 'Preservation of the internal Peace and Tranquillity of the Country against any Indian Disturbances'.²¹ The following month, the board, now under Shelburne's presidency, concurred with Egremont.²² It proposed strict instructions to colonial governors not to grant lands in Indian country. It also advocated the encouragement of settlement in Georgia, Nova Scotia, and the newly acquired Floridas. Egremont responded approvingly in September and ordered the Board to prepare a draft proclamation as soon as possible, the news of the outbreak of Pontiac's War having just reached Britain. In October the king issued the report in the form of a proclamation, outlining a programme for future dealings with American Indians. The Proclamation of 1763 was designed specifically to bring peace to the frontier. As Halifax remarked to Gage the following January, he expected the Indians to be set at ease by the proclamation. 'To such a Disposition His Majesty's late Proclamation (when it shall be make known amongst them) must greatly contribute,' he declared, 'since it will remove the principal Causes of their Discontent, by quieting their Jealousies with respect to the encroachments on their Lands'.²³ The proclamation included a clause prohibiting settlement across the Appalachians and placed westward expansion of the colonies under the control of the British government. Private individuals and colonial governments were no longer authorized to settle or purchase lands in the interior without express permission from the British government. Determining an exact western boundary of the colonies now became a paramount concern, and so for the next several years superintendents struggled to fix borders across the colonial frontier.

Extensive interior settlement was also opposed by a number of British merchants and manufacturers and the military. Some concern arose within British commercial circles that new interior colonies would not be directly accessible to British trade. Interior colonies, they argued, would

²¹ CO 5/65 Part 1, fols. 43–51: Egremont to the Board of Trade, 5 May 1763.

²² CO 5/65, Part 1, fols. 58–78: 'Report on Acquisitions in America', addressed to the king, 8 June 1763. See also Humphreys, 'Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763', 241–58. ²³ Gage English MS, vol. 1: Halifax to Gage, 14 Jan. 1764, marked 'Private'.

instead rely on the established seaboard colonies, and this dependence would precipitate the rise of manufacturing in North America.²⁴ More significant were officials' worries that interior settlements would provoke conflicts with the Indians. The British military opposed unrestricted settlement from the start, based on commanders' assumption that in the event of a conflict between interior settlements and the Indians, frontier garrisons would always come out losers.²⁵ As the Cherokee War and Pontiac's War had vividly demonstrated, Indians could effectively cut off any interior position and turn forts into virtual prisons.

In short, many British officials and military commanders saw interior settlements as liabilities that were not worth supporting or even defending. The costs of constructing, garrisoning, and maintaining the large forts that could withstand lengthy Indian sieges were prohibitive when compared to the meagre economic benefit from small interior settlements. Moreover, their erratic, Indian-hating inhabitants would spark conflicts that would draw in British troops, who would bear the brunt of the fighting and the Indian resentment that followed. When reassessing troop deployments in 1768, Gage advocated abandoning even the hard-won Fort Pitt on these grounds, writing to Hillsborough that 'I should not hesitate a Moment to give my Opinion, that it ought to be abandoned'.²⁶ The fort, he explained, was difficult to supply 'in Case of a Quarrel with the Savages', and it was in the centre of a district where illegal settlers were 'frequently on the Eve of a Rupture' with the Indians. If armed hostilities erupted, he explained, the proximity of the fort would force the British into the conflict, and its vulnerable position would make the garrison hostages of the Indians. Without British troops as liabilities, Indian attacks on illegal settlements were seen as beneficial checks on unlicensed expansion. Hillsborough remarked privately to Gage in 1772 that Indian attacks on settlements in the Illinois and Ohio regions, both illegal and legal, would have clear advantages:

At the same time I confess to you that, if their Hostilities should have the effect to induce the [white] Inhabitants of the Illinois Country to remove into the Province

²⁴ The best summary of the contemporary debate over retaining Canada or Guadeloupe in the 1760s, and the accompanying discussion regarding interior settlement, remains Vincent Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763–1793* (London, 1952), i. 162–7.

²⁵ Conway to Gage 20 May 1766, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 38.

²⁶ Gage to Hillsborough, 16 June 1768, *ibid.* i. 175–9.

of Quebec, that of West Florida, or any other of the settled Colonies, it would in my Opinion be a happy Event, as nothing appears to me to be more contrary to the true Interests of this Country than settling new Colonies and making new Establishments in the interior parts of the Continent.²⁷

General Frederick Haldimand, Gage's second-in-command and temporary replacement while Gage was in England in 1773–4, expressed similar sentiments, noting that he would 'continue to keep a watchful eye on the disposition of the Indians', but would not be alarmed by any of their 'irregularities' resulting from the colonists, 'who in contempt of His Majesty's Proclamation are constantly making encroachments'. Although he expected the advances to 'prove fatal to some of them [the colonists]', Haldimand believed such a consequence to be 'a just punishment and a check to put a stop to the rashness'. Better that illegal squatters should die than the British military interfere and in so doing 'occasion a war, unjust in itself, and very expensive in the end'.²⁸

Few ministers, imperial agents, or colonists expected the prohibition on settlement to endure forever: most assumed that war, famine, and disease would deplete Indian strength and eventually allow whites to assume control peacefully. As Thomas Boone, governor of South Carolina, observed in his proposal that circulated around Whitehall, rum, war, and disease would be far more effective and cheaper than any military campaign.²⁹ Ministers sanctioned interior settlements if they directly served British trading or defensive interests and local Indian communities did not strenuously object. Thus, settlement was encouraged at points where the French had formerly settled or established forts, such as at Detroit, Chartres, and in limited territories in the Illinois region. When ministers rejected proposals for settlements, they usually did so on the grounds of either inadequate defence or concerns for peace, not out of a desire to keep the whole of the interior permanently for the Indians.³⁰

²⁷ Hillsborough to Gage, 5 Feb 1772, *ibid.* ii. 140.

²⁸ BL, Add. MS, 21,695: Haldimand to Dartmouth, 3 Nov. 1773, fols. 44–5.

²⁹ CO 5/377, Part 2, fol. 276: Extract of letter from Thomas Boone, governor of South Carolina, including 'A Scheme for the Management of Indians', addressed to Halifax, 24 Nov. 1763.

³⁰ See e.g. CO 5/65, Part 3, fols. 135–41, John Bradstreet to the Board of Trade, 23 Jan. 1765; Gage to Conway, 28 Mar. 1765, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 86–7; Conway to Gage, 20 May 1766, *ibid.* ii. 38; Hillsborough to Gage, 31 July 1770, *ibid.* ii. 108–9; Hillsborough to Gage, 4 Dec. 1771, *ibid.* ii. 137–8; Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 114–17 and 166–8.

The British government did not see the boundary as static, but as adjustable according to the needs of the white colonists and disposition of the Indians. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix included the sale of a substantial parcel of Iroquois-claimed lands to the Crown, Virginia, and a number of traders seeking damages from the late wars.³¹ That same year, Hillsborough rejected a Cherokee offer of land on the grounds that 'the extending the western limits of our Colonies, beyond the line fixed by the Proclamation of 1763, [had already left] ample room for extension of settlement for a long time to come'.³² In consequence, he concluded, entering into 'any negotiation of this nature' was not necessary 'for the present time at least'. In 1772 Dartmouth, however, allowed a substantial purchase of land in the Ohio valley by a private group. The interior, therefore, was not a permanent Indian reserve in the eyes of the British government; rather, they saw it simply as a territory whose unrestricted settlement was not, for the time being at least, in the empire's overall interest.

Second only to British officials' certainty that land management would restore peace to the frontier was their conviction that a more regulated system of trade between whites and Indians was necessary to maintain it. How to regulate the trade, however, was much less clear. Colonial governments had long pursued their own trading policies with Indians, which varied according to both the colony and its current government, and ministers believed that this lack of uniformity had caused a host of problems during the Seven Years War and the Indian unrest which immediately followed it. One colony's ban on the sale of weapons to a particular community was not necessarily recognized or enforced by its neighbours, and advantageously situated Indian nations could play colonies off against one another in the same way they had the French and British.³³ Further complicating matters was the fact that victory over the French and the extension of British territorial claims meant that more traders would be

³¹ CO 5/241, fol. 77: Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 Jan. 1769. For a discussion of the intricacies of the treaty and the various interests of those involved, see Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 174–80. Hillsborough later regretted the decision, CO 5/241, fol. 211: Hillsborough to Johnson, 1 July 1772.

³² CO 5/241, fol. 53: Hillsborough to Stuart, 15 Sept. 1768.

³³ This was particularly the case with the Cherokee, who did not have easy access to French or Spanish settlements and traders. See John Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy to London, 1762', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27 (1999), 1–2; Clarence E. Carter, 'British Policy Towards the American Indians in the South, 1763–8', *English Historical Review*, 33 (1918), 39–41.

roaming the interior, and, as noted above, the traders were largely condemned throughout the Anglo-Atlantic world as swindlers and poor representatives of Anglo-American culture. Gage candidly apportioned much of the blame for the difficulties of the late conflicts to the traders: 'One of the chief causes assigned for the total defection of almost all the Indian nations from the English at the beginning of the last War, was the scandalous practices of the British traders who went amongst the nations defrauding and cheating them, by the most vile and deceitful Methods.'³⁴ When reflecting on the future of the programme for the interior, Shelburne concurred: 'if the most enormous Abuses and Frauds had not been committed by such worthless Fellows as the Indian Traders have in general been, and too many of Them still continue to be, the last War in America instead of lasting seven years would have terminated in two.'³⁵

The British plan was to open the Indian trade to all colonists so long as they could assure the authorities of their good character. Formal acknowledgment that the trader satisfied this requirement was to take the form of a licence issued by one of the colonial governments. A trader's poor conduct would result in the revocation of the licence, and thus prevent him from operating. To ensure good trading practices, the British also limited legal exchange to specific forts, posts, and towns where either a British military officer or an Indian affairs agent could monitor the situation and prevent the sale of contraband.³⁶ Such a system, however, proved virtually impossible to fund or enforce. Licensing was subject to fraud, traders being able to license their firm and then hire whomever they chose to represent them among the Indians.³⁷ Because licences were

³⁴ Gage to Conway, 24 June 1766, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 96.

³⁵ Shelburne MS, vol. 60: 'Shelburne's Observations upon a Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs', title imposed, no date (1766?).

³⁶ For the continued promotion of this practice, see CO 5/65, Part 3, fols. 135–41: Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradstreet's 'Thoughts on Indian Trade, necessary Posts etc.', Dated 4 Dec. 1764 and sent to Board of Trade, 23 Jan. 1765; Shelburne MS, vol. 50: Shelburne to Guy Carleton, 20 June 1767; Halifax to Amherst, 19 Oct. 1763, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 5.

³⁷ For complaints of fraud or projected problems with the licensing, see CO 5/66, fols. 70–1: Stuart to Halifax, 24 Aug. 1765; Shelburne MS, vol. 57: Shelburne to Stuart, 11 Dec. 1766; *ibid.* vol. 53: Shelburne to Lord Charles Greville Montagu, Governor of South Carolina, 25 Oct. 1766; *ibid.*, vol. 52: Montague to Shelburne, 3 Mar. 1767; *ibid.*, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 20 Aug. 1767; *ibid.*, vol. 52: James Wright, Governor of Georgia, to Shelburne, 29 Nov. 1766; *ibid.*, vol. 51: Stuart to Shelburne, 11 Apr. 1767; and Carter, 'British Policy', 42 and 46.

issued by colonial governments, the licensing procedure and criteria were subject to their regulation, which was relaxed and did not embody the more rigid ethos of the British programme for the interior.³⁸ An unsuccessful applicant could try for a licence in another colony that was either more lenient or further away from those who knew of his poor reputation. Moreover, every inch of the interior could not be patrolled to monitor trade. Traders made lengthy journeys to the recognized trading centres, giving them ample opportunity for sales of banned goods and an alibi for being in the region.

Changes in British practices in handling Indian relations formed as important a part of the programme as did the reforms to expansion and trade policies. First and foremost, diplomatic efforts became solely the jurisdiction of the imperial establishment; governors or other colonial representatives were barred. The superintendents and their deputies were to maintain regular, if not constant, contact with the major nations in their districts and be proactive in their diplomacy. Should hostilities appear imminent, they were to offer immediate appeasement to cool tempers. As Shelburne noted to Johnson when news reached Whitehall of traders' continuing to provoke agitation among the Iroquois, the king was 'greatly displeased', and Johnson was ordered to 'take every measure that prudence can suggest' to patch up the situation and to 'appease for the present the too just Resentment of the Indian Tribes'.³⁹

This was accomplished primarily by gifts. Gift giving was an important and established facet of white-Indian relations by this time.⁴⁰ As we have seen, the meaning of the gifts had changed by the mid-eighteenth century from expressions of mutual affection and friendship, to bribes in the eyes of whites, and opportunities to acquire and control the flow of European goods in the eyes of Indians. Gifts primarily were a mixture of products selected to have the highest impact at the lowest cost—weapons, textiles, various curiosities, and alcohol. At Stuart's Indian congress just after the Seven Years War, gifts distributed included 1,077 guns, 2,300 shirts, 500 brass pans, 576 hatchets, 79 looking glasses, 36,500 gun flints, 190 saddles,

³⁸ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 20 Aug. 1767. Gage noted that he had never heard of a single trader being punished for transgressing the conditions of his licence.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 53: Shelburne to Johnson, 13 Sept. 1766.

⁴⁰ The most comprehensive discussion of the role of gifts in Indian diplomacy remains Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers: 1748-1763* (London, 1950).

798 bridles, and an abundance of gunpowder.⁴¹ Guns, ammunition, hatchets, knives, and textiles were essential to Indian communities which had largely lost the ability to produce their own clothing and weapons.⁴² Warfare interrupted regular trade, and so gifts were essential avenues through which Indians could procure these vital goods. As a leader of the Indians present at the Treaty of Easton in 1758 reportedly complained, the British had failed to bring vital supplies: 'it is impossible for the Indians to subsist without guns, powder, and lead, of which we have received none.'⁴³ In consequence, by showering an Indian faction with gifts, which were always redistributed to increase the faction's support base, the European supplier was able to benefit as that faction rose in prominence.⁴⁴ Gift giving increased dramatically during times of war, partly because suitably placed Indian nations regularly courted one or more European nations, but also because the loose structure of government in most Indian communities enabled factions to pursue their own politics and wars.⁴⁵

A further attraction of gift giving was that it gave an opportunity to entice representatives of various Indian nations and factions to a meeting. Once there, the face-to-face distribution of gifts allowed the British representative to speak privately to each group. As Stuart explained in his report on the general congress he held after the Seven Years War, which was attended by representatives of nations with strong pro-French factions, 'the Delivery of the Presents gave me an Opportunity of Conferring separately with every Tribe and of endeavouring to discover the Sentiments of each with Regard to the Other Indian Nations in this Department'.⁴⁶

⁴¹ CO 5/65, Part 2, fol. 74: Stuart to Board of Trade, no date.

⁴² On American Indian dependence and use of European goods, see esp. George Irving Quimby, *Indian Culture and European Trade Goods: Archaeology of the Historic Period in the Western Great Lakes Region* (Madison, Wisc., 1966); Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (Cambridge, 1995), 11–13; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistency, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983), 68; Timothy Shannon, 'Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson and the Indian Fashion', *WMQ* 53 (1996), 13–42.

⁴³ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Mar. 1759), 115.

⁴⁴ Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 7–8.

⁴⁵ This was particularly the case in the Ohio region, whose Indian population was relatively new to the area. See Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (London, 1998), 92–3.

⁴⁶ CO 5/65, Part 2, fols. 69–70: Stuart to Board of Trade, no date.

Before the 1760s the French excelled the British in effective gift giving.⁴⁷ The French system was centralized in order to reduce Indian duplicity and prevent French interests from competing with each other. The French also benefited from regular, annual shipments. In comparison, before the late 1750s the British and colonial governments were poorly organized and decentralized, which led the British and the colonists to duplicate gifts, support rival factions, and neglect entire nations.⁴⁸ As a result, Indian diplomacy was in disarray when the British Empire needed Indian allies the most. Furthermore, the paltry peacetime sums colonial assemblies allotted for gifts and the openness of pre-war Indian diplomacy to colonial and private rivalries meant that well-placed factions and individuals could use gifts to obtain favourable land sales and trade agreements. William Johnson, who was both a merchant and sporadic Indian agent for New York before 1756, outspent the colony by an almost 7:1 ratio in terms of Indian gifts to the strategically paramount Iroquois between December 1746 and November 1747.⁴⁹ Combined with his talent for negotiating and convincing Indians that he shared a cultural affinity with them—in 1746 he arrived at a congress between colonial officials and Indian leaders dressed in war-paint and riding at the head of a Mohawk delegation—Johnson's expenditures made him the most powerful man in the Mohawk Valley, and arguably among the most influential people in North America. Not surprisingly, when he was removed as New York's Indian agent, the Iroquois complained vehemently until he was restored, and when war with France appeared imminent in 1754, the British immediately turned to him to gather allies and begin managing Indian affairs.

Part of Britain's wartime centralization efforts included placing gifts under the direct authority of the Crown so as to maximize their potential and keep costs low. Instructions from Whitehall were sent to commanders and governors insisting that sufficient gifts accompany any diplomatic mission, and that lists of appropriate goods be returned to London for future shipments.⁵⁰ Gift giving did not always run smoothly for the

⁴⁷ Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, ch. 2; Carter, 'British Policy', 39.

⁴⁸ Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 31–42.

⁴⁹ Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 37; for an excellent assessment of Johnson and his relationship with the Iroquois, see *ibid.* 30–42.

⁵⁰ See e.g. the general instructions from the king to Abercrombie upon his appointment as commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, CO 5/212, Part 2, fols. 231–9; 30 Dec. 1757; CO 5/211, fol. 47; Secretary of State Sir Thomas Robinson to Robert Dinwiddie,

British, even after the conflicts ended, and savvy Indians were swift to take advantage of continued disorganization. In a letter to Shelburne in August 1767, Gage reiterated superintendents' complaints that the ministry's policy of sending goods for distribution to both superintendents and governors allowed Indians to dip into the honey pot twice.⁵¹ Indians were also believed to 'greatly exaggerate' foreign influence in their communities in order to obtain gifts.⁵²

Despite complaints from colonists and British officers that gifts were an overrated tool of diplomacy, ministers in Britain were thoroughly convinced of their value. Amherst, while serving as commander-in-chief in America, detested the idea of giving gifts, perceiving the Indian tribes as a conquered people whose defeat did not merit presents; he attempted to halt the practice.⁵³ The governor of South Carolina's letter to Halifax in November 1763 typifies the sentiments of many colonists and British officials serving in America. After disparaging the Indian character as ignorant and ruthlessly savage, he asserted that gifts made the British appear weak:

we are in a habit of purchasing from Indians, forbearance from injuries, and this tribute, as all tribute ever have been by the levier to the least, is interpreted as the token of Inferiority. . . . why may not those disgraceful conferences, where their Insolence is constantly displayed, be for ever laid aside, those ignominious tributes, under the name of Presents, be utterly abolished, and that immense expence of Provisions now incurred by their frequent visits to the Settlements, be saved to the Colonies . . .⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the lessons of the recent wars made it clear to most officials in Britain, as well as to many in America, that victory over the Indians was neither complete nor to be taken for granted. As another South Carolina's governor had explained to the Board of Trade in August 1758, gifts need not be considered a sign of weakness, but could be seen instead 'in the light of a Subsidy to a Foreign nation, who may be dangerous Enemies or very

Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, 5 July 1754; Lyttelton MS: Sir James Write to Lyttelton, 25 Nov. 1758; and Dinwiddie to William Pitt, 18 June 1757, *The Correspondence of William Pitt . . . with Colonial Governors and Naval Commissioners in America*, ed. Gertrude S. Kimball (London, 1906), i. 80.

⁵¹ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 20 Aug. 1767.

⁵² See e.g. Hillsborough to Gage, 24 Mar. 1769, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 87.

⁵³ Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (Oxford, 1994), 236.

⁵⁴ CO 5/377, Part 2, fols. 273–7: Thomas Boone to Halifax, 24 Nov. 1763.

serviceable Allies to us'.⁵⁵ Johnson's letter to the Board of Trade in August 1762, provoked by Amherst's neglect of gift giving, best summarizes the approach that British ministers adopted:

I am very apprehensive that we who always fell greatly short of the Enemy [the French] in presents and kindness to them [the Indians], may become too premature in a sudden retrenchment of some yet necessary Expences, which on due Consideration I flatter myself your Lordships will be of opinion they should be gradually weaned from, and that by prudent Conduct, and due distribution of some little favours to them for a time, we may effect without much trouble, what we should find no small difficulty in compassing by force.⁵⁶

Fears of French and Spanish influence over their old Indian allies, worries that colonists were upsetting neighbouring Indian nations, and growing tension between the colonists and Britain ensured that ministers heeded Johnson's complaint. British gift giving never fell to anything near the colonies' pre-Seven Years War allocations.

In pursuit of their general aim to avoid conflicts with Indians, British ministers and agents made every effort to avoid entangling alliances with them. Bolstering one Indian nation so it could suppress another might have given Britain greater sway within the interior, but in the process the backcountry settlements and interior garrisons would have been exposed to war parties of vengeful Indians seeking easy targets. Therefore, British officials instructed the curtailment of ammunitions and supplies and acted as intermediaries when inter-tribal conflicts erupted. Shelburne explained to Johnson in December 1766 that the policy of avoiding entanglements 'is a System as much superior in sound Policy as it is in Humanity to that of spiring up one tribe to cut the Throats of another'.⁵⁷ Even when war seemed imminent between Britain's former Choctaw allies and the Creek Indians, who had largely sided against Britain in the late war, Britain remained neutral. Stuart played the role of arbitrator, which Hillsborough commended. Nevertheless, he reminded Stuart that Britain's neutrality in such matters was vital:

great care ought to be taken in any mediation of this Nature, that His Majesty's Name is not committed in any thing that may have the most distant appearance

⁵⁵ Lyttelton MS, Letterbook: Lyttelton to Board of Trade, 7 Aug. 1758.

⁵⁶ Johnson to Board of Trade, 20 Aug. 1762, *Johnson Papers*, iii. 866–7.

⁵⁷ Shelburne MS, vol. 57: Shelburne to Johnson, 11 Dec. 1766.

of taking any part in differences that may arise between one Nation of Indians and another, other ways than as wishing to conciliate those differences which it would be for their mutual Interests to extinguish.⁵⁸

Officials wanted the Crown and its agents to appear as impartial buffers between both Indians and colonists as well as between rival Indian communities. As Shelburne expressed it in his December 1766 letter praising James Grant, governor of East Florida, for his recent prevention of a war between the Creek and Cherokee nations: 'Your success . . . proves how much more preferable it is to gain the Affection of those Tribes by mild Treatment, Than to set them at variance with each other, which ultimately must confirm them in the Impression which they have already entertained, that we wish the Extirpation of them all.'⁵⁹ The old system of dividing and conquering, Shelburne wrote to Johnson on the same day, was at an end. The new plan was to convince the Indians of the Crown's benevolent justice, and 'that we really mean to cherish and protect them'; then 'they will naturally be led to look up to us as their Guardians and Defenders, and we shall become not only the Arbiters of their Differences but the only Refuge they will think of seeking in their Distress'.⁶⁰ This practice was only compromised when Indian political manoeuvring raised the possibility that an Indian confederation might form. The pan-Indian nature of Pontiac's War had alarmed the king and governing elite, and so ministers and imperial agents were wary of inter-Indian organizing and took steps to inhibit it.⁶¹

⁵⁸ CO 5/241, fol. 106: Hillsborough to Stuart, 15 July 1769. See also *ibid.*, fol. 189: Hillsborough to Stuart, 4 May 1771, *ibid.*, fol. 161: Hillsborough to Stuart 31 July 1770; *ibid.*, fol. 188: Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 May 1771.

⁵⁹ Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to James Grant, 11 Dec. 1766. See also *ibid.*, vol 53: Shelburne to Stuart, 19 Feb. 1767.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 57: Shelburne to Johnson, 11 Dec. 1766.

⁶¹ Gage to Halifax, 11 Feb. 1764, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 16; Gage to Halifax, 12 May 1764, *ibid.* i. 26–7; Halifax to Gage, 12 May 1764, *ibid.* ii. 12–3; Gage to Hillsborough, 15 May 1768, *ibid.* i. 174; Gage to Hillsborough, 6 Jan. 1770, *ibid.* i. 245; Gage to Hillsborough, 12 Nov. 1770, *ibid.* i. 281; Hillsborough to Gage, 15 Nov. 1770, *ibid.* ii. 120; CO 5/241, fol. 177: Hillsborough to Johnson, 15 Nov. 1770, which was sent as a circular to the governors in Johnson's district; *ibid.*, fol. 188: Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 May 1771; *ibid.*, fol. 235: Dartmouth to Johnson, 10 April 1773; BL, Add. MS, 21,695, fol. 9: Haldimand to Dartmouth, 7 July 1773; *ibid.*, fol. 24: Haldimand to Dunmore, 4 Aug. 1773.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE NEW REGIME

British commitment to the programme for the interior was substantial. Until the eve of the American War of Independence, ministers and commanders alike demonstrated both a continuing interest in the success of Britain's policies and willingness to enforce them. Indian affairs figured prominently in the correspondence between ministers and commanders and colonial governors in America, often constituting the first or main topic in instructions and reports. Only in the early 1770s did the affairs that were unique to the white colonists emerge as the main theme of official transatlantic correspondence. However, difficulties with the American colonists over issues of imperial rule undermined British-Indian relations by challenging Britain's authority and straining its resources. These developments eventually compelled the abandonment of an assertive interior policy.

Ministers demanded that commanders, governors, and superintendents act to enforce the general policy of non-agitation, even if it was at the immediate expense of settlers. These were not instances of officials favouring Indians over colonists, but rather cases of acting in the empire's best interests as the British officials defined them. This meant eliminating illegal settlements and persuading Indians to rely on the British to resolve their grievances. In a circular letter to the governors in September 1766, Shelburne expressed fury at learning that a number of Indians had been killed on the frontier by squatting colonists and, moreover, that 'the Offenders have not yet been discovered and brought to Justice'.⁶² The governors were ordered to co-operate with Gage in the capture of the offenders and removal of the illegal settlement. Superintendents also acted on ministers' orders to ensure that colonies were licensing traders and preventing settlement. They contacted governors in their districts and regularly reported their efforts to their superiors in London. Governors also frequently reported that they were taking whatever actions were possible. William Franklin, governor of New Jersey, even noted in December 1766 that two whites had been executed for murdering two Indian women.⁶³ In May 1767 Gage wrote to Shelburne that problems had developed between illegal settlers at Cheat River and Red Stone Creek and neighbouring

⁶² Gage to Halifax, 11 Feb. 1764, *Gage Correspondence*, vol. 53; Shelburne to all governors in North America, 13 Sept. 1766.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. 51; Franklin to Shelburne, 12 Dec. 1767.

Indians. The settlers had requested assistance, but with Gage's consent and Shelburne's subsequent approval the British commander of Fort Pitt ordered the settlers to withdraw immediately or face armed force, because 'he did not think them entitled to any Protection from the Garrison under his Command'.⁶⁴ The following summer Gage reported that the threats had been successful in removing most of the settlers, but to finish the job the commander of Fort Pitt had marched a detachment of regular troops along with several Indian headmen to the settlements and ordered the whites to leave.⁶⁵ After the settlers left, the commander had the buildings burned.

The imperial establishment's desire to impress upon the Indians that British officials were impartial and not tied to colonists' prejudices is made particularly clear in the handling of a series of killings in 1773. That spring two young Cherokee arrived at Hezekiah Collins's farm 'in the back parts of Georgia', where they asked for food. Hezekiah and his daughter obliged, but when Hezekiah's son John arrived, he killed them. Father and son then sank the bodies in a river. According to Stuart, the Cherokee discovered the incident and wanted to 'take revenge on Innocent people'.⁶⁶ Hezekiah and John were apprehended, but John escaped to the backcountry. The incident caused a flurry of letters and reports involving Stuart, Haldimand (who was sitting in for Gage), Dartmouth, and the governors of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Haldimand and Dartmouth concluded that the Cherokee, who did not seek their own revenge, needed to be substantially rewarded and offered 'capital' satisfaction in form of the execution of John Collins. To this end the British government instructed allotments of compensatory gifts to be delivered to the Cherokee, offered a £100 reward for the capture of Collins, and pressed the governors to follow the lead of Georgia's governor, James Wright, in matching it. Two months later Haldimand reported to Dartmouth that four white traders had been robbed and killed by Senecas. Johnson investigated the attack and demanded that the murderers be handed over.⁶⁷ By November they were in British custody,

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Gage to Shelburne, 15 May 1767.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Gage to Shelburne, 13 June 1767 and 24 Aug. 1767.

⁶⁶ BL, Add. MS, 21695, fol. 29: Haldimand to Dunmore, 12 Aug. 1773; *ibid.*, fol. 30: extract of John Stuart's report, 28 July 1773; *ibid.*, fol. 32: Haldimand to Dartmouth, 31 Aug. 1773.

⁶⁷ For a description of the incident, see *ibid.*, fol. 40: Dartmouth to Haldimand, 14 Oct. 1773; *ibid.*, fol. 42: Haldimand to Dartmouth, 3 Nov. 1773; and *ibid.*, fol. 44: Haldimand to Dartmouth, 30 Nov. 1773.

but in sharp contrast to their response to the Collins incident, British officials unanimously favoured leniency. As Haldmand remarked to Dartmouth, 'they [the Indians] have but too much reason to complain, that whenever any of their people are killed by ours, they never get any satisfaction'. Thus, in a public show of mercy and power, the British officials decided to hold the offenders in custody for a short period and then release them with pardons.

The British government demonstrated its resolve that the new regime would be followed in February 1767, when the king recalled the governor of West Florida, George Johnstone, for conducting an unauthorized war against the Creek Indians in his territory. Despite Johnstone's claim that he was reacting to atrocities first committed by the Indians, British ministers were unmoved. Gage had written the previous December that the grounds for war were questionable at best: two traders had been killed, but this alone did not justify starting a war that inevitably would entail Indian attacks on the frontiers of both Floridas, Georgia, and South Carolina.⁶⁸ Chastisement was a more practical alternative. Furthermore, Gage refused to support a war until he had explicit orders from the king. Two weeks after Gage's report arrived, Shelburne wrote to Johnstone to inform him of his dismissal, explaining the reasons clearly in the opening lines of his letter to the disgraced governor:

The King disapproves entirely of every Measure which can tend towards rashly rekindling the war between the Indians and His Subjects in North America, which has been so lately extinguished. His Majesty views your late conduct in this Respect, as opposite to the spirit of your Instructions, and extremely disapproved your entering into an Affair of so important and serious a Nature, without waiting for answers to your former Letters, by which the Error you have fallen into, would have been prevented.⁶⁹

Shelburne used Johnstone's recall as a warning to other governors. In a letter to the lieutenant-governor of Virginia, he described the consequences of disregard:

the King is extremely displeas'd to hear of Hostilities being commenced against the Creeks in West Florida. This is a Step diametrically opposite to the System

⁶⁸ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne 23 Dec. 1767.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 53: Shelburne to Johnstone, 19 Feb. 1767. For Johnstone's justification of his actions see *ibid.*, vol. 52: Johnstone to Shelburne, 4 Oct. 1766.

which has been recommended in the strongest terms to the different Governors and the Superintendents of Indian Affairs. . . . His Majesty's Intentions on this head are so decided, that he Recalled Governor Johnstone; and he will expect that all the Governors Act in concert to conciliate the Affection of the Indians.⁷⁰

In letters to the governors of South Carolina, North Carolina, and East Florida, as well as to Johnstone's temporary successor, Shelburne expressed similar sentiments, first informing them of the recall and then reiterating the king's commitment to peace with the Indians.⁷¹ The governor of Georgia, who was perceived as meeting expectations, received warm praise from Shelburne in a letter that noted, the king 'wishes that the same attention had been paid to maintain Peace among them [the Indians] by the Governor of West Florida'.⁷² The reaction of the governors was to take action as they were best able, and seize every opportunity to report it. The governors of North and South Carolina each responded that they had issued further proclamations calling for illegal settlers to withdraw; the governor of Virginia noted that he too was 'requiring and enjoining all Persons who have seated themselves on Lands belonging to the Indians to evacuate'. The governor of East Florida was quick to assure Shelburne that his colony was complying with the king's proclamation and that there had been no violence against the Indians.⁷³

Restrictions on settlement rapidly came to an end between 1772 and 1774. In 1772 Hillsborough vehemently opposed a petition by the Walpole Associates, a land-development company, for substantial interior land. William Wildman, Viscount Barrington and secretary of war, who had worked closely with Hillsborough and military officers in America on frontier policy, adamantly supported Hillsborough. However, the petition's promoters had shareholding allies in the Treasury, and the two other secretaries of state saw an opportunity to weaken the American Department to their own benefit. In June the grant was approved by the lords of the Committee for Plantation Affairs and sent to the Privy

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 50: Shelburne to Francis Fauquier, 19 Feb. 1767.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 53: Shelburne to Lord Charles Greville Montagu, Governor of South Carolina, 19 Feb. 1767; *ibid.*, Shelburne to William Tryon, Governor of North Carolina, 19 Feb. 1767; *ibid.*, Shelburne to James Grant, Governor of East Florida, 19 Feb. 1767; *ibid.*, Shelburne to Browne, Lieutenant-Governor of West Florida, 19 Feb. 1767.

⁷² *Ibid.*, Shelburne to Wright, 19 Feb. 1767.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, vol. 52: Tryon to Shelburne, 18 July 1767; *ibid.*, Montagu to Shelburne, no date; *ibid.*, Grant to Shelburne 2 Aug. 1767.

Council, which gave its consent the day after Hillsborough resigned in protest, 13 August 1772.⁷⁴ Hillsborough was replaced by the prime minister's brother-in-law, Lord Dartmouth, who gave his immediate approval to the grant.⁷⁵

Hillsborough's resignation did not result in the collapse of Britain's interior programme, but his departure certainly heralded it. Dartmouth initially acted in a similar way to his predecessors, maintaining a regular correspondence with agents in America, chastising complacent governors, and worrying about Indians' dispositions. However, he fully expected controlled expansion to resume under Crown supervision, instructing Gage not to destroy Fort Pitt and to overlook the white settlements in the Illinois region, both of which Hillsborough had seen as threatening good Indian relations.⁷⁶ In March 1773 Dartmouth openly confessed his complacency regarding interior settlement to Stuart, remarking that although he had to attempt to prevent settlement across the boundary line, he recognized the futility of such efforts.⁷⁷ In February 1774, as British government concerns were refocusing on the looming uprising in the established mainland colonies, Dartmouth sent a circular letter to the governors announcing that land acquisition was no longer the domain of the Crown. Land was to be available at public auction, and the authority to purchase land from the Indians and grant land patents was returned to the colonial governments.⁷⁸ The British policy toward American Indians as conceived in the Seven Years War had been disassembled.

EFFECTIVENESS AND DEMISE

The effectiveness of British policy towards American Indians before the outbreak of the American War of Independence is questionable. At the general level it was a success. The constant Indian wars that had plagued the colonies virtually ceased. Judging it according to its initial, specific aims, however, the programme was a failure. Indians constantly complained of traders' abuses and white settlers flowed, if not flooded, into

⁷⁴ For the best discussion of this episode, see Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, ch. 8.

⁷⁵ Dartmouth to Gage, 2 Sept. 1772, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 148.

⁷⁶ Dartmouth to Gage, 3 Feb. 1773, *ibid.* 154–5; Dartmouth to Gage, 3 March 1773, *ibid.* 156.

⁷⁷ CO 5/241, fol. 231: Dartmouth to Stuart, 3 Mar. 1773.

⁷⁸ Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 226–7.

the interior. The 1772 petition for a land grant made by the Walpole Associates claimed that 30,000 families were already residing in the Ohio region illegally, 5,000 of whom had arrived in the past year alone.⁷⁹ Their claim was undoubtedly exaggerated to promote their own goals, but substantial illegal settlement in the interior was a fact even before the Proclamation of 1763.

The factors that undermined a completely successful implementation of British policy in this period were numerous. First and foremost, neither the British nor colonial governments had effective control over the white backcountry population. Second, the rising tensions during the 1760s and 1770s had compelled the British to begin to redeploy forces away from protecting the colonies from Indian attacks to securing them from what was seen as a more pressing threat from within. By 1772 only a few skeleton garrisons remained. Finally, the British concluded that only tremendous expenditure would enable them to assert total control over the interior. The need to ease the British tax burden left over from the Seven Years War combined with the difficulties in raising funds in America to handicap the British programme for the interior and undermined ministerial resolve. As a result, in 1768 control over Indian trade was returned to the colonies, and six years later the interior was effectively reopened.

Colonists' disregard of the restrictions on trade and settlement should not be taken simply as resistance to Britain's intrusion into colonial affairs. After all, control of the backcountry had been a problem for colonial governments since their foundation. Just as the Seven Years War and its aftermath painfully introduced the British to the uncooperative and bickering nature of colonial governments, so the 1760s revealed how difficult these governments' constituents could be. The frontier inhabitants generally had little regard for Indians as either property-holders or human beings. There were, of course, numerous exceptions, but years of brutal frontier warfare had demonized most Indians in frontier whites' eyes.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid. 203.

⁸⁰ For an excellent explanation of how these racial divisions and assumption emerged and played out on the Pennsylvania frontier, see Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (London, 2003). See also Alden T. Vaughn, 'From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian', in *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York, 1995), 3–33; and Nancy Shoemaker, 'How the Indians Got to be Red', *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 625–44.

Although not every Indian was believed to be a scalper or plunderer, the assumption of savagery even in 'Europeanized' Indians prevailed. As described in the previous chapter, such incidents as the uprising of the Paxton Boys in 1764 illustrate both frontier people's negative assumptions about Indians and the colonial governments' inability to prevent these feelings from expressing themselves in armed hostilities.

The British ministers and their imperial agents in America became acutely aware of these problems.⁸¹ As settler-Indian disturbances persisted in the Pennsylvania backcountry in 1766, Gage explained to Conway that lack of success in quelling the disruption was not the fault of the governor. 'The Ringleaders as well as most of the rest are known,' he explained, 'but I have not been able to get any Satisfaction. I make no doubt but Governor Penn has done every thing in his power to bring them to Justice, but it's plainly perceived, that the Reins of Government are too loose to enforce an Obedience to the Laws.'⁸² A letter from Penn the following January exemplifies the difficulty of apprehending anyone in the backcountry.⁸³ First assuring Shelburne that he was 'truly sensible of the great Injustice of these violences on the Persons and Rights of the Indians under His Majesty's Protection', Penn explained that these murders were usually committed 'by vagrant Persons beyond the settled parts of the Country, and that it is very difficult at such a Distance to detect the Authors of them, especially as few of the back Inhabitants who still harbour Resentments against the Indians will make any Discoveries of such Villanies'. Penn also noted that he had contacted the governor of Virginia, whose response Penn summarized: 'he is not surprized at this having found it, by Experience, impossible to bring any body to Justice for the Murder of an Indian, who takes Shelter among the back Inhabitants.' Penn concluded by stating that he had nevertheless issued a proclamation calling for the removal of illegal settlers to prevent further confrontation, but he despairingly prophesied that 'no proper Respect would be paid to any Injunctions of that kind'.

The British government was just as ineffective as the colonial governments in policing the frontier. The British peacetime establishment in America never consisted of more than 7,500 regular troops—hardly

⁸¹ Gage to Johnson, 5 May 1766, *Johnson Papers*, v. 201.

⁸² Gage to Johnson, 6 May 1766, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 91.

⁸³ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Thomas Penn to Shelburne, 21 Jan. 1767.

enough to patrol the colonies when riots broke out, let alone thousands of miles of wilderness. Gage, Johnson, and Stuart regularly complained of their inability to prevent settlement or fraud. As Gage informed Conway in May 1766, problems on the frontier were continuing and several more Indians had been murdered by illegal settlers, but little could be done. 'The Difficulty of bringing those Ruffians to punishment,' wrote Gage, 'encourages them to every Excess.' He continued: 'They escape out of one province into Another, if by chance apprehended, they are rescued, and it is said the bringing them to tryal signifies little, as No Jury wou'd condemn them [for] murdering or ill treating an Indian.'⁸⁴ Removing settlers was rarely effective, because they could re-establish themselves elsewhere in the interior or return later with little to fear from the overstretched British establishment.⁸⁵ When Gage reported to Shelburne in 1769 that the commander of Fort Pitt had again threatened to remove nearby illegal settlements by force if they did not leave, he also admitted his 'great Doubts about the Success of that Message'.⁸⁶

The British also had difficulties in forcing their programme upon the Indians. Indian communities were expected to hand over criminal suspects accused of murdering a settler, whereas whites accused of murdering Indians were tried by fellow Europeans. As James Merrell explains, although a 'middle ground' remained in this period, it did not extend to Anglo-American criminal justice.⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, Indians were reluctant to hand over tribesmen to a prejudiced justice system in which capital punishment was the likely outcome. Besides, only a handful of individuals usually committed the offences, and, short of a war against the whole nation, there was little the British or colonial governments could do to force the hand of reluctant Indian communities. The Cherokee War had been sparked by the colonists' demand that Indian murder suspects be handed over for trial, and this type of conflict was exactly what the British wanted to avoid. As described above, the governor of West Florida was recalled for going to war against the Creeks over the murder of two white traders—a justification deemed inadequate by Gage, Shelburne,

⁸⁴ Gage to Johnson, 6 May 1766, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 91.

⁸⁵ Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 107–9.

⁸⁶ Shelburne MS, vol. 51: Gage to Shelburne, 15 May 1767.

⁸⁷ James H. Merrell, '“The Customes of Our Countrey”: Indians and Colonists in Early America', in Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (London, 1991), 142–6.

and the king. Shelburne's instructions to Stuart in December 1766 upon learning that another trader had been murdered by the Cherokee Indians encapsulate the complicated British position. They must be chastised, declared Shelburne, but a war of retribution was not acceptable:

let them [the Cherokee] know how little Right they can have either to our Notice or Protection if they take that Satisfaction of themselves which they must at all times wait for, and which they will be sure to receive from our Justice. Altho' Indians they cannot be at a loss to know that the Murder of a Man sent to them in a public Capacity is a Crime of the deepest dye, and that they would merit the severest Chastisement if we did not attribute their Misbehaviour to the Revenge and Indiscretion of a few rather than to the Bulk of their Nation.⁸⁸

In consequence, Indian murderers of whites often went as unpunished as white murderers of Indians.

Throughout the 1760s and early 1770s inadequate funds constantly threatened and often impeded the regime. Maintaining a standing British peacetime army in North America was not cheap. The annual cost of maintaining what were initially planned to be twenty regiments and forts in North America was estimated at £350,000.⁸⁹ In consequence, the new programme for American defence needed a substantial funding mechanism. In order to reduce the swollen national debt and meet its new security obligations around the globe, the British government insisted that the American colonists assist in paying for their own protection. The ill-fated Stamp Act of 1765 imposed this obligation, but it caused such outrage in America that it was repealed the following year. While parliament and the colonists haggled over principles of taxation and representation, the British establishment in America was left without adequate or secure funding. The reluctant and overburdened British government had to foot the full bill for troops, forts, superintendents and their staffs, and presents for the Indians. Adding to the problem was the regular over-expenditure by Johnson and Stuart. After 1764 both districts received budgets of about £10,000, but in the southern district congresses alone in 1764 and 1765 cost in excess of this.⁹⁰ A shocked Shelburne wrote to Stuart

⁸⁸ Shelburne MS, vol. 57: Shelburne to Stuart, 11 Dec. 1766.

⁸⁹ Vincent Harlow, *Second British Empire*, i. 178.

⁹⁰ Helen Louise Shaw, *British Administration of the Southern Indians, 1756–1783* (Lancaster, Pa., 1950), 50. The large costs were due primarily to presents. Shaw estimates that, excluding Congress's gifts in the Southern district in peacetime from Stuart cost an average £2069: Appendix A.

that his expenses 'run so much above all Expectation and Proportion that it is very necessary you should attend to this Point very minutely for the future'.⁹¹ After receiving Stuart's justification, Shelburne instructed that Indian congresses were to be avoided.⁹² But the desire to maintain frontier peace and construct a clear border made congresses inevitable, and year after year the superintendents went over budget.

An instance that has been misrepresented as evidence of a British sense of moral responsibility for the Indians is a resolution of the House of Lords in March 1765 that prohibited 'the bringing from America any of the Indians who are under His Majesty's Protection, without proper authority for so doing', and resolved 'that the making a public shew of Indians, ignorant of such proceeding is Unbecoming and Inhuman'.⁹³ The immediate impetus for the resolution was a complaint that reached the Lords regarding the 'arrival of two Mohawks who are now on publick show', and their treatment by the London crowds as vulgar amusements. The main concern expressed by officials in Britain responsible for Indian affairs, however, was not that Indians were being abused but that they were in Britain. Neither the Board of Trade nor the ministers responsible for Indian affairs seem to have discussed the episode before it was raised before the House of Lords, and the Board of Trade's primary concern afterwards was how the cost of maintaining the Indians was to be defrayed until they might be returned home. Visits were expensive, and Britain, like France, increasingly discouraged them in the eighteenth century.⁹⁴ The unexpected visit of a Cherokee delegation three years earlier had irritated ministers and the king, who had to foot the bill for their visit. As a result, superintendents and governors were instructed that such visits were too expensive and of insufficient value to be repeated.⁹⁵ Shelburne complained to the Board of Trade in 1766 about the unannounced visit of four Wappinger Indians, who had travelled to London to protest about the occupation their land. They were to be cared for in the same style as the

⁹¹ Shelburne MS, vol. 57: Shelburne to Stuart, 11 Dec. 1766.

⁹² *Ibid.*, vol. 53: Shelburne to Stuart, 19 Feb. 1767.

⁹³ See Oliphant, 'The Cherokee Embassy', 17; CO 5/66, fol. 27: 'Extract of a Minute of the House of Lords, March 6th 1765.'

⁹⁴ Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Alberta, 1987), 221–3.

⁹⁵ On the 1762 Cherokee visit, see Carolyn Foreman, *Indian Abroad 1493–1938* (Norman, Okla., 1943), ch. 7; on the complaint of costs, see CO 5/65, Part 2, fol. 107: Halifax to Stuart, 11 Feb. 1764.

Cherokee, he noted: 'But I am to acquaint your Lordships that as these Indians have been brought over without any Authority His Majesty does not think proper to reimburse any Expenses which may hitherto have been incurred for their Passage and Maintenance.'⁹⁶ In the end, a reluctant British government paid a hefty bill that totalled £555. 12s. 2½d., which included lodging for six adults, their passage home, and various gifts.⁹⁷

Growing tensions between Britain and its mainland colonies meant that funding for the interior as envisioned in the early 1760s was highly unlikely. The colonists would not fund it themselves, and the British governing elite was reluctant to pay vast sums for a programme they saw as benefiting those ungrateful subjects. In the absence of secure and adequate funding, plans for a British presence in the interior had to be altered. If the colonies would not pay for the British to handle the situation, then many of the duties, for better or worse, would have to be returned to the colonies. Without adequate provisions to maintain an extensive military presence in the interior, Gage feared that isolated British garrisons risked being caught in an Indian-colonist crossfire, and in the wake of the Stamp Act's repeal, he persuaded Lord Barrington, secretary of war, that if adequate financial support could not be secured then limited withdrawal was the only option.⁹⁸ Barrington went to work constructing a plan for a reduced British military presence in the interior, taking on the position that: 'If we had no Forts Garrisons or Settlements, in the Indian Country, it is probable we could never be in a State of National Hostility with those People should any of Our Colonies by Misconduct get themselves into War with the Indians let them get themselves out of it as they all used to do when they were not so strong.'⁹⁹ If a war erupted, he declared, then 'let them [the colonists] beg for Military Assistance, acknowledge their want of it, be thankful for it and pay its Expence'.

These concerns were addressed in 1768 in a revised plan for the interior. Although the plan was implemented under Hillsborough, it was

⁹⁶ Shelburne MS, vol. 53: Shelburne to Board of Trade, 16 Aug. 1766.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Shelburne to the Lords of the Treasury, 25 Nov. 1766.

⁹⁸ Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, 119–21.

⁹⁹ Shelburne MS, vol. 50: 'Lord Barrington's Plan', 10 May 1766. A copy was forwarded to the king: *The Correspondence of King George III from 1760 to 1783*, ed. J. W. Fortescue (London, 1927–8), i. 432–41.

largely formulated under the direction of Shelburne.¹⁰⁰ In April 1768 Hillsborough sent a circular letter to the governors outlining the new plan.¹⁰¹ British troops were to withdraw from all but a handful of interior forts; the regulation of trade was to be returned to the colonies; and the superintendents were to complete a boundary line between the Indians and the colonies as soon as possible.¹⁰² New budgets for the superintendents were cut in half, and, in consequence, most of their staffs were dismissed.¹⁰³ Although Hillsborough explained on this and other occasions that the reasons for the shift in policy were multiple, including the colonies' request to regulate the trade themselves, the main impetus was clearly financial.

The shift was not without hardship. The governor of Georgia lamented the change in a letter to Stuart the following September, remarking: 'I really most heartily wish that the whole [trade regulation] had been expressly taken from the Governors and vested in you, [I] so little desire to interfere with you or your department or to have anything to do with Indian affairs.'¹⁰⁴ But despite colonists' and Indians' requests for a return to the British regulation of commerce, Whitehall had no intention of reclaiming the role.¹⁰⁵ Although Hillsborough believed he had often 'fully explained the reason and necessity' of the new plan, his struggle to enforce the new spending restrictions resulted in several heated exchanges. Writing to Johnson in October 1768, Hillsborough expressed great respect for the superintendent but reminded him that costs had to be reduced. Johnson's estimate of £10,000 for settling the boundary line in his district, which arose mainly from the expected Indian demands for gifts at the inevitable congresses, was unacceptable. Economy, he asserted, was paramount: 'The relieving this Kingdom from every Expenditure that can with safety be avoided, is, in its present state, a consideration of the greatest

¹⁰⁰ Shelburne MS, vol. 60: imposed title of 'Shelburne's Observations upon a Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs', no date. Shelburne instructed Gage to consider this in a letter dated 14 Nov. 1767, *ibid.*, vol. 54.

¹⁰¹ CO 5/241, fols. 14–16: Hillsborough to the North American Governors, 15 Apr. 1768, and Hillsborough to Gage, 15 Apr. 1768, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 61–6.

¹⁰² Gage advocated this as early as 1765 in a letter to Conway, 9 Nov. 1765, *Gage Correspondence*, i. 74.

¹⁰³ Hillsborough to Gage, 15 July 1769, *ibid.* ii. 89. Upon receiving the news, Stuart wrote to his staff that most of their salaries would end on 1 December 1768.

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Shaw, *British Administration*, 43.

¹⁰⁵ CO 5/241, fol. 96: Hillsborough to Johnson, 13 May 1769.

importance; it is one great object of this plan, and I have it in command from the King in an especial manner to recommend to you the strictest economy in those services . . .'¹⁰⁶ If the costs were high, he reiterated, then the colonists should pay.

After receiving the bill, which was still much larger than he desired, Hillsborough expressed his frustration and irritation with the whole situation in a letter to Gage. The colonies were not regulating Indian trade as they had pledged to do. If the state of affairs on the frontier worsened, they should not expect the British to bale them out:

it is in vain for them to trust, that this Country will again take upon itself the enormous expence attending Indian Affairs upon the former place, and therefore His Majesty hopes, that they will . . . be induced to provide for a service, in the support and encouragement of which their own safety and interest is more immediately concerned.¹⁰⁷

The hope that the benefits of a peaceful backcountry would compel the colonial governments to 'provide the utmost effectual Laws for preventing any settlements being made beyond the Line . . . and for the Control and Punishment of those atrocious frauds and abuses which have been practised by the Traders', had proved unfounded.¹⁰⁸ When war with the Indians seemed again imminent in late 1771, Hillsborough admitted to Johnson that the return of trade regulation to the colonies had been a disaster.¹⁰⁹

The Quebec Act of 1774 represents something of an epitaph for the British attempt to exercise direct control over Indian affairs from Whitehall. Although it aroused American cries of betrayal and British accusations of promoting Catholicism, the act is not surprising. When considered in the context of the previous two decades of British policy towards American Indians, the Quebec Act did not represent a significant deviation from standing objectives.¹¹⁰ The act's primary aims were to settle questions of government and religious establishment in Quebec and to ensure some degree of stability in the interior.¹¹¹ The act extended the boundaries of Quebec to include much of the interior of the northern district, provided

¹⁰⁶ CO 5/241, fol. 55: Hillsborough to Johnson, 12 Oct. 1768.

¹⁰⁷ Hillsborough to Gage, 24 March 1769, *Gage Correspondence*, ii. 87.

¹⁰⁸ For Hillsborough's circular letter to the governors announcing the altered plan, see CO 5/241, fol. 16: 15 Apr. 1768.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 197: Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 Dec. 1771.

¹¹⁰ Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness*, ch. 10. ¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 240–1.

a military governor and council, and granted Catholics toleration. Except for the extension of Quebec's boundaries, the bulk of the bill had been in practice since the war.

The territorial extension of Quebec, when considered in the light of Indian affairs, was consistent with previous policies. Experience of the cost and impracticality of direct imperial control over Indian affairs had taken its toll, pushing ministers reluctantly first to relinquish the regulation of Indian trade in 1768, and then to allow limited expansion after 1772. As Anglo-American tensions reached boiling point, the possibility of a reassertion of control seemed more remote than ever, despite the increasing frequency of violent eruptions between whites and Indians. By extending Quebec's authority over one of the most problem-ridden areas of the interior, the American Department and its supporters sought to provide stability to the region in which whites were now pouring as the remaining British troops marched out. The only colony that had demonstrated the ability to co-operate and live peacefully with the Indians was Quebec. It had rarely appeared in the reams of letters carrying ministers' complaints about Indian affairs. Not only had Quebec's white inhabitants demonstrated their ability to coexist peacefully with Indians, it had the added appeal of a military governor and council over which Whitehall could exercise greater authority than it could over colonies with elected assemblies.

The only other options were to leave the interior in anarchy, hand it over to one of the other colonies, or resume direct control. For the ministers, these alternatives were unacceptable. The first was inadmissible, as it essentially would have entailed a return to 1754, when the region was open to foreign influence and colonies vied with one another to exercise control over portions of it. The British ministers believed that this had led to the almost wholesale disaffection of the Indians at the start of the Seven Years War. The second alternative was hardly different from the first. Poor handling of Indian trade when it had been returned to the colonial governments in 1768 would have convinced almost anyone that little had changed in their inability to handle Indian affairs. The resumption of control was equally impossible due to costs and strategic objections of the British military leadership to garrisoning the interior. As a result, the Quebec Act should be partly seen as a last attempt to defuse the powder-keg that was the American interior.

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PART III

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5

‘Under the Rudest Form in Which We Can Conceive Man to Subsist’: The Scottish Enlightenment and the North American Indians

Whereas the English excelled at disseminating information about Indians through their extensive newspaper and periodical press network, prominent Scots succeeded in assimilating this information into an accessible, intellectual framework for widespread British audiences to digest. In the perspective of the Scottish Enlightenment, the American Indians were much more than curiosities living at the periphery of the empire: they were living windows on Europeans’ past. Key Scots philosophers fuelled British interest in the related investigations into their own historical origins and the reasons for the vast social and economic differences between the world’s cultures. Remarking in 1777 that ‘the most celebrated nations trace back their origin to a few wandering tribes’, the *Scots Magazine* summarized the paradox that would overshadow the Scottish Enlightenment’s treatment of American Indians: assumed commonalities underlined the oneness of humanity, but explanations of contemporary differences required the search for inherent dissimilarities between cultures or ‘nations’.¹ Thus, while the Scottish Enlightenment offered Britons intriguing insights into their own pasts and reminded them of their own ‘savage’ origins, it provided many with an intellectual framework for their assumptions of Indians’ natural inferiority.

Scots philosophers were not the first to use their knowledge of primitive peoples to explain the development of human society. The roots of this

¹ *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1777), 434.

approach can be traced to the beginnings of recorded civilization. Ancient writers such as Cicero, Lucretius, and Diodorus Siculus, among others, had reflected on their own societies' primitive origins and postulated that human societies advanced through a series of socio-economic changes.² Nor were the Scots alone in their own time in their use of Indians. Philosophers throughout Europe utilized their understanding of Indians to support their theories of natural history and moral philosophy. Writers from Thomas More to Rousseau employed the New World and its inhabitants as literary devices to critique European societies, and naturalists such as Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, and Conelius de Pauw used descriptions of Indians to 'prove' their theories about the influence of climate on animals. Nonetheless, shaped by the eighteenth-century Scottish, and wider British, contexts, key Scots formulated a decidedly unique enquiry into 'the history of man', in which contemporary perceptions of Indians played a vital role that ultimately led to the foundation of the modern social sciences.³

An examination of the Scottish Enlightenment's relationship with American Indians is not novel, but our understanding of the topic is worth revisiting and in need of refinement. From the perspective of investigating eighteenth-century perceptions of Indians, it is especially relevant because Scots philosophers' perceptions shaped and were shaped by popular British views of Indians. Such an examination also underlines the importance of exploring Enlightenment ideas within their national and imperial contexts.⁴ Just as the rise of Enlightenment culture in Scotland was partly shaped by the union with England in 1707, the importance of American Indians in the Scots philosophers' written works reflected Scotland's inclusion in the British Empire.⁵ Furthermore, the

² Roger L. Emerson, 'Conjectural History and Scottish Philosophers', *History Papers of the Canadian Historical Association*, (1984), 69–72.

³ See esp. Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge, 1979); A. S. Skinner, *A System of Social Science: Papers Relating to Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1979); Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, 1945), 5.

⁴ On the importance of the national context, see the preface to Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in a National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); on the importance of empire on intellectual currents, see C. A. Bayly, 'The British and Indigenous People, 1760–1860: Power, Perception and Identity', in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds.), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850* (London, 1999), 20–1.

⁵ On the role of the Act of Union, see Bryson, *Man and Society*; Nicholas Phillipson, 'Towards a Definition of the Scottish Enlightenment', in P. Fritz and D. Williams (eds.),

popularity throughout Britain of the published fruits of the Scottish Enlightenment demonstrates that this enquiry was considered a worthy investigation, not just by the Scottish intellectuals who were new to the empire, but also by the majority of English for whom the growth of the press had made the empire a new reality as well. The Scottish Enlightenment provided its British audience with the prime secular intellectual framework in which American Indians, as well as a host of other cultures with whom the British Empire interacted, were evaluated and categorized in the hierarchy of human societies, all the while affirming the economic, social, and technological superiority of European civilizations.

THE ROLE OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS

The place of American Indians in the Scottish Enlightenment was comparatively minor. They were not a major subject of study in their own right, unlike the origins of civilization, or the human body. Instead, accounts of Indians offered an enormous fount of empirical evidence, which the philosophers used to refine their theories. For the most part, representations of Indians illustrated, rather than shaped, theories about the development of human societies.

The Scottish philosophers' use of contemporary information about Indians offers important insights into how they perceived the world and how imperial expansion influenced their works. Although numerous Scots took an interest in Indians and their relationships with wider human social development, the present examination focuses primarily on those individuals who made the greatest contributions to the national discussion through publication and widespread readership: Adam Ferguson, John Millar, James Burnett (Lord Monboddo), Henry Home (Lord Kames), William Robertson, and to a lesser extent, David Hume and Adam Smith. Such criteria allow the works of these individuals to be understood as contributions to wider public discussions about Indians, rather than as merely the individual reflections of a handful of Scottish academics.

These men knew each other as colleagues, mentors, students, and friends. Edinburgh's university and clubs were their social hubs. Although they often disagreed with one another, their associations formed an intricate web that Gladys Bryson called the 'Scottish school', in which moral philosophy and natural history were all-encompassing. They lent books to one another, dined at each other's houses, and visited each other on their sickbeds. Even the disagreeable Monboddo begrudgingly set aside his dislike of Kames in 1777 to visit the aged and declining philosopher at James Boswell's request.⁶ Such sociability and camaraderie, Ferguson remarked, was an important precondition for great intellectual outpourings: talents, he asserted, 'have most vigour when actuated [in] the mind by the operation of its principal springs, emulations, the friendships, and the oppositions, which subsist among forward and aspiring people'.⁷

The lives and associations of the leading Scots philosophers are well recorded, and therefore only a brief description of their relationships will be offered here.⁸ Hume and Smith, perhaps the best-remembered figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, were at the centre of the group. John Millar, for example, was a student of Adam Smith, who arranged for him to live with Kames during his apprenticeship in law. Kames was thus in a position to introduce Millar to Hume and the wider Edinburgh circle. Millar, who later became professor of Civil Law at Glasgow, returned the favours of his mentors by teaching both Hume's nephew and Smith's nephew and heir. Robertson, also one of Smith's students, was the principal of Edinburgh University at the height of his publishing career, and thus would have been familiar with the whole group. Adam Ferguson, who was appointed to the professorship of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1759, partially owed his appointment to Smith and Hume, and Kames had intervened on Ferguson's behalf two years earlier to secure his

⁶ *Boswell in Extremes, 1776–1778*, ed. Charles McC. Weis and Frederick A. Pottle (New York, 1970), 82–3.

⁷ Cited in David Kettler, *The Social and Political Thought of Adam Ferguson* (Columbus, Ohio, 1965), 15.

⁸ See esp. Ian Simpson Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1995); Ernest C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1980); William C. Lehmann, *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735–1801: His Life and Thought and His Contributions to Sociological Analysis* (Cambridge, 1960); E. L. Cloyd, *James Burnett, Lord Monboddo* (Oxford, 1972); Ian Simpson Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of His Day* (Oxford, 1972); Stewart J. Brown, 'William Robertson and the Scottish Enlightenment', in Stewart J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), 7–35.

appointment as a tutor to the earl of Bute's two oldest sons.⁹ Monboddo, who has been dubbed 'one of the most eccentric figures of an age which tolerated much that was strange', was a judge along with Kames, with whom he shared an amicable rivalry. He was also a friend of Hume and part of the wider circle.¹⁰

The Scottish discourse was not carried on in an ivory tower. It was consciously constructed for consumption by the public, or at least by the middling and higher ranks. Smith, Ferguson, Millar, and Robertson were educators, and many of their published works were born out of lectures intended for student audiences. Kames intended his *Sketches of the History of Man* for the wider literate public, and designed the work so as not to make great intellectual demands on the reader.¹¹ Fanny Rutherford, a Scots woman of about 18 or 19, had a copy of his work with her during a voyage to the West Indies in the 1770s.¹² The *Scots Magazine* best described the target audience for most of the works under consideration here in its review of Kames's *Sketches*:

The following work is the substance of various speculations, that occasionally amused the author, and enlivened his leisure-hours. It is not intended for the learned; they are above it: nor for the vulgar; they are below it. It is intended for men, who, equally removed from the corruption of opulence, and from the depression of bodily labour, are bent on useful knowledge; who, even in the delirium of youth, felt the dawn of patriotism, and who in riper years enjoy its meridian warmth.¹³

His receipt of a thousand pounds from his London publishers, Alexander Kincaid and William Creech, is further evidence that the work was meant for broad distribution. Moreover, the purchase prices of these works were on par with those charged for other histories, travel accounts, or the annual *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. As a result, they

⁹ See Vincenzo Merolle's introduction to *The Correspondence of Adam Ferguson*, ed. Vincenzo Merolle (London, 1995), i. 24.

¹⁰ The often-quoted remark is from the opening sentence of Cloyd's biography of Monboddo.

¹¹ John Valdimire Price's introduction to the reprint Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames* (London, 1993), p. xxvi; Ian Simpson Ross, *Lord Kames*, 338.

¹² Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality, Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the years 1774 to 1776*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews (New Haven, 1923), 45.

¹³ *Scots Magazine* (Feb. 1774), 80.

found their way into the private libraries of the elite, as well as the holdings of circulating libraries and literary societies throughout Britain.¹⁴

Although they may be grouped together in terms of their general interests and personal affiliations, the Scots philosophers did not speak with one voice. They agreed, disagreed, refined, and built upon each other's work. With regard to their engagement with American Indians, however, fundamental differences between them were few. The authors generally shared three major common traits: they relied on a similar pool of travel accounts and histories for information about American Indians; they operated under roughly similar assumptions about man and society; and they were deeply affected by Scotland's participation in the British Empire.

That they drew on the same sources is not surprising. None of the Scots philosophers discussed here had an opportunity to see American Indians in their native environment, with the exception of Ferguson, who was part of the unsuccessful Carlisle Commission that went to America in 1778 to deliver a British peace proposal to the American Congress.¹⁵ Like the vast majority of the British populace, their portal into the Indians' world was the travel account. Although travel accounts had admitted faults, the Scots philosophers who used them accepted them as trustworthy sources. In fact, as Millar asserted, when taken as a whole the accounts were superior to even one's own, first-hand observation, because they offered 'a degree of authority, upon which we may depend with security, and to which the narration of any single person, how respectable soever, can have no pretension'.¹⁶ Full of vivid descriptions and written by well-educated authors who had prolonged and intimate relationships with a variety of Indian peoples, leading French accounts such as Lafitau's *Moeurs des Sauvages Amériquains, Comparées aux Moeurs des Premiers Temps* (1724) and Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix's *Histoire et Description Général de la Nouvelle France* (1744) were in high demand in Britain. Available in Britain in French and in a variety of translations, they were treated as authorities, appearing in excerpted form in newspapers and

¹⁴ This is based on a survey of 32 contents lists of circulating libraries throughout the country, in which the works discussed here appear regularly. That they went through so many editions is further testimony to their widespread consumption.

¹⁵ There is no record of Ferguson meeting an Indian while in North America, but he easily could have.

¹⁶ John Millar, *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (London, 1771), p. xiii.

magazines, as well as in the text and footnotes of many of the published works of the Scottish Enlightenment.¹⁷

The reliance of Scots philosophers on French accounts is understandable because, despite being arch-rivals, the British recognized the French accounts as superior to their own in both detail and analysis. An important exception was *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada* (1744) by Cadwallader Colden, a fellow Scot and lieutenant-governor of New York. Robertson made use of James Adair's *History of the American Indians* (1775); however, as with other general histories and newspapers that drew on this account, he selectively extracted unrepresentative passages that underlined Indian ferocity, such as 'his [Adair's] account of the revengeful temper of native Americans'.¹⁸

Dependence upon travel accounts, however, did not undermine the Scots' credibility, because the reading public accepted these accounts as the best authorities for accurate descriptions of American Indians. During the Seven Years War newspaper and magazine editors deftly applied extracts from the accounts to contemporary concerns about the fighting in North America. The *London Magazine*, for example, reprinted an extract from Charlevoix's account under the heading 'Wonderful Fortitude of an Onneyouth Captain, burnt by the Hurons; expressive of the savage and brutal Behaviour of the Indians, now destroying our Frontier Settlements in North America. From Charlevoix'.¹⁹ The use of familiar authorities lent further legitimacy to the Scots' histories. As the *Monthly Review* remarked in its assessment of Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*: 'Such readers as are desirous of forming some general conceptions of our species in its rude state, will be pleased with this part of our Author's work; it contains many interesting and entertaining particulars, taken chiefly from Charlevoix, Lafitau, Colden, &c'.²⁰

¹⁷ Some authors were more meticulous in their citation efforts than others, but for just a handful of examples of the use of the accounts of Charlevoix and Lafitau, see Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh, 1767), 40, 132–3, and 142–3; Millar, *Distinction of Ranks*, 27, 63, 66, 202, 209, and 303; James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, 1773–92), i. 260; Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1774), i. 24 and 188; and William Robertson, *The History of America*, 2 vols. (London, 1777), i. 54, 56, 264, 268, 307, 321, 361, 370. These accounts also appear in Smith's library, as recorded in James Bonar, *A Catalogue of the Library of Adam Smith*, 2nd edn. (London, 1932).

¹⁸ Robertson, *History of America*, i. 478 (this is how the extract was indexed).

¹⁹ *London Magazine* (Aug. 1763), 459.

²⁰ *Monthly Review* (May 1767), 345.

The Scots philosophers' works that made significant reference to American Indians also shared methodologies and assumptions. At the heart of the Scots philosophers' attempt to explain the development of modern society was what has been dubbed 'conjectural history'. The term was first employed by Dugald Stewart to describe the methodology of Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but it also applies to the relevant works of Ferguson, Millar, Monboddo, Kames, Robertson, and to a lesser extent Hume. Conjectural history as practised by these Scots commonly has three characteristics.²¹ First, the histories began with the primeval or original state of human society. The Scots under discussion here attempted to avoid the pitfalls stumbled into by Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau, who all started their examinations of society with the 'condition of nature', by instead starting with humans who already lived in some form of social state, such as clans, tribes, families, and the like. Second, conjectural histories offered a hypothetical sketch of how a society develops. Such societies could be entirely fictitious or represent the assumed origins of a contemporary race or nation. Regardless of this, the beginnings and changes were proposed as being probable, rather than having conclusively occurred. The histories outlined a gradual and evolutionary development, free of jumps or the actions of occasional genius. They were not entirely progressive, however, and, in line with contemporary European intellectual fashion, they included elements of degeneration and corruption. Third, the desire for self-preservation and betterment were assumed characteristics of all societies. Arts, sciences, and sensibility were all regarded as the products of striving societies, not as having been present from the start.

In shaping their conjectural histories, the Scots philosophers generally operated under the assumption that the commercial society in which they lived was the outcome of a social evolutionary process that had substantially altered European government and manners. The driving force of this advancement was change in the means by which a society obtained its subsistence. Most clearly outlined and developed in Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Millar's *The Origin and Distinction of Ranks in Society*, and Robertson's *History of America*, this transformation was

²¹ For the best synopsis of Scottish conjectural history, see H. M. Hopfl, 'From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 17 (1978), 19–40.

marked by four stages: hunting, shepherding (pastoralism), farming, and commerce. In some cases a fifth stage, decline, was included. The assumption was that as a society moves through the stages, so too does the course of human interaction. Private property, in the form of domesticated animals and pastures, introduced a stable social hierarchy that was based on control of food production resources. The greater reliability of food production allowed by agriculture meant larger populations, cities, and opportunities to pursue commercial and artistic activities. Because the Scots philosophers believed that the character of a given society was inherently linked to its stage, they made sweeping assumptions about a range of societies based on the observations of just one. Moreover, they argued, the lower a given society was in its development, the more similar it was to other societies at the same stage. As Ferguson explained: 'Mankind, when in their rude state . . . have a great uniformity of manners; but when civilized they are engaged in a variety of pursuits; they tread on a larger field and separate to a greater distance'.²² Thus, the North American Indians, who the Scots philosophers universally deemed to be in an early stage of society, were viewed as 'historical documents' that reflected all primitive societies, past and contemporary.²³

These Scots also shared in a milieu of wider British imperial expansion and increased interaction with non-European cultures. Although Sir John Seeley's view that modern Scotland, and with it the Scottish Enlightenment, began with the 1707 Act of Union has long been put to rest, the influence of the union on Scotland's eighteenth-century intellectual currents should not be underestimated.²⁴ Before 1707 the Scots' involvement with the New World was minimal. Scotland had no successful colonies of its own, and its transatlantic commerce had to contend with the protectionism of the English Navigation Acts. During the seventeenth century English emigration to the Americas exceeded Scottish by fiftyfold.²⁵ The Act of Union in 1707 gave the Scots unrestricted access to the old English Empire, and through investment, manpower, and

²² Cited in William C. Lehmann, *Adam Ferguson and the Beginnings of Modern Sociology* (New York, 1930), 86.

²³ Mark Duckworth uses the term in 'An Eighteenth-Century Questionnaire: William Robertson on the Indians', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 21 (1987), 40.

²⁴ J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London, 1883).

²⁵ James Horn, 'British Diaspora: Emigration From Britain, 1680–1815', *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2: *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1998), Table 2.1.

migration they made it a truly 'British' enterprise.²⁶ By mid-century large numbers of Scots were in America as colonists, soldiers, and royal servants. Lords Loudoun and Colville, Simon Fraser, James Murray, and James Stuart were part of the large group of Scots who held posts in the New World from Quebec to the Caribbean in the mid-century, as well as membership in the prominent Edinburgh clubs that were the hubs of the Enlightenment in Scotland.²⁷ Glasgow emerged as Scotland's great imperial port, dominating the American tobacco trade by mid-century.²⁸ The Scots also matched English emigration, flooding into the American frontier and becoming the neighbours of American Indians.²⁹ Between 1763 and 1775 alone, the period when the majority of the works relevant to this discussion appeared, 3 per cent of the Scottish population emigrated to North America.³⁰ Coupled with the incorporation of Scotland into the metropolitan media web, these changes flooded Scotland with information about American Indians.

Like many Scottish Enlightenment figures, Ferguson, who set the main precedent for using Indians to bolster the understanding of the first stage of social development, was intimately connected to Britain's mid-century imperial endeavours. In 1766, the year he finished *History of*

²⁶ On Scottish participation in the eighteenth-century empire, see Ned Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony, 1683–1765* (Princeton, 1985); G. J. Bryant, 'Scots in India in the Eighteenth Century', *Scottish Historical Review*, 64 (1985), 22–41; Eric Richards, 'Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire', in Bernard Bailyn and Philip Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), 67–114; David S. Macmillan, 'Scottish Enterprise and Influences in Canada, 1620–1900', in R. A. Cage (ed.), *The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750–1914* (London, 1985); John Riddy, 'Warren Hastings: Scotland's Benefactor', in Geoffrey Carnall and Colin Nicholson (eds.), *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (Edinburgh, 1989). Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging of the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992), argues that these joint imperial ventures formed a British national identity at home; others have presented arguments against this, the most persuasive of which is John M. MacKenzie, 'Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998), 215–32, in which he argues that Scots participation in empire bolstered, if not redefined, widespread Scottish identity.

²⁷ Roger L. Emerson, 'American Indians, Frenchmen, and Scots Philosophers', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 19 (1979), 217.

²⁸ Kettler, *Adam Ferguson*, 18; T. M. Devine, 'The Golden Age of Tobacco', in T. M. Devine and Gordon Jackson (eds.), *Glasgow* (London, 1994).

²⁹ James Horn, 'British Diaspora', Table 2.1.

³⁰ Jacob M. Price, 'Who Cared About the Colonies? The Impact of the Thirteen Colonies on British Society and Politics, circa 1714–1775', in Bailyn and Morgan (eds.), *Strangers within the Realm*, 427.

Civil Society, he entertained the possibility of becoming the governor of the newly acquired colony of West Florida—a position that would have made Indian affairs a daily issue.³¹ Thanks to Hume, who at the time was an undersecretary to the secretary of state for the Northern Department and who promoted Ferguson's book, the first readers of the *History of Civil Society* included key figures in the British government, including Lords Bute, Mansfield, Chesterfield, and Lyttelton, all of whom praised it. Perhaps most significantly, Ferguson's early audience included Lord Shelburne, who was then formulating and implementing American Indian policy as secretary of state for the Southern Department. According to Hume, Shelburne declared that the 'book is one of the best he ever read'.³²

The importance of these changes for Scottish intellectual currents is partly revealed in the timing of the Scots philosophers' use of Indian descriptions. Despite the availability of detailed travel accounts since the early eighteenth century, including several they later employed, Scots philosophers did not make substantial use of Indians to bolster their propositions until after the Seven Years War, when discussion about Indians moved to the fore in the public sphere. As explored in Chapter 2, descriptions of Indians were abundant throughout the British press, which provided easy and inexpensive access to detailed accounts of Indian warfare, culture, and society. These were available in the *Scots Magazine*, a favourite of the Scottish literati, as well as in a host of other Scottish and English newspapers and magazines that would have been available by subscription in the coffee-houses in which the Scots philosophers met and socialized.³³ As reports rolled in, British audiences recognized the potential that philosophers would later exploit. As early as May 1757 the *Universal Magazine* remarked that:

The Indians, or Aborigines of America, throughout the whole extent of the two vast continents which they inhabit, and amongst the infinite number of nations and tribes into which they are divided, differ very little from each other in their manners and customs, and they all form a very striking picture of the most distant antiquity. Whoever considers the Americans of this day, not only studies the manners of a remote present nation, but he studies, in some measure, the

³¹ Kettler, *Adam Ferguson*, 60.

³² Hume to Ferguson, 10 Mar. 1767, in *Ferguson Correspondence*, i. 72–3.

³³ On the popularity of the *Scots Magazine*, see John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987), 15.

antiquities of all nations; from which great lights may be thrown upon many parts of ancient authors, both sacred and profane.³⁴

The development of Scots philosophers' interest in American Indians appears to be the consequence of the Scots' increasing participation in the empire. A highly plausible inference is that the influx of information on American Indians both inspired and allowed Scots philosophers to consider the first stage of human society in unprecedented depth. Admittedly, the case is largely circumstantial, but it is nevertheless compelling. As argued in the next section, American Indians were crucial to the account of the first stage in the post-war stadial, conjectural histories—a fact that the Scots philosophers openly acknowledged. If the bombardment of information about Indians during the Seven Years War compelled the public to reflect on the importance and nature of empire, then it just as easily could have provoked the intellectual elite to consider the significance of peoples who had until then been at the periphery of their imaginations.

At the very least, Indians played a role in illustrating the Scots philosophers' thinking about human development that is not evident in earlier writing. Before the conflict Indians were a rare sight in the works of the Scots philosophers; after the Seven Years War, they are essential features. All of these writers made direct, albeit passing, references to the conflicts in America, particularly when using illustrative examples of Indian warfare practices. Moreover, only in the aftermath of the dramatic rise in British awareness of Indians did the Scots make use of the decades-old French travel accounts. Neither Francis Hutcheson nor David Hume relied on accounts of American Indians to illustrate or inform their arguments. Any inclusion of Indians in their work was passing and could have been excluded without readers noticing. For example, Hume's minor use of Indians in his essay on the 'Natural History of Religion', written on the eve of the conflict, contrasts strikingly with Ferguson's substantial post-war reliance on American Indians in his *History of Civil Society*. Detailed analysis of American Indian spirituality by Jesuit writers would have been very relevant to Hume's investigations, but he did not draw on them, while their less detailed accounts of Indian government, warfare, and family structure are substantial features of Ferguson's work.

Indian illustrations certainly made the Scots philosophers' ideas about socio-economic development more accessible. After all, their audiences

³⁴ *Universal Magazine* (May 1757), 193.

had read the same newspapers and magazines that had been full of Indian activities and accounts during and after the Seven Years War. In consequence, authors could have confidently assumed their post-war audiences' familiarity with Indians, and employing an established perception of Indians was less taxing for both the author and reader than conjuring up a generic primitive. The practice was also more persuasive, because known examples are easier to grasp than hypothetical probabilities. As discussed later in this chapter, reviewers regularly praised the accessibility of many of the post-war stadial histories, and often singled out their use of Indians for particular notice.

UTILIZING ACCEPTED REPRESENTATIONS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

Columbus's 'discovery' of the New World provoked a fundamental reconsideration of European cosmology that reverberated into the eighteenth century. As the *Critical Review* remarked as late as 1777, the discovery of the Americas 'is unquestionably the greatest event to be found in the history of mankind. It has new-modelled, in a great measure, both America and Europe, and has affected most sensibly one half of the globe.' The *Monthly Review* concurred in its issue for the same month, declaring that 'when Columbus set sail for unknown lands, he little expected or believed that he was to make a revolution in the system of human affairs, and to form the destiny of Europe for ages to come'.³⁵ The Scots philosophers' contribution to this revolution was a reassessment of human social and economic development.

The stadial, conjectural histories they wrote could not have existed in any remotely similar form without American Indian 'evidence'. Detailed studies of the Europeans' ancestors simply were not available. The ancient accounts of Caesar, Polybius, Thucydides, and Tacitus were useful, but they provided only enough information to indicate that the Britons, Scots, Germans, and Gauls they described were vaguely similar to the American Indians. As Millar asserted, only in contemporary accounts of primitive cultures and societies such as those of the American Indians

³⁵ *Critical Review* (June 1777), 401 and *Monthly Review* (June 1777), 450. Both comments were made in the context of reviews of Robertson's, *History of America*.

could one find the answers to questions that were not always asked by ancient historians.³⁶ The *Scots Magazine* agreed:

The Gauls, the Germans, and Britons, at the time when they were described by Caesar and Tacitus, were advanced but little beyond the savage state, and in many particulars resembled the nations of North America. . . . the history of the New World gives us the spectacle of savage life in a more perfect form than it is any where else to be found.³⁷

Comparatively reliable and detailed accounts describing sub-Saharan African communities were not yet widely available, and the travel accounts produced by the Cook voyages to the South Pacific did not appear until the final stages of these Scots philosophers' examinations of early human society. In consequence, examples using descriptions of Africans and South Pacific islanders appear only occasionally. By the time accounts of other first-stage societies became widely available, the practice of using American Indians was firmly established. As Hugh Blair reflected toward the end of the Scottish Enlightenment: 'It is chiefly in America that we have had the opportunity of being made acquainted with men in their savage state.'³⁸

First published at the height of the Seven Years War in 1759, Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was the first major work to make explicit use of Indians as empirical evidence for the first stage of human society. In this work Smith made the universal assumptions about first-stage, or 'rude', societies that his fellow Scots would embellish in the 1760s and 1770s. He argued that the daily experiences of the first stage prevented the individual from feeling or expressing a range of emotions: 'all savages are too much occupied with their own wants and necessities, to give such attention to those of another person'.³⁹ Sympathy, therefore, was neither articulated nor expected in these societies, according to Smith; in fact, it was disdained. Only in more advanced social stages were there sufficient opportunities—made possible by a hierarchy of social ranks and leisure time—for moral sentiments to develop. To illustrate his points, he turned to the 'savages of North America, [who] we are told,

³⁶ First published in 1771 as *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society*, Millar changed the title to *The Origin and Distinction of Ranks* in his 3rd edition, published in 1778.

³⁷ *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1777), 434.

³⁸ Cited in Daiches, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', 21.

³⁹ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 2nd edn. (London, 1761), 313.

assume upon all occasions the greatest indifference, and would think themselves degraded if they should ever appear in any respect to be overcome, either by love or grief, or resentment'.⁴⁰

Smith's use of American Indians, however, was minimal when compared to the works of Ferguson, Millar, Monboddo, Kames, and Robertson, and it has little more than an occasional illustrative impact on the work. For the most part, his first-stage savages were generic. Although he described Africa, Asia, and the Americas as lands inhabited by rude nations, he rarely gave his primitives specific ethnic identities. In this respect he was closer to Hume and Hutcheson. This is not to suggest, however, that Smith rejected the idea of Indians being a window on Europeans' pasts. The more probable explanation is that he wrote most of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* before it could have been substantially influenced by Britain's Seven Years War experience. In the *Wealth of Nations*, published after the seminal works of Ferguson, Millar, and Kames, Smith equated Britain's Celtic ancestors with contemporary Indians, noting that 'at the invasion of Julius Caesar . . . its inhabitants were nearly the same state with the savages of North America'.⁴¹ Accounts of American wilderness warfare had also entered Smith's thinking by 1776, as evidenced in his remark that: 'Nothing can be more contemptible than an Indian war in North America.'⁴²

Adam Ferguson's 1767 *Essay on the History of Civil Society* set the tone for Scots philosophers' use of Indians to illustrate the first stage. Although not the first to engage with stadial, conjectural history, he was the first to make substantial use of travel accounts as empirical sources, and to draw heavily on accounts of Indians to illustrate the first stage.⁴³ Relatively short, inexpensive, and well written, the work received great praise. Earlier unpublished drafts had received high praise from Adam Smith and William Robertson, and their opinions proved well founded when the work was published. With the exception of Hume, who objected to its style more than to its conclusions and nevertheless promoted it, the *History of Civil Society* met with admiration virtually everywhere it appeared, the *Monthly Review* proclaiming in May 1767 that Ferguson 'has shewn a

⁴⁰ Ibid. 312; for another similar example see p. 319.

⁴¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776), i. 419. ⁴² Ibid. ii. 293.

⁴³ The accounts of Charlevoix, Lafitau, and Colden formed the core of Ferguson's descriptions of Indians. For some of the examples that drew on Charlevoix, see: *History of Civil Society*, 40, 128, 132–3, 138, 140–1, and 143; on Lafitau, see e.g. 11, 126, 130, 132, 140 and 143; on Colden, see e.g. 129, 130, and 139.

manly and original turn of thought thro' the whole of his performance'.⁴⁴ Soon it was translated into German and French and appeared on bookshelves throughout the Western world.

At its core, Ferguson's *History of Civil Society* addressed the concerns and queries of a British nation whose cosmology had been stretched and strained during the rapid imperial expansion and awakening that had accompanied the Seven Years War. Just as publishers found a niche for general *descriptions* and histories of the newly encountered and conquered regions, Ferguson's history and those of a similar vein that followed it resonated with audiences that also desired an *explanation* of these new worlds and peoples.

According to Ferguson, the contemporary zones of the 'rude nations' were enormous, stretching 'from one to the other extremity of America; from Kamschatka westward to the river Oby, and from the Northern sea, over that length of country, to the confines of China, of India, and Persia; from the Caspian to the Red sea, with little exception and from thence over the inland continent and the western shores of Africa'.⁴⁵ His assumed universality of the first stage, however, meant that first-stage societies were interchangeable, and so to examine one was to examine them all. In the classical accounts, such as those of Caesar, Polybius, Thucydides, and Tacitus, Ferguson found enough evidence to conclude that the ancient inhabitants of Europe also lived in a social state similar to the American Indians of the eastern woodlands. 'The suggestions of nature which directed the policy of nations in the wilds of America,' he argued, 'were followed before on the banks of the Eurotas and the Tyber; and Lycurgus and Romulus found the model of their institutions where the members of every rude nation find the earliest mode of uniting their talents, and combining forces.'⁴⁶ Britain was no exception: 'the inhabitants of Britain, at the time of the first Roman invasions, resembled, in many things, the present natives of North America,' he declared. Therefore, Indians offered 'polished' nations opportunities to peer into their own past: 'It is in their present condition, that we are to behold, as in a mirror, the features of our own progenitors, and from thence we are to draw our conclusions with respect to the influence and situations, in which, we have reason to believe, our fathers were placed.'⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Monthly Review* (May 1767), 221.

⁴⁵ Ferguson, *History of Civil Society*, 123.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 129–30.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 122. Ferguson believed that the 'Canadian[s] and Iroquois' bore the best resemblance to ancient Northern Europeans.

In consequence, American Indians dominated his representation of first-stage societies. When depicting first-stage material adornment, he described North American Indian decoration and then shifted immediately to Thucydides for a supporting example of the semi-sedentary ancient Greeks.⁴⁸ The Iroquois of Charlevoix's account informed Ferguson's portrayal of first-stage governing institutions, and appeared soon afterwards in his account of first-stage fortitude.⁴⁹ To illustrate his views of first-stage family structures, he once again drew on accounts of the north-east woodland Indians, relying on Lafitau, Charlevoix, and Colden.⁵⁰ Ferguson's depiction of the first stage was decidedly grim. His history was largely a description of the benefits of property and its acquisition, and because he deemed Indians to have little property at best, they were the embodiment of backwardness. Perpetual warfare, limited ambition, the virtual absence of personal comforts, and bodily torture dominated his descriptions of them. The first-stage peoples of Ferguson's history also lacked remorse, pity, and civic duty. 'It was their favourite maxim,' he summarized, 'That no man is naturally indebted to another'.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Ferguson noted some admirable traits. Freedom from obligation meant that no man had to endure 'any imposition, or unequal treatment'.⁵² He admiringly asserted that the preservation of people, rather than the pursuit of glory and material greed, dominated the Indians' wartime goals: 'The American rates his defeat from the numbers of men he has lost, or he estimates his victory from the prisoners he has made; not from his having remained the master of a field. . . . A man with whom he can associate in all his pursuits, whom he finds an object to his affections, and an aid in his struggles, is to him the most precious accession of fortune'.⁵³ Ferguson even went so far as to liken the Indian warrior to the romantic hero:

The hero of Greek poetry proceeds on the maxims of animosity and hostile passion. His maxims in war are like those which prevail in the woods of America. They require him to be brave, but they allow him to practise against his enemy every sort of deception. The hero of modern romance professes a contempt of stratagem, as well as of danger, and unites in the same person, characters and dispositions seemingly opposite; ferocity with gentleness, and the love of blood with sentiments of tenderness and pity.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 378–9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 129–30, 138–9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 130–1.

⁵¹ Ferguson cites Charlevoix for this account, *ibid.* 133.

⁵² *Ibid.* 133.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 211.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 309.

Ferguson's work was hardly an exposition of the unassailable merits of civilized life. Just as he was under no illusion that the first stage was an Eden inhabited by noble savages, so he was unwilling to endorse the flawless superiority of the fourth stage that 'polished' nations inhabited. The boasted refinements of that stage, he asserted, were not devoid of danger: 'They open a door, perhaps, to disaster, as wide and accessible as any of those they have shut.' He continued: 'If they build walls and ramparts, they enervate the minds of those who are placed to defend them . . . they reduce the military spirit of entire nations . . . they prepare for mankind the government of force'.⁵⁵ His primary concern for his own society was that the pursuit of refinement and luxuries would ultimately weaken the nation from within. He feared that the benefits of applying the division of labor in manufacturing would be perilously applied to the government and defence of a society. 'By having separated the arts of the clothier and the tanner, we are better supplied with shoes and cloth', he explained, but the same principle did not transfer with equal benefit to governance:

But to separate the arts which form the citizen and the statesman, the arts of policy and war, is an attempt to dismember the human character, and to destroy those very arts which we mean to improve. By this separation, we in effect deprive a free people of what is necessary for their safety; or we prepare a defence against invasion from abroad, which gives a prospect of usurpation, and threatens the establishment of military governments at home.⁵⁶

Polished nations' worst enemies, therefore, were their own citizens, whose abdication of responsibility for protecting their liberties to others would ultimately lead to the destruction of those very freedoms. In contrast, freedom reigned without serious challenge in the non-specialized world of the first stage.

Millar, like his fellow Scots philosophers, was struck by the influx of travel accounts that described distant places and peoples. In particular, the pervasive barbarity in the world led him to conclude that it was lurking in even the most polished nations' histories. As he stated in his introduction to *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society*: 'When we survey the present state of the globe, we find that, in many parts of it, the inhabitants are so destitute of culture, as to appear not to live above the condition of brute animals; and even when we peruse the

⁵⁵ Ferguson cites Charlevoix for this account, 355.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 353.

remote history of polished nations, we have seldom any difficulty in tracing them to a state of the same rudeness and barbarism.' Like Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, Millar's *Distinction of Ranks* maintained that human social advances were gradual, stadial, and dependent upon private property as their cornerstone. Also like his colleagues, Millar saw living examples of the first stage of human social and economic development in the Indians, the observation of whom could shed light on the customs and practices of the civilized nations' ancestors. In the *Distinction of Ranks*, Millar explored how advancing through various stages of social and economic development had influenced power within the family and the status of women. The place and treatment of women in a society, he argued, reflected a society's socio-economic development. Millar was not unique in considering the role of women in the various social stages, but he was the most systematic and focused in his treatment.

Millar's approach was born out his earlier experience in studying law. During his residence with Kames, he was exposed to the latter's long campaign to reform Scottish law by bringing it in line with the continental tradition of Roman law. Millar soon concluded that there were few subjects in which the differences between Justinian's version of Roman law and English and Scottish common laws were more glaring than in the treatment of women.⁵⁷ Under Roman law, female citizens had the same property relationship to the male head of the extended family as men, and were able to enter into contracts and inherit property. Furthermore, women were regarded as independent citizens, and thus marriage was treated as a contractual relationship between two equally competent participants. English and Scottish common laws were wholly unequal systems in which women could enter into contracts and hold property only in very specific circumstances, and never if a male claimant to it existed. Such sharp differences in the treatment of women spurred the young mind of Millar into action, and the stadial, conjectural historical method of Smith and Ferguson provided him with a framework in which to explore these issues.

Like other applicants of stadial, conjectural history, Millar relied heavily upon travel account descriptions of American Indian cultures for his discussion of humanity in its first socio-economic stage.⁵⁸ Rejecting

⁵⁷ Richard Olson, 'Sex and Status in Scottish Enlightenment Science: John Millar and the Sociology of Gender Roles', *History of the Human Sciences*, 11 (1998), 73–100.

⁵⁸ Millar most extensively used the French edition accounts of Charlevoix and Lafitau for his extended descriptions of North American Indians.

the naturalist Buffon and his supporters' arguments that the low population-density of Indians was the result of inferior reproductive organs, Millar sought to emphasize the power of sociological factors by asserting that the seemingly stagnant, or even declining, population of the American Indians was the result of a limited male interest in copulation as opposed to a physical defect. According to Millar, the lack of enthusiasm on the part of Indian males for 'cultivating a correspondence with the other sex' was a direct result of their easy access to sexual relations. He claimed that: 'He [the male savage] arrives at the end of his wishes, before they have sufficiently occupied his thoughts, or engaged him in those delightful anticipations of happiness which the imagination is apt to display in the most flattering colours'.⁵⁹ Female virginity and chastity had little value, and for small presents the natives of America, the South Pacific, and Guinea, just like the ancient Britons, were believed to make their wives available to strangers.⁶⁰ 'The Indians of America think it no stain upon a woman's character, that she has violated the laws of chastity before marriage,' he asserted, 'nay, if we can give credit to travellers who visited that country, a trespass of this kind is a circumstance by which a woman is recommended to a husband.'⁶¹

The result of this lack of regard for sexual relations in such a society, Millar argued, was a substantially inferior status for women: 'We accord[ing] find that, in those periods, women of a family are usually treated as servants or slaves of the men.'⁶² The only sort of power women could hope to possess was informally through their male children. Addressing the accounts of the Iroquois' inclusion of women in public councils, Millar recognized that these women possessed some power.⁶³ But, he claimed, until their sons reached positions of prestige women were doomed to the servile life of a slave. A rise in the status of women could accompany only the introduction of widespread use of private property, which took place in the next stage of development. In advanced stages, Millar argued, rivalries between families and distinctions between rich and poor substantially reduced the free intercourse between the sexes and thus inflamed men's passion for women, which in turn gave women greater value.⁶⁴

In the hierarchy of human civilization presented by Monboddo in *Of the Origins and Progress of Language*, the American Indians were not cast

⁵⁹ *Distinction of Ranks*, 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 9–13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 9.

⁶² *Ibid.* 18.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 38–63.

as the lowest humans on the social ladder.⁶⁵ Orang-utans were. This position drew a great deal of amused contemporary criticism that continues to overshadow the merits of his work. Perhaps best remembered through the comments of Samuel Johnson, as recorded by his biographer James Boswell (who was a friend of Monboddo and forever defending him), Monboddo has been portrayed as something of a buffoon. Johnson liked Rousseau and his propositions no better than Monboddo and his, but Rousseau, Johnson asserted, at least 'knows he is talking nonsense and laughs at the world for staring at him. . . . But I am afraid, (chuckling and laughing) Monboddo does not know that he is talking nonsense'.⁶⁶ Monboddo's practice of hunting down travellers to enquire if they had encountered any men with tails, who would represent the link between orang-utans and American Indians, did not aid his reputation. He even interrupted court proceedings to send a note to a recently arrived traveller.⁶⁷ When Joseph Banks returned from his circumnavigation of the world as part of the first Cook voyage, Monboddo quizzed him relentlessly. Monboddo, recalled an amused Johnson, 'was not well pleased, that they [men with tails] had not been found in all his [Banks's] peregrination'.⁶⁸

In Monboddo's defence, however, assessments of his work have been greatly overshadowed by his comments on orang-utans. Building on John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* and Adam Smith's *Dissertation on the Origin of Languages*, Monboddo's basic premise was that language was itself an idea, and as human society developed so too did language. Language, he asserted, was not natural or a divine gift, but an acquired ability. The invention of language required a social state to prosper, and as a typical society advanced, languages evolved and were invented to meet that society's needs.⁶⁹ Because language was itself a human invention, it could not be used as a criterion for determining humanity. Rather, the capacity alone was sufficient. The orang-utan fitted into his broad

⁶⁵ Monboddo, *Of the Origins and Progress of Language*.

⁶⁶ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1970), 405.

⁶⁷ Bryson, *Man and Society*, 71.

⁶⁸ Johnson to Hester Thrale, 25 Aug. 1773, *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford (Princeton, 1992–4), ii. 57.

⁶⁹ For the best summary of Monboddo's position, see Stephen K. Land, 'Lord Monboddo and the Theory of Syntax in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 37 (1976), 423–40; Robert Wokler, 'Apes and Races in the Scottish Enlightenment: Monboddo and Kames on the Nature of Man', in Peter Jones (ed.), *Philosophy and Science of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1988).

classification of humans, because Monboddo believed it had the necessary anatomy for producing speech. Monboddo's followers, therefore, spent countless hours in subsequent years in fruitless attempts to teach orang-utans to speak.⁷⁰

Monboddo saw the North American Indians as prime living examples of humanity in an early social stage, and, in line with his own theory, asserted that the languages used by these societies reflected their primitive state. Like his fellow Scots philosophers, he accepted the universality of the primitive stage, arguing that all primitive languages, whether 'spoken in Europe, Asia, America, and the new world that we have now discovered in the South sea, are derived from [a] common parent'.⁷¹ Without detailed travel accounts such as those by Charlevoix and Lafitau, who were both proficient in a number of North American Indian languages, and eighteenth-century endeavours to translate the Christian gospels into some of the Indian languages, Monboddo would have been hard-pressed to offer a philological analysis of human language in what he believed was its earliest stage of development. Selecting the language of the Huron, Monboddo described it as the rudest of all known barbarous languages.⁷² It lacked vowels, he explained, and one sound could signify eight different items.⁷³ Monboddo proposed that because primitive languages were stretched to their limits by an expanding society, entirely new languages had to be invented that allowed for sufficient expansion of expression. He dubbed such a language a 'language of art', examples being classical Greek and Sanscrit. He used the Huron language as an example of a language whose future must be limited if the Huron society was to develop. He declared it incapable of discussing modern topics, because it supposedly did not distinguish the action from the agent. Were it not for the narrow life of the Huron, he concluded, the language would have been useless.⁷⁴

In addition to his dismissal of their languages, Monboddo cast Indians in a generally unfavourable light. Although writing admiringly of their oratorical skills—he likened them to the celebrated ancient Greeks in this regard—he emphasized their cruelty to prisoners, brutal conduct of war, and cannibalism, which he asserted took place regularly during the Seven Years War.⁷⁵ 'It is certain', he asserted, 'there is nothing in which they

⁷⁰ Wokler, 'Apes and Races', 151.

⁷¹ *Progress of Language*, i. 399.

⁷² *Ibid.* 315.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 6–7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 364–70.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* ii. 86, v. 443, and i. 260 and 208–9.

delight so much as blood and slaughter.⁷⁶ He also likened the 'well known' Indian 'war-cry' to 'the natural cries of the animal'.⁷⁷

For Kames, the indigenous peoples of the Americas posed an important intellectual problem in themselves. Within the context of his *Sketches of the History of Man*, he took the opportunity to address the problem for European cosmology caused by the discovery of two vast continents populated with peoples who had no proven origin or connection with the then known world. He roughly accepted the developmental model of human society from barbarity to civilization in which private property was an integral part; however, he was sometimes sympathetic to accounts which endorsed the occasional virtues of the savage.⁷⁸ He heralded the Ossianic depiction of the ancient Scots as demonstrating the virtues that some primitive peoples had lost with the socio-economic development of their society.⁷⁹ The American Indians, however, did not receive such sympathetic treatment from him. They were depicted as a prime example of a race of men who had failed to progress from hunting to the pastoral stage of civilization. Nevertheless, Kames believed that their stagnation in the first stage could not possibly have lasted since the creation as described in Genesis: the chasm in sensibility, commerce, and technology between the Europeans and the American Indians was too great for the European and American Indians to have had a common origin.⁸⁰ His proposed explanation was polygenesis, in which the biblical account of creation did not pertain to the American Indians. Although intending to explain only the gap he perceived between the European conquerors and the American Indians, Kames unwittingly gave credence to lingering beliefs that the Indians were subhuman, a divine afterthought, or not the intended beneficiaries of the laws and covenants described in either the Old or New Testaments.

Kames's explanation required him to engage with the widely accepted theory of climatic determination proposed by Buffon, 'the pope of eighteenth-century zoologists'.⁸¹ Kames agreed with Buffon that the

⁷⁶ Ibid. i. 260. ⁷⁷ Ibid. 319.

⁷⁸ Kames, *Sketches*, Book 1. Sketch 3 'Origin and Progress of Commerce'. Kames asserts that: 'Without private property, there would be no industry, and without industry, men would remain savages forever.'

⁷⁹ See esp. Wokler, 'Apes and Races', 152-3; Roy Peace, 'The Eighteenth-Century Scottish Primitivists: Some Reconsiderations', *English Literary History*, 12 (1945), 203-20.

⁸⁰ Ross, *Lord Kames*, 337.

⁸¹ The fitting title was ascribed to Buffon by George Gaylord Simpson, 'The Beginnings of Vertebrate Paleontology in North America', *Proceedings of the American*

American continents emerged from the ocean later than the others. He also accepted Buffon's assertion that a physical inferiority in American Indian reproductive organs had prevented the population surges that would have encouraged widespread advancement into shepherding and agriculture.⁸² However, Kames rejected Buffon's conclusion that climatic differences accounted for variations in human physical appearances and societies. Laplanders and Norwegians, he noted, lived in similar climates but had substantially different appearances, and despite the enormous variations in climate all American Indians had the same copper colour.⁸³ Climate may account for some variance, such as the extreme fairness of the Norwegians or the slightly darker complexion a European living in Africa sometimes acquired, Kames contended, but ultimately the offspring of Europeans in Africa were not any darker at birth than their parents.⁸⁴ He remarked that 'European colonies have subsisted in the torrid zone of America more than two centuries; and yet even that length of time has not familiarised them to the climate: they cannot bear heat like the original inhabitants . . . they are far from equalling in vigour of mind or body the nations from which they sprung'.⁸⁵ Clearly, Kames's concept of physical adaptation was constrained by his gross underestimation of the world's age.

If Buffon's assertion that the animals of the New World were substantially different from their Eurasian cousins was accepted, Kames queried, then why not also assert that some, including the humans, were a completely unique species? The answer, Kames argued, was that 'we must unavoidably admit a local creation' in the case of American quadrupeds living in the torrid zone; 'and nothing seems more natural, than under the same act to comprehend the first parents of the American people'.⁸⁶ Kames thus spun Buffon's conclusion—that humans could adapt to fit various climates—in a different direction by asserting that humans had been created by God specifically for these climates: 'Thus it appears, that there are different races of men fitted by nature for different climates.'⁸⁷ To further bolster his polygenic case, Kames even made the hair-splitting claim that the ability of two humans to reproduce indicated that they

Philosophical Society, 86 (1942), 145. For the dominance of Buffon, see esp. Jacques Roger, *Buffon: A Life in Natural History*, trans. Sara Lucille Bonnefoi (London, 1997).

⁸² *Sketches*, iii. 148–9.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 137.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* i. 26–8.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 21.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* iii. Book 2, Sketch 12, esp. p. 143.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* i. 23.

were both human, but, in contrast to Buffon and accepted zoology, it did not necessarily mean that they were of the same species.⁸⁸ The sealing argument for Kames was that, if the story of Babel in Genesis 11 is to be taken as 'a real history', then there was no room for the American Indian culture, which he viewed as technologically and socially pre-Adamite.⁸⁹ Besides, he queried, if the American Indians were one of the groups that had migrated away from that ill-fated tower, then why were their most advanced nations in the centre of the New World and not in the Pacific north-west, where a land bridge might have existed?⁹⁰

William Robertson was the most famous of the Scottish historians who dealt extensively with American Indians. As the *Gentleman's Magazine* remarked in its review of his *History of America*, he needed no introduction: 'The histories of Scotland, and of Charles V having already diffused the reputation of this writer, not only throughout these islands, but, we may truly say, throughout all Europe, encomiums would justly be deemed impertinent and superfluous.'⁹¹ In its biographical sketch, 'A Character of Dr Robertson', the *Scots Magazine* reported that his remarkable historical talents earned 'no less than 4500l Sterling' for his history of Charles V, 'which we believe has never before been paid for any book in any country'. As a result, the article continued, his forthcoming history of America was eagerly awaited: 'The subject is highly interesting, and may be said to be in some measure new; nor will it fail, when treated by so masterly a hand, to prove a valuable acquisition to the republic of letters.'⁹²

Robertson was not a social theoretician in the fashion of Smith or Ferguson; however, he utilized a similar methodology to examine the Spanish Empire in the New World in the evaluative, philosophical history tradition of Machiavelli's *Discourses*, Hume's *History of England*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In essence, as Nicholas Phillipson argues, Robertson used a fashionable conjectural historical method to refine the older, more familiar, philosophical history tradition of the Renaissance.⁹³ His *History of America*, which was an extension of his successful history of Charles V, provided him with the opportunity to

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 24 ⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 77–84

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* iii. Book 2, Sketch 12, esp. pp. 156–80. Kames was impressed with the advances of the Aztec and Inca civilizations and generally excluded them from the more general comments regarding reproduction and advances in agriculture and commerce.

⁹¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1778), 25. ⁹² *Scots Magazine* (Apr. 1772), 196.

⁹³ Nicholas Phillipson, 'Providence and Progress', 56–7.

blend these traditions. He evaluated the Spanish in the Americas in the tradition of philosophical history, while employing the stadial model to explain the status and uniqueness of the advanced Central American societies.

In the New World, Robertson, like many of his contemporaries, found living examples of the origins of human society who provided windows on advanced civilization's past. He asserted that: 'In America, man appears under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to subsist. We behold communities just beginning to unite, and may examine the sentiments and actions of human beings in the infancy of social life.'⁹⁴ Although he admired the North American Indian peoples, who 'have defended their liberty with persevering fortitude against the Europeans', Robertson nonetheless dismissed them as 'small, independent, hostile tribes, struggling for subsistence amidst the wood and marshes'.⁹⁵ Robertson turned to the Aztecs and Incas as prime examples of societies that were advancing. Using the familiar stadial model of socio-economic advancement, Robertson evaluated the pastoral abilities of the Aztecs and Incas, as well as their advances into the arts, commerce, and government. Despite their achievements, Robertson ultimately concluded that 'they can hardly be considered as having advanced beyond the infancy of civil life'.⁹⁶ Their clearest link to a near-savage past was in their motivation for fighting: 'The savage fights to destroy, the citizen to conquer', and it was clear that these fledgling civilizations waged war 'with so much of its original barbarity'.⁹⁷

Robertson also used the stadial model to explain difficulties Spanish missionaries experienced when attempting to convert the American Indians. He was remarkably sympathetic in his evaluation of the missionaries, despite the 'black legend', which held Spanish religious zeal and greed to be responsible for the depopulation of the Americas.⁹⁸ He defended them against 'the many authors' who have 'represented the intolerating spirit of the Roman catholic religion, as the cause of exterminating the American, and have accused the Spanish ecclesiastics of animating their own countrymen to the slaughter of that innocent people, as idolater

⁹⁴ *History of America*, i. 282.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 416 and ii. 267–8.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* ii. 269. This evaluation is a key theme of Book 7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* ii. 291.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of the Black Legend, see W. S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England* (Durham, NC, 1971).

and enemies of God'. Robertson instead portrayed the missionaries as 'ministers of peace, who endeavoured to wrest the rod from the hand of the oppressors'.⁹⁹ At fault, argued Robertson, was the misunderstanding caused by the cultural chasm that existed between the natives and their conquerors. Because they were at different socio-economic stages, they had different capacities for processing abstract ideas. Robertson relied on Hume's sceptical theory of knowledge, in which conceptions of time, space, substance, and causation are held to be rooted in custom and education.¹⁰⁰ He explained that the American Indians were creatures of appetite without the use of reason, and consequently incapable of forming an idea of futurity. Thus limited, Indians could not genuinely convert to Christianity.¹⁰¹ The missionaries' primary mistake, explained Robertson, was their belief that the ability to comprehend futurity and the rational explanations of Christianity were natural to all humans, and that American Indians were accordingly ripe for conversion.¹⁰² According to Robertson, the Indians' inability to grasp immediately the tenets of Christian theology led to the false assumption that the natives were permanently inferior, which, combined with a Spanish desire for gold rather than commerce, led to the destruction of native societies.

Clearly, the Scots philosophers did not paint a flattering or sympathetic portrait of human societies in their early stages. This in turn reflected negatively on the North American Indians, who served as empirical examples of the earliest societies. Nevertheless, the association of these works with any sort of proto-racism in the modern sense is tenuous at best.¹⁰³ The Scots philosophers who sought contemporary illustrations of the early-stage

⁹⁹ *History of America*, ii. 350–1.

¹⁰⁰ This argument is best developed in Phillipson, 'Providence and Progress', 65–6, who argues for the centrality of religion in Robertson's works on both the Americas and the Indian subcontinent.

¹⁰¹ Phillipson, 'Providence and Progress', 69–70. Phillipson asserts that Robertson elaborated the Augustinian position that the Word of God was revealed only when the world was ready to receive it by proposing that the revelation was an ongoing process in which societies received parts, or meanings, of the Word as they advanced in their ability to comprehend it.

¹⁰² *History of America*, ii. 384–6.

¹⁰³ Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, 2000), esp. 176–233. Wheeler's overall case for placing the birth of racism in the late eighteenth century, as opposed to its traditional mid-nineteenth-century dating, is not entirely dependent upon the Scots' staid, conjectural histories and remains promising even without them.

societies, as opposed to generic 'savages', dealt almost exclusively with North American Indians, not the sub-Saharan Africans upon whom Wheeler focuses.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, none of these works equated social differences with physical differences, including even those of Kames, who accepted the possibility of a polygenesis.

The Scots' investigations focused on commonalities, not inherent differences. The histories divided the world according to 'nations', which were artificial constructs based on geographic and cultural groupings (physical characteristics rarely figured in this scheme), but for the most part these 'nations' merely reflected common assumptions about the world's divisions. The Scots did not invent the 'American Indians'; rather, they engaged with existing conceptions of them to enhance their readers' understanding of their wider arguments about the causes of socio-economic development. Central to these arguments, of course, was that the same starting points and causes of advancement operated everywhere—thus their acute interest in American Indians as windows on Europeans' own pasts. Had the people who became the Spanish and Iroquois miraculously traded geographical locations some 2,000 years earlier, most of the Scots philosophers would probably have postulated that the Iroquois would have discovered the Spanish. The Scots philosophers were primarily interested in establishing a hierarchical system in which societies might be categorized. It had numerous gradations, including a 'decline' stage in which commercial societies that had succumbed to luxury and decadence, such as the later Roman Empire and peoples of China, Japan, and India, might be placed. In the works of Ferguson and Kames these societies became cautionary tales for Europeans who toyed with excess luxury. All stages also had unique upsides. Indians and the other first-stage societies they represented enjoyed greater personal freedom, possessed superior oratorical skills, and did not endure the hardships associated with greed and vanity. Certainly difference often carried negative connotations, and Britons undoubtedly grouped others in terms of physical characteristics, but the Scottish Enlightenment did not overtly fuel such practices. In fact, its emphasis on social organization made physical differences insignificant.

¹⁰⁴ Millar and Kames made some use of descriptions of the South Pacific islanders found in accounts of the Cook voyages, but their presence paled in comparison to that of American Indians.

Nevertheless, the Scots philosophers' stadial, conjectural histories had a dark side that ultimately assisted subsequent promoters of racial difference. First, early-stage societies were grouped together. When discussing marriage, Millar made it clear that his conclusions pertained to 'all savage nations, whether in Asia, Africa, or America'.¹⁰⁵ Ferguson argued that only in advanced stages do similarly ranked societies differ significantly in culture.¹⁰⁶ All of the Scots philosophers discussed here readily blended examples of American Indians with ancient Europeans, as well as other contemporary 'rude nations', to bolster their portraits of early societal life. The links were both purposeful and well received. As the *Scots Magazine* remarked, observing the Indians offered the opportunity to witness 'the first footsteps of the human race'.¹⁰⁷ In turn, this interchangeability allowed for vast, sweeping generalizations that transcended ethnicity, geography, and race. Second, the Scots' histories depicted the Indians and other primitives as vastly different from themselves. Assertions of common origins and cultural potentials were overshadowed by the constant descriptions of how Indians most closely resembled Britons' ancestors from nearly 2,000 years earlier. These were aliens who tortured prisoners of war, worshipped idols, were illiterate, and had little use for private property; lacking both moral sentiments and commerce, they were the very opposite of the 'polite and commercial' middling ranks of Britain.¹⁰⁸ Robertson denied them the capacity for abstract ideas, claiming that a Cherokee Indian could not comprehend a number above 100.¹⁰⁹ Millar even twisted primitive marriage into something entirely foreign. Citing Lafitau's account, he asserted that:

A savage is seldom or never determined to marry from the particular inclinations of sex . . . he discovers no preference of himself at all in the matter: if his proposals are rejected, he hears it without the least disturbance; or if he meets with a favourable reception, he is equally unmoved; and the marriage is completed, on both sides, with the most perfect indifference.¹¹⁰

Most importantly, the Scots' histories stigmatized American Indians, and to some extent the other contemporary societies they represented, as

¹⁰⁵ *Distinction of Ranks*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ *History of Civil Society*, 123.

¹⁰⁷ *Scots Magazine* (Aug. 1777), 434.

¹⁰⁸ For this characterization of English society, see Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727–1783* (Oxford, 1989).

¹⁰⁹ *History of America*, i. 311.

¹¹⁰ *Distinction of Ranks*, 26–7.

irredeemable. By emphasizing the gradual, deliberate pace of the stadial process, the Scots philosophers doused any hopes of rapid Indian advancement. The Scots had taken over a thousand years to advance from their Indian-like roots to achieve their bustling commercial society; how long would the Indians, who had not significantly progressed in the past several thousand years, take? Kames, as we have seen, was so struck by their relative primitiveness that he suggested the possibility of a later, separate creation to account for the vast socio-economic differences between the commercial Europeans and first-stage Indians. Moreover, education could not breach this gulf. According to Robertson, their routines were too entrenched in 'thoughtless indolence' for reason to prevail even in their best and brightest individuals; therefore, he explained, 'we may conclude, that the intellectual powers of man in the savage state are destitute of their proper object, and cannot acquire any considerable degree of vigour or enlargements'.¹¹¹ Besides, the savage did not want to change, even when offered the opportunity for improvement:

Even where endeavours have been used to wean the savage from his own customs, and to render the accommodations of polished society familiar to him; even where he has been allowed to taste those pleasures, and has been honoured with those distinctions, which are the chief objects of our desire, he droops and languishes under the restraint of laws and forms, he seizes the first opportunity of breaking loose from them, and returns with transport to the forest or the wild, where he can enjoy a careless and uncontrouled freedom.¹¹²

Unfortunately, these messages of savage inferiority and irredeemability were what most caught British audiences' attention.

A SCOTTISH INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE FOR A BRITISH PUBLIC

Although the broader public dissemination of ideas is often only a peripheral consideration for intellectual historians, for an examination of the wider, public perceptions and discourse surrounding American Indians it is crucial. As has been amply demonstrated in the biographical studies of key Scots philosophers, British literati took a keen interest in

¹¹¹ *History of America*, i, 314.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 413.

their published works. The Scots philosophers discussed here all moved within British polite circles—north and south of Hadrian's Wall—dining and corresponding with fellow Britons across the globe. Samuel Johnson's dismissals of Monboddo, confrontation with Kames, and occasional praise for Robertson were recorded by Boswell.¹¹³ Like Johnson, Horace Walpole collected, read, and discussed their works. He thought highly of Kames and lavishly praised Robertson, with whom he occasionally corresponded. Although he believed Robertson had been somewhat overpaid, Walpole remarked to him near the end of his career that, 'if I was one of your first admirers, Sir, it was an instance of my good fortune. Your works could not fail of their due celebrity—and when others agreed with my opinion, it only proved that I had not been mistaken.'¹¹⁴ Although Walpole and Johnson were not representative of the public at large, either in their range of interest in literature or in having the funds and connections to procure such expensive books, their remarks reflected the public's adoration.

Despite the Scots philosophers' intention of making their works accessible to the general literate public, high prices would have kept the volumes out of the personal collections of the vast majority of potentially interested readers. At six shillings, Smith's *Moral Sentiments* was by far the least expensive.¹¹⁵ Monboddo's *Origin and Progress* also cost six shillings, but that was only for the initial volume; anyone wishing for a complete set had to invest substantially to acquire the subsequent five. Even Ferguson's much smaller *History of Civil Society* cost fifteen shillings. Millar's *Distinction of Ranks* was more reasonably priced at nine shillings, but Robertson's highly praised *History of America* cost £1. 16s. James Boswell, always interested in economizing, called Kames's *Sketches* 'very dear' at a cost of £2. 2s. A junior clerk would have needed to save seventeen days' wages to purchase it.¹¹⁶ In contrast, the standard cost of a reprinted sermon or

¹¹³ See e.g. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 107, 219, 376, 392, 405–6, 460, 547, 913, 985, 995, and 977.

¹¹⁴ Walpole to Thomas Cole, 20 Aug. 1768, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis et al. (London, 1937–83), i. 152; Walpole to Robertson, 20 June 1791, *ibid.* xv. 210–2.

¹¹⁵ The prices listed are those given at the time of first publication and listed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Critical Review*, and *Monthly Review*. The only exception is Kames's *Sketches*, which both Boswell and the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted as costing £2. 2s., while the *Monthly Review* listed the cost at £1. 16s.

¹¹⁶ Based on wage estimates in Price, 'Who Cared About the Colonies?', 406.

political pamphlet was only a shilling, which still was equivalent to a month's supply of candles for an average artisan.

Two main avenues to wider audiences were available: the circulating libraries and literary societies, which, as described in Chapter 1, were flourishing across the nation, and the newspaper and periodical press. For two-thirds of the price of Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, men and women could join Ely's circulating library for a year, granting the subscriber access to over 600 titles.¹¹⁷ A one-time joining fee of one guinea followed by an annual subscription of five shillings gave tradesmen and members of the middle ranks access to the Liverpool library, which had over 300 titles by 1760.¹¹⁸ For one guinea annually, still less than half the price of Kames's *Sketches*, men and women joined the Bristol library during the mid- and late eighteenth century, where they could read any of the major works of these Scots philosophers.¹¹⁹ Alternatively, they might read these works as members of one of the thousand or more literary societies, which existed throughout the nation and often served as the parents of lending libraries.¹²⁰

Although newspapers rarely reprinted lengthy extracts from the relevant works, review periodicals and magazines played a crucial role.¹²¹ They served as catalogues for the latest books by carrying notices of minor titles and summarizing and judging the merits of the major works. The consistent appearance of the leading review periodicals in the holdings of circulating libraries and literary societies is therefore no surprise, as such periodicals would have been invaluable when members were considering potential acquisitions.¹²² Moreover, newspapers in Scotland and England alike also relied on the major review periodicals, from which they openly borrowed. In consequence, the reviewers' endorsements were

¹¹⁷ John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), 151.

¹¹⁸ M. Kay Flavell, 'The Enlightened Reader and the New Industrial Towns: A Study of the Liverpool Library 1758–1790', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 8 (1985), 20–1.

¹¹⁹ Paul Kaufman, *Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1733–1784: A Unique Record of Reading Vogues* (Charlottesville, Va., 1960), 8–9.

¹²⁰ Paul Kaufman, 'English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History', *Libri*, 14 (1964), 23.

¹²¹ One important exception to newspapers not carrying many reviews is the *London Chronicle*. For example, see its reviews of Millar's *Observations* (17 Aug. 1771) and Kames's *Sketches* (13 Oct. 1774).

¹²² Paul Kaufman, 'English Book Clubs', 23.

crucial to the size of a book's audience.¹²³ The monthly review periodicals were also mini-libraries in themselves. At a far more reasonable price than the actual works, review periodicals offered an inexpensive and easy way to remain abreast of the latest topics of discussion. As Robert Sharp, a Yorkshire schoolmaster, remarked: 'I like to read Catalogues: Jonathan Scott said he got all the learning he had from the Road Post; so I get part of mine from perusing catalogues.'¹²⁴ Rather than read the two lengthy volumes of Kames's *Sketches*, a reader who lacked enough enthusiasm or had no access to it could instead absorb one of its reviews. The *Monthly Review* summarized the work in a dozen pages, providing an excellent description of its structure, with illustrative extracts and an evaluation of Kames's key arguments. After digesting the review, the reader would have been prepared to engage in any basic polite conversation on Kames's work and even offer an informed opinion. The works of the Scottish Enlightenment thus provided a springboard for discussions at taverns, coffee-houses, and dinner parties between participants who need not necessarily have read any of the original works. As a result, an excellent way to demonstrate the Scottish Enlightenment's contribution to any sort of widespread and national discussion about American Indians is through an examination of how the relevant published works were treated in the review press.

The Scots philosophers' use of American Indians as living illustrations of the lowest stage of human society would have been apparent to audiences, as examples utilizing them were favourite extracts for reprinting. The reviews of the relevant works of Ferguson, Millar, Monboddo, Kames, and Robertson all recognized these authors' employment of Indians as examples of the starting point of human society. The *Gentleman's Magazine* summarized Ferguson's use of the 'nations of North America' as a people 'who have no herd to preserve, nor settlements to defend', and who 'are yet engaged in perpetual wars'.¹²⁵ The *Scots Magazine* remarked that 'this ingenious writer has illustrated by examples drawn from Americans [Indians]' and proceeded to reprint a few.¹²⁶ The *Monthly Review* dedicated a dozen pages of its May 1767 issue to Ferguson's use of North

¹²³ Flavell, 'The Enlightened Reader', 17–20.

¹²⁴ Entry for 11 Feb. 1827, *The Diary of Robert Sharp of South Cave: Life in a Yorkshire Village, 1812–1837*, ed. Janice E. Crowther and Peter A. Crowther (Oxford, 1997), 106.

¹²⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Apr. 1767), 177.

¹²⁶ *Scots Magazine* (Mar. 1767), 150.

American Indians.¹²⁷ The *London Chronicle's* review of Millar's *Observations* included a substantial extract that dealt primarily with American Indians.¹²⁸ Kames's theory of polygenesis was illustrated with American Indian examples and, of course, reviews of Robertson's history of the social development of the American natives were packed full of examples in which the North American Indians were contrasted with the Aztec and Inca civilizations. John Adams's effort to 'abridge' the ideas of these works into an inexpensive pocket guide in 1789 reflects both the continued relevance of the topic and the entrenchment of the American Indians in their role.¹²⁹ Each chapter is outlined clearly with easy-reference headings such as 'On Commerce', 'Rise of Civil Society', and 'On Polygamy', and none are more than a few pages long. In almost every chapter American Indians appear as the representatives of humanity in its most basic state.

Of primary interest to the reviewers was the Scots philosophers' stadial, conjectural method. Because the reviews carefully outlined the structure of each of these works, this approach would have been familiar to anyone in contact with the reviews. For those readers needing more direction, reviews often explained the nature of the enquiry into the 'history of man' fairly explicitly. In its assessment of Millar's *Distinction of Ranks*, the *Monthly Review* offered a clear definition on its first page:

By the history of society, taken in the most extensive sense of the phrase, we mean not the annals of particular nations under the different periods of their government; much less an account of the manners and customs which prevails [*sic*] among different nations whose circumstances are nearly the same; but a view of mankind in general, placed in all that variety of positions which occasions a diversity in their manners and way of thinking.¹³⁰

Moreover, this aspect of their work was often highlighted by praise. The *Gentleman's Magazine* enthusiastically declared in its review of Robertson's *History of America* that his enquiry into the stadial development of the peoples of the Americas was 'the most original, and for philosophical and contemplative readers, will be the most interesting part of the work'.¹³¹ Whether or not one can speak of a Scottish 'school' remains open for debate; however, contemporaries certainly recognized that this enquiry

¹²⁷ *Monthly Review* (May 1767), 345.

¹²⁸ *London Chronicle*, 17 and 27 Aug. 1771.

¹²⁹ John Adams, *Curious Thoughts on the History of Man* (London, 1789).

¹³⁰ *Monthly Review* (Sept. 1771), 188.

¹³¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1778), 26.

into the 'history of society' had coherent elements and was a product of Britain. As the *Monthly Review* proudly stated in 1771:

The study of human nature has been cultivated, with peculiar attention, by the greatest men in all ages; but the means employed by them to promote it, have not always been the same. It was not till of late, in particular, that they endeavoured to investigate the principles of human nature, by examining the sentiments of mankind in the different ages of society. As this philosophy took its rise in our own island we have reason to hope that it will here also receive its perfection.¹³²

As a whole, the relevant works were attentively considered. In every case the major review periodicals devoted significant space to their assessments, often carrying the review over several monthly issues. Arguments were evaluated; the structure of the work was described; and lengthy extracts were reprinted. In almost every case these reviews were favourable, despite the reviewers' general willingness to condemn and dismiss other authors. The *Scots Magazine* praised Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, noting in the opening lines of its review that: 'The subject is interesting to mankind, and Dr Ferguson has treated it in a manner suitable to its dignity.'¹³³ The *Critical Review* maintained its usual posture of praise for Robertson when it considered his *History of America*, declaring that his previous works 'have sufficiently apprised the public of the merits of the author, and have deservedly gained him a place among writers of the first rank in the historical department, whether ancient or modern'. Therefore, the reviewer explained, 'all that will be necessary on this occasion, is to satisfy our readers that it is not inferior to them in respect of excellence... in respect of the subject, it is perhaps more splendid and interesting'.¹³⁴ In its review of Kames's *Sketches*, the *Monthly Review* announced that it 'has a very considerable degree of merit... his knowledge is extensive, and many of his remarks are extremely acute and ingenious'.¹³⁵ The *London Chronicle* carried extracts over two issues, with the simple introductory endorsement: 'this Work abounds with entertaining and instructive observations on a great variety of subjects.'¹³⁶ For the most part, reviewers' criticisms focused on a desire that the author might expand their assessments. The *Monthly Review* expressed disappointment that Ferguson had

¹³² *Monthly Review* (Sept. 1771), 188.

¹³³ *Scots Magazine* (Mar. 1767), 149.

¹³⁴ *Critical Review* (June 1777), 401.

¹³⁵ *Monthly Review* (June 1774), 437.

¹³⁶ *London Chronicle*, 7 and 10 May 1774. Another extract appears on the front page of the 13 Oct. 1774 edition.

not considered the topic of religion more fully, and the *Gentleman's Magazine* pressed Robertson to consider whether the American Indians had benefited or suffered as a whole from contact with the Europeans.¹³⁷

The only major exception to the general praise for the Scottish Enlightenment's stadial histories was the criticism Monboddo endured.¹³⁸ In 1776 the *Edinburgh Magazine* harshly attacked both the *Origins and Progress* and its author, devoting sixty-four pages over seven issues to the onslaught. Monboddo exacted his revenge soon afterwards when a libel case came before the Court of Session on which he sat. The case was that of Walter Jardine, a schoolmaster who had been insulted in the same periodical, against the publishers. The court awarded Jardine £50. This decision, combined with the withdrawal of a number of subscribers, who had cancelled their subscriptions because of the abusive reviews, eventually forced the magazine to suspend publication in September 1776. The *Critical Review* offered a more representative and balanced assessment in its review of the *Origin and Progress*, declaring that: 'While we differ in opinion from this author, respecting some of the arguments he has advanced, we entirely agree in his assertion that language is not natural, but acquired.'¹³⁹ The review in the *Scots Magazine* made no mention of the orang-utans, and regarded the work favourably.¹⁴⁰

Most important, the reviews almost universally agreed that the topic of the history of human social development enjoyed a wide appeal, and that the authors considered here had made their works accessible to large audiences. As the *Monthly Review* stated in the opening lines of its assessment of Smith's *Moral Sentiments*, man was the most interesting subject for study: 'Of all the various enquiries that have exercised the thoughts of speculative men, there are scarce any which afford more genuine or lasting pleasure, to persons of a truly liberal and inquisitive turn, than those which have Man for their object. Indeed, what can be more worthy to be studied, and distinctly known?' As a result, the review continued, such topics were favourably received by the public: 'Those Writers, therefore, who lay our internal constitution open to our view, and point out the mutual connections, dependencies, and relations of the several powers, instincts, and propensities of the human mind, are certainly entitled to a

¹³⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1778), 26.

¹³⁸ The incident is described best in Cloyd, *James Burnett, Lord Monboddo*, 53–6.

¹³⁹ *Critical Review* (May 1773), 366.

¹⁴⁰ *Scots Magazine* (Mar. 1773), 143–4.

favourable reception from the public.¹⁴¹ Although criticizing Monboddó's style for its 'dry, abstracted, and metaphysical nature', the same periodical was swift to praise Kames's *Sketches*, noting that it 'will afford both entertainment and instruction to the general of readers . . . the Author's style, though not elegant, is in general, plain, easy and perspicuous'.¹⁴² The *Monthly Review* also praised Smith's style, declaring that 'his language is always perspicuous and forcible, and often elegant; his illustrations are beautiful and pertinent; and his manner lively and entertaining'.¹⁴³ The highest praise for an accessible style, however, went to Ferguson, in the opening lines of the *Critical Review*'s evaluation: 'This is one of the few modern compositions which unites preciseness of reasoning and depth of judgement, to an uncommon elegance of diction.'¹⁴⁴

Ultimately, such attentions fuelled the narrow, predominately negative British perception of American Indians. The portrayal of Indians as exemplars of 'humanity in its rudest state' was not openly challenged by the reviewers or their readers. Given that the press was an arena where little went uncontested, this indicates widespread acceptance. In fact, readers and editors praised the Scots for refuting the idea of the idyllic, noble savage. As the *Annual Register* declared in its summary of William Robertson's *History of America*:

Poets, philosophers, and politicians, had in vain exerted their genius, wisdom, and talents, to describe or discover the state of simplicity, innocence, and nature, the origin of society, and the source of laws. As they all wandered in the dark, their songs and theories were equally erroneous. That chasm is now filled up. That age, which was supposed to be golden, we now behold; and discover it affords only a state of weakness, imperfection, and wretchedness, equally void of innocence, and incapable of happiness. If we find man without property, and feeding on acorns, we also find him a sullen, suspicious, solitary, and unhappy being; a creature endued with a few good, and cursed with numberless ill qualities; unjust and cruel from nature and habit, treacherous on system, implacable in revenge, and incapable of gratitude, friendship, or natural affection.¹⁴⁵

The legacy of the impact of American Indians on eighteenth-century British culture is perhaps best preserved through the Scottish Enlightenment. Although representations and perceptions of Indians influenced

¹⁴¹ *Monthly Review* (July 1759), 1.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* (Sept. 1773), 166, and (June 1774), 436.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* (July 1759), 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Critical Review* (Mar. 1767), 180.

¹⁴⁵ *Annual Register* (1777), 214.

contemporary government policy more acutely and received more attention from the newspaper and periodical press, the consequences of the intellectual elite's engagement with them has proven to be more lasting. The British lost control over most of the North American interior in 1783, soon after which the press all but forgot its native inhabitants. In contrast, the stadial, conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment helped to inspire the development of social sciences, and are still read today.

This 'hothead of genius' had a context, however. The Act of Union may not have caused it, but Scotland's incorporation into Britain and the British Empire profoundly influenced it. Encountering an enormous variety of cultures, peoples, and products would have given even the least reflective individuals pause. The timing and extent of the Scots philosophers' inclusion of American Indians clearly shows how receptive they were to public discussion. The emergence of American Indians in the Scottish intellectual discourse was not merely the by-product of initial encounters. Had this been the stimulus, then one would expect Indians to have entered the Scottish intellectual scene in force much earlier—with either the discovery of the New World or Scotland's union with England in 1707. The prompting event, however, was the series of highly publicized, large-scale conflicts that raged across the North American frontier from 1754 to 1765. This was when the American Indians first emerged onto the public scene in any grand and lasting form, and the images accompanying their emergence were those of brutal savages living in crude, kin based, hunter-gatherer communities that the Scots philosophers found so useful.

Despite alternatives, this type of image was the overriding representation of Indians in the post-Seven Years War histories. The Scots philosophers could have turned to the exotic imagery left over from earlier sensational Indian visits, styling them in the fashion of *The Four Indian Kings* ballads. A more serious alternative was the noble savage portrayal—after all, the French *philosophes* constructed their noble savages from many of the same travel accounts that the Scots used to bolster the first stage of their conjectural histories.¹⁴⁶ The full extent to which mid-century representations of Indians compelled the Scots to reconsider the construction of civilization

¹⁴⁶ On the French *philosophes'* reliance on the same Jesuit travel accounts, see George R. Healy, 'The French Jesuits and the Idea of the Noble Savage', *WMQ* 15 (1958), 143–67.

cannot be determined definitively. Nevertheless, accounts of Indian societies certainly aided the Scots' elaborations and made their works more digestible for the middling audiences they targeted, who undoubtedly found satisfaction in the intellectual confirmation of the pervading public image of American Indians.

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Empire Through Evangelization: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the American Indians

The evangelization of the native ‘heathens’ of America was always among the English, and later British, imperial impulses. Richard Hakluyt listed it among his reasons for empire-building in the Americas in his *Discourse to Promote Colonization* (1584); it was included in the Virginia Company’s first charter in 1606; and it played into John Winthrop’s now famous justifications for the Puritan settlement of New England. In these instances, however, the rhetoric was far removed from reality. Economic impulses, rather than religious spirit, dominated British Atlantic expansion; the Jamestown colonists and Puritans in New England both killed far more Indians than they converted. By the outbreak of the American War of Independence many groups had long since given up hope of swift, mass conversions in the tradition of Paul and other early Christian evangelists. Until the Indians had been ‘civilized’, many agreed, there was little hope of their becoming Anglican Protestant, and thus ‘true’ Christians. As William Shipley, the bishop of St Asaph, remarked in a 1773 sermon: ‘I fear we have little reason to hope for their conversion, til some great change in their manners has made them abandon their savage vagrant life, and prepared them for the discipline of law and religion.’¹

The Church of England certainly was not alone in its American evangelical endeavours, nor was it especially successful. John Butler recently described the Church of England as having ‘failed in America’.²

¹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1773), 4.

² Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 127.

Nevertheless, it was unique in the Anglo-Atlantic world both in its visibility and in its centralized bureaucracy. Moreover, the British establishment saw the Church as one of its pillars, and thus it played an important role in their vision of America and its inhabitants. An exploration of the eighteenth-century discourse promulgated by the Church of England's leaders and members associated with overseas evangelical projects thus offers a unique opportunity to examine the explicit associations between Christian evangelism and imperial expansion.

At the heart of Anglican overseas evangelism was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), chartered in 1701 for the purposes of ensuring that the Anglican brand of Protestantism accompanied the spread of the English Empire. Imperial gains and substantial bequests, particularly those of Christopher Codrington in 1710, which included a plantation in Barbados, ensured the longevity and prosperity of the society. Also crucial was its attachment to the Anglican establishment. Its patrons and leaders were an array of aristocrats and bishops, and its members read like a who's who of the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world: the names of colonial governors, Indian superintendents, leading clergymen, military officers, and government ministers abound on the society's subscription lists.

A year after its foundation, the society introduced the practice of an 'Annual Anniversary Sermon', which was preached in February of each year in London by an individual nominated by the archbishop of Canterbury, the society's president.³ The sermons were printed, usually along with an annual report, and distributed to its members and sold to the general public. For insights into the minds of the Church hierarchy with regard to the state of the Church and its connection to the empire, the sermons are invaluable. Invariably given by bishops, their uncensored commentaries were more reflective than prescriptive. In consequence, they varied in tone, style, and politics. Shipley freely offered a sermon that included acute criticism of the North ministry's coercive American policies in 1773, and three years later William Markham, the archbishop of York, gave a sermon that equally damned the American rebels. Despite differences of style and politics, the sermons shared a number of themes between 1740 and the early years of the American War of Independence: they stressed

³ Daniel O'Connor, *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701–2000* (London, 2000), 11. In practice, the bishop of London took responsibility for overseas missionary activities.

the connection between the Church and successful imperial expansion, the strategic role of religion in creating and maintaining loyal subjects, and the paramount importance of civilizing the American Indians.

Alongside the missionary reports, correspondence, and administrative records of the society, the sermons paint a portrait of eighteenth-century Anglican evangelism as deeply committed to the expansion of the empire and to the centralization of imperial authority. This is not to discount the genuineness of many of its leaders and constituents. The sermons, correspondence, and actions of the missionaries reveal a powerful devotion to their god and dedication to persuading others to share their beliefs, and the same is true of many of the Church's Indian converts, who also dedicated their lives to spreading their faith. The present study does not intend to belittle their faith or diminish their lives. Of particular interest here, however, is that alongside and often intermingled with this religious devotion was an acute awareness, and indeed blatant celebration, of both the secular benefits of spreading the Anglican brand of Protestantism overseas and its usefulness as a tool to thwart rival European imperial powers. This was especially true after the outbreak of the Seven Years War, which awoke the clergy just as it aroused the attentions of the national government, the Scottish intellectual elite, and the literate public to the importance of the empire, particularly in North America. The remarks of Anthony Ellis, bishop of St David's, in his sermon before the SPG at the height of the war paralleled the sentiments expressed in the coffee-houses, parliament, and the press:

As the great importance of those colonies to this kingdom is now understood, it is easy to conceive what their loss would be to us, especially should they come into the possession of any enemy solicitous to impair, and, as far as possible, ruin our commerce, who therefore would improve all advantages, which these colonies might afford, to the height, against us: Perhaps so far as to become, at length, superior to us in maritime power; in which case, the way would be visibly opened to our final destruction.⁴

PRIORITIES IN PRACTICE

Within a year of its foundation the SPG began sending missionaries to North America, and one of the first, Samuel Thomas, went to South

⁴ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1759), 58.

Carolina to convert the Yamasee. However, he saw few Indians, and instead established himself at the governor's plantation, where he ministered to white colonists.⁵ Angry correspondence crossed the Atlantic, but before the issue could be resolved the Yamasee were effectively destroyed in a war with the colonists. The practice of missionaries who had been sent to evangelize Indians choosing to devote themselves fully to white colonists once they had arrived in America became a familiar pattern, and as early as 1707 the SPG leadership expressed reluctance to send missionaries to Indians at all.⁶ Of the twenty-five catalogued responses to a questionnaire sent in 1723 to all the Anglican clergy in North America by the bishop of London, who was responsible for licensing them, none indicated regular contact with Indians.⁷ Most left their response blank to the seventh question, which asked if any Indians or Africans were in their parishes and, if so, 'what means are us'd for their conversion'. Others were more open with their neglect. J. Fraser, who had been in America for twenty-three years and was at that time in Virginia, declared that 'Native Indians are averse to Christianity'. Thomas Howell responded from Maryland that there were indeed Indians in his parish, but he left them to 'their own petty princes'.

In the southern mainland colonies the Church of England's presence was substantial by mid-century, but its missionaries dealt almost exclusively with European colonists and African slaves. Virginia and Maryland were sufficiently established to recruit Anglican clergymen themselves—often competing successfully against SPG recruiters in England—and so the SPG focused on those newer colonies, which it deemed were too poor to recruit their own clergy and were, therefore, at risk.⁸ Gideon Johnston, Samuel Thomas's replacement in South Carolina, reported that a Cherokee Indian was living with him, but otherwise he made few forays into the

⁵ S. Charles Bolton, *Southern Anglicanism: The Church of England in Colonial South Carolina* (London, 1982), 103–8 and 119–20.

⁶ Lambeth Palace Library, Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [SPG Papers], xvi. fols. 157–8.

⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, Fulham Papers, iii. fols. 46–71. The response of the missionary to the Mohawks, if there was one, is not included in the papers.

⁸ John K. Nelson, *A Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons, and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia, 1690–1776* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001), 122–4. On the Church of England in Virginia and Maryland, see also Joan R. Gunderson, *The Anglican Ministry in Virginia, 1723–1766: A Study in Social Class* (New York, 1989), and Carol van Voorst, *The Anglican Clergy in Maryland, 1692–1776* (New York, 1989).

wilderness in search of potential Indian converts. James Read, writing in North Carolina in 1760, declared that ‘we have no Indians amongst us’.⁹ Reporting from North Carolina in the 1760s, John Barnett claimed that ‘in the Course of the Year I ride near fourteen hundred miles to the out parts of my parish: besides some occasional journies into some neigh’bring parishes to Preach and Baptise’, yet he rarely mentioned Indians in his congregations.¹⁰

With the important exception of New York, SPG–Indian relations were little different in other mainland colonies. Missionaries tended their white colonist flocks, and paid scant regard to bordering Indians. In Pennsylvania, frontier missionaries were among the first to flee when hostilities with Indians erupted. When Pontiac’s War began in 1763, William Thompson raced for the protection of the British fort at Carlisle, where he wrote letters to the SPG secretary that vilified the Indians, whom he described as ‘killing, scalping and butchering all’.¹¹ Thomas Barton, the SPG’s itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania, did the same, reporting that ‘the Barbarians have renew’d their Hostilities against us—And our Country bleeds again under the Savage Knife. The dreadful News of Murdering, burning & scalping is daily convey’d to us, and confirm’d with shocking Additions.’¹²

Missionaries’ preoccupation with white colonists and, to a lesser extent, African slaves is not surprising. Recruitment was difficult, due to low salaries and the undesirable living conditions that awaited missionaries in America. Writing from North Carolina in 1760, John Macdowell made an assertive, yet typical, complaint to his London superiors:

I could not possibly any longer subsist myself & family on £100 of this Currency, allowed me by my Vestry. For as every thing here is 3 or 4 times dearer than in Europe, I do not reckon my present allowance to be so good as £30 at home. . . . it was not any prospect of worldly Ease or Grandeur that induc’d me to come to America, & then that I continued so long in this Part of it, where it is impossible to give them [Society] an Adequate Idea of all the fatigues, hardships, Sickness &c I have gone thro’ since I have been here.¹³

The added hardships of living among neighbouring Indians, who as veteran enemies and refugees of British colonialism were often less than

⁹ Rhodes House Library, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel [USPG], American Materials, Series B4, fol. 134. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Series B6, fols. 282–4.

¹² *Ibid.*, Series B21, fol. 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Series B4, fol. 70.

welcoming, were more than most would endure. Most missionaries were also ill-prepared to engage Indians successfully. They rarely possessed the necessary language skills. Added to their lack of understanding of Indian cultures, and sometimes the difficulty of having dependent family members in tow, this made the possibility of establishing a household among the Indians formidable. The practical instruction that missionaries received from England was naive at best. As late as 1788, missionary handbooks' instructions for dealing with Indians consisted of a series of dialogues in which curious Indians are successfully converted through a short series of brief, uncomplicated exchanges.¹⁴

Aside from the difficulties in converting Indians, missionaries genuinely feared the lapsed state of Christianity among the colonists. As an SPG missionary in rural Georgia remarked as late as 1769, the colonists 'in general have but very little more knowledge of a Saviour than the aboriginal natives'. 'Many hundreds of poor people, both parent and children, in the interior of the province,' he continued, 'have not opportunity of being instructed in the principles of Christianity or even in the being of a God, any further than nature dictates.'¹⁵ In other colonies, such as New Jersey, there were few Indians left whom missionaries could tend. Still others seemed to have developed the anti-Indian sentiments of other white frontier inhabitants, and soon ceased communing with them. During the Seven Years War, Barton, who was on the highly charged Pennsylvania frontier, described his 'pleasure' at seeing 'my People coming crowding with their muskets on their shoulders' into what he described as his 'Churches militant'.¹⁶ Missionary work amongst the Indians, he declared in the same report, was best left to Indian converts, as Indians' 'customs and manners of living are so opposite to the genius and constitutions of our people, that they would never become familiar to them'.

The colonists-first sentiment was shared by a substantial minority of the Anglican hierarchy in England. Many of these views stemmed from a perception shared with most Britons that the priority in North America

¹⁴ *A Collection of Papers, Printed by the Order of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1788). See also similar dialogues in SPG-sponsored *The Knowledge and Practice of Christianity Made easy to the Meanest Capacities; or, and Essay Towards the Instruction for the Indians*, 2nd edn. (London, 1741).

¹⁵ Cited in C. F. Pascoe, *Classified Digests of the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1892*, 3rd edn. (London, 1893), 28.

¹⁶ USPG, American Materials, Series B21, fols. 1-2.

was its settlements. Indian affairs were significant only in so far as they affected the colonists. As Edward Cressett, bishop of St Asaph, argued in 1754, 'these two sorts of savages [African and Indians] shew forth the wretched degeneracy of human nature', and thus served as a reminder of what might happen if the SPG did not rejuvenate and maintain Christianity among the European colonists. Thus they, not the 'savages', needed to be the SPG's priority:

But it is in vain to talk of the conversion of the Heathen; whilst too many of our own People, I am afraid, seem to be rather sinking into barbarism, than bringing others out of it; and by their lives are a notorious reproach to Christianity, an impediment to the progress of it, and a scandal and stumbling block in the way of unbelievers. They must be the objects of our primary care.¹⁷

In the wake of the Seven Years War, the Church leaders, like their counterparts in parliament and Whitehall, saw the empire as vital to Britain's prosperity, and thus in need of centralized direction. A perceived sense of responsibility to Britons at home and abroad, rather than a desire for personal aggrandisement, directed their calls for change. As Richard Terrick, bishop of Peterborough, who was soon to be bishop of London and thus a director of overseas Anglican activities, remarked at the conclusion of the war, wartime successes in America carried peacetime responsibilities:

In the course of the late War, our successes, great in themselves and glorious to the British arms, have extended our Empire and opened a large field, which in every view, whether of Religion or Civil Policy, demands our culture and improvement . . . It would indeed add a luster to the Glories of a successful war, could we trace the progress of true Christianity, wherever our arms have conquered, and by introducing the Art of Civil life and the milder genius of a pure Religion, could boast of the Triumphs of Truth and knowledge over Popish error and Heathen ignorance. This would be an Event, which would shine in the Annals of our History, and do honour to our National character.¹⁸

'[T]he most able and experienced Politician cannot form any Scheme', he continued, 'in which He can better express a love of his Country, than by a generous attention to improve every enlargement of our National influence'. The goal, he concluded, was 'not to flatter the views of Ambition, not to indulge our avarice or love of oppression, but to civilize

¹⁷ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1754), 19–20.

¹⁸ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1764), 26–7.

the manners of the barbarous Nations', which would naturally result in 'the strongest security of their friendship to our Country'.¹⁹

When the colonists became increasingly unruly in the decade following the Seven Years War, the Church of England's hierarchy responded by encouraging calls for American bishoprics, a cause that the SPG's officers endorsed. When victory in North America seemed secure, the bishop of London had ordered a report on the 'state of the Church of England in the British Colonies in America'.²⁰ The meticulously detailed report concluded, unsurprisingly, in favour of creating American bishoprics in the mainland colonies. It argued that the Church of England's ability to compete with other Protestant denominations for colonists' support depended on the ability of the American Anglicans to train and support their own clergy, which established bishops would be able to do. At stake was the continuation of British authority in America. Although written four years before the Stamp Act riots, the report asserted that: 'Some very considerable men have expressed their apprehensions that the Colonies may not always be so subordinate as they have been to the laws of Trade and Interests of the Mother Country; and may some time or another think of Independency.' 'It is hoped', the report continued, 'that this is a very distant thought; but it may be safely asserted that if ever any one thing more than another can conduce such an Event, it will be the suffering of the Church in America to continue in her present languishing Condition.' Whereas other denominations were 'more Republican in their Principles', it concluded, the Church of England supported monarchy, loyalty, and the English Constitution.

A number of post-war SPG sermons reinforced colonists-first sentiments through calls for establishing American bishoprics. In 1765 Philip Yonge, bishop of Norwich, declared that before the Indians 'can have the word of God even mentioned to them with any tolerable hope of their receiving it . . . they ought to see the effect of it in their neighbours, and their masters'.²¹ By focusing on the colonists first, missionaries' later efforts among the Indians would be that much easier: 'Shew an Indian, that Christians in general entertain in their breasts, and manifest it in their conduct, love, joy peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

¹⁹ Ibid. 27–8.

²⁰ SPG Papers, x, fols. 140–73. The report was drawn up for the bishop of London and forwarded to the archbishop of Canterbury.

²¹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1765), 22 and 24.

meekness, temperance; and the missionary's work is half done.' Two years later John Ewer, bishop of Llandaff, railed against the 'irreligion' in the colonies, calling it 'this great evil', that could only be checked by new bishops.²² The 1770 annual sermon, given by Frederick Keppel, bishop of Exeter, again mingled calls for the creation of American bishoprics with arguments for prioritizing colonists over Indians, declaring that 'to begin at once with these [conversion of Indians], and to neglect the others [colonists], would be in effect to trim the branches, without manuring the root'.²³

Even for those who prioritized the evangelization of Indians, the welfare of white colonists came first. As discussed below, most promoters of Indian missions believed that converting them into civilized Protestants was an excellent way to ensure peace and prosperity on the frontiers of the economically vital mainland colonies. They argued that just as a common Anglicanism could bind the white colonists to the mother country, so too it would surely do the same with Britons and Indians. Thus, tending to the concerns and British-determined needs of the Indians was, in fact, a way of protecting the colonists and effectively governing the empire. In this regard, the perspectives of the leaders of the Church of England and the SPG were directly in line with the predominant views we have seen expressed in the press and government circles.

THE MOHAWK MODEL OF SUCCESS

Although SPG missionaries worked with an estimated forty-six Indian tribes and nations during the eighteenth century, the Mohawk received by far the most attention.²⁴ The mission itself served only a handful of native Americans, but it loomed large in the minds of the SPG's British members—particularly its leadership. The Mohawk mission featured prominently in the society's records and received more attention than any other eighteenth-century mission in both the minutes and the printed annual reports that were distributed with the printed annual sermons. During the course of the century, the SPG's relationship with the Mohawk was lauded as an exemplary success, and ultimately became the foundation

²² *SPG Annual Sermon* (1767), 10, 20–1.

²³ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1770), 7.

²⁴ O'Connor, *Three Centuries of Missions*, 45–6.

upon which its members in Britain built their understanding of the potential of Indian missions. Although unrepresentative of wider SPG–Indian relations, the perceived experiences with the Mohawk led the hierarchy of the Church and the SPG to champion the notion that Anglicanism could check the spread of Catholicism and that Anglican missions might turn Indians into steadfast allies.

The first SPG missionaries to New York arrived in 1702, and soon the organization had established a permanent mission in Albany, where missionaries served Dutch colonists living under British rule and the rising number of British colonists. They also had a directive to tend to the neighbouring Mohawk—many of whom had been converted to Protestant Christianity by Dutch missionaries. The Mohawk requested their own missionary in 1704, and followed up that request in 1710 during the London visit of the ‘Four Indian Kings’, who made an eloquent appeal to Queen Anne. Moved by the request, Anne immediately forwarded it to the SPG, which in turn interviewed the Mohawk ambassadors. The SPG took the opportunity to underline its commitment ‘to the conversion of heathens and infidels’, which ‘ought to be prosecuted preferably to all others’.²⁵ The SPG presented the Indians with ‘4 copies of the Bible in quarto with the Prayer book bound handsomely in red Turkey leather’, and promised to send a missionary soon. In support of the SPG, Anne ordered the erection of a fort with a chapel near Albany on Mohawk land (Fort Hunter). She personally donated a set of Communion plates that were inscribed to the ‘Indian Chappel of the Mohawks’.²⁶ Administered by some of the most active missionaries in the SPG’s ranks, the mission served as a focal point for British–Mohawk relations for most of the eighteenth century.

Unlike other missionaries sent to the frontier, SPG agents in New York dealt with Indians on a regular basis. Thomas Barclay, John Ogilvie, and John Stuart all learned the Mohawks’ language and regularly used translators. As white settlement around Fort Hunter increased and the Indians moved further north and west, the missionaries increasingly travelled to Indian villages. Barclay remarked in his 1750 annual report to the SPG in London that, besides preaching to any Indians who attended the services at the fort, ‘I preach to the Indians twice every Sunday by the help of an

²⁵ Cited in Pascoe, *Classified Digest*, 69.

²⁶ Cited in John Wolf Lydekker, *The Faithful Mohawks* (Cambridge, 1938), 31.

Interpreter whom I hire for that Purpose, & read most of our Liturgy to them myself in their own language'.²⁷ Missionaries also sent regular updates on their constituents' dispositions, and carefully noted any French advances.

From an imperial standpoint the Mohawk mission was a great success, helping to bind the strategically situated Mohawk to British interests. The Mohawk were among the most loyal allies Britain had for the duration of the eighteenth century. Led by generations of Christian converts such as Hendrick, Abraham, and Molly and Joseph Brant, the Mohawk consistently sent their warriors into battle alongside British forces and favourably represented British concerns at the councils of the Iroquois Confederacy, to which the Mohawk belonged. After their return from London in 1711 the Mohawk ambassadors rallied an estimated one-third of all Iroquois warriors in support of a British-colonial attack on New France.²⁸ The Mohawk supported British campaigns in subsequent North American wars, including the Seven Years War, when they were among Britain's few initial native allies. On the eve of that war the SPG missionary, Ogilvie, was integral to British recruiting efforts among the Iroquois, and later joined them on their expeditions. At the Battle of Lake George, the first major encounter of the war in the north, six of the twelve Mohawk leaders who fell were regular communicants at the Mohawk Chapel.²⁹ During the war Ogilvie was both missionary to the Mohawk and chaplain to the Royal American Regiment. Sir William Johnson, British superintendent for Indian Affairs, praised Ogilvie in his letters to the SPG and Board of Trade, and remarked on the necessity of his accompanying the Mohawk warriors.³⁰ He was promptly awarded a gratuity of £30.

After the Seven Years War, Johnson became the mission's major patron. Elected a member of the SPG in 1766, he saw the Church of England as a vital defence against both the spread of Catholicism and dissenting Protestantism. He therefore built and financed a number of Anglican churches and schools in New York that tended to Indians and white settlers alike. Johnson even married Molly Brant, who was a member of the Mohawk elite, at the Mohawk Chapel. Joseph Brant, Molly's younger brother, who led the Mohawk in support of the Crown during the

²⁷ Cited in *ibid.* 65–6.

²⁸ Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701–1754* (Detroit, 1983), 88–90.

²⁹ Pascoe, *Classified Digest*, 73.

³⁰ *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York* [hereafter *NYCD*], vii. 43.

American War of Independence, lived with the missionary John Stuart in the winter of 1772–3, while Brant grieved over the loss of his first wife. Together they translated the Book of Common Prayer into the Mohawk language.³¹ When a large number of Mohawk resettled under British protection in Canada, they took the Anglican faith, many of the Mohawk Chapel's ornaments, and their SPG mission with them.³²

The mission resulted in secular benefits for the Mohawk as well. As explained in Chapter 3, during the eighteenth century the Mohawk emerged as the linchpin of British frontier strategy in the Great Lakes region—a position that Mohawk leaders actively pursued out of their own self-interest. An established mission meant an additional conduit to the British leadership, a regular place of exchange, and a visible British commitment to its investment in the Mohawk alliance. A mission in Mohawk territory also decreased the likelihood of Anglican missions among neighbouring competitors, including fellow Iroquois nations, and thereby aided the Mohawk leaders' pursuit of a monopoly over British–Indian relations in the region.

The intermingling of secular and religious interests was clear from the start. In the 1710 appeal to Queen Anne for missionaries, the Mohawk ambassadors played on British concerns about the advance of Catholicism in America, noting that '[we] have often been importuned by the French by Priests and Presents, but ever esteemed them as men of Falsehood, but if Our Great Queen would send some to Instruct us, they should find a most hearty Welcome'.³³ In the same statement they also called for their combined forces to attack Montreal. Once the fort and chapel were under way, Hendrick, one of the four ambassadors and nominal leader of the Canajoharie Mohawk, formally expressed his gratitude 'to the Great Queen' and 'our father his Grace the Lord arch Bishop of Canterbury' through a combination of European and Mohawk conventions—letters and wampum belts.³⁴ The gesture reflected Mohawk diplomatic strategy in the eighteenth century: they were mediators between the British and Indian worlds, who had adopted elements of European culture at their own instigation and were sufficiently important to deal directly with British governing elite.

³¹ Owanah Anderson, 'Anglican Mission Among the Mohawk', in O'Connor, *Three Centuries of Missions*, 235–48. Brant is also credited with translating the Gospel of Mark.

³² Pascoe, *Classified Digest*, 74–8; Anderson, 'Anglican Mission', 245–6.

³³ The full address is reprinted in Lydekker, *The Faithful Mohawks*, 27–8.

³⁴ *NYCD*, v. 278–81.

The SPG's relationship with the Mohawk directly served British imperial interests. The SPG leadership expressed no official concern about conflicts of interest over secular imperial agendas, and actively encouraged the combination of the two. When the society discussed the appointment of Ogilvie as its missionary to the Mohawk at the general meeting of the SPG on 17 March 1748, the secretary read aloud supporting letters from the current missionary, Barclay, and the governor of New York, George Clinton, who both advocated allowing Ogilvie to serve as both the SPG's representative and the chaplain to the British garrison at Fort Hunter—a measure the SPG wholeheartedly endorsed.³⁵ Nor were there any recorded complaints, which were often noted in the meeting's minutes in unrelated issues, when Ogilvie's reports were read aloud describing his accompaniment of Johnson on military recruiting drives during the Seven Years War and his subsequent campaigns with the Indian forces raised.

Moreover, like the secular British agents and officers, the SPG rewarded Indians who advanced the interests of the Church of England and the British Empire. A typical instance occurred in 1750, when Clinton, who as governor of New York conventionally took precedence over other colonial officials in handling Iroquois affairs, sent a request for financial rewards for two of the Mohawk elite that was read aloud at the September 1750 meeting.³⁶ The first was for Abraham, who was a senior warrior, diplomat, sachem, and Anglican communicant. Abraham had planted the seed of concern some months earlier when, according to Ogilvie's report (read aloud at an earlier meeting), he had informed him that 'they had received a belt from a neighboring Popish priest, with a message to invite them to embrace the true Religion, expressing a most tender concern at their being heretics'. Abraham, who portrayed himself as an avid defender of Protestantism, and his fellow Mohawk bluntly refused the invitation, but warned Ogilvie that other Iroquois had not.³⁷ The second requested salary was for Petrus Paulus, which, as summarized in the minutes, would 'much engage his Uncle Hendrick who we are all sensible, has been of the most material Service during the late War, and is the Chief leading Sachem, among the five nations'. 'And Mr Clinton writes', the minutes continued, 'that for these, and several other material

³⁵ SPG Papers, v. fols. 174–5.

³⁶ Minutes from 21 Sept. 1750 meeting, *ibid.*, fols. 293–6.

³⁷ Minutes from 18 Jan 1750 meeting, *ibid.*, fols. 263–5.

Reasons, it would be much for the British Interest to employ him as a Schoolmaster.³⁸ The SPG promptly resolved to award a £5 gratuity to Abraham and an annual salary of £7. 10s. to Petrus. When war erupted five years later, both men actively implored the Iroquois to take the British side. Hendrick, although by that time in his seventies, personally led the mostly Mohawk Indian contingent at the Battle of Lake George, where he was killed in the fighting.

The British largely perceived the Mohawks' almost singular, seemingly unflinching support as having been prompted by a blind loyalty. The press carried tales of their brave exploits, politicians praised them in parliament, and leaders such as Hendrick became heroes. The Anglican hierarchy was no exception, and its members drew a connection between Mohawk loyalty and the endeavours of the SPG. Reflecting on several disastrous years of conflict in America, James Johnson, bishop of Gloucester, drew a conclusion at the height of the war that many had already drawn: 'In Fact, those Indians with whom this Society has had the longest Correspondence, and the most influence, have been found the most faithful of all Tribes, and the most steady Friends to this Country.'³⁹ Anthony Ellis concurred the following year, taking pride in the 'Mohoks [who] converted to our religion, and have been preserved in our interest, and behaved very well in that engagement at Lake George'.⁴⁰ Such statements typify the Church of England and SPG leaders' expressed belief that the Mohawks' Anglican Protestantism, rather than any demographic, economic, or geographic circumstances, linked them to Britain and ensured their loyalty during wartime. Not surprisingly, therefore, their subsequent calls for increased missionary activities were partly founded on the belief that the spread of Anglican Protestantism and elimination of Catholicism might be the cornerstone of a peaceful British hegemony in North America.

AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGION IN THE PRESS

Although commentary in the press on Indian spirituality was rare, what did appear in print was firmly embedded in the ongoing discussion of the empire in America. Two types of representation can be identified in the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 294. The request was also at the behest of William Johnson.

³⁹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1758), 12–13.

⁴⁰ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1759), 28.

letters, reprinted travel accounts, and editorial comment that appeared in newspapers and magazines. The first was designed to provide general information so as to arouse or satisfy the curiosity of readers; the second focused on the use of religion for imperial gain. After war erupted in America in 1754, spirituality was among the aspects of Indian life and culture that editors included in their didactic articles. The *Universal Magazine's* 'Account of the Country, at present the Seat of War in North-America, and of the Original Inhabitants of it, generally called the Indians', carried a typically short description of Indian religious beliefs and a tribally unspecific feast of the dead. When Britain assumed control of Florida from the Spanish, the *Gentleman's Magazine* carried a brief description of native rituals within its account of the new acquisition.⁴¹ Detailed theological discussions, however, were extremely rare.⁴²

Anyone relying primarily on the press would have had a hazy view of Indian spirituality, as editors saw its importance as secondary at best. The *London Chronicle*, summarizing part of a travel account, reduced Indian religion to mere superstition, concluding that 'they are sunk unspeakably below the polite Pagans of Antiquity'.⁴³ When the *Universal Magazine* set about describing Britain's Canadian conquests in 1761, it carried a short description of Indian religious practices. Like the *London Chronicle*, it dismissed the idea of any organized native religion:

They do not appear to have any religion among them, some faint notion excepted of a supreme and eternal Being, to whom however they do not perform any outward worship, unless those dances and songs, which they use at some particular times, be in honour of him. In all other cases, they seem to live without any token of love or fear of him, and follow only the dictates of nature, custom, and education.⁴⁴

When printing an 'Extract from an Account of the Captivity of William Henry in 1755', recently published in Boston and sent to London, the *London Chronicle* expressed its boredom with the subject: 'The Writer then goes on to relate sundry conversation he had at different times with the Indians, on religious subjects, occasioned by his acquainting them

⁴¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1763), 554.

⁴² One exception transpired in the *Scots Magazine* in 1761, when an alleged account of a Swedish missionary's attempts at evangelism provoked a limited response from readers on the topic of deism. See *Scots Magazine* (Jan. 1761), 12–13, (Feb. 1761), 67, and (Sept. 1761), 464–6

⁴³ *London Chronicle*, 3 Sept. 1758.

⁴⁴ *Universal Magazine* (Mar. 1761), 114.

with parts of our scripture history. These we pass over, as containing little entertainment or information.⁴⁵

Far more often, the press carried expressions of concern about how religion could be used, or was being better utilized by the French, as a tool to aid imperial interests in America. In the search at the outset of the Seven Years War for reasons why the French had been strikingly more successful in gaining Indian allies, commentators in Britain and America were swift to point to the advantages the French had reaped from the missionary efforts of the Jesuits. An extract from the governor of South Carolina's address to his colony's assembly in December 1754, that the British papers widely reprinted the following summer, is a typical portrayal of the Catholic-Indian connection that British audiences unquestioningly accepted:

When . . . they have, by menaces, or by the hellish jesuitical missionaries, made proselytes out of them, not to the true Christian religion, founded on peace, benignity, and brotherly love, but to the pomps and outward trappings of the popish hierarchy and superstition; and have inspired an enthusiastic fury into them against protestants, whom they call Heretics, making it meritorious in them to massacre and destroy them, upon which they assure them their future happiness depends; then they propose proceeding farther, and to seize and secure all passes on the mountains, and head the Indians against all our colonies, and force us to become a tributary, or to submit to the arbitrary government of France, and become their slaves, or be massacred by them or their Indians, or be forced out of our religion, liberties and properties; a fatal dilemma, should they execute their scheme!⁴⁶

The following extract from a supposed Ohio Indian's statement printed in the *Derby Mercury* would only have confirmed readers' suspicions: 'They [the Indians] answer'd that the French were better off than the English, for they had a great many old Men among them, that could forgive all their Sins, and these Men had often assured the Indians that it was no Sin to destroy Hereticks, and all the English were such.'⁴⁷ As a result, Anglican missionary efforts were condemned as failures because they had not produced similarly large numbers of Indian allies.⁴⁸

The Jesuit missionaries were depicted as a key problem facing British hegemony in the American interior. The *Edinburgh Magazine* complained

⁴⁵ *London Chronicle*, 25 June 1768.

⁴⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* (July 1755), 307.

⁴⁷ *Derby Mercury*, 25 June 1756.

⁴⁸ For examples, see *Derby Mercury*, 10 Oct. 1755; *London Chronicle*, 16 Jan. 1762.

that 'the Jesuits spare no labour nor pains in making pretended Christians of the natives, who they teach to murder all of another nation or religion, particularly the British'.⁴⁹ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1755 a reader warned that, unless action was taken, Britain's Iroquois allies would be lost to the French, who:

are continually making use of every art that human policy can suggest, to seduce the Indians from their alliance with the English The most artful and zealous of their missionaries are dispersed among them, their religion is made use of to inspire them with the utmost abhorrence of the English; and their priests enforce the doctrine of keeping no faith with heretics with too much success.⁵⁰

Even when France had been defeated in Canada, a cry went up for the removal of all Catholic priests, whether or not Protestant replacements could be found.⁵¹ Peace, the papers maintained, was not possible so long as the Jesuits had the ears of the Indians.

Enhancing the Jesuit Order's reputation in Britain was the corresponding press coverage of their missions' success among the natives of South America, where they had tens of thousands of natives under their control. Prompted by their expulsion from Paraguay and other Portuguese possessions in 1758 and 1759, the press publicized the potential consequences of unchecked Jesuit efforts. According to the *Edinburgh Chronicle*, their expulsion from Portuguese territory was a topic that had 'become a considerable object of publick attention'.⁵² In the *London Evening Post's* 'account of the Political Establishment of the Jesuits in Paraguay', the paper expressed an open admiration for their having 'civilized nations, and converted souls in order to acquire subjects'.⁵³ 'The diligence of these Fathers', the article concluded, 'is certainly worth the imitation of the Protestant clergy.' The result of such assessments was that, within the context of the British discussion of the spread of Christianity among the North American Indians, Catholic-Protestant rivalry was not expressed in the liberty-versus-slavery rhetoric that was so prevalent in Britain. Anglican evangelism among Indians was portrayed not so much as an

⁴⁹ *Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1761, p. 349.

⁵⁰ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Sept. 1755), 436.

⁵¹ For examples, see *London Chronicle*, 28 July 1763; *Derby Mercury*, 16 Sept. 1763; *London Evening Post*, Sept. 1763.

⁵² The most intense coverage of Jesuit difficulties with Portugal lasted from late 1758 to the summer of 1759.

⁵³ *London Evening Post*, 10 Mar. 1758.

extension of British liberty to natives, but rather a means of protecting whites. Religion was merely diplomacy in a different form, and few commentators attempted to disguise their cold pragmatism.

Commentators employed this rhetoric when promoting missionary endeavours in the press. This is not to suggest that calls for converting Indians to Christianity were all disingenuous; rather, that public declarations were commonly dressed in a rhetoric emphasizing the temporal political advantages of such efforts. A letter from a returned missionary written specially for the *London Chronicle* in May 1772 expounded the benefits of evangelism, proclaiming that: 'nothing can tend more to secure our colonies in that part of the world from the savages and desolation of Indian wars, which have been so severely felt, than bringing those poor benighted people to the knowledge of the Christian religion, which naturally unites them to us in affection and interest by the most sacred of all bonds.'⁵⁴ Not long afterward, a Scottish clergyman promoted his evangelical proposal in the *Scots Magazine* by arguing it was the best way 'to secure to us the peaceable possession of all our acquisitions in North America', as well as 'preserve the lives of many thousand British subjects'.⁵⁵ It seems he believed that Christian Indians would not mind whites taking their lands, so long as they were fellow Protestants.

ANGLICANISM AS A POTENTIAL IMPERIAL TOOL

Most of the eighteenth-century commentary surrounding the SPG and the Anglican Church in North America focused on its potential, rather than its achievements. As we have seen in earlier chapters, both policy-makers and commentators in the press had ambitious plans for the British Empire in North America that ultimately proved impractical. The Anglican leaders of the SPG were even more unrealistic. In fact, even as British authority in the interior was collapsing, Anglican bishops gave rousing sermons espousing the benefits of possible Church of England advances in America. The SPG was never equipped to meet the lofty goals expressed in the annual sermons. In terms of actual ministers sponsored, the SPG never had many more than a hundred in America at any given

⁵⁴ *London Chronicle*, 9 May 1772.

⁵⁵ *Scots Magazine* (Sept. 1772), 460.

time, and its annual expenditures rarely exceeded £4,000.⁵⁶ In comparative terms, Virginia alone supported more Anglican ministers during the course of the century than did the SPG, and Johnson's post-Seven Years War annual Indian gift expenditures regularly exceeded the entire budget of the SPG.⁵⁷ As noted above, the SPG mission to the Mohawk was generally a success, but it was atypical in comparison to other endeavours aimed at Indians. These realities, however, did not deter the SPG and Anglican hierarchy from developing grand plans and behaving as if their influence in America was potentially paramount.

The precise reasons for the SPG's lofty goals are not entirely clear, but some reasonable assumptions might be hazarded. Its ranks were filled with members of the governing elite who had pushed for imperial expansion and greater control in North America, and like the government the SPG leadership looked for ways to centralize its authority and assert greater uniformity throughout the empire in the wake of the Seven Years War. The SPG was slower to relinquish its vision, partly because its leadership was dominated by those very members of the governing elite that were among the slowest to recognize the severity of the troubles among the American colonists: the Church of England bishops, who regularly voted as a block in the House of Lords against conciliatory policies and the recognition of American independence. Moreover, the longevity of bishops' appointments meant that, unlike governments, whose turnover reflected to at least some extent the political currents of the day, the Anglican hierarchy did not have to be so responsive.

The SPG's annual sermons reflected, detailed, and explored imperial ambitions and concerns. Taken as a whole, the sermons expressed a hope for primarily secular benefits from evangelizing the Indians. Although most preachers wrapped these arguments in a religious rhetoric, they were at their heart tactical. They promoted missions on the grounds that they combated the spread of Catholicism, which the sermons equated with French influence, and secured steadfast allies in times of war. They also explored the relationship between 'civilization' and Protestant Christianity. Although not as elaborate as in the mid-nineteenth-century endeavours

⁵⁶ This is concluded from an examination of the SPG's financial records, SPG Papers, Lambeth Palace.

⁵⁷ Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 37.

Catherine Hall has described, the intertwining of Anglican Protestantism and the civilizing process was prevalent in the eighteenth-century SPG sermons.⁵⁸ Sometimes disagreeing on the order in which the two were achieved, Anglican leaders nonetheless agreed that each relied on the other, and that their instillation in bordering Indians would help to secure the prosperity of the British colonies.

The emphasis on lay, imperial benefits in the sermons, particularly after the outbreak of the Seven Years War in America, may at first be striking in how closely it resembles the pragmatic discussions about Indians in the press and government. However, the SPG's organizational structure was such that its North American agenda was exposed to secular trends. Although nominally independent, the SPG was tied to the Church hierarchy. The archbishop of Canterbury was its president, the bishop of London took responsibility for its overseas missionaries, and other bishops promoted its causes and gave its annual sermons. Anglican bishops were politically active in the eighteenth century, and together constituted one of the most solid voting blocks in parliament during its second half. During the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s all but one of them, William Shipley, voted in favour of every coercive measure against the American colonists.⁵⁹ Moreover, the SPG increasingly attracted Britain's imperial leadership into its subscribing ranks. In addition to large numbers of imperial agents and colonial governors abroad, the domestic membership included a large number of leading politicians, merchants, military leaders, and royal advisers.

Equally significant, the structure of the SPG's finances made it particularly sensitive to public interests and perceptions. The SPG depended entirely on private funds raised largely through annual charitable contributions and occasional one-off major fund-raising drives. In 1739, for example, the ratio of income from 'casual benefactors'—occasional, unlisted donors who donated anything from a few pennies to a few pounds—to that from regular sources, such as investment income and subscriptions,

⁵⁸ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (London, 2002).

⁵⁹ Paul Langford, 'The English Clergy and the American Revolution', in Eckhart Hellmuth (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1990), 275–308. Shipley was an outspoken advocate of a policy of conciliation and used every opportunity to promote it, including in delivering the SPG's 1773 annual sermon.

was roughly two to one.⁶⁰ By 1783 more stable sources of income had been built up through stock investments and the increased profitability of the SPG's Barbados estate, but casual contributions still made up the bulk of the society's annual income.⁶¹ And, as a summary report by the treasurer meticulously recorded in 1780, casual contributions could fluctuate wildly.⁶² During the 1772–9 period, the years covered by the report, the average annual total for casual donations was £2,125, but annual totals ranged from a low of £727 in 1779 to a high of £4,287 in 1773. Moreover, such fluctuations were unpredictable. Donations in 1774 were only a quarter of what they had been the previous year, whereas they doubled between 1775 and 1776. Such unpredictability caused problems. Annual spending regularly ran a deficit, forcing cutbacks until losses could be made up. When the annual deficit reached nearly £1,000 in 1783, the SPG reduced its expenditures on missionary salaries by 17 per cent.⁶³ Officers' salaries were low and stagnant, if not decreasing in real terms. Between 1730 and 1782 the secretary's base salary did not increase, a particularly sore point after 1781, when his annual bonus from the Barbados estate was suspended.⁶⁴

In order to maintain operations, the SPG had to appear useful to potential 'casual benefactors', who were the same socio-economic groups who visited museums, crowded around Indian visitors, joined libraries, patronized coffee-houses, and read newspapers. The society was aware of this. The SPG typically spent about £200 per annum on printing and distributing its annual sermons. The printed sermons were effectively advertising brochures for the society, and included annual reports and lists of major subscribers in appendices.

The SPG also conducted occasional major fund-raising drives, which reveal a savvy ability to orchestrate events so as to arouse maximum national interest. Its 1779 appeal for the 'Relief and Support of the American Clergy' was one such event.⁶⁵ Because contributions from an individual, institution, or congregation rarely exceeded £10 in these

⁶⁰ SPG Papers, Financial Records, vi. fol. 350

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fols. 395–6. By 1783 invested assets exceeded £28,000, which provided an income of just over £827 that year. The estate on Barbados produced an estimated £2,537 annual income, but there appear to have been regular collection problems.

⁶² *Ibid.*, fol. 427. ⁶³ *Ibid.*, fols. 395–6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 401–5. The annual base salary was £150.

⁶⁵ For details of the finances and organization of the event see *ibid.*, fols. 368–74.

drives after 1750—the largest in this instance was £50 from the duchess of Kingston—the appeal could not have been successful without targeting as broad an audience as possible.⁶⁶ Before the appeal began, the SPG formed a committee under the leadership of William Dickes, secretary to the archbishop of Canterbury, that began writing to the Anglican clergy as soon as the king's permission had been granted for the fund-raising drive. The central event was a day of fasting and prayer, topped off by special services at which local clergy were to preach a sermon on the topic of the appeal. Second collections were to be made at the services in its support. To create public interest, the SPG embarked on a national publicity campaign, spending £237. 18s. 9d. on newspaper advertisements. Nine of the major London newspapers that enjoyed quasi-national circulation, regardless of political disposition, carried daily advertisements for a week, starting on 14 May. The committee also wrote separately to major individual benefactors and institutions, such as the individual colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, whose fellows made collective donations.⁶⁷ The results of the careful planning was an impressive donation total in excess of £19,000—exceeding the combined normal annual donations for the 1770s.⁶⁸ The increase in funds enabled the SPG to disburse financial relief to its agents in America, eliminate its debts, and invest in stocks whose annual dividends would assist its normal operations.

As described in earlier chapters, these persons who comprised the potential donor pool were preoccupied with Indians' bearing on Britain's imperial interests in North America. They believed themselves to be knowledgeable about Indian affairs and informed about the latest developments. Moreover, they perceived themselves to have a vested, national interest in the prosperity of the empire in America, which they believed Indians could adversely affect. In consequence, sentiments expressed in the SPG's annual sermons both engaged with and reflected these concerns.

The blending of anti-Catholic sentiments with opposition to French and Spanish imperialism is evident throughout the sermons. As others have argued, anti-Catholicism in Britain in the eighteenth century was tied to secular conceptions of English, and to some extent British, national

⁶⁶ For the breakdown of subscriptions to the appeal see *ibid.*, fols. 379–88.

⁶⁷ Individual college donations ranged from St John's (Cambridge) with £21 to Magdalen (Oxford) with £4. 4s.

⁶⁸ SPG Papers, Financial Records, vi. fol. 428.

identities, rather than to any complex theological perspective.⁶⁹ Catholicism was thus an abhorrent ‘other’ against which the British defined themselves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁰ Sermons reflected and no doubt fuelled such perceptions by blending critiques of Spanish and French imperialism with anti-Catholicism. In his 1766 sermon before the SPG, William Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, tied the ‘Black Legend’ to Catholicism:

under the mask of the Gospel (if Popery may be said ever to have worn that Mask) the Natives of South America were murdered by millions because they had more Gold than they knew how to use; and the Savages of the North driven from their kindred Woods and Marshes, because they differed from their Invaders in the mode of cultivating their Lands: And neither One nor the Other deemed to have a right to any thing because they were Pagans and Barbarians.⁷¹

James Yorke, bishop of St David’s, concurred, explaining that Catholics were driven by greed and zeal, ‘not guided by knowledge’, which had resulted in the ‘miseries under which the unhappy natives smarted’. ‘To secure the possession of the immense treasures which glittered in their eyes,’ he railed, ‘and to displace the original proprietors from their valuable settlements, superseded in their mind . . . rendering them disciples of our Saviour.’⁷²

Competition with the Catholicism of its European rivals was connected to the British struggle for supremacy in North America. The ‘indefatigable’ Catholics, the preaching clergy explained, were always on the hunt to advance both their ‘false and pernicious Doctrines’ and the civil governments that nourished Catholicism. As Martin Benson, bishop of Gloucester, bluntly stated as early as 1740: ‘We are now engaged in a War’

⁶⁹ An excellent review of the most recent literature is in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride’s introduction to *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998). See also Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging of the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992), 11–54; David Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996); Jack P. Greene, ‘Empire and Identity from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution’, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2: *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford, 1998), 212–15.

⁷⁰ Colley, *Britons*; Steven Pincus has emphasized that the role of religion has been overplayed in the formation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century national identities in the British Isles, arguing that it was a constituent, rather than constituting, factor, in ‘“To Protect English Liberties”: The English Nationalist Revolution of 1688–1689’, in *Protestantism and National Identity*, 75–104.

⁷¹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1766), 6.

⁷² *SPG Annual Sermon* (1779), 14–15.

with Catholic forces, 'for the Success of which we chiefly depend on Advantages to be obtained in America'. The Catholic opposition, he continued, had notable advantages, including greater central authority over its clergy, bishops in America to manage its missionaries, and 'endless Numbers' furnished by their religious orders. Moreover, the authority of these order was such that 'they have only to say to any one, Go, and he goeth wherever they think fit'. He concluded that, although 'the harvest is undoubtedly great, and the labourers as certainly are few, general Obligations which we of this Nation are under to propagate the Gospel' outweighed any hardship or obstacle.⁷³ John Egerton, bishop of Bangor, warned in the annual sermon for 1763 that, 'unless we do this work ourselves, there are others, who will pretend to it: and undertake it they will, but in a way both detrimental to those, who they seduce into the paths of bigotry, and to us, who they will represent as the enemies of Christ; and as such with whom no commerce ought to be carried on.'⁷⁴ The 'success of our arms in the late war' might have reduced the Catholic presence in America, he warned, 'yet our rivals in power can never be so far removed as to render us secure'.⁷⁵ Vigilance and increased effort was the only answer.

Establishing and spreading Protestantism, particularly the Church of England's brand, in North America was thought to secure the fidelity of both white colonists and Indian neighbours to Britain. Robert Hay Drummond, bishop of St Asaph, warned on the eve of the Seven Years War that unless the SPG accelerated its efforts, the white colonists 'will probably fall into Barbarism or Popery: and though they are under allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, they may be, after a course of years, more estranged from us, in civil and religious terms.'⁷⁶ James Johnson made similar arguments in his sermon before the SPG four years later, offering the rhetorical question: 'May it not be reasonably presumed, that the Inhabitants in our Colonies will be more faithful, more dutiful, and more to be depended upon, if properly instructed in the Doctrines of our Religion?'⁷⁷ Richard Terrick declared in his sermon at the conclusion of the Seven Years War that 'we must all agree, that wherever we transfer the plan and Constitution of our Civil Government, the strength and vigour of it will most probably be secured, and dependence on the Mother

⁷³ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1740), 13.

⁷⁴ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1763), 14.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

⁷⁶ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1754), 14.

⁷⁷ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1758), 11.

Country established upon the best principles, if we take care at the same time to sow the seeds of that Religion, which will be the firmest bond, the most assured pledge of fidelity'.⁷⁸ Such scattered thoughts were brought together in the Church hierarchy's calls for the creation of bishoprics, described above, in the 1760s and 1770s. Proponents asserted that bishops in the colonies could ordain their own clergy, thus making the Church of England in America both self-sustaining and intimately linked to the central authority of the Church in England. The intensification of calls to bring Indians into the fold of the Church of England during the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s followed similar lines of thinking. As John Egerton asserted in 1763, the new political reality prevented the SPG from discontinuing its commitment to evangelizing the Indians:

If it may now be allowed to join motives of a mere worldly nature to those already enumerated, it would be easy to shew, that we cannot be indifferent in respect to the religion of our pagan neighbours in the colonies without betraying our own interest; for it must be expedient, even upon a political account, that we should obtain and preserve their friendship.⁷⁹

In the polarized, Catholic-versus-Protestant view of leading Anglicans, Indians' opposition to British interests was equated with an attachment to France and Catholicism. As an extract from Ogilvie's 1760 report, printed as an appendix to the 1761 annual sermon, made clear, the French Catholics were entrenched in Indian country: 'he is informed from good Authority, that there is no Nation bordering on the five great Lakes, or the Banks of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and all the Way to Louisiana, but what are supplied with Priests and Schoolmasters, and have decent Places of Divine Worship.'⁸⁰ Even ten years later, bishops continued to warn of Catholic missionaries waiting to pounce upon Britain's native allies and turn them into English-loathing papists. The French 'are always upon the watch to lay hold of every advantage that offer' and 'have an army of apostles to pour in upon them [the Indians],' Charles Moss, bishop of St David's, warned, 'to finish the work they have begun... [and] lead them by degrees to hold both the person and the religion of an Englishman in equal abhorrence.'⁸¹

At the core of leading Anglicans' perceptions of Indians was the widely held assumption of their barbarity and bloodlust. Edward Cressett

⁷⁸ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1764), 28.

⁸⁰ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1761), 47.

⁷⁹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1763), 13–14.

⁸¹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1772), pp. xxiv–xxv.

offered a summary description in his delivery of the annual sermon on the eve of the Seven Years War:

Amongst the Indians of North America there seems to be less sense of government, or law, or religion, than even amongst the nations of the South. They live most in the woods, in tribes, under chiefs who lead them to their huntings or skirmishes, of which they are fond: They have neither letters nor arts, further than to acquire the necessaries of life: They live without any notion of the true God or his laws, in a state of savage liberty; the liberty of beasts not men: and though some among them may be of better tempers and principles, and quicker apprehensions than others; yet they are generally characterized to be false, crafty and jealous; brave in suffering, but cowardly in engaging, implacable and cruel.⁸²

If the Indians were bound to fight at every opportunity, the only variable was with whom they would battle. Thus, during the Seven Years War the task was clear: convert the Indians or fight against them. In its wartime *Instructions from the Society... to their Missionaries in North America*, the SPG directed its agents to convert Indians for the interlinked spiritual and secular benefits: 'This good Work is not only pious and charitable, in the more important Views of Religion; but highly beneficial likewise in a civil View, as promoting the Security and Interest of the American Colonies; an Advantage, of which our Enemies are by no Means insensible, or negligent.'⁸³ At the height of the war in North America, Ellis called upon the society to renew its commitment to the Indians by making their conversion and care its top priority. After reviewing and lamenting British military setbacks, he declared that the evangelization of 'the heathen nations that border on those colonies may also be of real and great importance, and it ought to have a due share in our thoughts'.⁸⁴ Therefore, he continued, 'it will be now proper to consider it in the first place' of the society's aims.

British success in the mid-century conflicts also compelled the SPG to consider long-term solutions outside of the context of the Anglo-French rivalry. Although the SPG continued to fear lingering Catholicism and French influence in America, increasingly relevant was the future of Anglo-Indian relations without a French threat. The SPG leadership's response was to promote the 'civilizing' benefits of Anglican Christianity,

⁸² *SPG Annual Sermon* (1754), 17.

⁸³ Printed as an appendix in the *SPG Annual Sermon* (1756), 46.

⁸⁴ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1759), 4–5.

which, they argued, could transform the Indians into peaceable, loyal subjects. '[H]ow likewise can we better ensure and perpetuate to ourselves their affection, than by taking off the edge of their brutal ferocity,' argued Zachary Pearce, bishop of Bangor, 'by teaching them the mild and amiable doctrines of the gospel, and by laying before them the beauties of the moral virtues, as they are displayed to us in scripture?'⁸⁵

Calls in the annual sermons for a selective application of the civilizing process underlines their focus on temporal benefits. In short, most proponents expressed interest in converting only those neighbouring Indians who posed immediate threats. Once they were civilized into loyal subjects, they could act as a buffer against more distant, heathen Indians. Ellis explained in 1759, 'should the Americans [i.e. Indians] bordering on our settlements be, in time . . . civilized and truly converted to our religion . . . they would then, of course be more firmly attached to our natural interest'.⁸⁶ They 'would be a barrier, of service to our colonies against the assaults of the heathen savages who lie farther behind them,' he continued, 'and would help to extend and carry on our commerce with great advantage'. Realizing the secular appeal of his proposal, the bishop concluded that: 'As these effects must be very beneficial to the nation in general, many private persons may in some way or other be interested in them.' This line of argument was a familiar one in the 1760s, and continued well into the next decade. In justifying a continued missionary commitment to the Mohawk and their fellow Iroquois as late as 1772, the new bishop of Bangor explained that 'their martial spirit and bravery are such, as to render them a natural barrier to some of the principal British settlements, against the incursions of enemies, as well European as American'.⁸⁷

Given that bishops regularly complained about the vices of their own, supposedly civilized colonial constituents, their faith in the civilizing process seems at times poorly considered, if not naive. William Warburton's remarks in the 1766 annual sermon certainly fall into this category:

In a word, mortal enemies, ever addressed to ravage and desolate the extremities of our Colonies, we shall make them our cordial Friends, ready to embrace a Peace, not forced upon them by the terror of our arms, or feigned with the allurements of treacherous Presents, but immoveably [*sic*] established by gratitude and love, and further supported by the mutual advantages of honest commerce.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1763), 14.

⁸⁶ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1759), 31.

⁸⁷ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1772), p. xxiv.

⁸⁸ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1766), 24.

Part of the dilemma was that the SPG had neither a concrete plan for civilizing the Indians nor a clear consensus as to what such a process entailed. Even the basic issue of which should be pursued first, Christianity or civilization, was disputed. Frederick Cornwallis, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield and future archbishop of Canterbury, argued in 1756 that the British must stop trying to convert Indians as they were. First, missionaries must 'rescue them out of the wilderness' before imparting to them the complicated tenets of the gospels. 'For how can it be expected that the untutored mind of a poor Indian, should be capable of imbibing the Truths, or digesting the Precepts of the Gospel?' he asked.⁸⁹ Warburton concurred, noting that 'the Gospel, plain and simple as it is, and fitted in its nature for what it was designed to effect, requires an intellect above that of a Savage to apprehend'.⁹⁰ The only solution, he concluded, was to withhold the gospels' intricacies until the Indians were thought capable of comprehending them—after they had 'been first taught the *civil arts of life*'.⁹¹ Most bishops who addressed the topic in their sermons noted the importance of schools, but none delved into curriculum issues. Only Frederick Keppel considered the issue, and then only in a remote sense, in his sermon before the SPG when he advocated agriculture, and the sedentary lifestyle that accompanied it, as an important advance in the civilizing process, as it 'must reclaim them from their wild and roving disposition, and consequently afford them more time and tranquillity to consider the awful truths of the Gospel'.⁹²

Members of the SPG and the Church hierarchy universally assumed that the civilizing process afforded benefits to the Indians. In fact, in the annual sermons only Martin Benson in 1740 addressed the potentially destructive effects on Indian cultures, and that was only to dismiss any possible contrary arguments. He recognized that: 'Sometimes indeed we are told, they are very virtuous and good Men already, and that instructing them in Christianity will only be corrupting the Simplicity of their Morals', and he admitted that 'the Indians are free from several Vices, practiced in civiliz'd Nations and Countries, that call themselves Christians'.⁹³ However, he continued, their lack of vice was owed to lacking opportunity, rather than inherent morality:

But no wonder if they are guilty but little, or not at all, of what they have few or no Opportunities for: as Intemperance, Luxury, Avarice, and Ambition. They are

⁸⁹ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1756), 18–19.

⁹⁰ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1766), 17.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 18. ⁹² *SPG Annual Sermon* (1770), 16–17.

⁹³ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1740), 16.

innocent in these Respects, for the same Reason that Brutes are: Not because the opposite Virtues adorn them; for give them the Power, and we have Experience that they will shew but too fully that they want not the Will, to transgress in the utmost Degree.

For evidence of the benefits of civilization and Christianity, priests turned to their own ancient, heathen ancestors. Egerton declared that 'whoever will recur to history, and consider the lives and manners of the savages of America in general, must acknowledge, that he views a lively picture of the first Britons'.⁹⁴ He charged contemporary Britons to 'think with humility on the former condition of [their] own country,—with pity on those who are as yet unenlightened . . . and with a becoming gratitude of the efficacy of the gospel'. Moss similarly admonished his audience, comparing his message to that of Paul to the Jews in the early Christian church. Britons must not make the mistake of supposing that Christianity is reserved for them, he declared, and so must convert the gentiles of their day—the natives of the Americas and Africa.⁹⁵

The outbreak of the American War of Independence effectively halted most SPG operations in North America and ended long-term, pie-in-the-sky ambitions to create buffer states of civilized, Protestant Indians.⁹⁶ The often open support of the leadership of the Church of England for coercive policies and attempts to create American bishoprics, a move most colonists perceived as an assault on their autonomy, meant that its representatives in America were targets for rebel authorities and mobs. Many Anglicans in America, of course, openly supported American independence, particularly where the Church had been locally established, such as in Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey. The SPG's missionaries, however, received their salaries directly from England, were usually recent arrivals, and fully expected to return to England as their careers unfolded, and therefore seldom made permanent plans for a life in America. In consequence, most were presumed loyalist, whether they were really so or not, and were duly persecuted.

The war's spread and vacillating fortunes meant that tides of refugees ebbed and flowed from both sides, and by 1778 most of the SPG's

⁹⁴ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1763), 11.

⁹⁵ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1772), p. xi.

⁹⁶ For a comprehensive account of the Church of England in America during the war, see Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: The Colonial Church of England Clergy During the American Revolution* (London, 1999).

missionaries had fled their posts. Very few missionary reports reached London during the war, but those that did were dominated by complaints of abuses at the hands of the rebels, and of destitution.⁹⁷ Some missionaries, such as Samuel Cooke, who after returning from London in early 1777 found his parish occupied by American patriot forces, joined the British army as chaplains, but most fled or were imprisoned.⁹⁸ Isaac Browne wrote a moving letter to the SPG in March 1777 detailing the plundering of his New Jersey home and church, which he fled for the safety of New York; in the rush to escape the vengeful patriot mob he had left his family behind.⁹⁹ John Seymour, a missionary in Georgia, was imprisoned in 1779 by rebel forces. Although treated well by the officers, his situation plummeted once he was released. Upon returning to his parish, he discovered that rebel troops had occupied his house, turned the church into a hospital, and built barracks on his grounds. Moreover, his family, who had been stripped of their property, was destitute, and his children were either sick or dead. Unwelcome in the rebel-dominated town, he fled once again, this time taking refuge in the loyalist stronghold of St Augustine, where he sat out the war.¹⁰⁰

Activities among the Indians effectively ceased, as even the model mission to the Mohawk collapsed. The New York frontier was a particularly brutal theatre of war, in which divisions split colonists and Indians alike, and neighbours took up arms to slaughter one another. The Mohawk, led by active Anglican Joseph Brant, were largely unified in supporting their British allies, but they soon found themselves fighting other members of the Iroquois Confederacy. Nicholas Herkimer, a long-time frontier resident, imprisoned Stuart, the SPG's missionary to the Mohawk, soon after Herkimer's appointment to the presidency of the Tryon County Committee of Safety at the start of the war. Only as a result of the intervention of his close friend Brant, who with several hundred warriors surrounded Herkimer and his men and demanded the return of Stuart, was he released.

Accounts of the Anglican clergy's suffering in America peppered the British press coverage of the war, and reprinted commentary from American patriot newspapers left little doubt of the rebels' distaste for the Church of England's representatives. One widely reprinted letter called the clergy

⁹⁷ See e.g. USPG American Materials, Series B1, #259; Series fol. B6, 285, Series B24, fols. 149 and 247.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Series B24, fol. 149.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 56.

¹⁰⁰ Pascoe, *Classified Digest*, 29.

‘tools of the Court and pimps of the Administration’, who had ‘forgotten the Precepts of their great Master, the Prince of Peace’ and were ‘Slaves to Government, and Enemies to the Liberties of the People, [who] have addressed the Crown to enforce coercive and sanguinary Measures against Protestants and Freeman’.¹⁰¹

The SPG’s leadership responded to distress calls from its missionaries by organizing a charity drive for their relief, the mechanics of which are described above. During the war, charitable donations enabled the society to distribute over £4,000 to its 113 agents in America, which worked out as roughly the equivalent of two years’ salary.¹⁰² Although not a sum to be dismissed, the disbursement was limited and reflected the frustrated SPG hierarchy’s shift in commitment away from mainland North America. Funds distributed to the suffering clergy in America accounted for only about 25 per cent of the total raised, the rest being invested for future operations. Regular annual donations dwindled during the war, reaching an all-time low of £727. 7s. 6d. in 1779—less than 17 per cent of 1773’s takings. The leaders of the Church of England’s vocal onslaught on the rebels were criticized in the press by the equally vocal minority of American sympathizers, and were tacitly opposed by the larger number of Britons who were less vociferous in their support of the war effort.¹⁰³ As described in the following chapter, Britain’s employment of Indians against the colonists was deeply unpopular in Britain, and proposals for their use, such as the archbishop of York’s call in his 1777 sermon before the SPG for Indians to be used as scourges to punish the rebels, prompted widespread public criticism. After the war the SPG shrank its operations dramatically, eliminating all but twenty of its missionary posts by 1785. A decade later it supported less than half the number of missionaries it had done on the eve of the American War of Independence. Not until the SPG refocused its attention on Africa in the next century did it find levels of support and public enthusiasm that equalled, and ultimately exceeded, its eighteenth-century North American endeavours.

¹⁰¹ *Saint James’s Chronicle*, 6 Jan 1776.

¹⁰² SPG Papers, iv. fols. 378–9. The drive actually raised nearly five times the amount that ultimately was distributed to the missionaries in America, but the bulk of the funds were invested to increase the SPG’s future annual operating budgets.

¹⁰³ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1777).

PART IV

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American Indians and Britain's American War of Independence

When news of the outbreak of hostilities in Massachusetts reached Britain in May 1775, an anxious nation feverishly speculated about the style and consequences of another war in North America. Not surprisingly, past experiences factored heavily into British expectations, causing most Britons to draw two broad conclusions regarding the combat aspects of the upcoming conflict. The first was that the British military would crush the rebellion by Christmas. The second expectation was that, should the fighting last longer, the American Indians would play a decisive role in its outcome, just as they had in previous wars. As a reader of the *London Chronicle* remarked in September 1775: 'I have sent you the following particular account of the savages of Canada . . . because indubitably the fate of the American disturbance is to be finally decided by the interposition of the ancient inhabitants of that continent.'¹

The British were wrong on both counts. The prediction that the war would end favourably for the Crown in a matter of months is an error that has been celebrated for over two centuries. The second misconception, although largely forgotten, is nevertheless worthy of investigation as a means to better understand British expectations and responses to the conflict. The insignificance of Indian participation in the military outcome of the war was partly the consequence of the dwindling Indian population, but largely because this conflict was one of the rare instances in which Indians were not the major protagonists. Nevertheless, their participation proved to be one of the most controversial aspects of the war—both in America, where the colonists saw fit to include this grievance in

¹ *London Chronicle*, 16 Sept. 1775.

the Declaration of Independence, and in Britain, where pundits on both sides railed against the inclusion of 'savages' in a domestic affair. The study of the American War of Independence has long since ceased to be confined to an examination of the outcome, as the experience itself has proved to have been a forge in which identities across the Atlantic world were dismembered, reconstructed, and reflected upon. At this level, Indian participation was crucial.

As separate as public and government discussions could be in this period, they shared the perception of Indians as terrifying weapons. The debate in Britain was not over the nature or disposition of the American Indians, as their savagery was almost universally agreed upon, but instead about whether or not such a brutal instrument should and could be deployed against the colonists. The government's increasing willingness to use Indian allies reflects its declining confidence that victory could be easily won, and the extent to which it was prepared to go in order to win.

By contrast, the virtually universal public antipathy towards the use of Indians reveals the limits beyond which the nation was not prepared to go to prosecute a conflict that it viewed as essentially a civil war. Eliga Gould has persuasively argued that British experiences during the Seven Years War forged a popular perception that colonists were fellow nationals, and the public discussion surrounding the use of Indians during the American War of Independence certainly supports this viewpoint.² However, whereas Gould has asserted that British reluctance to relinquish a shared, national identity with the colonists was at the heart of Britons' readiness to endure a protracted war in America aimed at forcibly keeping those colonists in the relationship, the argument made here is that this perception of a shared national identity also compelled calls for a tempered waging of that war. Britons afforded more concern to colonists who had rejected a British identity than to those non-whites who sacrificed themselves as allies, and the most reliable Indian ally was never considered on a par with the most loathsome rebel colonist.

Studying the British public discussion also provides a means through which to explain the more subtle aspects of public opinion that have been lost in the largely 'for or against' analyses. Despite significant support for American protesters in the 1760s and some continued support for the

² Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Cultures in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 2000).

American patriots after 1776, the vast majority of Britons accepted the government's case for war.³ However, this acceptance was given grudgingly. There was no crusading atmosphere echoing the popular fervour of the wars against France, or such as could be found in some of the rebel enclaves of North America. To a great extent, as Stephen Conway has revealed, opposition was linked both at the high political and popular levels to the general discontent over mobilization.⁴ This was partly because the strains of mobilization acutely affected the daily lives of Britons, but also because complaining against mobilization was safe—being neither treasonous nor likely to agitate the majority of Britons who accepted the necessity of the war. It was this rhetoric that the Rockingham whigs manipulated to rally independent backbenchers to bring down the North ministry in 1782 and start the negotiations for an end to the war. But opposition was not entirely practical in content, nor was it always oppositional in its conclusions. There was, in fact, something far more hesitant, underlying, and subtle transpiring, that did not take the form of bold opposition. Perhaps best described as 'tentative', the widespread reluctance to wage war and the remorse with which it was pursued, tempered aggressive actions with lukewarm enthusiasm and numerous reservations and qualifications. The study of attitudes towards Indians and their role in the war helps to recapture this element of the public mood.

THE VIEW FROM WHITEHALL

In terms of British policy towards the American Indians, the American War of Independence essentially marked a return to the patterns of the Seven Years War. Once again Britain's primary aim was to obtain allies to act either independently against Britain's enemies or as auxiliaries in British forces. Indians did not constitute as crucial a variable in the American War of Independence as they had two decades earlier, but their participation was nevertheless significant. Britons, both in and 'out of

³ For the most comprehensive summaries of the historiography of British reactions to the American War of Independence, see James E. Bradley, 'The British Public and the American War of Independence: Ideology, Interest and Opinion', in H. T. Dickson (ed.), *Britain and the American War of Independence* (London, 1998), 124–53.

⁴ Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the American War* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 4.

doors', were more aware of Indians. This led to more directives from Whitehall regarding Indians than in the previous wars, as well as a greater mindfulness of the horrors of wilderness warfare. Nevertheless, the North administration's expressions of moral apprehension were few in comparison to the public uproar. No concern was expressed in the ministry over the massacres Indian war parties might inflict on frontier civilians, or about the white settlers' likely retaliation against Indian communities. Ministers appear to have been more concerned with suppressing the rebels as swiftly as possible while avoiding the negative publicity such aggressive policies might generate. In short, Indians were again called upon to be enforcers of Britain's political will, but they were a more politicized variable than they had been two decades before. Unlike during the Seven Years War, the public gagged at the thought of deploying Indians against frontier communities; the victims, after all, would be Britain's own colonists, rather than the French. The government, for its part, expressed no such squeamishness, but it nevertheless appears to have been somewhat sensitive to public sentiment on the matter.

Ministers and commanders recognized Indians as valuable allies whose role in the Seven Years War had been paramount. Worries that the rebelling American colonists might win teetering Indians to their cause prompted the British to act swiftly and decisively. The British leadership exploited the advantages that came with having an established Indian affairs department and cheaper manufactured goods for gifts, to assemble an impressive string of alliances with numerous Indian nations, as well as with substantial factions within nations.⁵ The Indians' tendency to hold the colonists responsible for encroachment and illicit trading practices also made Britain a more appealing partner. Essential to recognize is that Britain had little official interest in the plight of its Indian allies. Britain went to war to douse the rebellion, not to alleviate the pressures on Indians lands or the abuses of traders. The little regard British ministers and commanders paid to Indians is perhaps best revealed in Britain's total abandonment of them in the Peace of Paris in 1783. Like the French two decades earlier, Britain made no official effort to secure any sort of terms for its Indian allies. The treaty ceded Indian lands in the

⁵ On the British advantages over the Americans in terms of manufactured goods as presents, see Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY, 1972), 91–2.

interior without consultation or consent, and left the Indians entirely exposed to the full retribution of the citizens of the new United States of America.⁶

The American War of Independence was similar to the Seven Years War in terms of efforts made to organize the Indians. Indians' roles as independent threats to British interests and markets for trade were de-emphasized in governing circles in favour of their potential roles in British military mobilization. Although Britain was more successful in this second recruiting attempt, ministers once again left agents in America to implement general directives as they saw fit. This return to reliance upon on-the-ground authority was partly because the need for swift orders in wartime made the difficulties associated with London's distance all the more apparent. The primary reason, however, was that North's wartime ministry was ill-equipped to handle Indian affairs. Although ministers in general were undoubtedly more broadly aware of general Indian customs and cultures than their predecessors during the Seven Years War, the North administration lacked a secretary of state whose knowledge and interest in Indian affairs was comparable to that of Halifax, Shelburne, or Hillsborough. Lord George Germain, who replaced the more docile Dartmouth as secretary of state for the American Department in 1775, was a military man chosen specifically because he was believed to be more capable than his peacetime predecessor of directing the anticipated war.⁷ In consequence, military matters, which included Indian affairs, were largely left to him. However, although Germain was a veteran of the Seven Years War, he had served on the European continent, not in the American wilderness. Therefore, he lacked the familiarity with America that many of the British commanders who would serve there possessed. In consequence, he was far better at issuing directives to the large armies campaigning to capture colonial towns than at directing wilderness warfare.

Seeking Indian allies was widely recognized to be one of many options available to the British, and Germain encountered no apparent resistance to employing them from within the North ministry. As had been the case since the Seven Years War, fellow ministers steered well clear of Indian

⁶ Colin Calloway, *Crown and the Calumet: British Indian Relations, 1783–1815* (Norman, Okla., 1987), 5–11.

⁷ P. D. G. Thomas, *Tea Party to Independence: The Third Phase of the American Revolution, 1773–1776* (Oxford, 1991), 263.

affairs, and in general left tactical details up to him.⁸ Germain, in turn, relied on the wisdom of the superintendents and their deputies more than had any other minister responsible for Indian affairs since the Seven Years War. John Stuart and Guy Johnson, the nephew and heir of the recently deceased Sir William Johnson, enjoyed enormous leeway in enticing and organizing Indians, receiving only general directives from Germain that lacked the detail found in his predecessors' correspondence. The superintendents' budgets rose enormously as Germain offered almost unlimited supplies manufactures for distribution as gifts.⁹

The British made efforts to incorporate the Indians from the start. Shortly after hostilities broke out at Lexington and Concord, Thomas Gage, the commander of British forces in America, sent a report to Dartmouth noting that Indians would be essential to his proposed 25,000-man force. Furthermore, he asserted, American extension of the war to Quebec and the frontier 'will Justify General Carleton [the military governor of Quebec] to raise both Canadians and Indians to attack them in his turn'. Gage was careful to claim that the Americans had set the precedent for soliciting Indian support, declaring: 'we need not be tender of calling upon the Savages, as the Rebels have shewn us the Example by bringing down as many Indians down against us here as they could collect.'¹⁰ Lord Admiral Howe three months later, drawing on the suggestions of his brother Sir William (who was already serving in America and would soon replace Gage), advocated an armed force to secure Canada that would mix regulars, provincial irregulars, and Indians in the style of the Seven Years War.¹¹

British solicitation of Indian support was motivated partly by worries over American agents beating them to the punch, but largely by the expectation that Indians would significantly aid British operations. In his letter instructing General John Burgoyne to gather Indian auxiliaries before embarking on his campaign through Canada and New York, Germain warned that, although 'I hope every Precaution has been taken to secure the Indians to our Interest . . . the Congress is exerting all their influence to debauch them from you, presents are preparing, Deputies

⁸ Comments on American Indians during this period are virtually absent from the papers of other ministers and the king.

⁹ PRO, CO 5/76, fol. 381: Gage to Stuart, 12 Sept. 1775.

¹⁰ Gage to Dartmouth, 12 June 1775, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage to the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775*, ed. Clarence Edwin Carter (New Haven, 1931), i. 404.

¹¹ WLCL, George Germain MS, vol. 3: Lord Howe to Germain, 25 Sept. 1775.

appointing and all arts practised to gain their affections'.¹² Limited concern for the Indians' situation or safety, and cold regard for them as military tools, is perhaps best demonstrated by Germain's delight in learning that a number of rebelling colonies had offered cash rewards for Indian scalps. This, he proclaimed, was sure to assist British recruiting efforts among the Indians:

The Rebel governments in the former Province have, I also learn, not only offered considerable rewards for the scalps of those Indians [Cherokee], but declared their Children of a certain age, who may be taken Prisoners, the Slaves of the Captors; a Measure which I am sure must inflame the enmity of that nation to the highest pitch against them, and excite the resentment of all other Indians in so great a degree, that I cannot doubt of your being able, under such advantageous circumstances to engage them in a general Confederacy against the Rebels . . .¹³

Potential Indian losses aroused little visible compassion in Germain.

Despite his interest in squashing the rebellion with force, Germain was nonetheless initially cautious—aware that calling upon Indians to attack the American settlements risked alienating undecided and loyalist American colonists. Writing in December 1776 to the governor of East Florida, Germain praised him and Stuart for the efforts they had 'so successfully taken to prevent a defection of the Creeks'. But, Germain instructed, the Indians should only be used in proportion to the rebels' endeavours: 'At the same time the making those savages Parties in the present unhappy Dispute is a measure of a very delicate nature, and perhaps ought not to be pressed forward, but in proportion as it may be necessary to counteract any Steps of the like tendency, which may be taken by the Rebels.'¹⁴ For those persons in Britain most familiar with Indian warfare, the concept of releasing Indians on the backcountry was not easily stomachable. Indian cruelty was certainly etched into the minds of many British soldiers who had observed them. Advice even from an American loyalist, addressed to Germain, endorsed the benefits of menacing the south with reports of slave revolts and Indian attacks, but recommended that these remain threats only:

How far it may be prudent to keep their Fears perpetually awake the tensions of having their slaves armed against Them, or their savage neighbours let loose on

¹² Germain MS, vol. 5: Germain to Burgoyne, 23 Aug. 1776. Germain also remarked to Burgoyne on the importance of the Indians to any conflict in Canada, on 28 Mar. 1776, *ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, Germain to Stuart, 6 Nov. 1776.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 4: Germain to Patrick Tonlyn, 23 Dec. 1775.

their Frontiers, Circumstances must determine; the actually embodying of them is, however, an Expedient which, were Humanity out of the Question, sound Policy would reprobate. They resemble the Elephants of the Armies of old: they may, it is true, exceedingly annoy your Enemy, but you have no security that, even in the moment of victory, They will not turn on yourselves.¹⁵

Such hesitation was cast aside when the American war effort revealed itself as formidable. In March 1776 Germain instructed Sir William Howe to secure the support of the Iroquois, remarking that their strategic significance to future campaigns 'is a Consideration of no small Importance'.¹⁶ In a spirit closely resembling that of his predecessors in the Seven Years War, Germain gave very little explicit advice as to how this might be achieved, but noted that Guy Johnson, who was then in England, was being sent to assume 'the same Commission and Appointments as were given to Sir William Johnson in 1756 and he is in all respects made subject to your Direction and Control'.¹⁷ The following September Germain wrote to Stuart indicating that the policy of merely tit-for-tat recruitment of Indians should end if Howe were able to extend his operations to the southern colonies:

Should General Howe find himself in a Condition to extend his Operation to the Southern Colonies in the Winter, the Assistance of the Indians will be of the utmost Consequence, and you will no doubt receive timely Orders from the Generals to engage as large a Number as possible for that purpose: You will therefore have that Service in view in all your Transactions with those People . . .¹⁸

Two months later Germain informed Howe that 'the great Importance of engaging the Southern Indians in Our Interest has not escaped His Majesty's Attention'.¹⁹ Enclosing copies of the above instructions to Stuart, Germain noted that the southern Indians would soon be at Howe's disposal for 'seconding any Operation you may think fit to direct against those Colonies'. Further indicating that the control of Indian affairs rested primarily with officials in America, Germain wrote to Stuart the same day that a 'very liberal supply of Goods, for Presents to the

¹⁵ Germain MS, vol. 5: Jonah Bouchan to Germain, 27 Nov. 1775.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 4: Germain to Sir William Howe, 20 Mar. 1776.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 5: Germain to Howe, 20 Mar. 1776.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Germain to Stuart, 5 Sept. 1776.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Germain to Howe, 6 Nov. 1776.

Indians' had been sent for his disposal, but specific deployment orders would need to come from Howe.²⁰

Following the Declaration of Independence, Germain was willing to take Indian involvement a step further. He complained to Burgoyne in August 1776 that 'the Indians report that Had General Carleton permitted them to act last year, Canada would not have been in the hands of the Rebels but He kept them so long idle, that they were resolved to return Home'.²¹ The following spring Germain chastised Carleton for preventing the Indians who had gathered at Detroit from attacking the Americans, and then ordered him to release them on the frontier.²² All available Indians were to attack the backcountries of Virginia and Pennsylvania with a view to 'making a diversion' in the next campaign and forcing the already overstretched American army to protect the frontier. Full exploitation of American Indian military capacity, Germain explained, had the king's approval and was justified by the need to achieve victory:

it is His Majesty's resolution that the most vigorous Efforts should be made and every means employed that Providence has put into His Majesty's Hands for crushing the Rebellion and restoring the Constitution, it is the King's Command that you should direct Lieutenant Governor Hamilton to assemble as many of the Indians of His District as he conveniently can . . . in making a Diversion and exciting an alarm upon the Frontiers of Virginia and Pemsylvania [*sic*].

Writing to Howe a few weeks later, Germain first explicitly informed him that the king was aware of actions being taken to raise Indians for attacks on the frontier, then implicitly released Howe from any previous restrictions he had been given regarding their employment. 'And I am now to acquaint you it is the King's Pleasure', wrote Germain, 'that you make use of the friendly Indians in such a manner as may be most serviceable in the Prosecution of the War.'²³

American Indians were less instrumental in military strategy than in previous conflicts in North America, but colonial American familiarity with Indian warfare made the fear of Indian raids a useful tool—or so the British leadership thought. Germain certainly was enticed by the

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Germain to Stuart, 6 Nov. 1776.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Germain to Burgoyne, 26 Aug. 1776.

²² *Ibid.*, Germain to Carleton, 26 Mar. 1777.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 6: Germain to Howe, 19 Apr. 1777.

potential of terror and incorporated it into his instructions, but, unlike most advocates, he believed that aggressive raids were the way forward. In a letter to Stuart in April 1777, Germain claimed the greatest advantage Indian raids on the frontier would bring was general panic, as '[t]he Distress and Alarm so general an Attack upon the Frontiers of the Southern Provinces must occasion cannot fail of greatly assisting' Howe's operations in the north.²⁴ Similarly in his earlier instructions to Burgoyne to obtain Indian allies for use in his campaigns from Canada into New York, Germain had noted that Indians offered the added bonus of reminding the backcountry rebels of the terrors they had suffered in the last war and frightening them into obedience. 'The Dread the People of New England have of a War with the Savages', he explained, 'proves the Expediency of our holding that Scourge over them.'²⁵ Although later professing to have opposed Germain's sentiments, Burgoyne issued a proclamation during the course of his campaign on 29 June 1777 which greatly exaggerated the strength of the several hundred Indians in his command and threatened to release them upon the colonists.²⁶ Unfortunately for the British war effort, however, the Americans managed to spin the propaganda against the British and rally colonists to the defence of the frontier. The colonists were frightened, not into submission, but into continued defiance. An enlarged American army forced Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in October 1777.

Although American Indians continued to play a role in the conflict, their place in official transatlantic instructions and discussions was greatly reduced after Saratoga. Germain survived the scathing public attacks launched by the parliamentary opposition in 1778 over Burgoyne's Indian debacle, yet, as will be argued, they demonstrated how controversial the use of Indians was even among the most ardent supporters of the war.

²⁴ Germain MS, Germain to Stuart, 2 Apr. 1777.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 5: Germain to Burgoyne, 23 Aug. 1776.

²⁶ *London Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1777. On Burgoyne's claims that he did not wish to use Indians but was forced to by the orders of Germain, see the *Saint James's Chronicle*, 19 Oct. 1776, and his examination in the House of Commons in May 1778 as carried by the majority of the London dailies as well as the provincial papers, such as the *Ipswich Journal*, 30 May and 6 June, *Bath Chronicle*, 4 June 1776; Digby, a lieutenant under Burgoyne's command, professed the general's reluctance to solicit Indian assistance in his entry for 24 July 1777: William Digby, *The British Invasions from the North: The Campaigns of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne, from Canada, 1776–1777, with the Journal of Lieut. William Digby, of the 53rd, or Shropshire Regiment of Foot*, ed. James Phinney Baxter (Albany, NY, 1887), 237–8.

Burgoyne for his part used Germain's instructions for soliciting Indian support to exonerate himself in the eyes of the British public; and thereafter Germain approached Indian affairs more cautiously. The entry of the French into the war also led to greater emphasis being placed on campaigns in the more populated portions of the colonies, where large contingents of Indians were not as essential. In consequence, explicit orders and directives regarding Indian affairs are virtually absent from Germain's official correspondence after 1778. Although Britain would not slight its Indian allies until 1783, and irregular Indian warfare in the interior and along the frontier continued, the ministry had all but washed its hands of Indian affairs by the end of 1778.

THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The vast majority of Britons accepted the necessity of prosecuting the war in America, but as the following examination of the national outcry over the use of Indians reveals, such support was qualified. Hard-and-fast categories that describe which groups supported and opposed the prosecution of the war are impossible to create. This was, after all, a war in which the rebel commander was popular and respected on both sides of the Atlantic.²⁷ Writing in an anxious Liverpool atmosphere, where the 'coffee houses are now crowded waiting to hear the resolves of Parliament relative to the American affairs', the merchant Charles Goore declared that his stance against the American patriots was in spite of his financial interests: 'I have upwards of £5000 amongst the Virginians, yet I hope the British Government will not submit to their arbitrary demands. Submit now and always submit.'²⁸ Yet Samuel Curwen, a Massachusetts loyalist who had lost everything at the hands of American patriots and had become a refugee in England, responded mournfully in August 1777 to news that the British army might unleash its Indian allies on the New York frontier, woefully remarking that, 'should that event [take place] may it please God to preserve my poor Country from the desolating judgements of a merciless savage Indian war'.²⁹

²⁷ Troy Bickham, 'Sympathizing with Sedition? The Popular Image of George Washington in Britain During the American War for Independence', *WMQ* 59 (2002), 102–22.

²⁸ WLCL, Charles Goore Letterbook, Goore to Sir William Meredith, 25 Jan. 1775.

²⁹ Entry for 20 Aug. 1777, *The Journal of Samuel Curwen, Loyalist*, ed. Andrew Olivers (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), i. 394.

As the nation's medium for news and debate, the newspaper and periodical press offers the best source material with which to recapture and assess the public discussion that raged in Britain during the American War of Independence. The press became more vital than ever as the war cut normal lines of private communication, to the extent that even American loyalist exiles had to rely heavily on newspapers for updates on American affairs.³⁰ Horace Walpole, despite his elaborate and celebrated web of correspondents, relied primarily upon newspapers for American news, and even the British ambassador to Florence, who relied upon him for information, was reduced to reading Walpole's digests and clippings from the London papers.³¹ Circulation reflected this, reaching an all-time high despite increases in the stamp duty, and dropping sharply at the conflict's end.³² By 1775 the London dailies were churning out more than 40,000 copies per day, and by 1783 annual national circulation peaked at 15.3 million copies—a number reached despite government attempts to reduce circulation through heavy taxation.³³ Moreover, restrictions on parliamentary reporting largely disappeared in 1773, allowing newspapers to keep the nation up-to-date on the latest government transactions. No longer could heavily delayed reporting and thinly veiled codes, such as Samuel Johnson's 'reports from the Senate of Lilliput', confuse or alienate readers. Newspapers such as William Woodfall's *Morning Chronicle* even made such reporting their niche. The vigorous coverage that followed made the American War of Independence the first event in which the government's handling of a controversial conflict of national importance was fully aired before an eager audience.

Indian participation was among the most publicly detested aspects of the war in Britain. As Chapters 1 and 2 have explained, the Seven Years War and its aftermath had left the public with the image of the Indian as a relentless martial figure. The terrifying imagery of wilderness warfare still haunted the British imagination, undoubtedly plaguing the dreams of

³⁰ For examples of Americans gathering in coffee-houses to read newspapers in different parts of Britain, see *ibid.* i. 199–200, 417, 443, 511, and ii. 566, 570, 596, and 695.

³¹ Walpole to Horace Mann, 18 Sept. 1774, in *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis *et al.* (London, 1937–83), xxiv. 38.

³² Dora Mae Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution* (New Haven, 1930), 7.

³³ Solomon Lutnick, *The American War of Independence and the British Press, 1775–1783* (Columbia, Miss., 1967), 2; Dora Mae Clark, *British Opinion and the American War of Independence* (New Haven, 1930), 7; Arthur Aspinall, 'Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), 201–32.

veterans and readers alike. In the popular 1776 ballad 'Tears of the Footguards', which criticized the officers of the royal household regiments who had resigned their commissions when faced with service in America, the ability of Indians to instil terror in British troops is made clear:

Protectress, Patroness of lilly Hands,
O interfere, and save me from those Lands
Where savage *Indians* thirst for human Blood,
And make Mankind their daily choicest Food.
O hear thy gentle Ensign's suppliant Strain,
I feel the Tomohawk within my Brain;
O spare me, modern *Venus*, hear my Pray'r,
And make my Terrors thy peculiar Care!
I can't support this bloody, civil Strife,
The very War-Hoops will destroy my life.³⁴

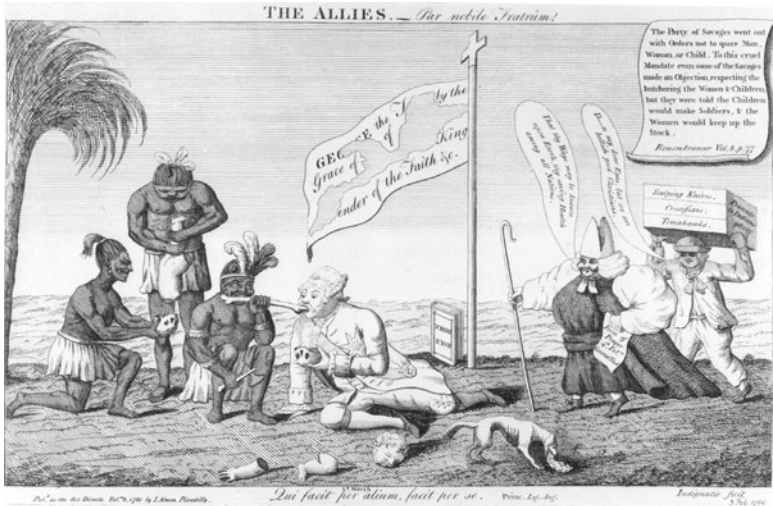
The press reinforced popular perceptions of Indian brutality and martial prowess throughout the war. As the *Ipswich Journal* reminded readers when it printed a supposed translation of an Indian war song in January 1778, mercilessness and murder went hand-in-hand with Indian warfare, and revenge and bloodlust, not temperance and logic, were believed to be at the very heart of Indian cultures:

The war-song above-mentioned, is usually recited by the Indians tribes previous to an engagement, and seems dictated by the most unrelenting spirit of revenge. The general burthen of it is as follows: 'I go to war to revenge the death of my brothers; I shall kill; I shall exterminate; I shall burn my enemies; I shall bring away slaves; I shall devour their heart, dry their flesh, drink their blood; I shall tear off their scalps, and make cups of their skulls.'³⁵

Indians were portrayed as independent predators rather than auxiliaries, and as fighters who targeted civilians, the weak, and the wounded. And just as they did not discriminate between civilian and combatant, so they were not thought capable of distinguishing between Briton, loyalist, and rebel. As the *Scots Magazine* remarked in 1779, their thirst for blood was unquenchable, and their palates were indiscriminate: 'their object and design in all wars, was not to fight, but to murder; not to conquer but to destroy: in a word . . . their service was uncertain, their rapacity insatiate,

³⁴ *The Tears of the Foot Guards, Upon Their Departure for America: Written by an Ensign of the Provincial Army*, 2nd edn. (London, 1776), 6.

³⁵ *Ipswich Journal*, 3 Jan. 1778.



7.1. *The Allies* (London, 1780), *Westminster Magazine*, 3 Feb. 1781. © Copyright of the Trustees of the British Museum. The print features Lord North and American Indians feasting on the flesh and blood of dismembered American colonists, while supplies of scalping knives and tomahawks are brought over from Britain. The sight causes the watching dog to vomit. William Markham, archbishop of York, is delivering crates of tomahawks, scalping knives, and crucifixes to aid the Indian allies.

their faith ever doubtful, and their action cruel and barbarous.³⁶ This made them the cruellest instruments of war, tarnishing civilized warfare and bringing shame to the British nation. As a poem written at the close of the conflict asserted, the inclusion of Indians was a bloody stain on the nation's history:

Her [Britannia's] name struck terror ev'n in barren soils,
And Indians Trembled when Britannia frown'd;
But now, even savages partake our spoils,
And England's annals with disgraces crown'd.³⁷

Although general perceptions of Indians had not changed since the Seven Years War, attitudes towards employing them in war had altered

³⁶ *Scots Magazine* (Apr. 1779), 179.

³⁷ *The Triumph of Liberty and Peace with America* (London, 1782), 15–16.



7.2. 'Shelb—n's Sacrifice' (London, 1783). © Copyright of the Trustees of the British Museum. This print is a typical representation of how Indians were used as universal symbols of savage cruelty. Here the artist shames the American patriots for their mistreatment of loyalists by depicting them as ravaging Indians. Shelburne (second figure standing from the right) too is ridiculed for pursuing a peace settlement that has allowed fellow Britons to suffer such abuses. The scene is so gruesome that even a butcher, supposedly accustomed to slaughter and gore, weeps.

remarkably now that the enemy consisted of fellow British subjects. During the Seven Years War, the press had made heroes of men such as William Johnson and Robert Rogers, whose abilities to amass Indian allies and fight like them against enemy French and Indians were widely celebrated. Their brutal methods were not tempered in press accounts, which included tales of scalping, cannibalism, and killing non-combatants. Indians who sided with the British, such as the Mohawk leader Hendrick, whose death at the Battle of Lake George in 1755 was mourned in the British press, were celebrated as worthy allies.³⁸ The change was not in the way the war was

³⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Nov. 1755), 519. This account of the battle and Hendrick's death appeared throughout the British press.

fought, because there were plenty of 'white Indians' and Indians fighting in the service of Britain during the American War of Independence. Johnson's heirs allied with those of Hendrick to lead attacks on New York patriots, and new ranger companies were formed under such leaders as John Butler and John Simcoe. Nor had the British penchant for cruelty towards its foreign adversaries declined. Instead, it seems that most Britons were singularly reluctant to visit the horrors of Indian warfare upon their American cousins. Such lack of enthusiasm underlines the extent to which the British had accepted the American colonists as fellow nationals by the time of the American War of Independence, as well as the resilience of these sentiments even in times of great discord, when the fellow nationals wanted to be British subjects no longer.

The subject of Indian involvement in colonial affairs was controversial even before the war began. 'Lord Dunmore's War' between the Shawnee and Virginians in the summer of 1774 was closely covered in the British press, ensuring that images of the brutality of Indian warfare were fresh in readers' minds. As a result, reports regarding early British efforts to secure Indian allies for a possible war with its own colonists were mixed with graphic descriptions of massacred frontier families and tortured captured soldiers. The *London Magazine* carried a lengthy piece in its April and May 1775 editions entitled 'An Account of the North Indians Barbarity to their Captives, and their Manner of devoting them to Death.' Claims from colonists that Whitehall was financing Indian war-parties soon surfaced in Britain and found their way into print in anti-ministerial London newspapers.³⁹ The *London Packet* remarked that 'the great military skill shewn by the Indians in their last battle with the people of Virginia convinces all America that they have an assistance of a very unnatural nature; and since the language of the Court is, that they hope the Indians will scalp the greatest part of them, it is easily to be discovered from what quarter they draw their new succour'.⁴⁰ The *Saint James's Chronicle* concurred, declaring that the 'Courtiers rejoice at this War hoping, it may be a Means to subdue the Spirit of the Colonies'.⁴¹

When war between Britain and the American colonists erupted the press closely followed Indian activities, but portrayed them as an option

³⁹ For examples, see *London Chronicle*, 1 Sept. 1774; *London Packet*, 11 Jan. 1775; *Saint James's Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1775.

⁴⁰ *London Packet*, 13 Jan. 1775.

⁴¹ *Saint James's Chronicle*, 15 Jan. 1775.

best left alone. As the politically restrained *Gentleman's Magazine* observed in September 1775, 'nor is it easy perhaps to fathom the real intentions of a people [the Indians] who probably would be glad to espouse the strongest side. . . . Introducing them upon the stage of action for the purpose of butchering our fellow-subjects, let which side soever avail themselves of their assistance, is equally impolitic and anti-christian.'⁴² The Indians' perspectives were almost never taken into account.⁴³ Public sympathy for their precarious situations did not emerge, nor did readers admire the desire of many Indian communities to remain neutral. Even the swiftness with which some of the Indian tribes, many of whom had been allied to the Crown for generations, rallied to the British side was met with disgust in the press. According to the British perspective, loyalty merely went to the highest bidder. A widely reprinted extract from the *Annual Register* declared: 'The Indians, ever light in act and faith, greedy for presents, and eager for spoil, were not [with] difficulty induced, by a proper application of the one, and the hope of the other, concurring with their own natural disposition, to forget the treaties which they had lately confirmed with the colonists, and to engage in the design.'⁴⁴

The sincerity of British misgivings about Indian participation is further revealed when compared to other voiced complaints regarding the war. Propaganda was rife in Britain throughout the conflict, as opposition factions took advantage of every opportunity to humiliate the government; however, complaints about Indians did not wax and wane according to the general feeling about the war. The inclusion of Indians in the British war effort was equally unpopular before and after each of the major events. In fact, the lament over using Indians was one of the few themes that both was expressed across the public political spectrum and remained relatively unchanged for the duration of the war. The most popular newspapers and magazines, such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the

⁴² *Gentleman's Magazine* (Sept. 1775), 446. Early British efforts to secure Indian allies first appeared in 1774. For examples, see *London Chronicle*, 5 and 9 Aug., and *Public Advertiser*, 24 Aug. Reports increased considerably in 1775. For examples, see *Ipswich Journal*, 7 Jan. and 1 July; *Saint James's Chronicle*, 12 Aug. and 7 Aug.; *London Packet*, 22 Sept.; *Gentleman's Magazine* (Oct.), 495.

⁴³ One notable exception appeared in the *London Chronicle* on 20 June 1776 in the form of a lengthy supposed 'Old Indian's Speech to his Countrymen'. He complains of white intrusions on Indian lands and his pleasure at seeing the Europeans kill one another. The article was not widely reprinted and provoked no further comment in the press.

⁴⁴ *Scots Magazine* (Dec. 1778), 648.

London Chronicle, which often followed a difficult line between neutrality and support for coercion in order to secure their large readerships, staunchly opposed the use of Indians. Even after France's entry had turned most of the nation's attention away from the North American theatre, the *Gentleman's Magazine* carried a brutal account of Indian warfare with the intention of exhibiting 'a striking instance of the ferocity of the Indian savages when employed in the service of civilised nations'.⁴⁵ The lengthy account was that of the 'massacre of the English garrison of Fort William Henry, in 1757', selectively extracted from Jonathan Carver's *Travels through the Interior*. The passage offers vivid descriptions of babies being dashed against rocks, scalped women and children, and Indian savages who 'drank the blood of their victims as it flowed warm from their fatal wounds'.

The genuineness of objections to Indian involvement is further underlined when they are compared to reactions to the 30,000 German troops hired to quell the rebellion. Although in the Declaration of Independence Congress linked the complaint about Indians with opposition to Britain's use of German auxiliaries, the British do not seem to have accepted the comparison. Criticism about German troops flared up for a short period, but such complaints were clearly partisan attacks that were not embraced by the wider press audiences. Stories of German brutality or declarations that the nation was shamed by hiring foreigners were rarely printed outside the heavily political London press. Moreover, they disappeared altogether after 1776, when it became apparent that even with foreign assistance Britain might lose the war—a realization that did not, by contrast, prompt changes in British views of Indians. Besides, any atrocities committed by Germans troops, with whose activities the British as a whole had long been familiar, had to fall within the realm of believability to score points in the press. The British knew that the Germans could get out of hand—just like their own regulars—but stories of Indian brutality were restricted only by the extremities reached by the gruesome images

⁴⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine* (Feb. 1780), 69–72. Although the *Gentleman's Magazine* does not give credit to Jonathan Carver, the selective extract is taken directly from his travel account, which otherwise is a fairly sympathetic treatment of Indians. See Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America, in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768* (London, 1778), 312–29. Ian Steele has provided an excellent examination of the episode, which significantly reduces the death toll and explains the sequence of events, in his *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the Massacre* (Oxford, 1990).

that had haunted Britons' nightmares since the 1750s.⁴⁶ In the context of the rules of war, the British and German soldiers were considered to have much in common when compared to the Indians. As the *Gazetteer* declared in December 1777:

What a dreadful mode of carrying on war is this, and calculated to gratify the insatiable revenge of those who direct such nefarious measures, but which are prohibited by the laws of every civilized nation throughout the world!—What English and Hessians must not in honour do, is left to be perpetrated by Savages, who are more excusable in the sight of Heaven, than those who issue such sanguinary orders, or connive them at all.⁴⁷

British employment of black Africans, both free and enslaved, for combat purposes met with comparatively little discussion in Britain. This is not to suggest that they played an unimportant role in the American War of Independence, because detailed studies have amply demonstrated their participation at a variety of levels, both combat and non-combat, on both sides.⁴⁸ However, their contributions provoked a very limited response. Neither the opposition nor the supporters of the North administration made much use of African slavery to enhance their position in the public arena. The opposition press did not utilize it to attack the ministry in a way even remotely comparable to its practice in the cases of foreign troops and American Indians, nor did the opposition in parliament appear to have given it much attention during debates.⁴⁹

The absence of a significant discussion was largely the result of neither side being able to make much political capital out of the issue, mostly from the lack of a British consensus when it came to slavery. If opponents of the North administration and pro-Americans denounced the horrors of releasing slaves upon their masters, proponents of coercion could reply

⁴⁶ Thousands of German troops had been stationed in Britain as recently as the Seven Years War, and Hanoverian troops, who recognized George III as their Elector, had garrisoned various British posts since the Hanoverian ascent to the English throne in 1714.

⁴⁷ *Gazetteer*, 16 Dec. 1777.

⁴⁸ See esp. Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, rev. edn. (Amherst, 1989); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1961); Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Oxford, 1972); Peter Voelz, *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in Colonial America* (New York, 1993).

⁴⁹ For a few exceptions, see Commons debates on 26 Oct. 1775 and Lords Debate 5 March, in *Parl. Debates*, vi. 105 and 537; as well as *Saint James's Chronicle*, 20 June 1776; *London Packet*, 6 Oct. 1775 and 28 Feb. 1776; *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1776), 39–40.

that the colonists too had revolted against their lawful ruler. If 'such tyrants as the American negro-whippers' proclaimed freedom to be such a paramount value that they should take up arms, said the *London Packet*, was it not hypocritical to deny the slaves the same opportunity?⁵⁰ Besides, opponents of slavery could not choose sides in the conflict on this basis. Both the Americans and British transported, bought, and sold slaves, and neither had any intention of bringing slavery to an end. As Horace Walpole, a some-time sympathizer with the American cause, wrote on the eve of the war, if the freedom of the slaves were at stake then choosing sides would be easy: 'If all the black slaves were in rebellion, I should have no doubt in choosing my side, but I scarce wish perfect freedom to merchants who are the bloodiest of all tyrants.'⁵¹

Equally important was the timing and extent of black participation. Although they fought as armed troops on both sides, Africans were an under-exploited combat resource during the war. Promises of emancipation risked the alienation of slaveholders in general, whether patriot, loyalist, or undecided. Voluntary turnout was also low. Free blacks risked enslavement if captured, and slaves faced the long and perilous task of escaping and reaching British lines.⁵² Furthermore, although the image of a slave revolt was reasonably familiar in the British press due to the constant tension in the West Indies, it was not on a par with the regular depictions of American Indian warfare. Reports of slave revolts in the press were at best brief and sporadic paragraphs. Finally, the situation in America gave little ammunition to anyone wanting to use this imagery to provoke outrage in Britain. Representations of hordes of angry slaves plundering and burning their way through the southern colonies would not have been remotely applicable. The main contribution made by the tens of thousands of African slaves who assisted the British in the southern campaigns after 1779 was the familiar one of hard, manual labour in building roads and fortifications. In contrast, Indians were employed almost exclusively as warriors, whose primary function was to kill or scout out those to be killed. When blacks assumed combat roles, the British consciously placed them under white officers and drilled them in European tactics. African weapons were not distributed; African styles of warfare

⁵⁰ *London Packet*, 22 Sept. 1775.

⁵¹ Walpole to William Mason, 14 Feb. 1774, *Walpole Correspondence*, xxviii. 135–6.

⁵² For the best explanation of low black participation in combat and supportive roles, see Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, 120–2.

were not adopted. Blacks were meant to bolster the regular army's numbers, not to act as a largely independent body of marauders whose unorthodox style of warfare aided British objectives.

British disdain for Indians should not be simplified as a loathing of all things deemed 'primitive'. The almost universally favourable British public response to Omai, the South Pacific islander who visited Britain during the 1770s, and the public willingness to accept that his life included some enviable benefits underlines this. A 'newly discovered' people, made popular by the Cook voyages, Tahitians and their culture were favourably described in the abundant press coverage. Omai was a sensation across the social spectrum, attending dinners and hosting 'native' barbecues.⁵³ Tahitian culture was depicted as leisured, hierarchical, comfortable, and refined. Even the literary wit Samuel Johnson, who had denounced Indians as being anything but noble, was willing to admit the politeness and grace of Omai.⁵⁴ Moreover, the primitive bliss of Tahitian society was thought to offer lessons for the British themselves. Throughout the 1770s the *London Chronicle* published various letters, whose authors adopted Tahitian pen-names, in which British society was compared unfavourably with the innocent happiness of Tahitian life.⁵⁵ No such letters appeared during any of the multitude of post-Seven Years War Indian visits.

Although opposition parties undoubtedly benefited from the general disdain for Britain's Indian allies, they do not appear to have been the sole directors of it. Unlike complaints about Germans that appeared almost exclusively in those London papers sympathetic to opposition politics, criticism of Indian participation appeared throughout the metropolitan and provincial press. When news reached Britain about Indian involvement, whether accurate or not, newspapers throughout the nation readily printed it. Reports and letters giving accounts of attacks on frontier families were common features, and regardless of the sensationalism of the atrocity reported, readers did not raise doubts about the stories' truthfulness or origins.⁵⁶ Each new report provoked further condemnation,

⁵³ See esp., E. H. McCormick, *Omai: Pacific Envoy* (London 1977); Thomas Blake Clark, *Omai: First Polynesian Ambassador to England* (Honolulu, 1969) and Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2nd edn. (New Haven, 1985).

⁵⁴ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1970), 723. Although a native of a neighbouring island, Omai was treated as a representative of Tahiti.

⁵⁵ *London Chronicle*, 24 July 1774, 21 July, 1, 15, and 20 Aug., and 26 Dec. 1778.

⁵⁶ For a range of some of the most graphic examples, see *Saint James's Chronicle*, 15 June 1775 and 15 Aug. 1776; *Ipswich Journal*, 21 Oct. 1775; *London Packet*, 25 Oct 1775;

and even became a subject for satire. One notable example is the *Gazetteer's* spoof regarding a Bulgarian king wanting to hire Indians under the authority of 'Count Scalpsem Tomahawk' to subjugate his subjects, who had refused to recognize his supremacy. The supposed count agreed to the proposal so long as he and his men were paid in advance and allowed to eat the enemy.⁵⁷

THE BURGOYNE FIASCO

Public discussion about Indians peaked in late 1777 and 1778, during the uproar following Burgoyne's ill-fated campaign from Canada to New York. The campaign ended in the British surrender at Saratoga in October 1777, but the episode sparked a heated controversy in Britain that would last until the end of the war. Burgoyne's campaign had been closely followed in the British press, which printed extracts from his journal and reports to his superiors alongside letters from officers and soldiers of varying ranks. There were high hopes that this campaign would slice the rebelling colonies in two and finally end the war, and so his defeat was a devastating blow to British morale at home. The *Edinburgh Advertiser* described for its readers the shock of the House of Commons when Lord Germain, secretary of state for America and the minister directing the war, announced that Burgoyne had surrendered: 'His Lordship's speech struck the house with astonishment; and such a gloom appeared on the countenance of every member, as might be supposed to have been settled on the face of every Roman senator, when the defeat at Cannae was announced in the senate.'⁵⁸ 'No occurrence, in the course of the war, seems to have made so unfavourable an impression on the minds of the people in general,' a reader's letter in the *London Chronicle* reflected, 'or to have caused so many to doubt of final success, as the army under general Burgoyne having been reduced to the necessity of laying down their arms.'⁵⁹

A substantial part of the debate focused on the several hundred Indians accompanying Burgoyne's army. As a reader's letter in the *Public Advertiser*

Jackson's Oxford Journal, 17 Aug. 1776; *Derby Mercury*, 18 Oc. 1776; *Gazetteer*, 14 Apr. 1779; *General Advertiser*, 12 Feb. 1780; *Morning Chronicle*, 30 June 1780 and 13 Sept 1782.

⁵⁷ *Gazetteer*, 16 Dec. 1777.

⁵⁸ *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 9 Dec. 1777.

⁵⁹ *London Chronicle*, 22 Jan. 1778.

remarked, 'the employing, or attempting to employ the Indians in America in our Service . . . is a reigning Subject of Conversation'.⁶⁰ Because the plan included an arduous journey from Canada through the New York wilderness, Indian allies were viewed by the North administration as essential. After all, this was the same region in which they had played such a crucial role in the Seven Years War. The French general Louis-Joseph de Montcalm had successfully used French-allied Indians to devastate the British frontier and isolate besieged British garrisons twenty years earlier, culminating in the capture of forts Oswego and William Henry, and Burgoyne and the British leadership expected the same success.

Although the Indians in Burgoyne's company did not cause devastation on a par with that wreaked by those who had fought with Montcalm, the uproar in Britain surpassed the public outrage of twenty years earlier. The Indians who rallied to the British flag in 1777 were small in number in comparison to the support the French had been able to muster. Moreover, the colonists in the American army were far better prepared for wilderness warfare than the British troops that had garrisoned the New York frontier two decades earlier had been. Nevertheless, Burgoyne and his superiors had expected the threat of unleashing a 'horde' of Indian warriors on the frontier communities to terrorize the colonists into submission. On 29 June 1777 he published a proclamation that exaggerated the number of Indians in his company and made thinly veiled threats to unleash them on the civilian population. This tactic did not go unrecognized in the British press. The *London Chronicle* explained that Burgoyne's advertised threat to use Indians 'was, doubtless, well calculated to intimidate and strike a general panic through the northern colonies; they had experienced the like in the late war; it was particularly dreaded, and, in the early stages of rebellion, would have produced instant submission'.⁶¹ The proclamation, however, backfired. Instead of submitting, the apprehensive colonists flocked by the thousands to swell the ranks of the American army that ultimately defeated Burgoyne. This did not escape the attention of the press either. The vehemently pro-coercion *Edinburgh Advertiser* complained that the proclamation had only 'inflamed the minds of the colonists; and giving them fresh cause for disgust, had nerved the arm of the contest with double vigour, by joining the moderate to the violent, and rousing every individual to resistance'.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Public Advertiser*, 9 Jan. 1778.

⁶¹ *London Chronicle*, 22 Jan. 1778.

⁶² *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 13 Feb. 1778.

Reprinted throughout the British press, Burgoyne's proclamation also backfired on the North ministry at home. The British general's claim that 'I have but to give stretch to the Indian forces under my direction, and they amount to thousands, to overtake the hardened enemies of Great Britain', was abhorred by the British public, regardless of their feeling towards the colonists. As the *Annual Register* for 1778 dryly remarked, '[t]his conduct was far from being generally approved at home'.⁶³ The *Gazetteer* printed a scathing condemnation, noting that Indian allies were known to be uncontrollable savages in war:

It is an undoubted fact (says a correspondent) acknowledged by all who have served in America, that the Savages kill all they meet with. . . . Further it must be observed, the number of regulars appointed to restrain the impetuosity and barbarity of these Savages, is often *not sufficient* to govern or deter them from murdering in cold blood those who have laid down their arms, and surrendered.⁶⁴

The sharpest portrayal of Indians' indiscriminate cruelty focused on the death of Jane McRea, a loyalist engaged to an officer in Burgoyne's army. Although the circumstances of her death remain unclear, the British public, like the American patriots, readily assigned full blame to the untamable ferocity of the Indians in Burgoyne's army.⁶⁵ The *Annual Register* for 1777, for instance, highlighted it as a particularly horrible example:

the murder of Miss McRea, which happened some small time after, struck every breast with horror. Every circumstance of this horrid transaction served to render it more calamitous and afflicting. The young lady is represented to have been in all the innocence of youth, and bloom of beauty. Her father was said to be deeply interested in the royal cause; and to wind up the catastrophe of this odious tragedy, she was to have been married to a British officer on the very day that she was massacred.⁶⁶

Adding further fuel to readers' disapproval was a letter from General Horatio Gates, the commander of the American army opposing Burgoyne's advance, complaining of the incident, which was printed throughout the British press. Even the fervently pro-ministry *Scots Magazine* printed the

⁶³ *Annual Register* (1778).

⁶⁴ *Gazetteer*, 16 Dec. 1777.

⁶⁵ For a short summary of the importance of the image of the murder of McRea in the post-war anti-Indian sentiment in the United States, see Calloway, *The American War of Independence in Indian Country*, 295. See also June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993), ch. 4.

⁶⁶ *Annual Register* (1777), 156.

letters, under the heading of 'Indian barbarity'.⁶⁷ Gates blamed Burgoyne personally for the murder of this 'young lady, lovely to the sight, of virtuous character', who was 'dressed to receive her promised husband, but met her murderer employed by you'. Gates also threatened to shame Burgoyne at home, demonstrating both the known propaganda value of the incident and the power of the press:

That savages of America should in their warfare, mangle and scalp the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands, is neither new nor extraordinary; but that the famous Lt-Gen. Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the soldier and the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans, and the descendants of Europeans; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken; is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall, in every gazette, confirm the truth of the horrid deed.

Burgoyne's response to Gates was to deny any atrocities committed by Indians in his army and to offer the implausible explanation that McRea's death was an accident arising from a quarrel between two Indians over which individual would have the honour of protecting her. In the struggle she had accidentally been killed, claimed Burgoyne, and hence he had given the men pardons. Burgoyne also noted his 'desire and demand' of Gates that 'should it [Gates's letter] appear in print at all, this answer may follow it'. Both Gates and the British press honoured this request, but it did Burgoyne little good.

The controversy surrounding the campaign's inclusion of Indians provoked heavy criticism in parliament, peaking on 6 February 1777 with what was declared to be the greatest oration from perhaps the greatest orator of the age, Edmund Burke. Rising to his feet late that night in the House of Commons, Burke harshly condemned ministerial invitations to the Indians, declaring that they could not be rewarded in the usual British manner: 'The Indians of America had not titles, sinecure places, lucrative government pensions, or red ribbons, to bestow on those who signalized themselves in the field; their rewards were generally received in human scalps, human flesh, and gratification arising from torturing, mangling, scalping, and sometimes eating their captives of war.' According to Burke, this was no way to regain the affection of disgruntled

⁶⁷ *Scots Magazine* (Dec. 1777), 648–9. The cited extracts of Gates's letter are from this magazine, although the letters appeared in various forms throughout the press.

colonists, and it certainly was no way to treat one's own countrymen.⁶⁸ Although spectators had been cleared from the galleries, Burke's speech was printed and reprinted in newspapers throughout the country, all describing it as his best ever. The *Public Advertiser* asserted that '[i]t is agreed on all Sides, that Mr. Burke's Speech, on moving for an Inquiry about employing Savages . . . was the best and most fancif'1 he ever delivered'. Charles James Fox wrote in his diary entry for that day that Burke's wit 'made North, Rigby, and Ministers laugh; his pathos drew tears down Barré's cheeks'.⁶⁹ Colonel Barré declared in the House of Commons for the speech to be posted on the church doors under the injunctions of the bishops for a fast. George Johnstone declared that 'he rejoiced there were no strangers [spectators] in the gallery, as Burke's speech would have excited them to tear the ministers to pieces as they went out of the house'.⁷⁰

To call the public discussion surrounding Indian participation a 'debate' would be an exaggeration, as few Britons disagreed publicly over the undesirability of the Indian alliances and virtually no one challenged the image of Indians as ferocious warriors bent on savage cruelty and destruction. Even when the paroled Burgoyne was examined before the House of Commons in the late spring of 1778, no one came to his aid on this issue. The extensive press coverage that captured the nation's attention highlighted the 'Indian abuses' that transpired in the campaign.⁷¹ During the course of the examination and its heated reverberation in the press, blame and accusation came from all parties and all angles. At one point in the debate Germain reportedly challenged Henry Luttrell, a leading opposition spokesman, to a duel.⁷² Apportioning blame for both the employment of the Indians and their supposedly bad conduct remained unresolved. However, one aspect was never in doubt. Indian warfare

⁶⁸ Because the House was closed to visitors, several versions of the speech circulated. The most widely reprinted first appeared in the 7 Feb. 1778 edition of the *Morning Chronicle*, which was renowned for its parliamentary reporting.

⁶⁹ *Memorial and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, ed. Lord John Russel, 4 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1853–7), i. 171. ⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 355.

⁷¹ Burgoyne's examination in the House of Commons was carried by the majority of the London dailies as well as the provincial papers, such as the *Ipswich Journal*, 30 May and 6 June; *Bath Chronicle*, 4 June 1776, which seem to have reprinted the *Morning Chronicle's* version. A pamphlet version constructed from extracts in the press was also printed as *The Substance of General Burgoyne's Speeches on Mr. Vyners Motion, On the 26th of May; and upon Mr. Hartley's Motion, On the 26th of May*, 4th edn. (London, 1778), which enjoyed at least four editions in 1778 alone.

⁷² *Gentleman's Magazine* (May 1778), 235.

remained in the public view a shameful business, whereby 'promiscuous Carnage' was inflicted by savages 'who rejoice to murder the Infant smiling in its Mother's Arms'.⁷³

Virtually all British political factions found advantage in portraying Indians as savagely as possible—Burgoyne and his superiors, to terrorize the colonists and conciliationists; and the parliamentary opposition, to accuse the British government of brutality. Apologists for the government generally failed to reply to accusations of Indian cruelty. Only a tiny number of even the most ardent haters of the American patriots viewed the Indians as fit punishments for traitors. William Markham, archbishop of York, was extremely rare in his public acceptance of Indians as viable tools for restoring 'the supremacy of law', and was satirized for it.⁷⁴ Even Germain, although pushing commanders to recruit Indians, was publicly silent on the issue, to the point of exasperating the parliamentary opposition. When North's supporters in parliament did respond, they underlined the assumption of Indian savagery, arguing that 'from their [the Indians'] character, it was presumed they could not lie still; and if not engaged in the King's service, would have joined the Americans'.⁷⁵ British intervention was necessary to direct the Indians' thirst for blood into a useful channel: 'supposing their assistance had been rejected on both sides, they would notwithstanding have become a destructive party in the war, by scalping and murdering each indiscriminately, wherever they found themselves superior in force.'⁷⁶

Even when protected by the anonymity of the press, 'out-of-doors' advocates of the government line urged only Indians' potential usefulness as scouts to protect British troops from ambushes in the wilderness. No one publicly proposed setting them loose on frontier inhabitants to create trails of havoc and destruction. Even in the most ardent and detailed proposal to appear in the press, the author, who claimed to have served in America alongside Indians in the last war, made clear his opposition to including them in any unchaperoned capacity.⁷⁷ 'The savages' should

⁷³ *Public Advertiser*, 11 Aug. 1778. The extract is from Congress's address of 9 May 1778, which the newspaper printed just below Germain's letter to Governor Carleton of 26 March 1777, instructing him to furnish Burgoyne's expedition with Indians.

⁷⁴ *SPG Annual Sermon* (1777), pp. xiv–xix; see illustration 7.1.

⁷⁵ The *Annual Register* for 1777 notes that this was a standard defence. See also *Scots Magazine* (Apr. 1777), 178.

⁷⁶ *Annual Register* (1778), 114.

⁷⁷ *London Chronicle*, 22 Oct. 1776.

only be included if officers of sufficient quality were able to control them, he explained, to ensure that they act 'as bugbears, without allowing them to act as hell-hounds'. Utilizing them in any other setting, he stressed, was unacceptable: 'God forbid, however, that I should recommend the letting loose these barbarians in all their native cruelty and ferocity! Rather than consent to this, I would willingly forego all the benefits arising from their service.'

Moreover, for most Britons the sin of involving Indians in a civil war was not lightened by being shared. The Americans were known to have been recruiting Indians from the start, yet their efforts were not subjected to significant criticism in the British press.⁷⁸ The *Public Advertiser*, in the wake of Burke's celebrated speech, was a lone voice in reminding readers that 'much has been said about Hatchets, Tomahawks, Scalping Knives, and employing of Indian Savages', but it should be noticed that Congress had been attempting the same thing since 1774, and that 'Within a few Weeks after the Affair of Lexington, the Rebels had a Company of Stockbridge Indians, amounting to near forty, in their Service at Cambridge'.⁷⁹ Such observations, however, seldom figured in the discussion. Partly this was because the British perceived themselves to be restoring order, not promoting chaos, and bringing the colonists in line with firmness, not driving them away with vengeful cruelty.

British perceptions of American Indians during the period of the American War of Independence simultaneously demonstrate the overwhelming lack of regard the public had for the Indians themselves, and the tentativeness with which the British public supported the prosecution of the war. Nothing underlined the British disdain for American Indians more than the peace settlement. Africans, patriots, and loyalists all received provisions in the peace accord between Britain and the newly recognized United States. The welfare of Indians, however, was not mentioned. Like the Indians' French allies at the conclusion of the Seven Years War, the British totally abandoned them. But whereas Britain in the 1760s worked to find accommodation with the Indians residing within its territorial claims, the United States did not.

⁷⁸ For reports on American efforts to recruit Indians, see *Saint James's Chronicle*, 29 June 1775 and 18 June, 11 July, and 20 Aug. 1776; *Ipswich Journal*, 1 July and 21 Oct. 1775; *Gentleman's Magazine* (Dec. 1775), 472–4; *Derby Mercury*, 18 Oct. 1776.

⁷⁹ *Public Advertiser*, 5 Mar. 1778.

Lingering British affection for their American cousins, despite overwhelming loathing for the American quest for independence, ensured that Indian allies would be widely jeered rather than cheered. In the British mind, Americans remained sufficiently 'British' to be deserving of a more sympathetic treatment than traditional enemies, such as the French or Spanish. The vast majority of Britons endorsed their government's prosecution of the war; however, they did not necessarily agree with the way in which it was prosecuted. This distinction is an important one, not least because it suggests the extent to which the British reflected on the conflict and its significance. Ultimately supporting the war may have been perceived as the duty of the British patriot—a direction most Britons accepted—but, as their disdain for Indian participation reveals, this was not a path that was proudly or gleefully trodden. Had desire to smite the perfidious colonists been the overwhelming sentiment among Britons during the conflict, images of bloodthirsty American Indians might still have been resurrected, but the Indians would have been depicted as comrades of heroes rather than tools of villains. These images, therefore, provide evidence of public belief that the war was undesirable, if not a tragedy.

Conclusion

After the American War of Independence, North American Indian appearances in either person or discussion in Britain were rare. When British interests moved to other segments of the empire, Indians moved down the public's list of overseas concerns and then fell off it altogether. The effects of Britons' intense interest in Indians lingered via Mrs Salmon's Waxwork and the British Museum's Iroquois and Cherokee objects, which remain on display to this day, but the Indians themselves were overshadowed by a succession of other non-Europeans whom the public deemed more pertinent. Even as early as the 1770s, in the wake of the Cook voyages, objects from the South Pacific began to usurp the Indian objects' former pride of place. Natives of the Americas, although rarely North American, continued to occupy an occasional, if small, space in the imperial discourse, as when literary figures like Robert Southey and Richard Sheridan used Spanish mistreatment of the Aztec and Inca as cautionary tales for the British in India.¹ A century later North American Indians once again captured the interest of the British nation, but this time it was as entertainers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.² Just as they had in the case of the Iroquois ambassadors in 1710, whites moulded the Indians' image to serve a specific aim—in this case to sell tickets to the show. Indians thus appeared as mounted, painted savages who attacked wagon trains or unwary US cavalrymen.³ In other nineteenth-century instances they were buffoons, whose ignorance of civilization made them clowns rather than noble

¹ Astrid Wind, "So in the land / Madoc was left sole Lord": The Defence of British Colonialism in Southey's *Madoc* and Sheridan's *Pizarro*' Oxford University, M.Phil. thesis (1998).

² Daniele Fiorentino, '“Those Red-Brick Faces”: European Press Reactions to the Indians of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show', in Christian Feest (ed.), *Indians in Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1987), 403–14; Carolyn Foreman, *Indians Abroad, 1493–1938* (Norman, Okla., 1943), 190–209.

³ After Sitting Bull joined, Custer's Last Stand was re-enacted. Rayna D. Green, 'The Indian in Popular American Culture', in William C. Sturtevant (ed.), *Handbook of the North American Indians*, vol. 4: *History of Indian-White Relations*, ed. Wilcomb Washburn (Washington, DC, 1988), 600–3.

savages, and occasionally, via the translated works of other Europeans such as Alexis de Tocqueville, they were tragic victims of the merciless expansion of capitalism and democracy.⁴ All of these images, however, were imported and not products of domestic British discussions.

Although Britain still controlled the northernmost region of the North American continent, complexities of relations with its Indian inhabitants rarely entered into ministerial discussions. Indian policy was left almost entirely to British officials in Canada, who had broad powers of direction and implementation.⁵ British decisions not to assist significantly the American Indians in their resistance to the United States' expansion ensured that British-Indian relations, which were dominated by trade, could be handled locally. Only in the War of 1812 did the British again seek substantial numbers of Indian allies to serve British interests in North America, but this effort was an aside to a conflict that itself was an aside to the Napoleonic Wars in Europe. In consequence, the struggle in the American interior received much less prominence in British newspapers than had been given to conflicts taking place in the period from the Seven Years War to the American War of Independence.⁶

The timing of the appearance and subsequent disappearance of American Indians as a major topic of discussion in Britain underlines the central argument of this book: that changes in the empire and Britons' perceptions of its importance defined discussions and representations of Indians during the eighteenth century. Indians had long been part of at least some Britons' cosmologies. They were put on display in England and Scotland just as soon as explorers were able to drag them back. They entertained royal courts, and visions of the Americas and its natives entered into such literary works as Thomas More's *Utopia* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the American empire changed from being a far-flung collection of outposts into the largest overseas market for British goods, and home to a population of freeholders whose size exceeded that of every British territory except England itself. Once the wider public recognized this in the mid-eighteenth century, the

⁴ Harry Liebersohn, *Aristocratic Encounters: European Travellers and North American Indians* (Cambridge, 1998), chs. 3 and 4. Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* appeared in an English translation in Britain as early as 1838.

⁵ For the best discussion of post-American Revolution British-Indian relations, see Colin Calloway, *Crown and the Calumet: British-Indian Relation, 1783-1815* (Norman, Okla., 1987).

⁶ This is based on my reading of *The Times*, 1812 to 1814.

Indians' place in the British imagination was transformed from exotic curiosity to key variable in the British bid for imperial supremacy. The pragmatism of pursuing an ambitious imperial policy that required unprecedented national support in terms of manpower and finance meant that Shakespeare's Caliban and Queen Anne's turban-wearing 'Indian Kings' were replaced by the Ostenaco found in the London daily press and Mrs Salmon's Waxwork.

As we have seen, keen practical interest in Indians began with Britain's first sustained overseas military endeavour, the Seven Years War. Museums offered displays of Indian objects for families to view, auctions sold these objects, and printed accounts described them and their functions in vivid detail. The newspaper and periodical press both educated readers with the latest information about Indians and served as a national forum for discussing them and their future within the British Empire. In the wake of the war, governments sought to control the Indian variable by initiating an aggressive programme that placed the governing of a non-European people directly in the hands of a central imperial authority for the first time. The Church of England's missionary wing, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, reorientated its public message within an imperial framework in order to underline its importance in imperial endeavours to the middling and higher social audiences that funded the society. In its sermons, meetings, and correspondence, Indian convert became synonymous with imperial ally. The flood of images of Indians and their prominent place in mid-century national discussions also influenced contemporary thinking on human socio-economic development. This was particularly evident in the Scottish Enlightenment's stadial histories, in which Indians became the primary source that leading philosophers used to consider and to explain the first stage of human societal development.

British discussions and representations of Indians were shaped more by the peculiarities of British encounters with Indians than by any widely held generic view of so-called savage peoples. After all, the wider public and governing elite were not so much interested in the Indians themselves as they were in Indians' relationship to British overseas interests. When they were a powerful force capable of warding off British encroachment or tipping the balance of power in favour of France or the rebelling colonists, Indians received the close attention of the British; but when British imperial interests moved away from North America, Indians were easily discarded as topics of conversation. This is not to suggest that

Britons in the second half of the eighteenth century never made generalizations about so-called savages—sometimes they did. However, Britons consistently distinguished between American Indians and South Pacific islanders and American Indians and sub-Saharan Africans; and among the better-known groups of such Indians, Britons regularly differentiated between sub-groups such as the Iroquois, Huron, and Cherokee.

Like most scholarly endeavours, this book raises new questions in the process of addressing old ones. American Indians played a unique role in the eighteenth-century empire, and the examination of British portrayals and perceptions of them offers important clues to the development of imperialism. However, Indians were but one component in a vast, interconnected territorial and trading empire, and British discussions and representations of these other regions and peoples need to be integrated into the picture outlined here. To some extent this task has already been attempted in a variety of comprehensive histories of the empire, most poignantly just over two decades ago in P. J. Marshall's and Glyndwr Williams's *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment*, but rather than dividing studies into discrete chapters assigned to specific peoples, historians need to take a more integrative approach.⁷ After all, contemporary Britons understood the empire and world not as a compilation of units but as interconnected. When they toured a museum they would have seen artefacts from a variety of peoples, and when they read a newspaper they would have been bombarded with information from around the world.

Equally needing further investigation is the emergence of a national imperialism. Scholars increasingly accept both that the seeds of modern nationalism were sown first in late eighteenth-century Britain, and that experiences of the British abroad nourished their growth. The connection between perceptions of the empire and early British national identity deserves further exploration, but in order to accomplish this, scholars must look beyond print culture. The first chapter's exploration of Indian objects in museums and auctions demonstrates that alternatives to print culture offered access to different audiences, but there are numerous other avenues that need examination. Britons were exposed on a daily basis to their empire, and the non-Europeans who were connected to it,

⁷ P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perception of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982).

in a plethora of ways other than through the print media—from shop-signs to clothing—and Britons expressed their understanding of the empire in such diverse contexts as gardening, architecture, and cookery. Only by integrating the diversity of experiences that brought the empire into Britons' lives can we begin to understand the making of a national imperial mentality.

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