

THE HOVEY MURALS
AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



Culture & Contexts

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EDITED BY BRIAN KENNEDY

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HOOD MUSEUM OF ART ◆ DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

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C O N T E N T S

List of Illustrations • vii

Foreword • xi

Greg Fell & Mickey Stuart

Preface and Acknowledgments • xiii

Katherine Hart

CHAPTER ONE

The Indians Wheelock Knew • 1

Colin G. Calloway

CHAPTER TWO

American Bacchanal

Myth, Memory, and the “Hovey Murals” • 19

Robert McGrath

CHAPTER THREE

Walter Beach Humphrey Meets Norman Rockwell
at the Last Stand Saloon • 45

Rayna Green

PLATES • 65

CHAPTER FOUR

The “Hovey Murals” and the “Greening”
of Orozco’s *Epic of American Civilization* • 79

Mary Coffey

CHAPTER FIVE

The Indian in the American Literary Imagination
Walter Beach Humphrey and the “Forms Aboriginous”
of American Fictions • 107

Melanie Benson Taylor

Index • 133

ILLUSTRATIONS

- FIGURE 1.1 Walter Beach Humphrey painting the chorus panel • xii
- FIGURE 1.2 Dining at the Hovey Grill, undated • xiv
- FIGURE 1.1 Jonathan Spilsbury, after Mason Chamberlin, *The Reverend Samson Occom*, 1768 • xx
- FIGURE 1.2, a & b Title pages from the Mohawk gospel, from Joseph Brant, John Stuart, and Daniel Claus, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1787 • 6
- FIGURE 1.3 Samuel E. Brown, *Founding of Dartmouth College*, 1839 • 7
- FIGURE 1.4 John Sauck's letter in Mohawk • 10
- FIGURE 1.5 An Abenaki couple from one of the mission villages on the St. Lawrence, 19th century • 11
- FIGURE 1.6 Joseph Brant in later life. John T. Bowen, after Charles Bird King, *Portrait of Thayendanegea* (Joseph Brant), 1838 • 13
- FIGURE 2.1 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 3, right side • 18
- FIGURE 2.2 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, right side • 22
- FIGURE 2.3 Perino del Vaga, *Sala Paolina*, 1545 • 23
- FIGURE 2.4 Joseph Steward, *Portrait of The Reverend Eleazar Wheelock*, 1793–96 • 24
- FIGURE 2.5 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, left side • 25
- FIGURE 2.6 Bronze statue (ca. 1905) of Chief Chocorua • 27
- FIGURE 2.7 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 2, left side • 28
- FIGURE 2.8 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 2, right side • 30
- FIGURE 2.9 Detail of the Hovey mural, chorus panel • 32
- FIGURE 2.10 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, right side • 32
- FIGURE 2.11 Walter Beach Humphrey, *Study for the Hovey Mural*, ca. 1935–38 • 33
- FIGURE 2.12 Andrea Mantegna, *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*, ca. 1470 • 33
- FIGURE 2.13 Walter Beach Humphrey, *Eleazar's Feast*, ca. 1936–39 • 35
- FIGURE 2.14 Giulio Romano, *Wedding of Amor and Psyche*, ca. 1528 • 35
- FIGURE 2.15 Annibale Carracci, *Triumph of Bacchus*, 1590–1600 • 36
- FIGURE 2.16 The Cruise Room, Oxford Hotel, Denver, Colo., ca. 1935 • 38
- FIGURE 3.1 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, right side • 44
- FIGURE 3.2 *The Pocahontas Chewing Tobacco*, ca. 1868 • 48

- FIGURE 3.3 G. Brouwer, after A. Borghers and P. Wagenaar, *Holland Recognizes American Independence*, ca. 1782 • 49
- FIGURE 3.4 *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*, 1899 • 51
- FIGURE 3.5 George Virtue, after T. Knight, after Edward Corbould, *Smith Rescued by Pocahontas*, ca. 1850–1880 • 54
- FIGURE 3.6 *Pageant, Men of Antrim, Sesquicentennial, Antrim, N.H. No. 12*, 1927 • 55
- FIGURE 3.7 Frank Mechau, *Dangers of the Mail*, 1937 • 57
- FIGURE 3.8 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 2, right side • 58
- FIGURE 3.9 *The Red Man's Fact, Niagara Falls (The Maid of the Mist)*, ca. 1910 • 59
- FIGURE 3.10 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 3, left side • 61
- FIGURE 3.11 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, right side • 62
- FIGURE 4.1a José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization: Modern Migration of the Spirit* (panel 21), 1932–34 • 78
- FIGURE 4.1b Detail of the Hovey mural, chorus panel • 78
- FIGURE 4.2 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization*, view of the west wing showing *Aztec Warriors* (panel 4), *The Coming of Quetzalcoatl* (panel 5), *The Pre-Columbian Golden Age* (panel 6), *The Departure of Quetzalcoatl* (panel 7), and *The Prophecy* (panel 8), 1932–34 • 81
- FIGURE 4.3 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization*, view of the east wing showing *Cortez and the Cross* (panel 13), *The Machine* (panel 14), *Anglo-America* (panel 15), *Hispano America* (panel 16), and *Gods of the Modern World* (panel 17), 1932–34 • 81
- FIGURE 4.4 José Clemente Orozco, *Study of Figure Chopping the Cross for the Modern Migration of the Spirit* (panel 21) for *The Epic of American Civilization*, 1932–34 • 82
- FIGURE 4.5 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization: Modern Industrial Man* (central panel 2 of 3, panel 23), 1932–34 • 83
- FIGURE 4.6 José Clemente Orozco, *Figure Study for Modern Industrial Man* (central panel 2 of 3, panel 23) for *The Epic of American Civilization*, ca. 1930–34 • 83
- FIGURE 4.7 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization: Gods of the Modern World* (panel 17), 1932–34 • 85
- FIGURE 4.8 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization: Modern Human Sacrifice* (panel 18), 1932–34 • 86
- FIGURE 4.9 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization: Anglo-America* (panel 15), 1932–34 • 88

- FIGURE 4.10 Paul Starrett Sample, *Beaver Meadow*, 1939 • 89
- FIGURE 4.11 José Clemente Orozco, *Study of Eleazar Wheelock with Indians* for *The Epic of American Civilization*, 1932–34 • 90
- FIGURE 4.12 John Hall, after Benjamin West, *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, 1775 • 94
- FIGURE 4.13 Walter Beach Humphrey, unused panel for the Hovey mural, 1938 • 95
- FIGURE 4.14 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 3, right side • 97
- FIGURE 4.15 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 3, right side • 98
- FIGURE 4.16 Detail of the Hovey mural, chorus panel • 99
- FIGURE 5.1 Walter Beach Humphrey, *The Wild West*, 1930 • 106
- FIGURE 5.2 Walter Beach Humphrey, art illustration for cover of *Collier's Magazine*, ca. 1935–40 • 110
- FIGURE 5.3 Joseph Christian Leyendecker, *Trading for a Turkey*, illustration for cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*, ca. 1923 • 111
- FIGURE 5.4 Walter Beach Humphrey, *Book Characters Coming to Life as Boy Reads*, 1920–25 • 112
- FIGURE 5.5 Unknown artist (Iroquois), band from elaborate headdress • 115
- FIGURE 5.6 Illustration of an Iroquois headdress from the *Parker-Reuss Presentation Book*, 1849 • 115
- FIGURE 5.7 Unknown artist (Iroquois), ball-mouth-type war club • 115
- FIGURE 5.8 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, left side • 116
- FIGURE 5.9 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 2, left side • 117
- FIGURE 5.10 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, left side • 125
- FIGURE 5.11 Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, left side • 127

FOREWORD

The Dartmouth Class of 1971 is extremely pleased to have provided funds to the Hood Museum of Art for the publication of this important book on the Hovey mural, located in the newly renovated Class of 1953 Commons, formerly Thayer Dining Hall. The mural was painted in the late 1930s by Walter Beach Humphrey, Class of 1914, to illustrate a college drinking song by Richard Hovey, Class of 1885. Commissioned shortly after the Orozco mural in Baker Library, it represents a fascinating touchstone that speaks to Dartmouth's history and the cultural changes that the college and our nation have experienced since the mural was painted.

The Hovey mural remains controversial because of its depiction of Native Americans and women. It should be studied and discussed for the issues it raises, and that is the purpose of this book. The Class of 1971 hopes that this class project will inspire other Dartmouth alumni classes to use our model and seek innovative ways to make a contribution to the college.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the staff at the Hood Museum of Art, and especially former director Brian Kennedy, who nurtured the project and ensured the high quality of the book's images and essays.

GREG FELL

President, Class of 1971

MICKY STUART

Projects Chairman, Class of 1971



PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sometimes works of art become catalysts for protest and debate. This book is about such a work on a college campus — the mural by Walter Beach Humphrey in the basement of Thayer Dining Hall (soon to be renamed the Class of 1953 Commons) at Dartmouth College. Created in 1938–39, this mural consists of a series of four painted canvas scenes inspired by a Dartmouth drinking song. The illustrated narrative, which wraps around a wood-paneled room that served as a “grill” for Dartmouth faculty (fig. 1.2), became so controversial in the 1970s that it was literally covered over, so that its existence for many years was barely remembered, except when resurrected for brief periods as an object of controversy. When the mural came up in discussion over the ensuing years, it was referred to either with nostalgia or repugnance, fondness or distaste. It still has the power to evoke extreme reactions, and this book is aimed at providing not only the history (and art history) of this mural but also its wider cultural and historical context.

The popularly named “Hovey murals” have a unique place in the college’s history. Their genesis is closely linked to another Dartmouth mural, by José Clemente Orozco, the great Mexican painter who was invited to come to campus as an artist-in-residence in 1932 by members of the college’s fledgling Art Department. When he got to campus, Orozco proposed the creation of an ambitious mural cycle, which he titled *The Epic of American Civilization*, for the basement of the college’s recently completed Baker Library. A storm of controversy followed the completion of the cycle in 1934; far from celebrating America in the fashion of many Great Depression-era post office murals, it included biting scenes that satirize both academia and New England culture. The way in which the resulting outcry against Orozco’s mural generated, in turn, a new mural by Walter Beach Humphrey (1892–1966) is described by Mary Coffey, a professor in the Dartmouth Art History Department and scholar of Orozco’s work, in her essay in this volume.

As the ultimate fate of Orozco’s great mural cycle at Dartmouth hung in the balance, it was no doubt overshadowed by the knowledge that fellow Mexican muralist Diego Rivera’s controversial mural at Rockefeller Center in New York City had been destroyed in February 1934. As Coffey relates, Dartmouth president Ernest Mark Hopkins deftly sidestepped calls for a similar disposition of the Orozco fresco by agreeing to commission Humphrey, an experienced illustrator and creator of

FIGURE 1.1
Walter Beach Humphrey painting the chorus panel of the Hovey mural. Dartmouth College Library.



FIGURE I.2
*Dining at the Hovey
Grill, undated.
Dartmouth College
Library.*

historical figurative painting, to make a mural that would be thought more appropriate to its Dartmouth setting. Humphrey, a Dartmouth graduate (Class of 1914) and artist who worked in a style akin to *Saturday Evening Post* covers of the era, himself became one of the greatest advocates for a mural presenting a homegrown story linked specifically to Dartmouth.

This mural cycle came to be based on a Dartmouth drinking song by Richard Hovey (1864–1900), Class of 1885, that tells a mythical story about the founder of Dartmouth College entering the North Woods with a five-hundred-gallon barrel of rum and meeting up with the local Indian chief, who then becomes one of the first undergraduates at the newly formed college. Humphrey’s visual retelling of this drinking song, whose lyrics are reproduced in chapter 2 of this volume, evokes an idyllic scene of an early autumnal woodland populated with Disneyesque animals

of the forest. Eleazar Wheelock is a comic Falstaffian character, while the chief and his male compatriots represent scantily costumed contemporary undergraduates “playing Indian.” The half-naked Native American females comprise a supporting cast to the main characters and evoke a certain type of 1930s pinup, put on display for the largely male clientele of the grill. The mural itself as planned and realized by Humphrey, as well as his sources and inspiration, is discussed in the essays by Coffey and Robert McGrath, a professor emeritus of art history at Dartmouth who also provides an overview of its art historical context.

The mural’s roots in the founding myths of the college are covered by Colin G. Calloway, professor of history and Native American studies at Dartmouth, in the first essay of this volume. The original charter of Dartmouth stated that the college was to be created “for the education & instruction of Youth of the Indian tribes in this Land.” In the mural, Eleazar Wheelock, the college’s founder, greets and then drinks with a “Sachem of the Wah-hoo-wahs.” The chief becomes, in effect, Wheelock’s first student, and the subjects of study are the joys of drinking and male conviviality. Calloway writes about the real Eleazar and the individual Native Americans, such as Samson Occom (1723–92), who were part of the story of the college’s early years. The history of Native Americans at Dartmouth is in reality a brief one, as the college was soon devoted mostly to the education of young white men; very few indigenous students would matriculate at the college until the early 1970s.

In her essay, Smithsonian curator Rayna Green delves into the visual history of the “Indian” in America and traces the origins of the characters who occupy Humphrey’s Dartmouth stage. She discusses the gradual formation of the stereotype and its artificial “decorative” character, which comes to stand for all Native Americans, belying the diversity and complex realities of cultures that lived not only in the Northeast but also across the continent. Melanie Benson Taylor examines Humphrey’s mural through the lens of those nineteenth- and twentieth-century non-Native American literary works and films that adopted a romantic view of what it meant to be an American Indian. These deeply ingrained sociocultural attitudes toward “Indian” identity and culture have supplanted the actual realities of European and indigenous interaction, which tell a very painful story of domination and systematic eradication.

It is the intention of this book to give a broader context to the history and reception of the “Hovey murals.” These paintings, originally designed to decorate a Dartmouth eatery and to offer an alternative to the “Mexican” fresco across the green, were thought to be fairly innocent, well rendered, and humorous by most of the mainly white and male faculty members and students who were exposed to them in their first decades of existence. By the early 1970s, however, things had begun to change. The arrival of coeducation brought in women whose presence alone began to alter the exclusive, homosocial culture of Dartmouth College. The mural’s images of half-naked women, one of whom reads Eleazar’s book upside down, were

not as amusing to these new members of the student body. Another development profoundly affected the mural's reception by students as well. In 1970, Dartmouth president John Kemeny rededicated the college to fulfilling its primary purpose as stated in its charter, which was educating Native Americans. With the beginnings of coeducation, the Native American education program, and, shortly thereafter, the Native American Studies Department, long-ingrained Dartmouth traditions such as the Indian mascot and the college's songs (including "Men of Dartmouth," with lyrics also by Hovey), as well as the "Hovey murals," became subjects of protest.

What evolved out of the debates and declarations both for and against the mascot and mural was an awareness that there were in fact two Dartmouths, one that embraced the Indian symbol as harmless fun as well as complimentary emulation and another that saw it as a painful reminder of the appropriation by whites of a false and belittling image of the "Indian" that was insulting to real Native Americans. The "Hovey murals" became a focal point of this larger protest, and in 1979 the room that housed them was closed. In 1983 the paintings were covered by specially made panels that were bolted into the supporting woodwork. The mural continued to be unveiled for commencement and reunions, though even this practice was discontinued in the early 1990s. Then, on October 12, 1992, the mural was uncovered for a viewing session following the conclusion of a conference held in conjunction with the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in America. Michael Dorris, founding head of the Native American Studies program at Dartmouth in the early 1970s, led a discussion about the mural in situ for the attendees. In response to one student's query about whether its current covered status equaled censorship, Dorris noted that the murals were like any work of art in the Hood Museum of Art's storage area and could be made available from time to time for display and discussion. Some of the Native students present at that session spoke about their abhorrence of the mural's portrayal of alcohol in relation to their own experiences with the debilitating effects of drinking on the reservations where they had grown up.

In the early 1990s, the Native American Council at Dartmouth recommended that the murals be uncovered and the room be reopened with a didactic program written by a committee of Native American students, which was charged with explaining why the mural's portrayals of women and Indians caused offense to many on campus. The students on the committee soon decided that they did not want to perform this task — they found the mural deeply offensive and were not comfortable writing about or otherwise addressing it. They also made it clear that they did not feel the "Hovey murals" had anything to do with them, or with Native Americans in general, and the burden of explaining them should not fall on their shoulders. As a consequence, the idea of reopening the room was, for the time, abandoned. It was recommended, however, that the mural be made available for teaching, and since that time

it has been unveiled at periodic intervals for curricular purposes to classes from a range of departments that have discussed the mural in an academic context.

About four years ago, in light of plans for the demolition of Thayer Dining Hall, then provost Barry Scherr asked Hood Museum of Art director Brian Kennedy to convene a committee to discuss the fate of the mural. On the committee's recommendation, plans were made to house the detached murals in Hood Museum of Art storage. In 2008, the plans for building a new dining hall were tabled, and instead, Thayer Dining Hall was to be renovated with support from alumni and renamed the Class of 1953 Commons. In light of this development, a committee of advisors has recommended to President Jim Yong Kim that the mural room be treated as a study room and open by appointment for Dartmouth classes and other groups. Any sessions in the mural space would be led by professors and Hood Museum of Art educators. The Hood will also provide a didactic program that will give a historical and cultural context to the murals. This reopening as a study space will take place within the next two years.

Part of the didactic program is the publication of this book of scholarly essays, which serves as a prelude to the mural's reemergence as an acknowledged part of Dartmouth's visual culture and history. The mural provides a unique opportunity for discussion and debate on issues of identity and appropriation. It reveals more than most works of art that while we may look at the same things, we do not actually *see* the same things — that who we are, our cultural conditioning and positioning within a society at a particular time and place, forms how we consume and read images. This mural and the Orozco fresco in Baker Library continue to be fascinating case studies concerning how cultural values and perceptions can and do change over time, depending on who takes part in the conversation. The debate that this work of art has generated for so long suggests that Americans have much to learn about the legacy of European American and Native American relations during the founding of this nation and in the years that have followed. What is agreed among many involved here is that we at Dartmouth should not bury the past, or censor it, but instead make use of it as an opportunity for education and dialogue.

This book would not have been possible without the support of the Class of 1971. Its genesis in fact came about through conversations between leaders of that class, in particular class projects chairman Mickey Stuart and class president Gregory Fell, and Robert McGrath and Brian Kennedy. Consequently, Kennedy formed the idea that a scholarly book about the murals would be extremely helpful in bringing the murals into focus, and the Class of 1971 generously agreed to fund its printing. The Hood Museum of Art would like to thank the scholars who contributed essays to this publication, including Robert McGrath, professor of art history emeritus; Colin Calloway, John Kimball Jr. 1943 Professor of History and professor of Native

American studies; Mary Coffey, associate professor of art history; Melanie Benson Taylor, assistant professor of Native American studies; and Rayna Green, curator and director of the American Indian Program, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, for applying their expertise and experience to this challenging topic. The staff at the New York State Museum in Albany, including Molly Scofield and Betty Duggan, helped the Hood staff to locate objects in their collection that, it is believed, Walter Humphrey used as models for some of the attire worn by his figures in this mural. Lucretia Martin, former special assistant to Dartmouth presidents John Kemeny, David McLaughlin, James Freedman, and James Wright, provided invaluable historical detail and context in relating how these administrations attempted to come to terms with Dartmouth's legacy regarding Native Americans and in particular the "Hovey murals." Hood Museum of Art staff members who were instrumental in bringing this book to print include Karen Miller and Essi Rönkkö, both assistant curators for special projects; Nils Nadeau, communications and publications manager; Patrick Dunfey, exhibitions designer; and Kathleen O'Malley, acting collections manager. Jeffrey Nintzel provided the photography of the mural, and Bruner/Cott and Associates made the plans of the room. Our colleagues at University Press of New England have been wonderful associates in the production of the book, and we would like to thank in particular Michael Burton, director, and Eric Brooks, assistant director of design and production, who provided its handsome design.

We would also like to thank Barry Scherr, former provost of the college and Mandel Family Professor of Russian, for his oversight of the mural when it first became known that Thayer Dining Hall was to be demolished; the members of the former Hovey Mural Committee — Brian Kennedy, Colin Calloway, Mike Hanitchak, Mary Coffey, and Kellen Haak — who took on the task of advising on the mural's fate; and current provost Carol Folt and acting dean of the college Sylvia Spears for their advice and leadership during this last year, as plans moved forward for Thayer's renovation as the new Class of 1953 Commons. Lastly, the museum would like to acknowledge the important leadership of President Jim Yong Kim, and especially his belief that addressing this aspect of Dartmouth's past is crucial to its growth as an institution.

KATHERINE HART

Interim Director

Barbara C. and Harvey P. Hood 1918

Curator of Academic Programming

Hood Museum of Art

September 2010

THE
Hovey Murals
AT
DARTMOUTH
COLLEGE



FIGURE 1.1
Jonathan Spilbury
(1737–1812), after *Mason*
Chamberlin (1727–87),
The Reverend *Samson*
Occom (1723–1792),
1768, mezzotint on laid
paper. Hood Museum of
Art, Dartmouth College:
Gift of B. F. Prescott,
Class of 1856, and others;
PR.961.307.

The Indians Wheelock Knew

COLIN G. CALLOWAY



The Indians depicted in the Hovey Grill mural are half-naked (in some cases completely naked) forest dwellers, getting their first taste of books and alcohol and apparently unable to handle either. Native Americans have long pointed out that the caricatures in the Hovey panels reflect white fantasies and stereotypes but bear little resemblance to Native peoples past or present. In fact, they do not bear much resemblance to the Indians whom Eleazar Wheelock knew personally or to the people in any of the tribes with which he was associated through his missionary, recruiting, and educational efforts. Wheelock had Indian students before he established Dartmouth College, he brought Indian students with him when he came to Hanover, and he dispatched Dartmouth recruiters to Indian communities to bring them to the college. He also had definite ideas about the kind of Indians he wanted at his school. Unlike the Indians in the Hovey mural, Indian people in Dartmouth's "catchment area" already knew plenty about books and alcohol by the time the college was founded. They also knew enough to wear clothes during a northern New England fall, and they were as likely to have worn garments of European manufacture, cloth, and fashion as they were to have worn loincloths and moccasins of deerskin.

Indian people throughout New England had been feeling the effects of European contact, directly or indirectly, for generations. They had suffered repeated epidemics of smallpox and other diseases imported from Europe that may have reduced their population by as much as 90 percent. Many had become commercial hunters to satisfy European market demands, rather than subsistence hunters satisfying family and community needs, and they had become producers and consumers in an Atlantic economic system that shaped their tastes, changed their lives, and undermined their independence. They had incorporated European technology and firearms, and participated in escalating intertribal and interethnic hostilities as competition for

land and resources intensified. Some tribes in southern New England had suffered massive defeats at the hands of the English, and refugees had filtered northward into Abenaki country. Declining beaver, deer, and other animal populations and the introduction of livestock by English colonists contributed to changes in the ecosystem and disrupted balanced subsistence practices that had sustained indigenous communities for centuries. Seasonal mobility to harvest the resources of forest, fields, and rivers gave way to pressured migration and permanent displacement of populations. Indians participated, and some were immersed, in colonial life. They could be found serving in colonial armies as scouts and soldiers, and as sailors and whalers in colonial ships. They walked the streets of colonial towns and sold baskets, brooms, and other crafts in colonial settlements. They worked as servants and sometimes as slaves in colonial households, and as guides, carpenters, laborers, and even as missionaries. Indians maintained their tribal kinship networks, beliefs, and moral economy, yet in a world thrown out of balance and into chaos, many turned to alcohol and many turned to Christianity.

Native Americans did not drink as much as Anglo-Americans. Annual per capita consumption of hard liquor, mostly rum, in colonial American society reached about 3.7 gallons by the eve of the American Revolution. By 1830 it exceeded 5 gallons — nearly triple today’s rate. Several of the founding fathers worried that their new republic was “a nation of drunkards.”¹ But combined with the effects of colonialism, alcohol had disproportionately disruptive effects in Indian communities. Europeans had been injecting alcohol, particularly rum, into Indian country from the seventeenth century. An instrument of market capitalism in the fur and deerskin trades, alcohol was used to attract Indian business, stimulate overhunting, and obtain furs on favorable terms. It was quickly consumed, it was addictive, and it wrought havoc in Indian communities where people often drank for the sole purpose of getting intoxicated. Indian hunters who traded their catch for rum often left their families in poverty, and drunken brawls disrupted social relations that traditionally stressed harmony and reciprocity. Not all Indians drank, and like other Americans alarmed by the excessive consumption of alcohol, many responded with temperance rather than drunkenness. The Reverend Samson Occom, Wheelock’s first and most famous Indian student, delivered a sermon at the execution of Moses Paul, a Christian Indian who had committed murder during “a drunken fray.” Addressing his Indian brethren, Occom denounced alcohol and the liquor trade, warning that the punishment for alcohol abuse was eternal damnation. Indian leaders regularly complained about alcohol’s effects and asked colonial authorities to halt or at least regulate its use, but alcohol was an instrument of colonial Indian policy and control; colonial governments could not or would not stem the flow of rum into Indian villages, and alcohol spread virtually unchecked through Indian country.²

Some New England Indians turned to religion rather than — or as well as — rum

as a refuge from other upheavals in their lives. The English had been teaching and preaching to the Indians of New England for more than a century before Wheelock. In the mid-seventeenth century, John Eliot established a ring of “praying towns” in Massachusetts. With the help of an Indian translator and an Indian printer, he produced a Bible in the Massachusetts dialect of the Algonquian language, the first Bible printed in North America.³ Building on the missionary work of Thomas Mayhew and his sons, Wampanoags on Martha’s Vineyard embraced Christianity, established their own church, and made their religion a source of community cohesion and resilience in perilous times.⁴ In western Massachusetts, John Sergeant established an Indian mission town at Stockbridge in the 1730s, drawing in Mahicans, Housatonics, and other neighboring peoples.⁵ In Rhode Island, many Narragansetts embraced Christianity in the 1740s during the Great Awakening, built their own church, and had their own Native preachers, pastors, and deacons. New England Indians looked to Christianity to provide spiritual meaning in a chaotic world but, contrary to what ministers like John Eliot hoped, they did not cease being Indian. They made Christianity an Indian religion, and in some places the church became a mainstay of their community, the congregation a center of Indian social life.⁶

English missionaries regarded conversion to Christianity and education in English ways as two sides of the same coin. Harvard’s charter of 1650 declared that the institution’s purpose was “the education of the English and Indian Youth of this Country,” and Harvard built an Indian college in 1656, although only six Indian students attended and only one graduated (delivering his graduation address in Latin) before the college closed its doors in 1692 and was pulled down six years later.⁷ Eleazar Wheelock established Moor’s Charity School (named after a local benefactor) in Lebanon, Connecticut, with the avowed purpose of “Educating Such of the Indian Natives, of any or all the Indian tribes in North America, or other poor Persons, in Reading, Writing, and all Liberal Arts, and Sciences . . . & More Especially for instructing them in the Knowledge & Practice of the Protestant Christian Religion.” More than 100 Indian students, and perhaps as many as 150, enrolled in the school during Wheelock’s lifetime, and between 13 and 15 of them became missionaries, teachers, or assistants.

New England Indians used English education and literacy for their own ends, and attached their own meanings and values to books and manuscripts. Members of an oral culture that preserved knowledge, history, and accumulated wisdom in story and song, New England Indian people also were accustomed to transmitting information on birch bark and in wampum belts. They were immediately impressed with Europeans’ books, writing, and literacy and admired the “technological novelty of thinner-than-birch-bark paper, uniform typefaces, gold-stamped bindings, and illustrations.” But they were more impressed by writing as a means of communication across time and distance. Writing gave Europeans a powerful weapon in the colonization of

America — as Indians found to their cost in numerous deeds and treaties — and Indian people endeavored to acquire the power of literacy themselves.⁸ In some cases, nonliterate Indians also recognized the power or perhaps the status that books conveyed — several times in the seventeenth century Indians broke into English schoolhouses to steal English, Greek, and Latin textbooks.⁹ English schools taught some things worth learning and held knowledge and power worth acquiring.

Most of the Indians Wheelock knew were Christianized to some degree, and a degree of literacy was often an important marker of identity for Christian Indians.¹⁰ According to his autobiography (the first written by a Native American: he wrote a draft in 1765 and a longer version in 1768), Samson Occom (fig. 1.1) was raised as “a Heathen” but at sixteen, stirred by the emotional intensity of the Great Awakening, he put his trust in Christ and “found Serenity and Pleasure of Soul, in Serving God.” He taught himself to read and write so he could better understand “the Word of God” and teach Mohegan children.¹¹ He also had more temporal reasons for advancing his literacy. At nineteen, Occom was elected to the Mohegans’ twelve-person governing council, at a time when the tribe was renewing its efforts to reclaim lost lands. In 1743 they took their suit to court. In December of that same year, Occom sought out Wheelock and asked if he would be willing to give him instruction in reading. Wheelock agreed, and Occom spent four years with him. In addition to the scriptures, Wheelock’s students studied Greek and Latin and practiced penmanship. Despite poor health and failing eyesight, Occom became fluent in English and proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, a remarkable achievement by any standards and particularly at a time when few people were literate even in their own language. In addition to his autobiography, Occom wrote diaries, letters, ethnographies, sermons, hymns, and petitions to colonial assemblies.¹² Other Indian students attained similar proficiency: Jacob Woolley, a Delaware boy who joined Wheelock’s school in 1754 at age eleven, could read Virgil and Tully and the Greek Testament “very handsomely” by the time he was fifteen.¹³

Two hundred and twenty years before Dartmouth College went coeducational, Wheelock admitted girls to his school. For Wheelock, educating girls was essential to promoting Christianity and proper ways of living, and he hoped that some might do God’s work as the wives of missionaries, if not as missionaries themselves. His first female student was Amy Johnson, who arrived in June 1761. The Charity School curriculum for young Indian women covered “all parts of good Housewifery” and included tending a dairy, sewing, and spinning as well as reading and writing. Whereas boys lived at the school and attended class five or six days each week, girls were placed “in pious families,” who were expected to teach them English in return for housework, “or under the care of a skilful governess,” where they were “instructed in domestic business and other accomplishments adapted to their sex.” Once a week they went to Wheelock’s house for instruction in writing. The girls were also expected

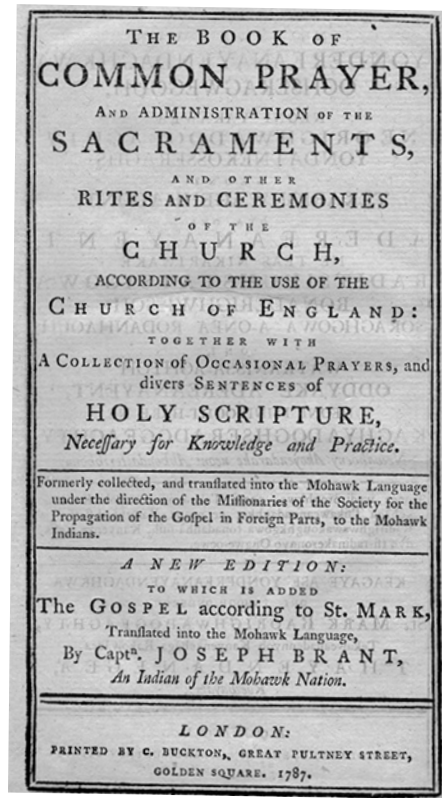
to teach the younger children.¹⁴ Several of the female students were great disappointments to Wheelock — Mary Secutor, a Narragansett, and two Mohegan girls, Hannah Nonesuch and Sarah Wyog, signed confessions of drunken behavior, dancing, and lewd conduct with Indian boys, and Mary dropped out of school¹⁵ — but a Mohawk girl named Susannah “obtained a universal character among us for a young woman of virtue.”¹⁶ Unlike the scantily clad nymphs in the Hovey mural (plate 4), Wheelock’s female students, like most Native women in southern New England by this time, would have been accustomed to wearing gowns, shifts, aprons, petticoats, and stays, as well as items of Native clothing.¹⁷

Although Wheelock began by educating Indians from southern New England, he was more interested in recruiting students from the Iroquois Six Nations of New York: he considered the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras less corrupted by contact with colonial society.¹⁸ In 1761 he began sending graduates from his school into Iroquois country as missionaries and teachers, and he solicited help from Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson in recruiting Iroquois students.¹⁹ Joseph Brant, a protégé of Sir William, and two other young Mohawks arrived in Lebanon that summer. Although his companions were almost naked, could not speak a word of English, and soon returned home, Brant was well dressed, understood some English, and proved a good pupil. Wheelock said he learned to “read handsomely in the Bible” and “much Endeard himself to Me (and I think to everybody Else) by his good Behaviour.”²⁰ Brant’s sister, Molly (the consort of Sir William Johnson and later an influential clan mother), insisted that he withdraw from school, not because she objected to the education he was receiving (she too could read English, and she informed her brother that she wanted him to withdraw in a letter written in Mohawk) or because of the English ways he was exposed to (she sometimes wore European clothes, and she served tea in porcelain crockery) but because he was required to do farm labor.²¹ Brant himself wrote in a clear hand and later translated the Gospel of St. Mark into Mohawk (fig. 1.2).

In August 1770 Wheelock, his wife and family, his black slaves, and about thirty students relocated from Connecticut to Hanover, New Hampshire, to build Dartmouth College. Several of the students were Indians. As a woodcut of the college’s founding indicates (and college expense accounts for buying, washing, and mending shirts, coats, waistcoats, breeches, stockings, and shoes confirm), the first Indians on the new campus were not wearing loincloths and feathers; they would have been dressed in the style of colonial Englishmen and would have understood that in the eighteenth century what they wore reflected their status, education, and degree of acceptance of Christianity. They were young Indian scholars familiar with the world of books, and they would have been expected to lead lives of piety and sobriety (fig. 1.3).

“A pious Narragansett widow” named Sarah Simon sent four sons and a daughter

FIGURE 1.2A & 1.2B
 Title pages from
 Mohawk gospel, from
 Joseph Brant, John
 Stuart, and Daniel
 Claus, *The Book of
 Common Prayer: And
 Administration of the
 Sacraments, and Other
 Rites and Ceremonies*
 (London: Printed by
 C. Buckton, 1787).
 Dartmouth College
 Library.



to Wheelock for education. Two of Sarah's sons, Abraham and Daniel, moved north with Wheelock. Abraham, together with another Narragansett former student, John Mathews, went as emissaries to Iroquois country in 1772. Daniel received his degree in 1777, the first Native American to graduate from Dartmouth College.²² The second was Peter Pohquonnapeet from the mission community at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who graduated in 1780. Daniel and Peter seem to have been serious students: in the winter of 1773, they and two non-Indian students complained to Wheelock about "the Indians that Lives in the room against us" who interrupted their studies by "making all manner of noise."²³

Wheelock tried to recruit Iroquois students for his new college and for the Charity School, which he reopened in Hanover. By the time he did so, many Mohawks, the nation closest to New England, were Anglicans, and some lived "much better than most of the [white] Mohawk River farmers."²⁴ Samuel Kirkland, a former student of Wheelock, was a permanent fixture among their immediate neighbors, the Oneidas. In 1769, the year Dartmouth College received its charter, a visitor to the Oneida town of Onoquaga on the upper Susquehanna River found an orderly and Christian community of fifteen or sixteen large houses on the east side of the river,

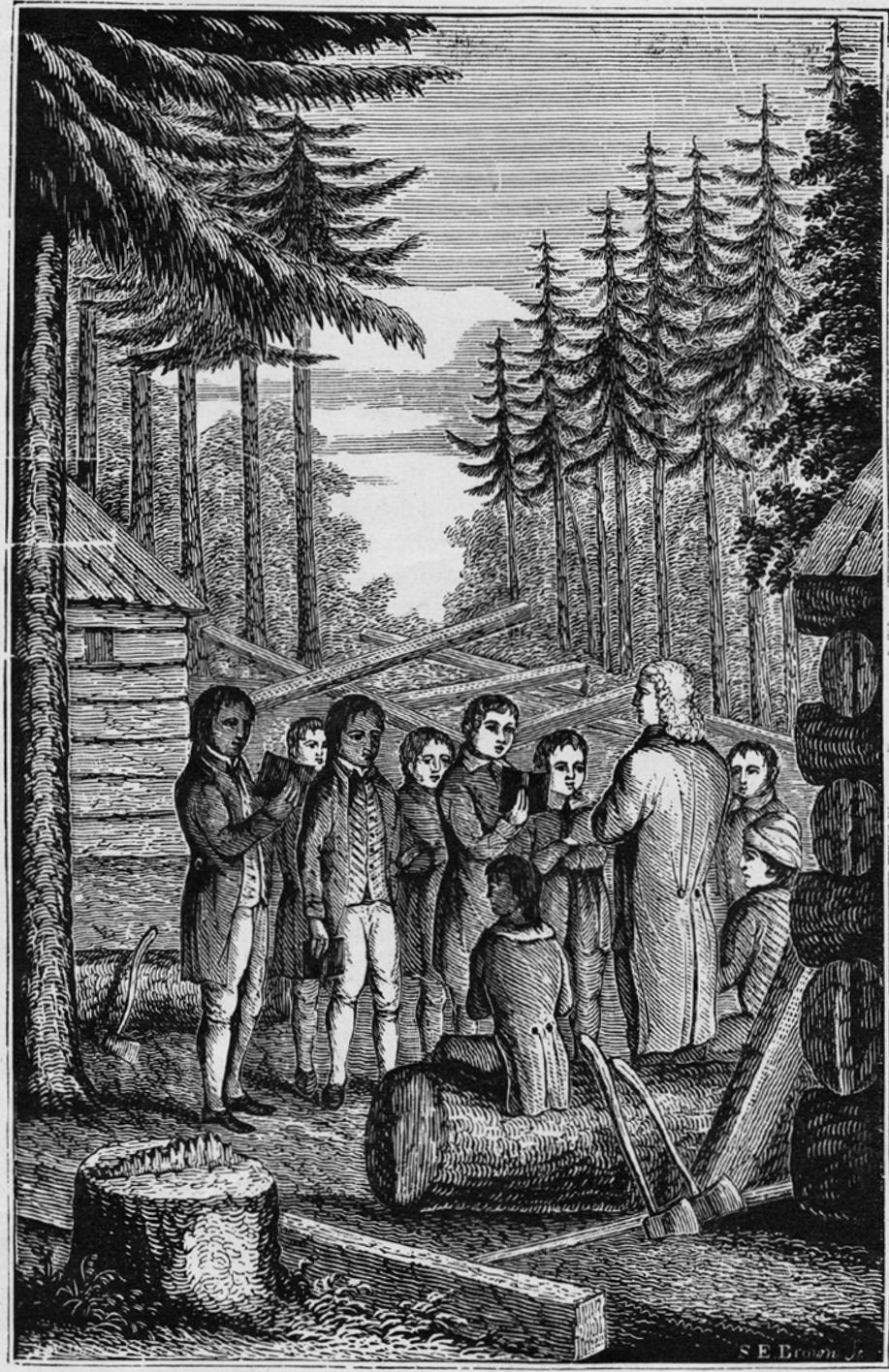


FIGURE 1.3
Samuel E. Brown
(d. ca. 1860), *Founding*
of Dartmouth College,
in 1769, 1839, engraving.
Dartmouth College
Library.

with a “suburb” on the west bank. The inhabitants were hospitable, “civil and sober.” Each house had a small garden in which the Indians cultivated vegetables, and there were apple orchards. One hundred Oneida men, women, and children attended Sunday morning service, “and all behaved with exemplary devotion.” An Indian priest officiated, a chief known as Good Peter translated the psalms into Oneida, and the service “was conducted with regularity and solemnity.”²⁵ Mohawks and Oneidas had become reliant on foreign trade: Wheelock said he was hard pressed to find a single Indian-made article among the Iroquois “without the least Mixture of foreign Merchandize.” Strouds (a coarse woolen cloth) from Gloucester, rum from the West Indies, ruffled shirts, woolen stockings, and lace-trimmed hats were common. Some Mohawks and Oneidas cooked in metal kettles and frying pans, ate from pewter plates, drank tea poured from teapots into teacups, and served drinks from punch bowls; they used combs, candlesticks, mirrors, and silk handkerchiefs, and some lived in frame houses with chimneys and windows. Some wore frock coats, linen shirts, and three-cornered hats as well as loincloths, leggings, and moccasins. Mohawk and Oneida men earned cash wages working as guides, porters, and laborers.²⁶ Far from the stereotype of bloodthirsty heathens, the Iroquois seemed to offer good recruiting prospects for a Christian college and for conversion to an English way of life.

But the Iroquois rejected Wheelock’s recruiting efforts — not out of ignorance about the education he was offering but because they already knew too much about it. Wheelock sent David Avery (one of the four students in Dartmouth’s first graduating class in 1771) to the Oneidas in 1772 to gauge their attitude toward missionaries and sending their children to Dartmouth. But the Oneidas had pulled their children out of Wheelock’s school three years earlier on rumors that they were being mistreated, and they had no intention of letting them return to his new school. “English schools we do not approve of here, as serviceable to our spiritual interest,” said Oneida headmen; “& almost all those who have been instructed in English are a reproach to us. This we supposed our father was long ago sufficiently appraised of.” That same year, Wheelock sent his son Ralph to Onondaga, the central council fire of the Iroquois League, in a final effort to win back the Iroquois. The Onondagas were even more forthright than the Oneidas in expressing their views about Wheelock’s schooling. Shaking Ralph by the shoulder, they told him they knew only too well the methods the English used to teach Indian children. “Learn yourself to understand the word of God, before you undertake to teach & govern others,” they said; “learn of the French ministers if you would understand, & know how to treat Indians. They dont speak roughly; nor do they for every little mistake take up a club & flog them.”²⁷

With no Indian students to be expected from the Iroquois in New York or from west of the Appalachians, where his recruiters met a similar lack of interest, Wheelock turned elsewhere. In the spring of 1772 there were only five Indian students in

Moor's Charity School, all of them from New England; by the end of 1774 there were "upwards of twenty," mostly from Canada.²⁸

The Mohawk community at Kahnawake, near Montreal, the Abenaki community at St. Francis, now Odanak, near the St. Lawrence River, and the Huron community at Lorette, near Quebec City, had grown up around Catholic missions. Their warriors had fought as allies of the French in numerous raids against settlements in New England, and they had carried off English captives — usually women and children — whom they adopted into their societies.²⁹ Scholars disagree about the numbers of captives who "went Indian" but, over the years, these Native communities absorbed many and produced children of mixed Native and English ancestry.³⁰ Wheelock believed that such Indians with "English blood" would make better students.³¹ In 1772 eight students from Kahnawake and two from Lorette came to Hanover. Wheelock thought the young men from Lorette (Lewis and Sebastian Vincent) were "endowed with a greatness of mind, and a thirst for learning."³² He described Lewis as one of "the Most promising Young Indians I have ever Yet Seen, and the most likely to answer the great and good Ends of an Education." He also observed "no undue appetite" in Lewis for "Strong Drink."³³ Lewis was involved in a drinking infraction — with another student and the college cook in a local tavern — but seems to have been a good student. On one occasion, he and other students sent Wheelock a formal request that he preach a sermon to them, and Wheelock said that Lewis spoke Huron, Mohawk, French, and English well. During the Revolution he served the Americans as an interpreter, emissary, and scout.³⁴

The Kahnawakes gave Wheelock more trouble (they may have been the rowdy students that Daniel Simon and Peter Pohquonnapeet complained about) but, when Thomas Kendall traveled to Kahnawake the next year looking for students, he found more encouraging prospects: "they Seem to be a People of surprising understanding of things & never set about any thing before they have wayed the matter in their own minds," he wrote. Working with these Mohawk boys, "I have my hands full mending their pens & seting their Coppys & hearing them read." They learned to read and write "very fast."³⁵ Those who came to Dartmouth also showed progress. When New Hampshire historian Jeremy Belknap visited the college in 1774, most of the Indian students "could speak good English."³⁶ John Sauck from Kahnawake attended Moor's School for perhaps only four months in 1775–76 but, according to a British officer who met him during the Revolution, he spoke, read, and wrote good English "and received his education at Dartmouth College."³⁷ Sauck could also write in Mohawk, which he may have been able to do before he came Dartmouth (fig. 1.4).³⁸

In the last years of Wheelock's life and well into the nineteenth century, the majority of Indian students were Abenaki.³⁹ By the time Wheelock built a college in their country, Abenakis had had plenty of contact with Europeans. Eastern Abenakis

FIGURE 1.4
John Sauck's letter in
Mohawk. Dartmouth
College Library;
Ms. 775410.

Te gia ton nia rigan July 10 1775

Wa ga l'ien non ni t'hi rigan non tar ye wa
ne the gia ton nia rigan.

og syer non tar ga te t'he me ne abge shon
a gwe gon wa gwa no rong wu nien. ne l' wa
te ri sou wicors ta. og o ni ne ru ti lan nowa
nun l' ab gwa non ti ia ne re. og o ni ne m
ti t'he on tar t'hi. Wa ta gwa ton te. t'hi wa lion
ka hon. A gwa t'hi ni ok ti ia ne re. ne ru ti
- Su r no wa non l'. Wa the ka non re yon ni
ny. te ab ti ia to ren tha.

ok o ni wa on ye te non nar. A ga nia tar ye shon
ok gwe gon wa te gwa non yon nien.

ok so t'he t'hi wa te wa te ri hon iah a gwe gon te gwa
ia ton l' John Sauck.

te Te gia ton nia rigan July 10 1775

on the coast of Maine had encountered European sailors as early as the 1520s, and there is evidence to indicate that the peaked caps favored by Abenakis were acquired from, or derived from those worn by, Basque sailors (fig. 1.5). Jesuit missionaries operating out of New France introduced Abenakis to Christianity. The French established missions in Maine and on Lake Champlain in the seventeenth century, and sometime before 1713 they established a mission at Koesaek, just thirty miles upriver from where Wheelock would establish Dartmouth.⁴⁰ At the same time, Abenakis traded with the English, whose goods tended to be better and cheaper than those the French had to offer; they traveled down the Connecticut River to John Pynchon's trading post at Agawam (present-day Springfield, Massachusetts) in the early eighteenth century; and later they did business with former Abenaki captive Phineas Stevens at Fort Number Four, thirty miles downriver from Dartmouth. By the middle of the eighteenth century Abenakis were familiar with French Bibles and English ledger accounts.

Making common cause with the French, Abenaki warriors waged protracted guerilla warfare and held back English expansion up the Connecticut River Valley for almost eighty years. In 1747, for example, a group of Abenakis wrote or dictated a defiant letter that they stuck on a post outside Fort Number Two near Westmoreland,



FIGURE 1.5
*Unknown artist, an
Abenaki couple from one
of the mission villages on
the St. Lawrence, 19th
century, watercolor on
paper. Archives of the
City of Montreal.*

New Hampshire. Knowing there had been complaints about the costs of defending the frontier, they said, they had undertaken to reduce those expenses “by killing & taking Captive the people & driving them off & firing their fortification.” They had been so successful that the English now needed to spend only about half the money they had formerly expended! Four warriors signed the “petition” as “your very humble and obsequious servants.”⁴¹

Odanak, about halfway between Montreal and Quebec in Canada, emerged as a Catholic mission village and refugee center for displaced Native peoples in the seventeenth century. During the wars of the eighteenth century many Abenakis from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine migrated to the northern reaches of their homeland and took up residence in the village, which became a center of resistance to English expansion. An English captive described Odanak in the 1750s as a village of about forty buildings and a church, with some of the houses built of stone.⁴² But in 1759 Robert Rogers’ New Hampshire rangers attacked and burned Odanak, and Britain’s defeat of the French in the so-called French and Indian War (1754–63) deprived the Abenakis of their ally.

Meanwhile, English colonists from Massachusetts and Connecticut pushed north, displacing more Abenakis. Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire (1741–66) issued grants for about fifty townships east of the Connecticut River and

another one hundred fifty on the west side in what is now Vermont. In 1761 alone, seventy-eight new townships were granted, including Hanover, Lebanon, Hartford, and Norwich in “the New Country Commonly known by the general Name of Cohos,” that is, the upper Connecticut Valley. Settlement immediately followed those grants. Between 1760 and 1774, one hundred new towns were settled in New Hampshire and seventy in Vermont. During that time, the non-Indian population in all of northern New England increased from perhaps 60,000 to 150,000; as part of this regional upsurge, the number of English settlers in the upper Connecticut Valley jumped from a few hundred to several thousand.⁴³ The newcomers began clearing forests and transforming the landscape into a world of fields and fences.⁴⁴ The year Dartmouth received its charter, Britain’s secretary of state for the colonies warned that the influx of settlers was causing such destruction of forests in what is now Vermont that the Royal Navy’s supply of timber for masts was threatened.⁴⁵ In later years, the lumber industry took an even heavier toll.

Thus the tables abruptly turned. Only a dozen years after the Abenakis stopped carrying off English children as captives, Wheelock and his agents were recruiting Abenaki children as students. Some English children taken captive had lived willingly in Abenaki communities, but most of the young Abenakis who came to Wheelock’s school stayed there reluctantly at best.

However, not all of Wheelock’s Native students returned home to stay the first chance they got, and several saw more of the world than he did. In 1765 Wheelock sent Occom to England to raise money for the new college he planned to establish “in the heart of the Indian Country.” Occom was the first Native American clergyman to visit Britain, and he was a hit. He delivered more than three hundred sermons in England and Scotland and attracted large congregations. In all, he helped to raise £12,000, “the largest amount collected through direct solicitation by any American institution in the colonial era.”⁴⁶ Tobias and John Shattuck, Narragansett brothers who had attended Wheelock’s Charity School, sailed to Britain in 1768 to represent their tribe’s land claims to the colonial government; Tobias died of smallpox in Edinburgh.⁴⁷ Mohegan Joseph Johnson entered Wheelock’s school as a boy of seven; he left when he was still a teenager and went to Oneida country as a schoolteacher. Then he spent two years in wandering and hard living that included a yearlong sea voyage to the West Indies, which took him to Antigua, Grenada, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. At twenty-one, he returned to his Mohegan home and to Christianity. He married Occom’s daughter and received his license to preach at Dartmouth in August 1774.⁴⁸ Joseph Brant (fig. 1.6) traveled to London in 1775 and again in 1786; he met the king and queen, made friends in high places, and enjoyed the London nightlife with the Prince of Wales. He was feared on the Revolutionary frontier as a war chief but in later life was known for his refined tastes. Visitors to his mansion on the Grand River in Ontario after the war were waited on by servants dressed in



FIGURE 1.6
Joseph Brant in later life. John T. Bowen (ca. 1801–56?), after Charles Bird King (1785–1862), Portrait of Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant, 1742–1807), 1838, hand-colored lithograph, published in Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, History of the Indian Tribes of North America, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: F. W. Greenough), 1838–44. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Gift of Commander and Mrs. Charles Walkley, Class of 1938; PR.980.13.

livery, drank fine wines and Madeira, and ate by candlelight.⁴⁹ Other former students of Wheelock — Samson Occom, Daniel Simon, Peter Pohquonnapeet, David and Jacob Fowler, Joseph Johnson — led a movement to establish a new, self-governing community of Christian Indians at Brothertown, New York, after the Revolution. Unlike the naïve and gullible figures in the Hovey mural, these Indians, in the words of one scholar, “were experienced writers and sophisticated negotiators of the colonial world.”⁵⁰

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a new kind of Indian student began to arrive at Dartmouth — from the other side of the Mississippi. These students were the sons of Choctaws and Cherokees who had been driven west under U.S. policies of Indian removal. Uprooted from their homeland and driven to Indian Territory,

the Cherokees and Choctaws set about rebuilding their nations, their communities, and their schools. The students they sent to Dartmouth were no more “wild Indians” than Samson Occom had been. They were sometimes graduates of their own nations’ seminaries, and they pursued their education as a tool for helping to reconstruct their nations. Like the first generation of Dartmouth’s Indian students, they were well acquainted with missionaries, Bibles, books, and alcohol, and they dressed as befitted young gentlemen of the time. They also had their own ideas about what to do with what they learned at Dartmouth.

NOTES

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2. Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Joanna Brooks, ed., *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 192–94.
3. *Mamusse wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament. Ne quoshkinnumuk nashpe wuttinneumoh Christ noh asoowesit John Eliot* (Cambridge, Mass.: Printeuoop nashpe Samuel Green kah Marmaduke Johnson, 1661–63), Rauner Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
4. David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
5. Patrick Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Rachel Wheeler, *To Live upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).
6. William S. Simmons, “Red Yankees: Narragansett Conversion in the Great Awakening,” *American Ethnologist* 10 (1983), 253–71; William S. and Cheryl L. Simmons, eds., *Old Light on Separate Ways: The Narragansett Diary of Joseph Fish, 1765–1776* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982).
7. Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, revised ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 281–84; Walter Meserve, “English Works of Seventeenth-Century Indians,” *American Quarterly* 8 (1956), 264–76.
8. Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); James Axtell, “The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands,” in Axtell, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 86–99.
9. Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1650–1775* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 192.
10. Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), ch. 1.
11. Occom wrote the longer version of his narrative in response to questions raised about his identity as a recently converted Mohegan as he prepared to leave on his fund-raising tour

in England. Samson Occom, *A Short Narrative of My Life* (1768), Ms. and typescript in Rauner Library; Brooks, ed., *Collected Writings of Samson Occom*, 32, 42–43, 51–54.

12. Brooks, ed., *Collected Writings of Samson Occom*, 13–14; W. DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (1899; reprinted Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Bernd Peyer, “The Betrayal of Samson Occom,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 91 (Nov. 1998), 32; Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 84–86.

13. James Dow McCallum, ed., *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 263.

14. Dick Hoefnagel, with the collaboration of Virginia L. Close, *Eleazar Wheelock and the Adventurous Founding of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, N.H.: Hanover Historical Society/The Durand Press, 2002), 24–25; *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan et al., 15 vols. (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1921–65), 10:345, 469; Wheelock to Brainerd, Nov. 6, 1761, Dartmouth College Library, Ms. 761606.1; David McClure and Elijah Parish, *Memoirs of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock, D. D., Founder and President of Dartmouth College and Moor’s Charity School; with a summary history of the College and School, to which are added copious extracts from Dr. Wheelock’s Correspondence* (Newburyport: Edward Little and Co., 1811), 19. On Indian women at Moor’s Charity School, see Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607–1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), ch. 9.

15. Dartmouth College Library, Ms. 768211.1–2; McCallum, ed., *Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 232–33, 236–38.

16. Dartmouth College Library, Ms. 768429.1.

17. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England*, 136.

18. Laura J. Murray, ed., *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751–1776* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 54.

19. *Papers of Sir William Johnson* 9:480; 10:271, 272–74, 279–80, 309, 313–14, 344–45, 468–70.

20. James Axtell, “Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School,” in Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 94; Eleazar Wheelock, *A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity School at Lebanon, Connecticut* (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 40–42; *Papers of Sir William Johnson* 10:470, 729; 11:134, 339; Dartmouth College Library, Mss. 762470, 763120.2.

21. Lois M. Feister and Bonnie Pulis, “Molly Brant: Her Domestic and Political Roles in Eighteenth-Century New York,” in *Northeastern Indian Lives 1632–1816*, ed. Robert S. Grumet (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 303–5.

22. The five children Sarah sent to Wheelock were Emmanuel, Sarah, James, Abraham, and Daniel. McCallum, ed., *Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 219.

23. Dartmouth College Library, Ms. 773166; McCallum, ed., *Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 222.

24. William Campbell, ed., *Annals of Tryon County* (New York: Dodd, 1924), 130.

25. Francis Whiting Halsey, ed., *A Tour of Four Great Rivers: The Hudson, Mohawk, Susquehanna and Delaware in 1769, Being the Journal of Richard Smith* (New York: Scribner, 1906), 64–68, 87.

26. Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 46; Timothy Pickering Papers,

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27. The meetings with the Oneidas and Onondagas are in Dartmouth College Library, Ms. 772174.2 and Ms. 772331, and in McCallum, ed., *Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians*, 276–88.

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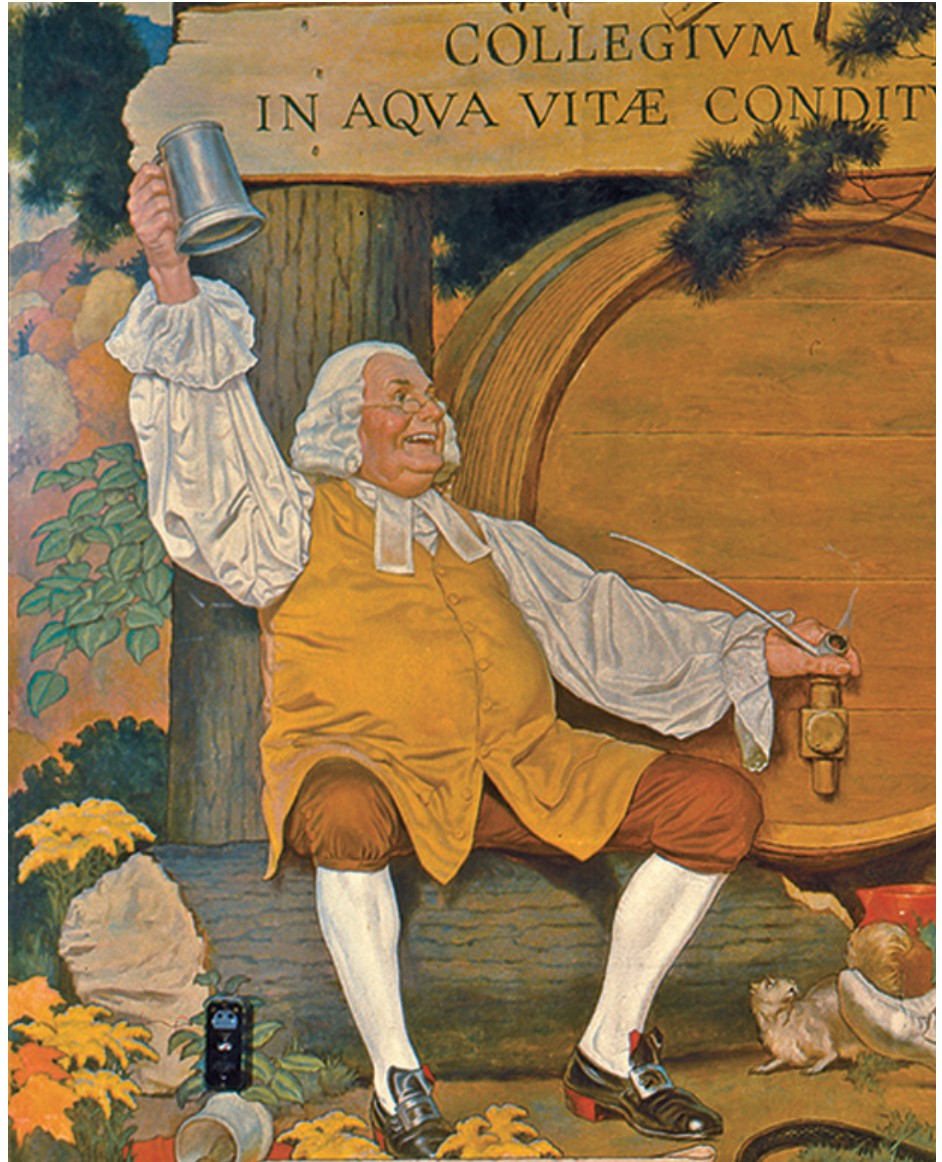


FIGURE 2.1
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 3,
right side (plate 6);
P.939.19.9.

American Bacchanal

Myth, Memory, and the “Hovey Murals”

ROBERT MCGRATH



The circumstances surrounding the commission for the Hovey Grill mural are generally well known; the artist's intentions in undertaking the commission far less so. Affronted by José Clemente Orozco's strident Expressionist aesthetic and socialist content in the Baker Library mural (1932–34), alienated alumni led by Walter Beach Humphrey, Class of 1914, petitioned Dartmouth president Ernest Martin Hopkins to counter the Mexican painter's visual polemic with “a real Dartmouth mural.”¹ Despite President Hopkins's principled defense of the Orozco mural (“a lecture in paint”²) and in the face of determined opposition to these hostile alumni, he acceded to their wishes for “one of their own” to oppose “the one-armed Dago Communist.”³

The site selected for waging this proposed culture war was the rathskeller of the newly designed Thayer dining hall. One of architect Jens Frederick Larson's most elegant buildings — it calls to mind the governor's palace in colonial Williamsburg — Thayer Hall is a prime example of the resurgent twentieth-century “Colonial Revival” in America and was, in the eyes of many at the time, an ideal setting for a cycle of murals devoted to the founding of Dartmouth College. The artist, largely self-selected for this redemptive task, was none other than loyal alumnus and occasional muralist Walter Beach Humphrey (1892–1966) who, it must be acknowledged, offered initially to undertake the project at no cost.⁴

In order to enlist support for his mural Humphrey published a quasi-whimsical poem outlining his project in a 1937 issue of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*:

SONG OF 500 GALLONS
[WHY NOT TURN NOSE PAINT
INTO REAL PAINT]

Oh give me some paint and a wall-space that ain't
All covered up yet by Oroz
Oh give me some hues that an artist would use
And a brush to apply them because

I've got some idears — have had them for years
That belong to the Hanover scene;
And I have a hunch they'd appeal to the bunch
That boasts a real love for the Green.

I'll never go "Mex," I'll picture no necks
Ground down 'neath a rebel's rough shoe;
My forms aboriginal will all be indigenous
To the haunts that as students we knew.

With exemplary candor, Humphrey gave fair warning of what he envisioned for his proposed "picturization" (cf. fig. 2.1):

I'll do a design that will never malign
All learning as skeletal dust;
I'd picture our founder in flesh that grows rounder
And rounder till buttons he'll bust.

No nothing satiric, — just let me grow lyric
With the poet who pictured the brain
And the brawn and the guts that dragged through the ruts
A barrel of rum to our plain.

The big chief who met him — we'll never forget him
Nor could Eleazar forget
The cords of the weed — still more would he heed
The red-skinned harem he met.

His first trepidation gives way to elation
At the wealth of the welcoming chief,
For I'll picture with Hovey the beautiful covey
Of squaws in a costume quite brief —

All cute little Nannies, their fronts and their fannies
Exposed to the rays of the sun

(I hope folks of virtue, the result will not hurt you
When this classical passage is done.)

Having cited his classical muse, Humphrey moved to his epiphanic conclusion:

Then right there between 'em where either may glean 'em
The five hundred courses I'll stand.
O auspicious founding! O wisdom astounding
Was e'er a curric'lum so grand!

Yea, beat in the bung! Never better was sung
The song of a college's start!
The story to tell in pictures as well
Is the thing that lies next to my heart.

So — give me some paint and a wall-space that ain't
All done on the Mexican plan,
And I'll make it sing with verses that ring
In the heart of each true Dartmouth man!

A respected illustrator of magazine covers for *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, as well as a sometimes muralist, Humphrey, who for a time shared a studio with Norman Rockwell in New Rochelle, New York, dutifully proposed a “picturization” of poet Richard Hovey’s beloved college drinking song “Eleazar Wheelock” for the rathskeller mural. Hovey, Class of 1885, had composed the college alma mater and is still considered the poet laureate of Dartmouth:

Oh. Eleazar Wheelock was a very pious man:
He went into the wilderness to teach the Indian.
With a *Gradus ad Parnassum* a Bible and a drum,
And five hundred gallons of New England rum.

Chorus: Fill the bowl up! Fill the bowl up!
Drink to Eleazar, and his primitive Alcazar,
Where he mixed drinks for the heathen
In the goodness of his soul.

The big chief that met him was the Sachem of the Wah-hoo-wahs.
If he was not a big chief, there was never one you saw who was:
He had tobacco by the cord, ten squaws and more to come,
But he never yet had tasted of New England rum.

Eleazar and the big chief harangued and gesticulated.
They founded Dartmouth College and the big chief matriculated.



FIGURE 2.2
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1,
right side (plate 2);
P.939.19.3.

Eleazar was the faculty, and the whole curriculum
Was five hundred gallons of New England rum.

Faithfully inscribed in pseudogothic lettering (considered appropriate for a rathskeller) beneath each of four panels, Hovey’s song — presently consigned to institutional oblivion — was visually realized by Humphrey between 1937 and 1939 with a loose commitment to its verbal content.⁵ His visual solutions (both formal and ideational), for example, rely more on inherited pictorial tropes than on Hovey’s verses.

For starters Humphrey did not undertake *buon fresco*, in conformity with the Mexican muralists, but chose instead the normative American practice of painting canvases that are, in turn, glued to the wall (*marouflage*). Another impression afforded by the mural cycle is that of each panel as a section of an unrolled scroll, almost medieval in the visual alliance between word and image. While the text, together with the attendant borders, affirms the architectural plane of the wall, the narrative pictures occupy a shallow, fictive space that recalls pictorial strategies first developed by medieval illuminators and wall painters (fig. 2.2).⁶

Several broad cultural currents, fashionable at the time, best account for Humphrey’s hard-edged realist imagery. First, and perhaps foremost, was a virulent aversion to Orozco’s perceived modernism as stridently articulated in Humphrey’s doggerel published in the *Alumni Magazine*. By espousing cultural nationalism and deploring “the curse of French culture” — jingoist critic Thomas Craven’s xenophobic formulation — Humphrey was giving voice and form to widespread cultural biases of the era.⁷

The “American Renaissance” and the “Colonial Revival” are two resurgent, contemporaneous cultural movements under which Humphrey’s mural is best understood. The first designation is evident in that Humphrey’s “anecdotal classicism” is firmly grounded in Italian Renaissance pictorial conventions ranging from classical nudity to heroic poses. His well-modeled, seminude Indians descend ultimately from Michelangelo’s *ignudi* on the Sistine ceiling at the Vatican, while his female figures have been distilled through the cultural alembic of Florentine Mannerism. The “squaws” in panel two (see plate 4), engagingly posed fore and aft as framing elements as well as spearheads (*repoussoir*) for the spectator’s gaze, consciously deploy the compositional strategies of Mannerist frescoes as seen, for example, in Perino del Vaga’s (1500–1547) 1545 *Sala Paolina* in Rome’s Castel Saint’Angelo (fig. 2.3). By way of marked contrast to the Mannerist-derived *figura serpentinata*, the chubby persona of Eleazar Wheelock is configured as an eighteenth-century divine from wig to britches (see fig. 2.1). In this guise he is the altered progeny of the only known portrait of Dartmouth’s College’s founder, Joseph Steward’s 1793–96 posthumous representation of the Congregational minister (fig. 2.4). Decidedly less sober than



FIGURE 2.3
Decorative figures.
 Perino del Vaga
 (1501–47), Sala Paolina,
 1545, fresco. Castel
 Sant'Angelo, Rome.

Steward's divine, Humphrey's jovial Eleazar appears through the device of simultaneous narration — a convention common to comic book illustration — in most every panel, advancing the narrative from anxiety (plates 1 and 2) to cordiality (plate 3) through inebriation (plates 6 and 7).

The juxtaposition of pseudomedieval lettering and banding with Renaissance-derived plastic forms produces a potentially discordant affect that the artist sought to resolve through color harmonies. The season is early fall, and the autumnal palette of muted yellows, oranges, light greens, and grays informs the whole (fig. 2.5). The

FIGURE 2.4
Joseph Steward
(1753–1822), Portrait
of The Reverend
Eleazar Wheelock,
1793–96, oil on canvas.
Hood Museum of Art,
Dartmouth College:
Commissioned by the
Trustees of Dartmouth
College; P.793.2.



golden hue of the inscribed scroll is picked up in the costumes of Wheelock and the Indians, providing an overall chromatic unity that effectively mediates any divide between text and image.

Among the many influences operating on Humphrey's diverse aesthetic is the work of two important muralists of the 1930s whose paintings were surely well known to him. The first is Dean Cornwell (1892–1960), a leading illustrator and the most prolific muralist of the period, whose wall paintings are found nationwide.⁸ Among his most important commissions are the murals for New York's Warwick Hotel, executed for William Randolph Hearst between 1937 and 1938 on the theme of Sir Walter Raleigh's voyage of discovery to Virginia. From Cornwell, Humphrey learned how to organize complex figural compositions and the necessity of making careful preliminary drawings. Discrete, classically derived poses for Indians, such as the provocatively bare-bottomed Native in the foreground of the Roanoke Island scene and the chieftain with an extended arm of greeting, also appear in Humphrey's pictorial repertoire of stock formulas for the representation of Native Americans.⁹

An equally vital source of inspiration for Humphrey belongs to an earlier generation and can be seen in the early twentieth-century work of the Cornish, New Hampshire, painter Maxfield Parrish (1870–1966). Another prolific muralist, Parrish, unlike Cornwell, taught Humphrey how to stress the architectonic character of mural painting by the deployment of strong vertical elements, either natural or



FIGURE 2.5
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1,
left side (plate 1);
P.939.19.1.*

architectural, in the interest of affirming the planar flatness of the wall. In such magisterial wall paintings as the *Old King Cole* of 1906 in the bar of the St. Regis Hotel, also in New York, Humphrey would have seen how strong verticals maintain the integrity of the wall to which the paintings are applied.¹⁰ This is a lesson in Parrish's "frieze aesthetic" that Humphrey fully assimilated and for which Cornwell, with his spatial, pictorial compositions, offered no coherent model. Within the shallow space of his mural Humphrey was able to foreground his narrative without recourse to deep perspectives or distanced vanishing points that might divert the spectator's eye from the frontal plane.

Also derived from Parrish, as well as his friend and mentor Norman Rockwell, is a quality of whimsical insouciance (if at times bordering on the bizarre) that is everywhere palpable in the Hovey mural. Humphrey is particularly indebted to Rockwell for his magazine illustrations in which "situation pictures" (cf. Leyendecker, fig. 5.3), requiring the spectator to supply the outcome, occur frequently.

In each of the instances provided above, especially the murals, the artists were employing Renaissance poses and Neoclassical aesthetics in order to position their paintings within the grand tradition and thereby enhance the cultural status of their work. This affect is known as the “American Renaissance” and is allied with a corollary movement, the “Colonial Revival.” Both movements, the first concerned with formal means and the latter with narrative content, figured prominently in the culture wars of the 1930s. Though the lines are often arbitrarily drawn, Humphrey was clearly devoted to the regressive politics of the “Colonial Revival.” At base an antimodernist retreat from the insecurities of industrialism, the “Colonial Revival” began in the late nineteenth century and attained its most complex expression in the 1930s, the era of the Great Depression.¹¹

Among the most celebrated practitioners of the twentieth-century “Colonial Revival” was Jens Frederick Larson, resident architect at Dartmouth since 1919 and designer of many of the buildings on campus.¹² Baker Library, one of Larson’s grandest achievements, is Neo-Georgian in style and capped by a loose replica of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. In point of fact, it was the disconnect between Larson’s Neoclassicism, a product of the usable past, and Orozco’s revolutionary Expressionism, housed in the same building, that disturbed many of the Mexican’s alumni-detractors. “That Orozco’s murals should arouse controversy was anticipated and desired,” responded President Hopkins to the alumni body, thereby extending the principle of academic freedom to public art.¹³

In addition to lessons learned from such celebrated muralists as Cornwell, Rockwell, and Parrish, Humphrey also drew on an inherited stock of iconographies for Indianness, developed during the nineteenth century. The hand-to-brow pose of the chieftain in panel one (see fig. 3.1), for example, derives from countless representations of the “Vanishing Race” in Romantic/Realist painting and sculpture (fig. 2.6). In shielding their eyes against the setting sun, Indians were understood to be gazing upon their ineluctable demise. Frederic Remington (1861–1909), another member of the New Rochelle art colony, frequently posed Indians before a luminous twilight intended to signify their passing. Humphrey’s reliance on this iconography surely possesses a similar meaning; Indians as avatars of nature, in this context, must assuredly yield to the imperatives of culture as represented by Wheelock.

As over and against the use of inherited formulas, Humphrey also significantly departed from the received iconography for Anglo-Indian relations. In panel two (see plate 3) Eleazar politely comes to grips with the sachem of the Wah-hoo-wahs, who with his left arm simultaneously gestures toward his bevy of nubile “squaws.” Customarily, encounters between Indians and white settlers do not take the form of an English Victorian handshake.¹⁴ Rather, in post office murals of the time commissioned by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a spatial divide between groups, denoting suspicion, generally obtains.¹⁵ To this extent, Humphrey is



FIGURE 2.6
*Bronze statue (ca. 1905)
of Chief Chocorua in
Meredith, N.H. Present
location unknown.*

remarkable for the degree of Euro-American cordiality that informs his mural and the relationship with Indians.

Humphrey, like most gainfully employed illustrators, had little use for WPA subsidies, yet his art is linked to theirs by myriad ties. Stylistically his conservative Neoclassicism is highly compatible with WPA Regionalist aesthetics. Secondly, Humphrey's concern for foundational myths and the creation of "genesis icons" finds numerous parallels on WPA-sponsored walls in federal buildings.¹⁶ As has frequently been observed, the WPA custodians of the national imaginary preferred well-sanitized recorded history to the gritty actualities of lived history.

Finally Humphrey's attraction to hypermasculine Indian males has numerous parallels in 1930s mural art.¹⁷ Assignable to the postmodern rubric of the "homo-social," if not the homoerotic, Humphrey's Indians act out a spectrum of behaviors, ranging from furtive curiosity to rambunctious male bonding.¹⁸ As Jonathan Weinberg writes, "exotic Native Americans — were allowed to act strangely and appear almost naked because of their very otherness."¹⁹

Embedded within the broader narrative is a destabilizing subtext that runs counter to the celebratory account of the founding of Dartmouth College. This can be seen in panel one where Wheelock, limply tethered to his vat of rum, arrives in the virgin wilderness. Furtive and hostile Indians observe this intrusion while a vast menagerie of animals, ranging from a roaring black bear to a bellowing bull moose, react to the disturbance of their idyllic, Edenic, world. Only a skunk appears, perhaps presciently, to welcome the itinerant divine. Positioned emphatically on the side of "nature," Indians and animals, roughly equated, observe the emissary of "culture," signified by Wheelock and his accessories. Wheelock's tentative demeanor

FIGURE 2.7
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 2,
left side (plate 3);
P.939.19.4.



contrasts sharply with another advent, that of the god Quetzalcoatl, another bestowing agent of culture and learning, in Orozco's powerful mural. The *Gradus ad Parnasum* schoolbook, grounded beside the drum (fig. 2.7), here begins its journey from being held upside down (plate 5; cf. Orozco, fig. 4.11) to object of scatological derision (plate 7).

This initial migratory episode — again shades of Orozco²⁰ — is mirrored on the opposing wall of the space by the scene of Wheelock drunkenly carousing with the chief of the Wah-hoo-wahs (plate 6). In this concluding narrative scene a large black

serpent looms phallically before the widespread legs of the sachem, who displays a painted, still dripping (bleeding?) “D” emblazoned upon his chest. The snake, symbolic of Satan and temptation, has entered the garden, glides over the discarded schoolbook, while the tree of knowledge has been chopped down to provide a seat for the two protagonists and presumably later to build classrooms.²¹ Still further intimations of Orozco, this destructive act of woodsmanship resonates with the Mexican muralist’s ax-wielding Christ. While a frisky rabbit observes the bonding ritual, the skunk, which initially welcomed Wheelock, departs the scene. Temptation in the form of alcohol rather than book learning, it would appear, has been proffered and embraced.

This disconcerting counternarrative of the desecration of the garden of Eden through the introduction of alcohol and subverted formal knowledge is further adumbrated by the poses of the “squaws” in panels two and three. Sisters under the skin, these idealized maidens bear strikingly similar physiognomies, leading to the supposition that the artist’s intent was to provide a 360-degree view of the perfect female. Inflected by Mannerist aesthetics, as well as a distinct aura of contemporaneous pinup porn kitsch, the central figure in the right side of panel two (fig. 2.8), posed frontally and disrobing before our eyes, is derived from countless Renaissance representations of Eve reaching for the fruit of knowledge.²² Grasping a feather fan, rather than plucking an apple, the Indian/Eve further fortifies the postlapsarian content of Humphrey’s mural.

Ironically, when the Hovey Grill mural was unveiled in the spring of 1939, it too became an object for contumely. Apart from Dean Albert Dickerson’s concern for the zoological accuracy of the black bear who makes a cameo appearance in panel one (plate 1) — he wrote several letters to President Hopkins expressing his anxiety — the seminude Eves, mischievously cavorting in panels two and three, appear to have aroused the most fervor. “How would you like to be shown years from now,” one alumnus challenged President Hopkins, “surrounded by a lot of naked Indian girls.”²³ “Apparently unaware of the nineteenth-century Neoclassical and Orientalist legacies that allowed for the representation of nudity in religion, mythology, and the female “other” (i.e., harem girls and Indian maidens), the irate alumnus gained little traction with the president or the wider community.²⁴ Still more distressing to other loyalists was the depiction of Eleazar Wheelock as a “sort of roguish snake-oil salesman.”²⁵

What these and more recent critics have failed to grasp is that the Hovey mural, *au fond*, is not about Indians and clergymen, nor is it much concerned with historical accuracy about the founding of Dartmouth College. Rather, as has been argued elsewhere in this publication, it is at one important level a metaphor for the ideals of Dartmouth manhood, the “homosocial” as understood at the time of the mural’s execution. A clue to its deeper meaning appeared in the April 1938 issue of the

FIGURE 2.8
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 2,
right side (plate 4);
P.939.19.6.



Dartmouth Alumni Magazine, where the mural was insightfully described as “appropriate to the masculine atmosphere” of the college.

The strongest composition in the cycle (plate 7), and in many ways the most provocative, occurs in the overmantel above the grill’s fireplace and purportedly seeks to envision the chorus of Hovey’s song: “Fill the bowl up! Fill the bowl up! / Drink

to Eleazar / And his primitive Alcazar / Where he mixed drinks for the heathen in the goodness of his soul." Pride of place is afforded to this panel by the elaborate cartouche over the head of Wheelock, inscribed with the names of Eleazar, Richard Hovey, and Walter Humphrey, and by the iconic frontal pose of the chief protagonist. Wielding a ladle in his upraised right hand and cradling a loose approximation of the historic silver bowl (monteith) given in 1773 by royal governor John Wentworth to Dartmouth to commemorate the college's first commencement, Wheelock appears as a godlike figure, hierarchically dominant, dispensing largesse to mortals. Among the mortals is a beanie-capped, limp feathered, inebriate freshman (fig. 2.9) — he makes his initial appearance in panel one (fig. 2.10) — grasping the tankard into which the pouring rum is partly captured, some spilling onto the downturned *Gradus ad Parnassum*. In this connection Wheelock is depicted as symbolically urinating from the silver bowl into the pewter mug. This transgressive, anti-intellectual gesture, perhaps found humorous at the time, calls to mind Dean Cornwell's urinating seaman in the Raleigh Room of New York's Warwick Hotel. The big chief, still bleeding green, now sports around his neck (in lieu of the earlier bear-tooth necklace) the emblems of the Green Key honor society, founded at Dartmouth in the early 1920s (see fig. 4.16).²⁶

Among many sources, one of the closer analogies with Humphrey's magisterial Wheelock is Horatio Greenough's infamous statue of George Washington as Zeus (1840), which was positioned on the east lawn of the Capitol until 1908, when it was banished to the Smithsonian.²⁷ Condemned for its seminudity and mythological aura, the statue of George Washington, together with his namesake monument, afforded the earliest examples of visual shock in American cultural history.

Humphrey's original sketch for the overmantel composition (fig. 2.11), published in the October 1937 issue of the *Alumni Magazine*, depicts a far less iconic Eleazar. Rather he appears off center in a narrative context serving "drinks for the heathen." Conspicuously absent is any suggestion of symbolic urination upon schoolbooks. Somewhere between his initial conceptions and the completed mural, Humphrey fell under the spell of a superior artist. It is argued elsewhere in this volume that Orozco's terrifying frontal figure of an ax-wielding Christ (see fig. 4.1a) was profoundly inspirational, and of this there can be little doubt; Humphrey intended a dialogue with this remarkable post-Christian icon. In a word he went "Mex." Wheelock's symbolic urination on formal education — a disavowal of his poetic intention to "never malign / All learning" — is no less transgressive than Orozco's *Gods of the Modern World* in Baker Library. Also indebted to Orozco's mural cycle is Humphrey's depiction of a great divide between an indigenous Golden Age and the dislocations produced by the encounter with Europeans and Euro-Americans. While Orozco seeks to resolve the conflict between the past and the present through the figure of modern industrial man, Humphrey leaves us with no utopian promise, only the consolations of rum.



FIGURE 2.9
Detail of the Hovey mural, chorus panel (plate 7);
 P.939.19.10.



FIGURE 2.10
Detail of the Hovey mural, panel 1, right side (plate 2);
 P.939.19.3.

An equally important source, one that casts additional light on the meaning of the entire cycle, is the persona of Bacchus and his drunken entourage as depicted in Italian Renaissance art (fig. 2.12). Andrea Mantegna's pose for the god Bacchus, reaching for a laurel wreath, for example, reverses that of Wheelock in the overmantel and mirrors that of the Indian/Eve in panel two. Through a remarkable conflation of the young god Bacchus with his fat, drunken mentor, Humphrey, arguably, has represented a ritualized American Bacchanal, together with scatological sight gags, that purports to resonate on many levels with the Dartmouth experience of the 1930s.²⁸

First there is the element of male bonding through alcohol; the "noble savage" at the right lifting his tankard is an obvious surrogate for Humphrey's ideal Dartmouth male student. The presence of available nubile maidens further suggests the normative aspirations and practices of 1930s undergraduates. In short, Humphrey's pictorial myth is less about Indians than about the previously mentioned "homosocial" ideals and aspirations of Dartmouth manhood. Indeed, by one of the strange mutations of the American imagination, it was at this cultural moment that Indians were reconfigured as embodiments of national virtue, the "onely reel Americans" to cite



FIGURE 2.11
Walter Beach
Humphrey, Study for
the Hovey Mural, ca.
1935–38, graphite and
charcoal. Hood Museum
of Art, Dartmouth
College: Gift of Walter B.
Humphrey, Class of
1914; D.965.45.11.

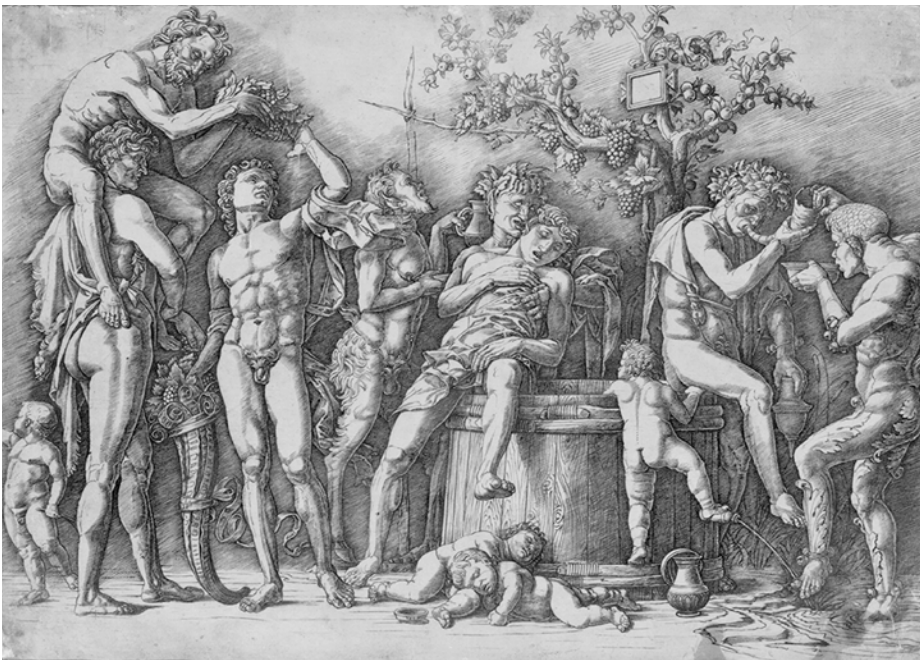


FIGURE 2.12
Andrea Mantegna
(1431–1506), Bacchanal
with a Wine Vat, ca.
1470, engraving and
drypoint. Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New
York, N.Y.: Purchase,
Rogers Fund, The
Charles Engelhard
Foundation Gift, and
The Elisha Whittelsey
Collection, The Elisha
Whittelsey Fund, 1986;
1986.1159.
www.metmuseum.org

the quaint formulation of cowboy-painter Charlie Russell.²⁹ From savage to sage, the American Indian, depotiated and confined to reservations, emerged at this time as the preeminent symbol of nationhood.

The first significant problems with an overly literal reading of the Hovey mural began to surface in 1969 during the bicentennial of the college. In a special bicentennial issue of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, John Hurd (Class of 1921) wrote a fashionably revisionist account of Eleazar Wheelock, striving to demythologize the foundational narrative of the college.³⁰ Especial targets for Hurd's screed were the Humphrey murals, on which he launched an all-out attack. He was particularly indignant at the conceptualization of Eleazar who, in the author's view, was anything but a "jolly squire." "Ponderous and pious," Hurd fumed, he possessed "a morose disposition and had no sense of humor." As for the five hundred gallons of rum, they came under even more intense scrutiny: "Even for muscular oxen, the 500 gallons would have presented a problem in transportation from Connecticut over corduroy roads and blazed trails. Not including the weight of the cask, the load would have been 4800 pounds." "Indians," he further opined, were hardly the square-jawed, muscular ideal of the murals (one senses the influence of J. C. Leyendecker's celebrated Arrow shirt man here)³¹ but "slippery, lazy, always gluttonous and often drunken."

Totally absent from Hurd's quasi-revisionist account is any genuine understanding of the broader purport of Humphrey's mural. In the overmantel scene, for example, not only was the muralist creating a foil to Orozco's iconoclastic Christ; he was also consciously discoursing with art-historical depictions of Bacchus/Silenus. In Italian Renaissance representations, to cite but one instance of bacchanalian revels (fig. 2.12), a large vat is generally present as an attribute of the god of wine. So too are heroic figures, both nude and seminude, imbibing the drink of the gods. That Humphrey was envisioning an American Bacchanal as a cultural template for the behavior of Dartmouth undergraduates is, in light of this evidence, indisputable.

Fortifying this argument is a bizarre mural painted by Humphrey in 1961 (fig. 2.13) for the Eleazar Wheelock Tavern of the newly instantiated Dartmouth Club of New York, then located in midtown Manhattan.³² Presently unlocated, the large-scale mural, titled *Eleazar's Feast*, displays numerous borrowings from his beloved Italian Mannerist and Baroque masters. The main source of inspiration appears to be Giulio Romano's *Wedding of Amor and Psyche* (fig. 2.14) in Mantua's Palazzo del Te (ca. 1528). Several poses, the tethered tiger, together with the busy, festive aura of Romano's painting resonate with Humphrey's staged Dartmouth Bacchanal.³³ Annibale Carracci's *Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 2.15) in Rome's Palazzo Farnese (1590–1600) also supplies the mood and diverse iconographies for Humphrey's creative reformulation of a Renaissance Bacchanal. For the rest, Humphrey seems to have given free rein to his often-lascivious imagination.

The apogee (or nadir, depending on the point of view) of literal readings of the

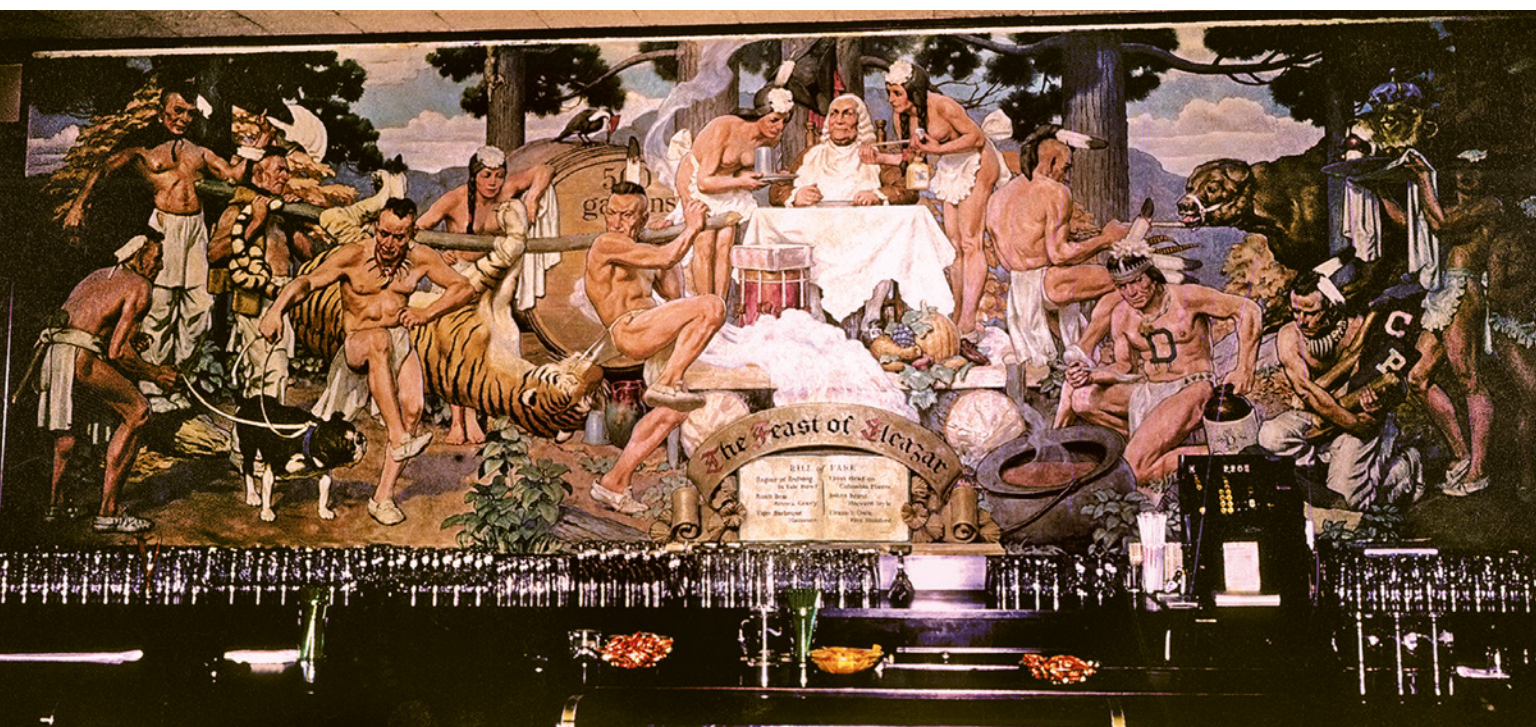


FIGURE 2.13
 Walter Beach Humphrey,
 Eleazar's Feast, ca.
 1961. Formerly in the
 Dartmouth Club in
 New York City. Present
 location unknown.



FIGURE 2.14
 Giulio Romano (ca. 1499–1546), Wedding of Amor and Psyche, ca. 1528, fresco.
 Hall of Psyche, Palazzo del Te, Mantua.



FIGURE 2.15
Annibale Carracci
(1560–1609), *Triumph
of Bacchus*, 1590–1600,
fresco. Palazzo Farnese,
Rome.

Hovey mural occurred in the early 1970s during the presidency of John Kemeny. Recommitted by Kemeny to the education of Native Americans, the institution discovered to its collective surprise that the Hovey mural was now on the wrong side of history and had become a lightning rod for dissent; its removal was “requested” by the Native American Council. Kemeny for his part declared that he was “100 percent” opposed to censorship of art but proceeded to do just that.³⁴ In the process he referred contemptuously to Humphrey as a “commercial artist,” displaying little appreciation for the artist’s formal aesthetic and layered narrative. In 1979, after some debate, the mural was paneled over and the Hovey Grill decommissioned. At almost the same moment, the Native American Council, which had not been consulted on the dismantling of the grill, decided that it did not wish to embrace censorship, or to flee from a history of bigotry and stereotyping. Professor Michael Dorris, chairman of the Native American Studies Program, gave voice to the belief that, if properly interpreted, the murals could serve as a “learning tool” for the broader community.³⁵

Dartmouth College is by no means unique with its problematic public murals. The University of Indiana, for example, acquired 1930s murals by Thomas Hart Benton depicting events from Indiana history, and installed them in a large classroom. One panel, in particular, inflamed African-American students for its depiction of a group of behooded Ku Klux Klansmen. Even after it was explained that Benton was criticizing, rather than valorizing, the clansmen, protests did not subside. After

considerable deliberation by the administration, it was recently decided to keep the murals exposed but to insist that an explanatory video be shown in class at the beginning of each semester.

WPA post office murals of the 1930s from Maine to California have provided additional fodder for those who choose to judge the past by the standards of the present.³⁶ Paintings, like all works of art, are, to be sure, persisting events to the extent that they hold meanings for both past and present. Assuredly there are no limits to interpretation of the Hovey mural, and its meaning will continue to evolve along with human history. For the moment, at least, public murals depicting Indians survive as extremely “anxious objects.”³⁷

On the wall of a courthouse in Boise, Idaho, there is a 1930s WPA mural depicting an Indian about to be lynched by two cowboys. Oglesby, Illinois, is the site of a post office mural depicting fighting Indians with exposed genitals. In the Saint Johnsville, New York, Post Office there is a Depression-era mural by Jirayr Zorthian, *Trading Post Scene*, with grotesque caricatures of drunken Indians. Still closer to home there is a mural in the Durham, New Hampshire, Post Office depicting a half-naked, torch-bearing Indian kneeling in the snow and contemplating an attack on a colonial home. Apologists for this mural claim that it signifies the historical fact of Indian raids in the region during King Philip’s War. To the credit of everyone involved in the above-cited instances, and despite the controversies aroused by the paintings, no one had advocated their destruction or removal.³⁸

The examples provided above pale, however, when it comes to the WPA murals in the Environmental Protection Agency (Ariel Rios Building, formerly U.S. Postal Service headquarters) in Washington, D.C. Painted in 1937 by the well-known Colorado artist Frank Mechau, *Dangers of the Mail* (see fig. 3.7) has engendered more outrage than the many acres of murals painted during the Depression era.³⁹ Native American employees of the EPA are particularly incensed by a scene of heartless savages scalping nude white females. Not only is this inaccurate — Indians did not scalp live victims — exclaimed one employee, but the mural serves to create “a hostile workplace.” So concerned was the General Service Administration, custodian of the mural, that a symposium was convened to explore solutions. A panel of experts, mostly art historians, testified with considerable unanimity that history was not on the side of public censorship. Unconvinced by arguments, rational and otherwise, the Native Americans remained unanimous in their demands for removal. This it turns out is both a physical and a cultural impossibility. The GSA’s solution — if it can be called that — has been to screen the mural with explanatory labels but allow for access, thereby creating a kind of “peep show” spectacle.⁴⁰

In all the above instances the lines are clearly drawn; to cover or remove public murals is defined as an act of unpardonable vandalism or censorship. The banning of images, according to this view, cannot and should not erase the pains of historical



FIGURE 2.16
*The Cruise Room,
Oxford Hotel, Denver,
Colorado, ca. 1935,
now destroyed.*

reality. Before rushing to judgment, however, cases can be adduced in which the boundaries are less clear. A recent mural at San Francisco State University, celebrating the career of Malcolm X, was bordered with dollar signs, Stars of David, and skulls and crossbones. Public outrage eventuated in the removal of the mural and its replacement with a less contentious portrait of Malcolm X.

Another example, this one from the Depression era, is equally instructive. In the Cruise Room bar of Denver's Oxford Hotel (fig. 2.16), a mural cycle was painted during the mid-1930s depicting traditional toasts of various European nations. The German panel, titled *Prosit*, featured nothing less than a heroic portrait of Adolph Hitler. With America's entrance into World War II, *der Führer's* effigy was removed from the bar and, according to local sources, burned publicly in the street.⁴¹ No voice, as far as can be ascertained, was raised to protest this public act of iconoclasm.

The lesson to be derived from these examples is that censorship depends largely on whose ox is being gored. Postmodernism, with its heightened tolerance for all forms

of deviance from societal norms, will no doubt allow history, if it has not already done so, to catch up with Humphrey's mural cycle. In the meanwhile the Hovey Grill paintings, for all their perceived vices and certain virtues, have remained out of sight for most of a generation.⁴² Their use for teaching and dialogue will afford this mural new life, hopefully based more on historic context than presentist response.

NOTES

1. *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 30, no. 7 (April 1938), 4.

2. The fullest account of the Baker Library controversy and Hopkins's role in defending Orozco is Laurence P. Hurlburt, *The Mexican Muralists in the United States* (University Press of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1989), 133ff.

3. Letter from President Hopkins to Sidney C. Hayward, dated August 10, 1937 (Rauner Library Archives, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.). According to institutional lore President Hopkins gave only one piece of advice in 1945 to his successor John Sloan Dickey: "Never have anything to do with murals," a caveat that Dickey followed to the letter. At least one enthusiastic member of the Dartmouth faculty wrote in the November 1932 *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* that he hoped that Orozco's mural would be "the beginning of a tradition that would decorate Dartmouth walls year by year with the murals of great contemporary artists in this most permanent of forms." The only mural cycle painted since is from the late 1980s and is to be found in Cutter/Shabazz Hall, home of the African-American Society and another Jens Frederick Larson building. Depicting the career of Malcolm X, the Cutter/Shabazz murals by Florian Jenkins (1940–) infer that whites were responsible, at least metaphorically, for his assassination. As far as is known, there has been no public protest against this contention. The most thorough account of art controversies in American history is Michael Kammen's *Visual Shock: A History of Art Controversies in American Culture* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2006).

4. In the end, at President Hopkins's insistence, Humphrey received almost \$9,000 from Dartmouth, only slightly less than the \$10,000 paid to Orozco over a period of two years.

5. Humphrey was much admired for his visual lettering. When his friend Norman Rockwell required a verbal inscription at the base of his *Yankee Doodle* mural (1937) for the bar of the Nassau Inn in Princeton, New Jersey, he hired Humphrey to undertake the lettering, claiming that this was a unique skill that he lacked. For an insightful discussion of the *Yankee Doodle* mural see Karal Ann Marling, *Norman Rockwell* (Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1979), 54–55.

6. Cf. Herbert L. Kessler, *Neither God nor Man: Words, Images and the Medieval Anxiety about Art* (Rombach Verlag, Freiburg um Breisgau, 2007).

7. Cf. Matthew Baigell, "The Beginnings of the American Wave and the Depression," *The College Art Journal* 82, no. 4 (Summer 1968).

8. For Cornwall's prolific career see Patricia Janis Broder, *Dean Cornwall: Dean of Illustrators* (Collector's Press, Portland, Ore., 1978). Cf. 133 for reproductions of the Warwick Hotel murals. The scene of *Raleigh Receiving His Charter from the Queen in 1584*, interestingly enough, has been discreetly cropped in order to eliminate the detail of a urinating seaman.

9. Cornwall's influence on Humphrey is particularly evident in the latter's murals for the Warren County Municipal Center in Lake George, New York. The Lake George paintings, depicting Revolutionary War heroes and which were executed in the 1950s, rely almost slavishly

in facture, composition, and chromatic scheme on Cornwell's 1937 depictions of Tennessee historical figures in the Davidson County Courthouse in Nashville, Tennessee. For the Davidson County murals see Broder, *Dean Cornwell*, 46–47. Humphrey's Lake George wall paintings have not been widely published and are most accessible through a small brochure issued by the local historical society. Cornwell and Humphrey also have in common institutional censorship of their murals. When Hearst attempted to renege on his contract with Cornwell, the latter painted several obscene passages in the Warwick mural including a seaman urinating on Queen Elizabeth. When Hearst relented to Cornwell's extortionist practices, the latter painted out the stream of urine but left the seaman's exposed genitals. For this, and an assortment of disguised "obscurities" within the murals, they were covered for almost forty years before their recent restoration and unveiling in the trendy new "Murals 54" restaurant.

10. Parrish originally executed the *Old King Cole* mural for the Knickerbocker Hotel (now condominiums) in New York. In 1932 it was moved to the St. Regis Hotel, where it currently resides. For a view of this mural in situ at the Knickerbocker see Sylvia Yount, *Maxfield Parrish, 1870–1966* (Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1999), 93. Legend has it that *Old King Cole* is a portrait of a flatulent John Jacob Astor IV, who mandated his presence in the mural. The jesters are twin portraits of Maxfield Parrish who, together with the guards, react amusingly to King Astor's olfactory faux pas.

11. Cf. *The Colonial Revival in America*, ed. Alan Axelrod (W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1985).

12. For Larson's career see Rod A. Miller, "Jens Frederick Larson and the Colonial Revival," in *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. R. G. Wilson, S. Eyring, and K. Marotta (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2006), 53ff.

13. Quoted in Hurlburt, *Mexican Muralists*, 85.

14. In 1930s mural iconography a handshake generally signifies the ratification of a treaty as in the example of the Poughkeepsie, New York, Post Office mural by Gerald Foster that depicts the ratification of the Constitution. Later critics of the Hovey murals understandably misinterpreted this panel as an exchange of land for liquor.

15. See for example Gerald Foster's 1938 mural for the Poughkeepsie, New York, Post Office, *Indian Resting Spot 1640*, or Caroline Rahland's *Father Lemoyne Trying to Convert Indians on Pathfinder Island*, Post Office, Fulton, New York (ca. 1936), where discrete separation is maintained. For Foster's mural see Karal Ann Marling, "A Note on New Deal Iconography: Futurology and the Historical Myth," *Prospects* 4 (1979), 420–40. For Rahland's *Father Lemoyne*: <http://www.moric.org/oneida/sainte>.

16. The seminal work here is Karal Ann Marling's *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the Great Depression* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1982). Humphrey, for example, was not alone in positioning the unadorned backsides of Native Americans near the center of important compositions. Apart from Dean Cornwell's rear-view Indian at the Warwick Hotel, there remains the infamous 1939 mural by Paul Cadmus in the Richmond, Virginia, Post Office (since relocated to the Court House Annex) that juxtaposed the naked buttocks of a Indian with a suggestive fox head genital covering. The penis-like fox head was forcibly altered and replaced by a limp fox skin. Unremarked by the authorities at the time were two embracing Indians enframing one half of the composition. A partly bare-breasted Pocahontas, striving to save John Smith, closed the composition and completed the

narrative. Indeed, this transgressive mural aroused minimal opposition at the time, as the nudes were Indians. See Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America*, 283ff., for an amusing account of this commission. Weinberg (vide infra, note 17) persuasively interprets the oppositional composition as denoting a contest between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

17. Cf. Jonathan Weinberg, "I Want Muscle: Male Desire and the Image of the Worker in American Art of the 1930s," in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, ed. A. Anreus, D. Linden, and J. Weinberg (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 2006), 115ff.

18. The concept of the "homosocial," which has allowed art and literary historians to navigate stormy waters without too much anxiety, was first developed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Men and Male Homosocial Desire* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1985). The "homosocial" is defined as the "hegemonic interchanges and negotiations between males that exclude women." Women, though often demeaningly subordinate in Humphrey's murals, nonetheless are central to the intended narrative.

19. Weinberg, "I Want Muscle," 118.

20. While Orozco's Dartmouth cycle is brilliantly dialectic — beginning with human migration and terminating in spiritual migration — Humphrey's mural, with minor exceptions, is a linear narrative.

21. Snakes also play a significant role in Orozco's cycle as symbols of aggression and attributes of Quetzacoatl. They are not, however, depicted in a Christian context.

22. The closest figural analogy with Humphrey's Indian/Eve is found in the many paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder of the Temptation of Eve. Cf. Gunnar Heydenreich, *Lucas Cranach, the Elder* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2007), fig. 178.

23. Quoted in Charles E. Widmayer, *Hopkins of Dartmouth* (University Press of New England, Hanover, N.H., 1977), 184.

24. Humphrey's chief mentor at New York's Art Students League was the renowned teacher Frank Vincent DuMond (1865–1951). DuMond was well known for his erotic nudes, a sensibility that was not lost on Humphrey. For DuMond see *The Harmony of Nature: The Art and Life of F. V. DuMond* (Old Lyme, Conn.: Florence Griswold Museum catalogue, 1990). See especially DuMond's triptych *Garden of Eden* (1904) in the Griswold Museum for a number of poses that dialogue with Humphrey's female nudes.

25. Quoted in Willem Lange, "The Murals Everyone's Mad About," *Yankee Magazine* 48 (September 1984), 105.

26. Humphrey is reported to have visited the History Museum in Albany, New York, in order to research eastern woodland Indian costumes and jewelry. Nonetheless Plains Indian artifacts in the form of war bonnets, bear-tooth necklaces, and the like made their way into the Hovey mural (vide infra chapter 5 by Melanie Benson Taylor and figs. 5.5–5.7).

27. The sculpture is housed today, somewhat incongruously, in the Smithsonian American History Museum.

28. Disguised scatology in public murals flourished during the 1930s. Among leading muralists of the era Cornwall, Parrish, and Cadmus all engaged in this sophomoric pictorial behavior. Derived from such Renaissance masters as Albrecht Dürer and Andrea Mantegna, American muralists took scatology to a new, decidedly cruder, level.

29. The locus classicus for a discussion of this reconceptualization of the Indian's status in

the national imaginary is Walter Benn Michael's *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism* (Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., 1995).

30. John Hurd, "Eleazar: The Man behind the Myth," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 62, no. 3 (December 1969), 25ff.

31. Leyendecker was another member of the New Rochelle artistic mafia. For the canonic Arrow shirt man see Michael Schau, *J. C. Leyendecker* (Watson-Guptill, New York, 1974).

32. Between 1938 and 1942 the Dartmouth Club of New York City was located at 30 East 37th Street in the old J. P. Morgan residence. In 1961 the club was relocated to the Commodore Hotel (now the Grand Hyatt), 109 East 42nd Street, at which point in time Humphrey executed the "Eleazar's Feast" mural for the Tavern Room. In 1977 Donald Trump acquired the hotel, gutted the first several floors, clad the older brick structure in glass, and leased it to the Hyatt hotel chain. The mural, alas, fell victim to the 1977 remodeling and attempts to document its survival have failed.

33. The tiger, an essential attribute of bacchanalian triumphs but distinctly out of place for American Indians, here refers to Princeton and its mascot and not to the mythologically mandated return of Bacchus from India. The "Bill of Fare" at the base of the composition contains the following culinary specialties: (*left*) Ragout of Bulldog in Yale bowl; Roast Bear, Brown gravy; Tiger Barbecue Nassau; (*right*) Lion's Head on Columbia Platter; Baked Beans Harvard Style; Eleazar's own five hundred.

34. Campus letter from President John G. Kemeny dated September 21, 1979 (Rauner Library Archives).

35. Quoted in Lange, "The Murals Everyone's Mad About," 120.

36. The gold standard for the discussion of WPA murals continues to be Karal Ann Marling's *Wall-to-Wall America*. For an intriguing account of recent protests against post office murals in the South see Sue Bridwell Beckham, *Depression Post Office Murals and Southern Culture: A Gentle Reconstruction* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1989).

37. Art critic Harold Rosenberg's term for works of art that possess an uncertain identity. Harold Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object: Art Today and Its Audience* (Horizon Publications, New York, 1964).

38. Such was not the fate of Canadian muralist John Chester's *Champlain Teaches Natives the Charleston*, in Toronto's Arts and Letters Club. Painted in the mid-1920s as an antidote to the Indian practice of the Sun Dance, this unusually patronizing mural was destroyed in more recent times. For a reproduction see Marilyn J. McKay, *A National Soul: Canadian Mural Painting, 1860s-1930s* (McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, 2002), fig. 41. Pierre Puvis de Chavanne's (1824-98) late nineteenth-century allegorical mural for the Sorbonne in Paris also fell partial victim to the 1968 student riots. Not unlike Humphrey's Hovey Grill mural, activist students condemned the *Allegory of the Sorbonne* as "reactionary."

39. Visit the General Services Administration website for extensive coverage of the Ariel Rios mural controversy including the proceedings of the sponsored symposium.

40. Reproduced in the March 2, 1936, issue of *Time Magazine*, the Mechau mural aroused considerable indignation at the time for the female nudity and its "girlie show version of western history." See Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America*, 249.

41. A perusal of Denver newspapers on and around December 7, 1941, turned up no journal-

istic account of this event. The German mural was replaced during the 1940s by an innocuous mural celebrating Ireland's contribution to bibulous culture.

42. Advocates for the unveiling of the Hovey mural can take encouragement from the recent example of Dean Cornwell's Warwick Hotel murals. Covered for almost forty years because of perceived and real pictorial obscenities, they have recently been restored and exposed to a largely indifferent clientele, more interested in eggs Benedict than last century's culture wars.



FIGURE 3.1
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1, right side
(plate 2); P.939.19.3.*

Walter Beach Humphrey Meets Norman Rockwell at the Last Stand Saloon

RAYNA GREEN



The Indian, in America, has a visual history. But what does an Indian look like? How did most Americans come to know, in the absence of living Indians or in spite of proximities to real Indians, how to recognize, characterize, and represent Indians? How did Walter Beach Humphrey construct *The Indian* (e.g., fig. 3.1) as he portrayed him in the “Hovey murals” at Dartmouth College (or, for that matter, how did Hovey construct the poem that accompanies the pictures)? How might the several and complex audiences for these murals, for the Dartmouth Indians so portrayed there, have come to be so loved by some, so loathed by others? Every picture, every artist, and every subject has a history and an audience, and that audience has a history. The so-called “Hovey murals,” their construction by an artist, the many audiences who have responded to that artist and their subject, tell a complex story when all the histories — of every picture, every artist, and every viewer — converge. What follows is an abbreviated visual history of *The Indian*, through space and time, the history summarized by Walter Beach Humphrey in the mural in the Hovey Grill, the history lived, loved, and loathed at Dartmouth and in the American imagination.

The Indian’s visual history delineates the way in which the representations of Indians came to be formed and acted on in American culture and history. That same visual history offers a lesson in how ideas form and take shape in popular culture. A general discussion of the process, insofar as art production works, can comment on the process through which an image might become embedded in popular cultural consciousness. Artists of the Italian Renaissance, for example, had a vast catalogue of

images and means of portraying those images at hand when they created the paintings, sculptures, and frescoes that came to be known as Renaissance art. These initial examples of what might later be understood as public art, though first commissioned by and for a very nonpublic audience of church and civic elites, drew from the repertoire of ancient, classical, biblical, and oral traditional references that encoded meaning for the client-viewers. Though each artist expanded on this repertoire, in some instances creating new versions of the images and meanings that would persist for centuries, most mirrored — in their artwork — the themes, ideas, and notions that were familiar, comforting, conforming, and reinforcing to their patrons. Their patrons understood what the artist meant by the use of certain colors, by nakedness or specific clothes, by the setting, by the positioning of bodies relative to one another, and by the “icons” that, in fact, had come to characterize the iconic. Abstract ideas such as Evil and Good, for example, found their expression in the characters and familiar stories of Devils and Angels and Saints.

Those artists who challenged the “catalogue” found themselves, just like public artists nowadays, in the midst of a disappointed outcry, an outcry that then was often accompanied by charges of heresy. Artists who wished to please their patrons stuck close to the approved catalogue of references. Those whom succeeding generations have deemed “great” took the catalogue apart, putting it back together in new ways, on their own terms. Many of them created new ways of “seeing” and new styles of producing art, all of which offered measurable standards for their successors. Their “popularity,” however, was often quite dependent on their adherence to recognizable messages through recognizable means of portrayal.

And so it goes. The generations create, build up, add to, subtract from, amend, and reinforce the cultural clichés of any intellectual and philosophical abstraction, indeed of any time period, embroidering on the various visual and oral means of expression that give the means of portrayal a certain power, an amazing longevity. Thus, “Democracy,” “Freedom,” and “Liberty” all have acquired a visual history in France, Great Britain, and eventually in America. “America” has its own visual history, as does any national identity. Whiteness and blackness, “Male” and “Female” have a visual history. Certain characters begin to embody and personify these ideas — the Irishman, the Negro, Uncle Sam, Miss Liberty, the Indian and the Indian Princess (Devils or Angels, anyone?) — and these characters, together and alone, become standard elements in the cultural catalogue in “America,” though these abstractions represent a vast accretion of elements carried down through centuries of meaning in the Western world. Even pieces of ancient artists’ catalogues come forward, into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. That’s how the Greek slave of Renaissance painting takes his Phrygian cap to America and becomes “Freedom” in the New World, who, in turn, often is pictured in the early days as an Indian. That’s how the Statue of Liberty (1886), the cartoons of Wonder Woman (1941), and the many

Indian Princesses of stage, screen, and tobacco ad (also cigar store figures) of the early to mid-nineteenth century (fig. 3.2) recall the Roman/Etruscan and Greek statuary versions of Minerva/Pallas/Athena/Diana. It's why they are all often tastefully draped and tiara-ed in vaguely Neoclassical garb (except for the latecomer cartoon Wonder Woman's red, white, gold, and blue onesie). That's how we recognize them, and why we are supposed to love them. They've got the right outfits, and their bodies, clothes (when they wear them), accoutrements, and demeanors speak to us of their authority, power, and relevance, even to our modern sensibilities. They're our girls, right alongside the various Virgins, Angels, Whores, Squaws, and Mammies that came to populate our visual imagination.

Our old friends Satan and the Angels, fallen and unfallen, have many guises. They may get amended slightly. Their styles of portrayal may change, but they carry their old identities with them to new venues, bringing the successes of those old identities forward as viable commodities for an audience ever hungry for them. Popular and public artists know what it takes to make their clients happy. Whether they are creating posters for the government or for the "Revolutionaries," creating cartoons for the editorial page, ads for the billboards, covers for the magazine, statues for the memorial park, or murals for the back of the bar, Popular and public artists pick and choose elements from the enduring pieces of iconic art. "The Indian" in our pantheon carries a heavy load of cultural baggage, some items in the baggage (signs, symbols, stereotypes, or representations) deliberately picked and unconsciously chosen from the available repertoire.

All the elements that composed our first ideas and representations of "The Indian" were shaped and formed long before any newcomer to this world ever encountered an actual Native of North America. The initial representations carried imagery through space and time from the ancient world, from folk mythologies (the Bogeyman, the Dark Man, the Devil, the Wild Man) and high art in medieval and Renaissance Europe, from the Bible and several versions of Christianity from the European twelfth century onward, and from first European encounters with native peoples of Africa and India in the fifteenth century. The add-ons, after first encounter, were shaped and formed by British relations with the Irish, by Neoclassic French philosophes and their notions about the "natural man," and by early imaginative drawings of the New World by accidental tourists and would-be naturalists. The basic catalogue of images, stereotypes, representations was encoded and sealed in the late seventeenth century, opened again in the late eighteenth century — with the formation of the United States — and again to important change after the Plains wars in the nineteenth century, or "Westerns." Perpetuated in the twentieth century by art and fashion movements, popular media, and popular social behaviors, these images endured.

We might trace the earliest, just pre- and at-the-moment-of-contact images, as



FIGURE 3.2
The Pocahontas
Chewing Tobacco, ca.
1868, chromolithograph.
Library of Congress,
Prints and Photographs
Division.

artists rendered the putative indigenous of North America as either the Dark Man (read: Savage) of the English and Christian imagination or the Natural Man (read: Noble Savage) of the French and Romantic imagination. With a little overlay of Neo-classic influence, The Indian emerges in the sixteenth-century, vaguely Michelangelesque drawings of John White, reaching its pinnacle in renderings of the half-naked, ultimately barbaric, and powerful Indian Queen. From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, America was often portrayed in art as an Indian woman, a warrior queen. She was the New World — a powerful protector of her domain. As time passed, she was stripped of her Native identity, becoming the very Anglo-European Miss Liberty. As America became less Indian, she became less Indian, lighter in color than her darker, sinister male relatives, smaller, less militant, and more Greco-Roman. “Reduced” to a Princess, she retained some of her Queenly attributes as American Mother, though complicated and confused somewhat by her antithesis, the Squaw. She persists in the continued mythologized imaginations surrounding Pocahontas (and Sacajawea), the women who gave white men the justification they needed to take Native land, though challenged in her identification with “America” by her dark and savage male relatives and their more noble and heroic brothers.

These earliest renderings of Indian women as symbol of the New World, barbaric but powerful defender and Mother-monarch of this land of abundance, migrate to the eighteenth-century emergence of the Indian as the defender of American Liberty. The Indian, in these instances, not only defends America and Liberty but is America and Liberty (fig. 3.3). The flowing draperies, helmets, weapons, eagle head, and eagle feather adornment they bear, with visual references to Greco-Roman warriors and goddesses (e.g., Diana and Minerva), are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European ways of portraying Liberty and Democracy. Yet the elements in these were then, and are now, deeply associated with Native people in North America, and were everywhere seen on visual representations of Indians from the sixteenth century forward. Neither Thomas Crawford, the sculptor of the *Statue of Freedom* on the Capitol dome, nor Auguste Bartholdi, the creator of the Statue of Liberty, would have said their statues were intended to reference Native people, but the various artistic clichés with which they constructed their embodiments of Freedom and Liberty have long been and are to date associated with real Indians, but most absurdly with The Indian of the imagination.

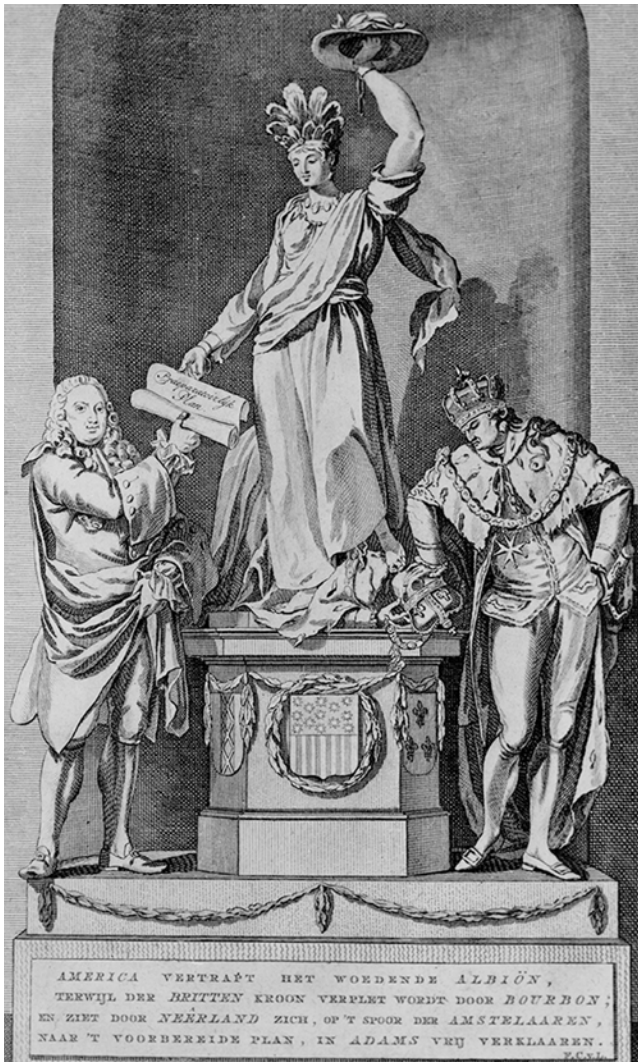


FIGURE 3-3
*G. Brouwer (active late 18th century),
after A. Borghers (active late 18th century) and
P. Wagenaar (active ca.1781–92), Holland
Recognizes American Independence, ca. 1782,
engraving. National Park Service, Franklin D.
Roosevelt Presidential Library
and Museum.*

Children and adults of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in eastern North America might have seen actual Indians — Algonquians of all sorts, Iroquois (of all sorts), and many others — in their towns and in the countryside. So, to the artistic repertoires shown universally on engravings, on banknotes, shop figures, and ship figureheads were added real elements of “Woodland” Indian attire, headgear, and body treatments, mixed with the old classic and Caribbean garb of tobacco-leaf skirts, high upright feather crowns, and Roman spears in hand. The Native warrior’s bow began to replace the centurion’s spear, but the classical and New World references remained for quite a while. Some might have seen their fathers and male relatives dress as Indians (in real local or imaginary clothing) for political actions (remember that Tea Party?), and some might have seen Indians incarnated as signs

of American Liberty and Democracy in political cartoons, political posters, and newspaper engravings.

Increasingly enshrined in a rich oral tradition (itself a grab bag of ancient and newly evolving mythologies) of jokes, proverbs, tales, songs, religious tracts, and sermons, The Indian is enhanced, enriched, and embroidered upon in the visual history. But as real Indians become associated with conflict, particularly over land and resources, the “good” Indian migrates further toward the highly symbolic and abstract; the “bad” Indian becomes the everyday Indian. Indians came to stand in the way of Liberty, instead of standing for it. In the early to late nineteenth century in the East, as Indians died of disease in large numbers and as they were pushed farther and farther away from non-Indians, fewer “Americans” saw “real” Indians. Only those easterners who fought them and removed them from their former lands saw them, and those they saw were savages, the enemies of the New Order. For others, increasingly, they were only symbolic. These “Indians” appeared in barroom paintings, pictorial and sculptural advertisements (for corn products, medicines, and tobacco), in political cartoons, in illustrations for popular literature of the times, on the theatrical stage, and once again as characters in the ongoing and expanding business of “playing Indian” on the popular stage, as well as in the business of fraternal, social, and political organizations whose use of Indians preceded and foreshadowed The Indian as mascot. The Improved Order of Redmen, for example, taking their cue from the Sons of Liberty and their Tea Party Indians, used pseudo-Indian characters, roles, and actions as their touchstones for organization and identity.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, America had fully laid claim to the abstraction of “Indians” as a dualistic symbolic system of identity available in a wide range of visual and oral media. In the late nineteenth century, with Indian removal a great success, with the end of the Plains wars and the opening of reservations, the repertoire of The Indian — how he dresses, what he looks like, and how he behaves — expands immensely, with the paradigm-altering addition of Plains Indians as primary actors in old representational styles. In popular literature, advertisement, decorative art, popular painting, and in photography, the Plains Indian becomes the central character on and in the American landscape.

Buffalo Bill’s 1883 Wild West Show (fig. 3.4) introduced the “wild, civilized and savage races” of the American West to America (and ultimately to Europe, where they were quite well received). Fully bonneted and befeathered, (Roman) or hawk nosed, painted-pony-mounted Indians (mostly Sioux and Pawnee) attacked a wagon full of settlers and were driven off by cavalry. Indians attacked a settler’s cabin and were driven off by Buffalo Bill and cowboys. They restaged historic events such as “Custer’s Last Stand.” Indians sang and danced around a “tepee.” In 1910 at Glacier Park, Montana, Cheyennes and Blackfeet made tepees, rode, shot arrows, and did



FIGURE 3.4
Buffalo Bill's Wild West
and Congress of Rough
Riders of the World,
1899, poster. Library of
Congress, Prints and
Photographs Division.

beadwork for tourists who had come to the park via the Great Northern Railway. Plains Indians stand for and *are* Western America; they also stand in for the “disappeared” Indians of Eastern America.

In the Wild West Show and its snake-oiled relatives — fairs, circuses, expositions, national parks, and regional tourist sites — Indians do play themselves, though they must all be Plains Indians in their dress and behavior. Everyone gets a war bonnet as daily apparel; just as often, everyone is issued a wig with long, black braids. Even tourists like Albert Einstein who wish to be posed with Indians must pose wearing their own newly acquired or photographer’s war bonnet next to a Hopi, Navajo, or Apache wearing a war bonnet. When Iroquois and Algonquian Natives (men and women) took to the stage, or to the political and performance circuit, they did so dressed and equipped as Plains Indians. The material culture of this new world, a world in which Plains Indians and their imitators and imitations are ever the hottest commodities, is composed of serious paintings and sculptures (and their popularized knockoffs in calendar and barroom art), souvenir jewelry, items of serious decorative art (and knickknacks), items of clothing, domestic utensils, furniture, photographs, print and 3-D advertising, public buildings (hotels, gas stations), and postcards, all of which defined and perpetuated a visual vocabulary of the West and Indians that persists to date. All Native dwellings became tepees, no more the lodges and longhouses of the early eastern Indians. In newer editions of *Song of Hiawatha*, the illustrations show the formerly Woodland Hiawatha wearing a headdress and

living in a tepee. The sachems of the past become chiefs, especially Big Chiefs, and “Chief” becomes, in everyday language, the most common nickname for any Native man. A whole new cast of Indian characters emerges, complete with exaggerated Plains features, most notably the hawk or Roman nose, long black braids, and complete Plains outfits with a full-feathered headdress (see fig. 3.1) for males and beaded, fringed clothing for men and women. Though their new, often half-naked state was used to convey, not innocence and “natural” as previously understood, but a menacing and inviting sexuality. The Indian as Plains warrior, savage, fighting forever against the western American heroes (cowboys and cavalry) through their muraled daily appearance over the bars of America. Cassilly Adams’s well-known painting of “Custer’s last stand” was later distributed, as a poster mural, to every bar in America by Anheuser-Busch.

While the tourist rage for the American Southwest, some residual passion for Hiawatha, and some otherworldly experiences with non-Plains Indians still yield a few popular vocabulary and material culture items that are not Plains (to wit: wampum, canoes, totem poles, and wigwams), these and Plains (pseudo and real) usages are reinforced by movies, toys, commercial advertising, parades, holiday celebrations (see, e.g., figs. 5.2 and 5.3), tourist postcards, pageants, plays, live battlefield reenactments, schoolbook illustrations, popular sculptures, and cartoons. Just as often as not, they are all mixed together in the cultural confusion that typifies the later image of The Indian. Plains Indians stand by totem poles and paddle in birch-bark canoes.

These portrayals are later encoded by the movies and in the newly emergent popular literature (dime novels). In these media, the stories are about Indian last stands and the conquering cowboy or cavalry hero. The Noble Warrior, begun in Fenimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans*, now alive only in Plains modes, is memorialized in popular imagery such as in James Earle Fraser’s well-known *End of The Trail*. They live on only insofar as white men play them, in films, of course, in fraternal clubs (Arizona’s Smoki People, the Boy Scouts’ Order of the Arrow, the YMCA’s Indian Guides), and finally, and most significantly, as and in mascots. Curiously, these mascots — as they emerge — are once again hybrids of images from different places and times: large, handsome, physically imposing “Indians” of the Greco-Roman sort, some with earlier Algonquian and Iroquoian imagery attached to their Plains warrior persona, a cross between Cooper’s evil Magua and the bravery and never-give-up resistance of Sitting Bull. The Noble Savage becomes a mascot, quite domesticated. He is a Savage (as some teams call him) in his incarnation as strong man triumphant over the “enemy” teams.

For the “disappeared” real Indians of the East, one sort of representation of them and their past, other than playing at being Sioux, remains open. Indians in New England, generally defined, proscribed and confined by their seventeenth-century relationship to Puritans, Pilgrims, and colonial warfare, exist in the present only in

relationship to their mythologized seventeenth-century past. That existence, forever embodied in the dramatic, imagined tableaux of the First Thanksgiving, is reduced to the politically justifying accompaniment of stories of Squanto's lifesaving assistance to the first colonists. These tales arrive with a full complement of school-made paper headbands-with-feathers, paper turkeys, and paper Pilgrim hats to be worn by the make-believe Squantos (Tisquantum, a Patuxet) and Governor Bradfords. Such a carefully constructed script, reenacted by schoolchildren — even by Native students in the government boarding schools — since the mid-nineteenth century, usually does offer Woodland Indians some break in the dominion of Plains drag.

Elaborated on, defined, and proscribed in the Southeast by a forced affiliation with John Smith, Jamestown, and the Virginian colonists (fig. 3.5), Pocahontas and her Coastal Algonquian relatives of the Powhatan Confederacy have as little cultural wiggle room as Squanto and the Wampanoags of “Thanksgiving” fame. While the historic Pocahontas, Powhatan, Squanto, and the Wampanoags matter little to those who have long since invested in the visually compelling but imaginary Indians of childhood book illustrations, the powerful and durable clichés of that visualization are repeated over and again in family and school tableaux, in popular artistic renderings, books, and films. Even though converted to Plains Indians as often as not, Pocahontased Powhatans and Turkey Day-ed Wampanoags remain in semicaptivity to the national obsessions that will not let them go. Even though the showplaces of historic Jamestown and Plimoth Plantation have, in the latter twentieth century, begun to correct the misrepresentations and inaccuracies found in their own portrayals of *The Indian*, the tropes remain untouched in American popular culture.

The most influential and continuing pseudo-Indian performances of all are the sports mascots in which living characters take the field, dressed as a Brave, a Warrior, a Chief, and so on, complete with (red) face and body paint, headband, full head-dress or single feather, fringed pants or breechclout. The team's fans may paint their faces with “warpaint” and dress in “Indian” accoutrements. They may make gestures of pseudo-Indian derivation, to wit: the tomahawk chop for the Atlanta Braves. The language used by “Indians” came to be widespread, encoded early on in movies, cartoons, songs, television, and stage speech. Indians speak either in the grunts of Tonto (umm, you good, kemosabe), in the stilted speech of Hiawatha (by the shores of the shining big sea water), and in the made-up, humorous names of mascots (Chief Noc-A-Homa) or other comic Indian characters such as Rain-in-the-face (actually a real character in the *Wild West Show*). These nonsense, made-up songs and sayings, along with pseudo-Indian gestures (hand to forehead, peering into the distance, right arm upraised, accompanied with the single word “How!”), were often epitomized in the cheers or yells that accompanied Indian-mascotted teams, to wit: the Dartmouth “Wah-hoo-wah” yell (of which a part became the University of Virginia yell).



FIGURE 3.5
George Virtue
 (ca. 1793–1868), after
T. Knight (active
 mid-19th century),
 after *Edward Corbould*
 (1815–1905), *Smith*
Rescued by Pocahontas,
 ca. 1850–1880,
 engraving. Courtesy
 of *Rayna Green*.

Wah-Hoo-Wah
 Wah-Hoo-Wah
 Da-did-di Dartmouth
 Wah-Hoo-Wah
 Tige-r-r-r

Together with the visualized history, these usages spell out what contemporary Americans think they know about Indians, all in the guise of *The Indian*.

Each generation added on to the others' constructs, taking whole pieces, fragmenting, bending, and altering the accumulated store of images and ideas to suit the forms and styles of its current realities. The pieces that compose *The Indian* are born, like the Indian himself, reborn, slain, removed, restored, relocated, and redefined, over and over again, by real war, real removal, and a real, long-standing demand for *The Indian* offered by artists, photographers, filmmakers, writers, illustrators, and product salesmen. By the early twentieth century, *The Indian* was virtually a staple cottage industry of American popular culture, fully formed (fig. 3.6). If any early twentieth-century child or adult were asked to make a picture of an Indian, he or she would respond with a portrait constructed from a small repertoire of images derived from products of that industry. But children and adults of the late eighteenth and



FIGURE 3.6
Pageant, Men of
Antrim, Sesqui-
centennial, Antrim,
N.H. No. 12, 1927,
postcard reproduction
of a photograph.
Courtesy of Rayna
Green.

early nineteenth centuries would have had a wider range of images and ideas for the construction of those portraits than their twentieth-century descendants. After the closure of the Indian image machine in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the additions to the repertoire were fairly decorative and insubstantial in terms of their change of content. Still, some of those decorative emendations had staying power and influence on the same old representations they had inherited.

By 1938, when Walter Beach Humphrey created his Dartmouth Indians, he had at least three centuries of cultural material to work with. He had an audience that had the same three centuries of material to work with in seeing, appreciating, and acting on his Indian imaginings. In short, their cultural baggage was heavy with accumulated meaning. What neither he nor his fellow Dartmouth alums ever counted on was that a later audience might see different things in his cultural history of North America than he and his original audience saw. Humphrey may not have understood exactly how his Dartmouth Indians would offer a defining moment for American history and popular culture, the antithesis of those countercultural versions of New World history as perpetrated by the Orozco mural then prevailing unchallenged on the Dartmouth library walls. But he did understand how powerful a wedge Indians might be in the battle for the American imagination. So his Dartmouth Indians, unlike Orozco's Indians, are rooted quite deeply in the centrality of Indians to the great national mythologies, from the Indian Queen as the first image of America, to the favorite Pocahontas Saving Captain John Smith, to Squanto and the Pilgrims and Thanksgiving, and, finally, to the Boy Scouts' evocation of the quintessential American man, one with the wilderness. His Indians, Savages incarnate with a twist — drunken, dumb, wild, libidinous, and venal — are nevertheless Dartmouth

Indians, mascots for the team that presides over American identity. Humphrey knew how to portray that identity. His Indians *are* Dartmouth. His Indians *are* The Indian, America's Indians.

To deconstruct the visual history encoded in these paintings, one has to understand the long and complex relationship between American visual history, oral tradition, and social practice as they concern The Indian, examining the trails and threads of The Indian's image as it is transmogrified into the Hovey murals. Nevertheless, in the Hovey murals that appear in a certain point in time, we can say that certain ideas and notions about The Indian do congeal. They are not, by the way, in themselves influential on popular culture or on other artists. They represent a place in space and time where we can see the accumulated detritus of previous oral and visual traditions. Just as certain other publications or artistic works appear, in various times, to "collate" ideas and notions about The Indian, these serve to represent the power assembled by those images as they gather both speed in their dissemination and authority in their powers of influence.

Certainly artists of every generation draw from specific artistic movements of their times, and often amend their images according to whatever the visual moment gives them. In the early twentieth century, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and Orientalist art made their mark on the visual history of The Indian. These art movements hijacked, for the moment, the obligatory Plains clichés, adding some fairly durable fillips to the artistic and pop cultural repertoire. Art Nouveau, for example, had a minor period obsession with Indians (along with Egyptians, Turks, "Orientals," Angels, and "Nature"), using Indians (often in Egyptian imaginary costume) alongside the trees and plants so favored in painting, on jewelry, and pottery. Actually, The Indian's body — naked or fancifully draped — and conventional accoutrements become the trees, leaves, and branches of lamp bases and vase stems. Blending into Art Deco, and Orientalist art, one may see these Indians — vastly magnified — in the WPA/Socialist Realist friezes on public buildings in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, depicting American successes in agriculture, manufacturing, and conquering the wilderness (fig. 3.7).

Humphrey's Indian women are drawn from the Art Nouveau style, their nakedness, their little Egyptianesque breechcloths, their flowing hair tastefully arranged over their bodies, taking the place of Roman drapes (fig. 3.8). They could be, and were, the same maidens carefully cast in the repousé silver services favored during the period, their curvilinear bodies serving as the handles of spoons or the bases of lamps. They also appear in the romanticized Native mythologies, such as the Maid in the Mist, commemorated in painting, calendar, and postcard art usually associated with tourist sites like Niagara Falls (fig. 3.9). The maids or "wood nymphs," often in their canoes, long braids and flowing hair merging with the waving of the trees and waterfalls, fill the popular illustrations of women by Howard Chandler Christy and



FIGURE 3.7
Frank Mechau
(1903–46), *Dangers of the Mail*, 1937.
Ariel Rios Building,
Environmental
Protection Agency,
Washington, D.C.

Maxfield Parrish. They add, in their nakedness and poses, the element of sexuality to the Princess repertoire. Though the fear of male Indian sexuality is always present as a subtext in the Savage's character when it concerns male Indians' actions toward white females, and though the Squaw is clearly a sexualized object in white male attention, sexuality had never been an essential part of the Princess syndrome. Here added, these art renderings of Native women and, to some extent, of Native men, seal newer and dominant notions about the decorative character of the Native presence, especially the Woodland presence. As background, like the trees and animals, they are decorative; their lithe bodies, drapes, and hair grace the lamp stands, vase bases, and decorations of the Nouveau and Deco repertoires.

It is no accident that the best-selling return of America's favorite Woodland Indian of the past, Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, favored the 1898 and 1908 *Song of Hiawatha* editions with illustrations by Frederic Remington, Maxfield Parrish, and N. C. Wyeth, where one might see this effective merger of the Savage with the Noble Savage, the Woodland and the Plains Indian. They lend their style, via Nouveau, Deco, and WPA Socialist Realism, to the later development of movie Indians, and to mainstream





FIGURE 3.9
The Red Man's Fact,
Niagara Falls (The Maid
of the Mist), ca. 1910,
postcard reproduction
of a painting hung in
Cataract House at
Niagara Falls. Courtesy
of Rayna Green.

fashion. In the '20s and again in the '60s and 1990s, they will provide models for the hippie, Hollywood, and New Age fashions for men and women, with headbands, love beads, fringed off-shoulder shirts and dresses, and moccasins. Still, in the Humphrey incarnations they are bar mural art, with their naked beauties and their cheerful references to drinking, and we may see them, or references to them, in Maxfield Parrish's *Old King Cole* mural in the bar of the St. Regis Hotel in New York City or in Howard Chandler Christy's wood nymphs in the Café des Artistes, also in New York City.

Humphrey's "squaws," as they are referred to in Hovey's text, are oddly enough neither the debased drudges of New England ministerial imagination nor nineteenth-century frontiersmen's sexual partners of convenience, hauling hides for her

FIGURE 3.8
(Opposite)
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 2,
right side (plate 4);
P.939.19.6.

trapper. They are squaws in a Princess body, with some of the physical accoutrements of the Princess/Queen. Though these women are the Egyptianized “Orientalist” versions of the usually Neoclassically, Greco-Roman draped Princesses, Wonder Woman via the Maid of the Mist, they do not have so much as a tiara topping their scantily draped bodies. And they are quite subsidiary figures to the Warrior Men, even to the giant puncheon of rum, unlike the earlier Princess/Queen who was the central figure of admiration, in fact, the defender of her people. Yet, like the Squaw, as Hovey refers to them, these women are illiterate, a defining characteristic of the Savage, holding the book, the *Gradus ad Parnassum* volume, the key to civilization, upside down (fig. 3.10). Comically dumb, they drape their nakedness with Wheelock’s clothing bribes and play with the other trinkets he has brought along in order to pacify the easily co-opted Big Chief.

Humphrey draws his intellectual sources from that bipolar American fascination with the Savage as savage combined with the natural man, covering the whole with a large dose of Dartmouth oral tradition. In the process he creates the embodiment of the Dartmouth Indian who emerges from Eleazar Wheelock’s Indian school to become the libidinous, happy, handsome, athletic drunk pictured in the mural. And it is Wheelock, the erstwhile minister whose mission was to save the savages from their fateful ignorance, who is responsible for the condition of this perpetually besotted Dartmouth boy, his mascotted “D” carved into his handsome bare chest (see plate 6). These men, unlike their female companions, are not curvily Deco Nouveau; they are hard-muscled and heroic like the WPA men on the federal friezes shown conquering the land, the country — the men of Socialist Realist art, the direct response to Orozco’s Aztecs. Warriors, yes, but successful on the playing field or in playing the field. Drunken, yes, but manfully so. Though set in nature, like the women, they are accompanied by a moose of the northern woods (not by a pony or buffalo of the Plains), perhaps a moose in rut, giving his call of the wild alongside that of the men (fig. 3.11).

Humphrey’s painting, like Orozco’s, is a visual allegory, the epic of American Civilization, embedded in the miniepic of civilization according to Eleazar Wheelock and Mr. Wheelock’s Indian school, Dartmouth College — in which the consumption of liquor and a good time with the girls whilst playing Indian gives the lie to the Dark Legend of Colonial Empire invoked and explored by Orozco. All it took was the creation of a new mythos in which these “Indians” are triumphant because of their acceptance of the “gifts” of Dartmouth civilization. The road to Parnassus is paved with rum and manly sport. And Humphrey’s parody of the epic of civilization does it with just a dab here and there from every visual and dramatic cliché attached to The Indian since precontact. A little Rousseau, a little Neoclassicist Orientalism, a little Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Wild West Show, a bit of Social(ist) Realism and Disney, and a lot of movie Western (maybe a spaghetti Western) — all blended in



FIGURE 3.10
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 3,
left side (plate 5);
P.939.19.7.*

the Hovey mural panels, which do know exactly what Indians look like, and how Dartmouth Indians behave.

Humphrey's bag of cultural tricks, both artistic and textual, was taken directly from the catalogue of images and ideas easily available to him. How he read his potential audience and endowed the murals with their power to provoke, to anger, to reflect, and to evoke emotion demonstrates his literacy in American visual history, at least when it concerned The Indian. While he doubtless believed his murals to be both an instructive satire on Dartmouth's "reverence" for its short-lived Native heritage and a biting rebuttal to Orozco's epic of American Civilization, one must credit

FIGURE 3.11
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1,
right side (plate 2);
P.939.19.3.



Rev. Wheelock's Indian school for sending him on his own with his *Gradus ad Parnassum*, equipping him with an ability to reflect on his own education. Humphrey's Dartmouth Indians, along with the Orozco murals, are primary texts in one of the major philosophical junctures in American civilization, and might be used as such, in the discussion that never dies. Real Indians and real Dartmouth men and women still stand to argue with the visual history of The Indian and Dartmouth Indians preserved in the Hovey murals. Rev. Wheelock's Indian school has kept its promise.¹

NOTES

1. Those interested in further reading might consult the following sources: Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Rayna Green, "The Image of the Indian in American Popular Culture," in Wilcomb Washburn, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians IV* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 587–606; "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in Europe and America," *Folklore* 99 (1988); and "The Pocahontas Perplex: Images of American Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16 (Autumn 1976): 698–714, reprinted with a new introduction in Rebecca Kugel and Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, eds., *Native Women's History in Eastern North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: American Indians in the Cultural Imagination*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

Plates





PLATE 1
Panel 1, left side



PLATE 2
Panel 1, right side



PLATE 3
Panel 2, left side



PLATE 4
Panel 2, right side



PLATE 5
Panel 3, left side



PLATE 6

Panel 3, right side



PLATE 7
Chorus panel



PLATE 8

Panel 1, center

Panel 2, center

Panel 3, center

PLATE 9
*Details of
side panels*

Dept of
y^e Classics

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

Dept of
Religious

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

Dept of
Music

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

Dept of
Fine Arts

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

Dept of
Social Sci.

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

Dept of
Political Sci

Eliazar Whitlock
Chairman

*Y
H*

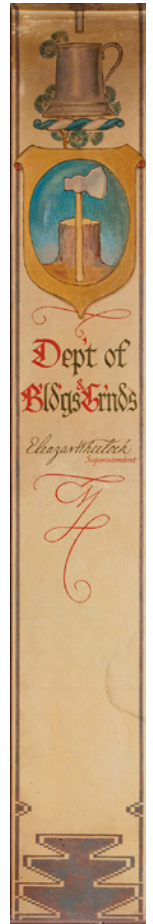
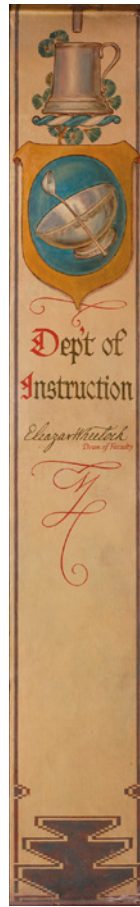


PLATE 9
(continued)
Side panels

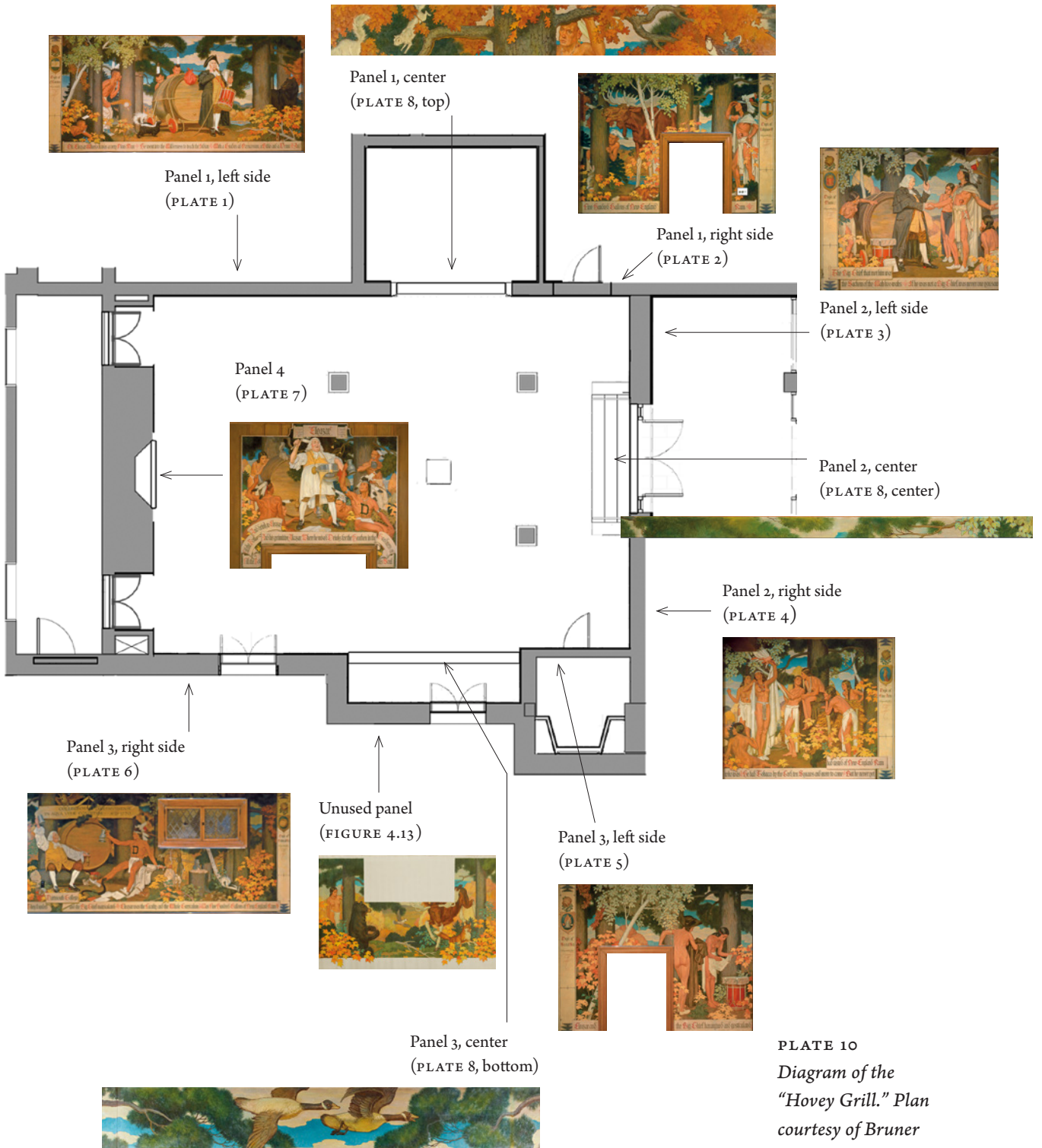


PLATE 10
 Diagram of the
 "Hovey Grill." Plan
 courtesy of Bruner
 Cott & Associates.



FIGURE 4.1A
 José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), *The Epic of American Civilization: Modern Migration of the Spirit* (panel 21), 1932–34, fresco. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College; P.934.13.21.



FIGURE 4.1B
 Detail of the Hovey mural, chorus panel (plate 7); P.939.19.10.

The “Hovey Murals” and the “Greening” of Orozco’s *Epic of American Civilization*

MARY COFFEY

◆ ◆ ◆

Emulating the humorous tone of “Eleazar Wheelock,” a beloved drinking song penned by the Dartmouth alumnus and poet Richard Hovey (Class of 1885), Walter B. Humphrey (Class of 1914) established quite clearly that the mural he was proposing in the pages of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* would be not only “in the lighter vein” but more significantly a response to those completed just three years earlier by “Mex”(ican) muralist José Clemente Orozco in the basement of the new Baker Library. Throughout August of 1937, Humphrey, via his administrative liaison Sidney Hayward, had been negotiating with President Ernest Hopkins for a long-sought-after commission at his alma mater.² The near completion of yet another campus building afforded the president an opportunity to finally quell this particularly vocal alumnus and personal friend’s ire over Orozco’s frescoes by offering up the walls of the rathskeller or grill in the basement of Thayer Hall.

In his *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* piece, quoted at the outset, Humphrey notes that he had used the Orozco frescoes as a “foil for my own ideas.”³ The purpose of this essay is to delve into his claim, not only by comparing the formal and iconographic features of Humphrey’s “Hovey murals” with Orozco’s *Epic of American Civilization* (fig. 4.1), but also by situating both murals within the cultural schisms of the 1930s. On the one hand, Humphrey’s “picturization” of Hovey’s “Eleazar Wheelock” represents a very Dartmouth affair that speaks to the “robust, masculine atmosphere” that many white, male alumni revere.⁴ On the other hand, as a pointed response to Orozco’s mural, it also affords us an opportunity to better grasp the period tensions

*I’ll never go “Mex,”
I’ll picture no necks
Ground down ‘neath a
rebel’s rough shoe;
My forms aboriginal will
all be indigenous
To the haunts that as
students we knew.*

WALTER BEACH
HUMPHREY

over modernist aesthetics, public art, and the paradoxical settler politics of “playing Indian” in the Americas.⁵

OROZCO’S EPIC OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

Before we can fully appreciate the Hovey Grill mural, we must consider its “foil” and the outrage it inspired among concerned alumni like Walter B. Humphrey. Orozco’s *Epic of American Civilization* consists of twenty-four panels, spread across the west and east wings of the Reading Room in Baker Library. Executed in true fresco, the mural is divided into two halves interrupted by the reserve desk, with the west wing devoted to ancient America and the east wing detailing the modern period (figs. 4.2 and 4.3). Painted over two years, Orozco’s cycle radically revises the standard narrative of American history by situating U.S. history within a hemispheric framework that begins with a pre-Columbian “golden age” and culminates in an apocalyptic modernity forged in Cortés’ Christian Conquest of the Americas.

As a whole, the mural cycle is structured by the myth of Quetzalcoatl, a white, bearded god who brings civilization to the ancient world but, upon being banished by his people, prophesies his return to destroy the civilization he built. Orozco’s version of the myth is heavily indebted to post-Conquest Spanish sources that were widely accepted in his day but which have now been largely debunked.⁶ According to this story the Spanish Conquest was understood by its victims as the fulfillment of Quetzalcoatl’s prophecy, and Hernán Cortés, because of his white pallor and beard, was perceived as Quetzalcoatl returned.

Orozco uses this myth to establish a relationship between the ancient and modern worlds, essentially rewriting Enlightenment narratives of European encounter with the Americas from the standpoint of what he believed to be an indigenous worldview. In Orozco’s retelling of the myth, Cortés is an antihero whose Christian Conquest of Mesoamerica ushers in an epoch of mechanization, war, and greed. The cycle culminates with a vengeful Christ (fig. 4.1a) chopping down his cross and destroying the world created in his name so that the spirit might “migrate” to a new “golden age.” When planning the mural, Orozco toyed with the idea of rendering an Indian Christ (fig. 4.4), but ultimately he opted for a Western figure to bring the cycle of prophecy to a close, and to forecast a new epoch in American civilization that is neither indigenous nor European, but rather mestizo.

The coda to Orozco’s cycle, *Modern Industrial Man* (fig. 4.5), presents a mixed-race worker reclining before a steel architectural framework. Shown reading, rather than engaged in physical labor, Orozco’s worker is presented as a self-edifying subject not simply as an emblem of class politics. He and the skyscraper behind him are “under construction,” and as such are posited as the foundation for a new “golden age” in which the antinomies between Euro- and Native-America as well as those between civilization and modernity are resolved.⁷ It is significant to note that Orozco



FIGURE 4.2 (top)

José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), *The Epic of American Civilization*, view of the west wing showing Aztec Warriors (panel 4), The Coming of Quetzalcoatl (panel 5), The Pre-Columbian Golden Age (panel 6), The Departure of Quetzalcoatl (panel 7), and The Prophecy (panel 8), 1932–34, fresco. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College; P.934.13.4-8.



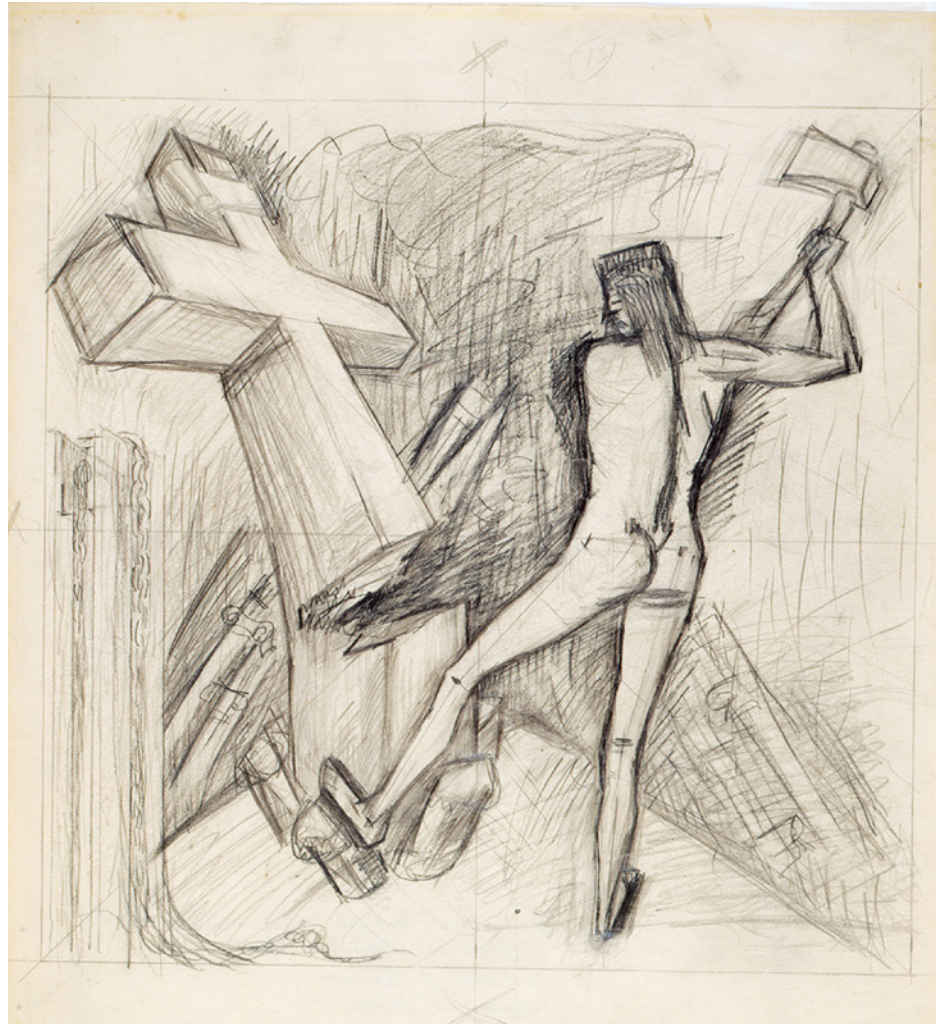
FIGURE 4.3 (bottom)

José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), *The Epic of American Civilization*, view of the east wing showing Cortez and the Cross (panel 13), The Machine (panel 14), Anglo-America (panel 15), Hispano America (panel 16), and Gods of the Modern World (panel 17), 1932–34, fresco. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College; P.934.13.13-17.

originally modeled this figure after a clearly Caucasian Dartmouth undergraduate (fig. 4.6), but ultimately he converted him into an ambiguously raced, working-class subject in deference to the promotion of *mestizaje* then current in his homeland.

Mestizaje refers to a positive reconfiguration by artists and intellectuals of Mexico's racial miscegenation and cultural hybridity from a sign of shame to one of pride. Postrevolutionary *mestizaje* posited an idealized mixture of the Spanish/Creole, configured as white and European, and the indigenous, understood as its racial and civilizational opposite. While essentially an assimilationist project, the cult of *mestizaje* nonetheless endeavored to revalue the contributions of both ancient and contemporary indigenous peoples and culture to modern society. In this respect, anthropologists inaugurated studies of long-neglected ruins in pre-Columbian cities

FIGURE 4.4
José Clemente Orozco
 (1883–1949), Study of
 Figure Chopping the
 Cross for the Modern
 Migration of the
 Spirit (panel 21) for
 The Epic of American
 Civilization, 1932–34,
 fresco. Hood Museum of
 Art, Dartmouth College:
 Purchased through
 gifts from Kirsten and
 Peter Bedford, Class of
 1989P; Jane and Raphael
 Bernstein; Walter
 Burke, Class of 1944;
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard D.
 Lombard, Class of 1953;
 Nathan Pearson, Class
 of 1932; David V. Picker,
 Class of 1953; Rodman
 C. Rockefeller, Class of
 1954; Kenneth Roman
 Jr., Class of 1952; and
 Adolph Weil Jr., Class of
 1935; D.988.52.207.



like Teotihuacán and Monte Alban, while ethnologists attended to Mexico's myriad living indigenous cultures and languages, and artists endeavored to incorporate motifs from Mesoamerican design and contemporary folk art into their work.⁸ While the rehabilitation of Mexico's indigenous past and present was already underway in the late nineteenth century, it was given impetus by the mass mobilization of Mexico's indigenous and peasant population during the Mexican Revolution (1910–17) and then officially embraced by social programmers within the postrevolutionary government.

Orozco's retelling of the American Epic at Dartmouth is informed by the progressive social agenda of the Mexican Mural Renaissance spearheaded in 1921 by the post-revolutionary state. In order to restore a sense of civic unity after the ten-year civil war, Minister of Education José Vasconcelos asked artists to paint edifying murals in



FIGURE 4.5
José Clemente Orozco
(1883–1949), *The
Epic of American
Civilization: Modern
Industrial Man* (central
panel 2 of 3, panel
23), 1932–34, fresco.
Commissioned by the
Trustees of Dartmouth
College; P.934.13.23.



FIGURE 4.6
José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), *Figure Study for Modern Industrial Man* (central panel 2 of 3, panel 23) for *The Epic of American Civilization*, c. 1930–34. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Purchased through gifts from Kirsten and Peter Bedford, Class of 1989P; Jane and Raphael Bernstein; Walter Burke, Class of 1944; Mr. and Mrs. Richard D. Lombard, Class of 1953; Nathan Pearson, Class of 1932; David V. Picker, Class of 1953; Rodman C. Rockefeller, Class of 1954; Kenneth Roman Jr., Class of 1952; and Adolph Weil Jr., Class of 1935; D.988.52.228.

the auditoriums and courtyards of federal buildings. The artists, many of whom had been radicalized by socialism, soon redirected Vasconcelos' mollifying agenda by executing mural cycles that emphasized not only the country's divisive class-based and ethnic antagonisms through scenes of Conquest, Revolution, and proletarian struggle but also a sympathetic view of Mexico's vast indigenous and peasant underclass. As the muralists famously declared in their 1921 Manifesto of the Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors Union of Mexico (signed by Orozco):

our people are the root of even the smallest expression of the physical and spiritual existence of our race as an ethnic force and, what's more, of its admirable and most particular ability to *create beauty: the art of the people of Mexico is the greatest, healthiest spiritual expression in the whole world, and its indigenous tradition is simply the best of them all.*⁹ (emphasis in original)

In the hands of Mexican muralists, *Indigenismo* became an anticolonial stance toward modernist art and culture.

Positing "race as an ethnic force," the muralists eschewed the cultural superiority of the European tradition from classical antiquity to the present and cultivated instead a modern art rooted in autochthonous American sources. A variant on modernist primitivism, *Indigenismo* differs somewhat from the appropriation of non-Western cultural forms by European artists, such as Picasso's interest in African sculpture, because it was motivated less by a desire to critique academic standards in art and more by a search for authentic identity. Mexican artists viewed indigenous culture not as an external Other but rather as an internal Other that must be recuperated and brought into the cultural imaginary. The Mexican self, they insisted, must be thought through the colonial relationship between settlers and indigenous peoples and culture. *Indigenismo*, while still a political project undertaken by the dominant settler class, nonetheless gives voice to the peculiar condition of being a postcolonial subject in a settler state, thereby making race (and racism) visible as a central component of the formation of identity in the Americas. This search for what would be called the "American sources of modern art" did not amount to a wholesale rejection of European influence, but rather a combination of modernist formal innovation with iconographic and thematic motifs drawn from ancient and contemporary indigenous culture and cosmology.¹⁰

Thus in Orozco's Dartmouth cycle we see the story of Quetzalcoatl treated in a modernist idiom. His cycle betrays the influence of avant-garde experiments with form, in particular the Expressionist use of color and figurative distortion to foreground feeling and idea over mere illusionistic representation. Moreover Orozco rejects a straightforward approach to narrative in favor of a dialectical strategy that avoids logical temporal or spatial continuities. Instead he juxtaposes provocative images and asks the viewer to synthesize their meaning. This tactic is most evident in



FIGURE 4.7
 José Clemente Orozco
 (1883–1949), *The
 Epic of American
 Civilization: Gods of
 the Modern World*
 (panel 17), 1932–34,
 fresco. Commissioned
 by the Trustees of
 Dartmouth College;
 P.934.13.17.

the southern corridor, where the story shifts abruptly from *Cortez and the Cross* to *The Machine* or from *Anglo-America* to *Hispano America*.

Orozco presumed an erudite viewer capable of relating his Epic not only to American history and historiography but also to the monuments of European and indigenous art. Therefore, when depicting *The Coming of Quetzalcoatl*, Orozco models the Toltecan god after Michelangelo’s Christian God on the Sistine Ceiling, while at the same time rendering the pyramids of the Sun and the Moon from Teotihuacán to evoke the Aztec legend about this ancient city as the “birthplace of the gods.” Similarly, he emulates Spanish Golden Age portrait styles when depicting Cortés, while paying homage to the work of popular graphic artist José Gaudalupe Posada by using the skeleton (or *calavera*) motif to satirize contemporary society in *Gods of the Modern World* and *Modern Human Sacrifice* (figs. 4.7 and 4.8).

This sophisticated use of geographically and temporally coded styles makes the mural seem disjointed to the casual viewer and demands prolonged engagement rather than a quick scan to unpack the artist’s meaning. In this sense Orozco, like his contemporaries within the European avant-garde, employs estrangement as a strategy for provoking critical thought rather than complacent enjoyment. Thus,

FIGURE 4.8
José Clemente Orozco
(1883–1949), *The*
Epic of American
Civilization: Modern
Human Sacrifice
(panel 18), 1932–34,
fresco. Commissioned
by the Trustees of
Dartmouth College;
P.934.13.18.



Orozco's approach to mural art differs dramatically from that of his Mexican peer and archrival, Diego Rivera, whose seamless narrative style, while often radical in political intent and sophisticated in its blending of figuration and avant-garde spatial experimentation, envelops the viewer in an easily legible story that moves logically in both space and time. Likewise, in his dyspeptic vision of modernity and hemispheric vision of America, Orozco deviates from the majority of public works executed by U.S.-based artists as part of Roosevelt's New Deal relief programs. As Karal Ann Marling has noted, New Deal murals "became a species of popular art, a social art whose primary function was to be liked by the American public."¹¹

It was the new federal commitment to public art during the Depression that spurred art professors to lobby their academic administrations for the funds to bring Mexican artists to U.S. colleges. Given that the New Deal art programs were modeled after Vasconcelos' mural initiative and that the Mexicans had already resurrected the ancient, but defunct, technique of fresco, the Mexican muralists were the

logical choice for training young art students in the use of this medium. Moreover, the accomplishments of the Mexican Mural Renaissance provided a powerful example of an American art taking the lead internationally for the still very provincial and marginalized U.S. art world. For these reasons, Artemas Packard and Churchill Lathrop finagled a visiting professorship for Orozco at Dartmouth, where he worked for nearly two years, at first training students in the fresco technique with the “test panel” located in the hallway off the reserve corridor and then, as an “artist in residence” at work on the walls of Baker Library, limning his vision of the American Epic. Ultimately, the cost of this enormous endeavor was offset by funds donated by Abby Rockefeller.¹²

According to archival materials, Orozco expressed an interest in the commission when he saw the relatively uninterrupted wall space in the basement of the new library. He had been conceiving for some time a cycle based in an “American” theme and felt that Dartmouth College was the logical place to execute such a work.¹³ Convinced of his sincerity and stature, President Hopkins agreed to the commission, and Orozco went to work with little oversight on the part of the college administration. While broadly American in theme, the mural does address its specific location in rural New England and at a college library at several key points.

In particular, *Anglo-America* (fig. 4.9) engages with the Colonial Revival and contemporary debates over the national importance of the New England town hall meeting as the core of U.S.-American democracy.¹⁴ Rather than simply reproducing the anodyne image of a quaint rural past like that immortalized in so many post office murals and then commercially exploited with the founding of *Yankee Magazine* in 1935, Orozco queries the idealized image of America evoked by such propaganda. His panel includes all the hallmarks of an iconic rural America: the red barn, the white, Protestant church/schoolhouse, the bale of wheat, the town hall meeting, and universal elementary education presented as the origin of a stoic adult citizenship. Like comparative works executed by his U.S. contemporaries, such as Paul Sample’s *Beaver Meadow* (1939) (fig. 4.10), *Anglo-America* evokes this nationalist ideal only to undermine it with the suggestion of a stifling conformity. Unlike his U.S. peers, however, Orozco situates his appraisal of White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant values within a broader critique of European “encounter” narratives, thereby implicating the settler mode of colonization in the violence of Conquest.

Orozco first touches on the theme of education with the stern schoolmistress in *Anglo-America*; he then elaborates it in subsequent panels. Specifically, in *Gods of the Modern World* he satirizes higher education, and in the coda, *Modern Industrial Man*, he obliquely addresses the radical potential of the library for a future “golden age.” *Gods of the Modern World* (see fig. 4.7) presents a grotesque scene of matriculation, in which robed academics preside over the macabre stillbirth of “dead knowledge.” Set against a flaming backdrop, this scene characterizes graduation as an empty ritual



FIGURE 4.9
 José Clemente Orozco
 (1883–1949), *The
 Epic of American
 Civilization:
 Anglo-America
 (panel 15)*, 1932–34,
 fresco. Commissioned
 by the Trustees of
 Dartmouth College;
 P.934.13.15.

in which students leave the mortified “womb” of the college dead on arrival, their learning directed toward the perpetuation of institutional prestige rather than enhancing modern society.

Orozco equates this scene, formally, with the array of pagan gods being displaced by *The Coming of Quetzalcoatl* along the north wall of the library’s west wing. However, in the earlier sequence, Quetzalcoatl fosters creativity and a peaceful society marked by achievements in agriculture, the arts, and science. In Orozco’s telling, Quetzalcoatl banishes the barbaric practice of human sacrifice. Whereas the academics that dominate the composition in *Gods of the Modern World* seem to enable or even rationalize the blood sacrifice of nationalist warfare represented by the Unknown Soldier in the subsequent panel, *Modern Human Sacrifice* (see fig. 4.8). Recalling the flaming seas that accompanied Cortés’ arrival, the fiery setting of *Gods of the Modern World* suggests continuity with and an apotheosis of the destructive European presence in the Americas.

If the final panels of the modern sequence speak to Orozco’s deep skepticism



FIGURE 4.10
Paul Starrett Sample
(1896–1974), *Beaver Meadow*, 1939, oil on canvas. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Purchased through the William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A. Jaffe Hall Fund; P.943.126.1.

about institutions (of education and war), the coda presents a more hopeful scenario (see fig. 4.5). There, as discussed earlier, we see the modern worker educating himself without need for institutional intermediaries. In a very subtle way, Orozco nods to the value of the library as a resource for self-enrichment and social enlightenment, albeit one made public rather than enclaved for an elite student body. Here it is significant that this image faces the very place in Baker Library where students check out books held in reserve for a class. Orozco's worker thereby models their imminent act of reading.

The area across from the reserve desk was not part of the original commission, but Orozco presumed to take it anyway. Initially he toyed with depicting a scene of Eleazar Wheelock administering to his Native disciples in an attempt to honor the founding mission of his patron (fig. 4.11). But he quickly decided against it. Rather than execute yet another scene of encounter that would seem to endorse a (racially and institutionally) hierarchical form of education, he opted for the more radical image of a mestizo worker educating himself.

Throughout the time Orozco was in Dartmouth's employ, critics, faculty, students, and alumni reacted in print and private correspondence to his mural. Art critics, in general, viewed the work positively and wrote glowing appraisals of Dartmouth's



FIGURE 4.11
 José Clemente Orozco
 (1883–1949), Study
 of Eleazar Wheelock
 with Indians for The
 Epic of American
 Civilization, 1932–34,
 graphite on cream paper.
 Hood Museum of Art,
 Dartmouth College:
 Purchased through
 gifts from Kirsten and
 Peter Bedford, Class of
 1989P; Jane and Raphael
 Bernstein; Walter
 Burke, Class of 1944;
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard D.
 Lombard, Class of 1953;
 Nathan Pearson, Class
 of 1932; David V. Picker,
 Class of 1953; Rodman
 C. Rockefeller, Class of
 1954; Kenneth Roman
 Jr., Class of 1952 and
 Adolph Weil Jr., Class of
 1935; D.988.52.265.

foray into the contentious world of modern art.¹⁵ Students and faculty, alike, seem to have been equally smitten with Orozco and his cycle, viewing it as an at times bewildering but nonetheless important contribution to modern culture.¹⁶ Alumni, on the other hand, reacted violently to the commission. President Hopkins responded personally to a torrent of letters decrying his decision to employ not only a modernist but also, and more disturbingly, a Mexican to desecrate the walls of their beloved New England institution. Their criticism ranged from an erroneous assumption that Rivera had painted the frescoes, to a general antipathy for “modernistic” art (and along with it jazz and modernist poetry), to a more troubling and overtly racist reaction to the Mexican (and French as well as “Jewish”) influence on U.S. taste and culture.¹⁷ Alumni were particularly offended by the *Anglo-America*, *Gods of the Modern World*, and *Modern Migration of the Spirit* panels, in some cases correctly perceiving them as a critique of “academic learning” and a sacrilegious interpretation of Christ’s sacrifice.

President Hopkins stood firm on his commitment to both Orozco and his mural. While routinely claiming to be ignorant in matters of art criticism, he nonetheless praised the artist as a “simple” and “sweet natured” man, defended the fresco on the basis of its ability to catalyze liberal debate, and valiantly condemned the many nativist objections to a “work by a Latin-American . . . placed in a colonial building.”¹⁸ He consistently averred that art and learning have no nationality and insisted that only time would determine whether or not Orozco’s Dartmouth cycle was a work of genius or mediocrity.

While President Hopkins entertained lengthy correspondence with several aggrieved alumni and even some widows, his exchange with Walter B. Humphrey is the most substantive and revealing. Their debate was inaugurated by a pamphlet written and published by Humphrey decrying the Orozco murals and then passed along to Hopkins by Humphrey’s brother-in-law, the former Dartmouth athlete Roald

Morton. At times jocular in their mock deference to one another and at turns testy, these two old chums debated the wisdom of the college's apparent endorsement of Orozco's radical vision and style. Of particular interest for our purposes here are Humphrey's arguments put forward in a ten-page, handwritten letter to Hopkins dated August 23, 1934.¹⁹

Humphrey begins by parrying Hopkins's defense of "controversy" as a sign of a work's potential significance. He argues instead that "a truly great work of art is seldom a matter of serious controversy or a subject of bewilderment."²⁰ Drawing a contrast between works of great beauty like the "Madonna della Sedia or the Taj Mahal" and the "modernist" disposition, which "seems gauged by the degree of excitement or shock which a work can produce," he asks, "is the college ready and willing to hold up these decorations as the example of what art really is?"²¹ He continues that Orozco's murals neither describe the world accurately nor present ideas appropriate for their setting. "A mural project," he writes, "is a very circumscribed thing, bound by definite limitations, not a blank canvas onto which the artist is at liberty to pour his personal convictions of any kind whatsoever."²² The artist is not a "free agent," he insists, but rather he is "bound by the ideas of his patron or the policies of an institution . . . and by the type, nature, and use of the building in which he works."²³

In arguing that Orozco had not labored in "humility" and "harmony" with the institution or the library's architectural style, he echoes other alumni complaints about the Mexican's foreign take on American origins and his lack of sensitivity to the Colonial Revival period style. However, what sets Humphrey's critique apart is his status as a working commercial artist. Thus, his opinions about the "circumscribed" nature of mural art emanate from not only an antimodernist aesthetic point of view but also from a very different attitude toward the art "public." He writes:

Perhaps my close association with the illustration-end of the art game has given me too much solicitude for what the public thinks and likes. Be that as it may I believe thoroughly that a work of art should be understandable to and appreciable by persons of fair intelligence and a reasonable education.²⁴

Humphrey's "solicitous" standpoint from the "illustration-end of the art game" differs dramatically from Orozco's more radical stance, forged in a postrevolutionary context in which public art was understood as a "weapon" for social change.²⁵ This difference would shape Humphrey's approach to his Dartmouth commission. True to his word, he proposed and executed "decorations" for the "Hovey Grill" that were consistent with the ideas and values of their patron (the Class of 1914), the institution (Dartmouth College), the assumed audience (Dartmouth Men), and the masculine aesthetics of a rathskeller.

HUMPHREY'S "ELEAZAR WHEELOCK"

Like Orozco, Humphrey had harbored ideas for a mural before he was granted the opportunity to realize one at Dartmouth. When describing the "Eleazar motif" to alumni liaison Sidney Hayward, he expressed his desire to create a true "Dartmouth mural" to "enliven a central meeting place and to give the College a real tradition."²⁶ So when, in 1937, the president offered him the walls of an upper-class eatery, described as "a headquarters for undergraduates not only at mealtimes but in the evening when song and gaiety should become a tradition along with lite suppers, short orders, and all that makes up the tradition of a popular eating place in the college,"²⁷ Humphrey was "all agog and in a dither" over the proposition.²⁸ Like Orozco, Humphrey labored over his mural for two years, completing it in the spring of 1939. However, there the similarities end.

Unlike Orozco, who worked in fresco, Humphrey executed his mural in oil on canvas affixed with various adhesives to the grill's plaster walls. True to his convictions as a commercial artist, Humphrey's "Hovey mural" is easily legible and executed in an illustrational style that has been aptly described as "Disney-esque." Whereas Orozco's mural is situated in the semipublic space of the library, Humphrey's mural is located in a semiprivate upperclassmen's (and faculty) eatery. Thus, Orozco imagined a broad public comprising Dartmouth students and faculty as well as visitors to the college, who enjoy free entrance to the Baker Library reserve corridor. He therefore took on an erudite topic and painted with an eye toward art-world posterity. Humphrey, on the other hand, imagined a very restricted audience of Dartmouth undergraduates engaged in evening revelry and celebration. As a consequence his cycle is embedded within the speech codes and sense of humor of a fairly homogeneous and homosocial cultural and linguistic community.

Orozco was an outsider who endeavored to challenge the aesthetic and ideological convictions of his U.S. public; Humphrey was an inveterate insider who sought to ingratiate himself with Dartmouth Men past, present, and future. Thus, Humphrey presents a scene of Euro-American "encounter" that is not only more in keeping with the standard U.S.-American narrative of European settlement and colonization but also specific to the founding of Dartmouth. And yet, despite his antipathy to "Oroz," he nonetheless structured his interpretation of Hovey's lyrics with the *Epic of American Civilization* in mind.

Taking his cues from the carousing comic spirit of Hovey's "Eleazar Wheelock," Humphrey converts the college's founding as a school for Native American youth into a carnivalesque sequence of encounter, corruption, and a drunken fall from grace. Illustrating the first stanza and chorus, the "Hovey mural" depicts Wheelock's foray into the wilderness paradise of the Hanover Plain with a "*Gradus ad Parnassum* a Bible and a drum, and five hundred gallons of New England rum" (plate 1).²⁹ There,

amid the region's flora and fauna, he encounters the "Sachem of the Wah-hoo-wahs" and his "ten squaws." The cycle culminates with a scene of matriculation, wherein the chief and Wheelock are shown drunk as a consequence of a "whole curriculum . . . [of] five hundred gallons of New England rum." The coda, located in a separate panel over the fireplace, shows yet another scene of Wheelock ladling rum into the tankards of inebriated Indians, accompanied by the chorus: "Fill the bowl up! Fill the bowl up! Drink to Eleazar, and his primitive Alcazar, Where he mixed drinks for the heathen In the goodness of his soul."

Using Orozco as a "foil," Humphrey "Greens" his encounter narrative by presenting Wheelock, not Quetzalcoatl, as the white "god" who brings "civilization" to the Americas. As the foregoing summary suggests, Humphrey relies on the Christian trope of the Fall, with the region's forests construed as a Garden of Eden, indigenous Americans as Native Adams and Eves, and New England rum the forbidden fruit. However, this Fall is not presented in a critical vein as a comment on the effects of colonialism, but rather as a lighthearted source of frat-boy humor. Orozco's recourse to the story of Quetzalcoatl was an attempt to ground his American Epic in an autochthonous myth. His perspective on European encounter and modernity is, thereby, rooted in a critique of Conquest and colonization. Moreover, in his depiction of a pre-Columbian "golden age," he attributes a fully developed culture to precontact civilizations and argues that while the Conquest brought death and destruction to the peoples and built environment of Mesoamerica, their accomplishments in agriculture, the arts, and science have an ongoing significance for modern Americans. Thus, Orozco's mural presents the inequities of power that enabled Mesoamerican defeat, while still acknowledging indigenous civilization as a cultural high point in the development of human history.

Humphrey's reliance on the biblical story of the Fall reveals that his perspective on European encounter is structured by the Christian worldview and "imperialist nostalgia" of the settler.³⁰ Within this framework, precontact America is presented as a New World Eden, a natural paradise bereft of culture, and Native Americans as "noble savages" unsuited to the progress of civilization. Accordingly, indigenous peoples were "doomed to perish," not because modes of European settlement forcibly displaced and dispersed their communities and ways of life, but because of an unfortunate incompatibility between nature (Native Americans) and culture (Euro-American settlement).³¹ The settler mourns this loss but views it as inevitable, and therefore he is neither culpable nor directly implicated in the processes of acculturation that he laments.

Humphrey's mural betrays its "imperial nostalgia" most significantly in the stereotypical portrayal of its Native American subjects. Indigenous men lurk throughout the early scenes of Wheelock's arrival, their comportment likened to the sundry



FIGURE 4.12
 John Hall
 (active 1775–97),
 after Benjamin West
 (1738–1820), William
 Penn's Treaty with the
 Indians, 1775, engraving.
 Hood Museum of Art,
 Dartmouth College:
 Gift of Reverend J. E.
 Johnson; PR.972.135.

animals that populate the New England woods. In the first scene we see native men crouching along the forest floor, hiding behind a tree, and poking their heads around Wheelock's five-hundred-gallon barrel of rum. They seem to sniff and skulk like feline predators, their attitudes conveying the same range of curiosity and potential alarm as the bear and moose that accompany them. Humphrey suggests that Wheelock's presence augers trouble by pairing him with a skunk.

In the two scenes that follow, Wheelock's rotund physique is contrasted with the exaggerated physical perfection of the "Sachem," a "noble savage" indeed (plate 3). Their encounter is depicted as cordial and uncoerced, with a trade implicit. Wheelock stands to the left with his "*Gradus ad Parnassum* a Bible and a drum, and five hundred gallons of New England rum," and doffs his hat to the chief, who takes his hand in friendship while gesturing toward his "ten squaws." This scene replicates a common motif in early American paintings and material culture, such as Benjamin West's *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771–72) (fig. 4.12), that served as



FIGURE 4.13
Walter Beach Humphrey, unused panel for the Hovey mural, 1938, oil on canvas. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Commissioned by Trustees of Dartmouth College; p.939.19.11.

propaganda for settler claims to indigenous lands.³² By presenting the two parties on equal ground and offering up goods for trade, the inequities of power in the colonial arrangement are assuaged.

The following scenes present renderings of seminude indigenous women in an assortment of poses that allow Humphrey to reveal the idealized female form in its entirety, while also offering his exclusively male audience a life-size pinup spread. In dedicating nearly a third of the rathskeller walls to these “cute little Nannies, their fronts and their fannies Exposed to the rays of the sun,” Humphrey expanded their significance from a brief mention in Hovey’s song to a major visual element in his Paradise theme.³³ While Eve was instrumental to the Fall of Man, these women betray a childlike innocence as they play dress-up in Wheelock’s outerwear and examine his book upside down. Situated as contraband and on the margins of Wheelock and the chief’s transaction, they contribute to the Edenic theme by presenting gender inequality as part of the natural order of things. Humphrey makes this argument all the more clear in an unused panel, where a lone female figure stands alongside a tree (fig. 4.13), as though one with the sundry woodland animals shown vacating the wilderness in the wake of Wheelock’s influence. This vignette might have been intended for insertion between the two final scenes dedicated to Wheelock’s “primitive Alcazar”

suggesting that women, like wildlife, remain a part of nature once the Native Man has been acculturated.

As the foregoing description suggests, Humphrey's mural takes the basic motif of encounter and civilization from Orozco's cycle, but strips it of its critical standpoint in favor of a founding story that is more ideologically consistent with the nativist self-mythologizing of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant America. This contrast is even more evident in the scenes depicting matriculation and the chorus. For here, Humphrey responds specifically to Orozco's "Mexican plan" with images that "boast a real love for the Green."³⁴ Not only does he offer up an alternative vision of education to Orozco's *Gods of the Modern World*, but also his "forms aboriginal" should be interpreted in a dialogue with Orozco's *mestizaje*.

To further unpack the thematic parallels and reversals of intent, I turn again to Humphrey's verse for *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, where he proclaims, "I'll do a design that will never malign All learning as skeletal dust."³⁵ It might be surprising, given Humphrey's concerns about Orozco's attack on academic learning in *Gods of the Modern World*, to see that Humphrey too lampoons Dartmouth's founding mission as nothing more than a drunken swindle. We see Wheelock and the "Sachem" seated on chopped-down tree trunks, legs splayed as they consume the "whole curriculum" (plate 6). Each holds a smoking pipe, while all around them are signs of their debauchery. Wheelock's shaving cup is turned on its side, suggesting an unkempt man; the "big chief's" admission papers, grades, and composition books lie strewn about along the forest floor (fig. 4.14). A rustic wooden placard announces the founding of the college as animals flee the scene on either side, with the exception of a serpent that has established its presence between the master and his pupil.

Humphrey equates the "big chief's" matriculation with the destruction of the wilderness through his inclusion of a freshly cut tree-stump and ax (fig. 4.15). While this is a reference to Wheelock's clearing of a small part of the forest to build the first classrooms after the college's founding, it also resonates with a predominant motif in American landscape painting, what Barbara Novak describes as a "double-edged symbol of progress . . . the axe that destroys and builds, builds and destroys."³⁶ Found in many images of the American landscape from Thomas Cole through Frederic Church, this icon, Novak argues, is an expression of Euro-American ambivalence regarding the effects of "man's traces" on the nation's wilderness. On the one hand, paintings such as Cole's *The Oxbow (View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, After a Thunderstorm)* (1836) or George Inness's *The Lackawanna Valley* (1855) purport a divine ordination to American expansion through brightly illuminated scenes of a domesticated landscape, while on the other they betray anxieties about this domestication by including cut-down tree trunks throughout the scene. These emblems of human destruction mar the pastoral beauty of the classical



FIGURE 4.14
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 3,
right side (plate 6);
P.939.19.9.*

landscape and remind the viewer not only of the challenges settlers faced within “nature’s nation” but also of the loss of the very wildness that defined the American frontier spirit.³⁷

The felled tree represents a phenomenon analogous to the “noble savage,” displaced onto the landscape. As an anxious emblem of settler identification with nature/Native Americans, it betrays simultaneously a desire for and a fear of the wild. And here it is significant that U.S.-American painters often painted small, nearly indiscernible Native Americans hiding or warily eyeing civilization within the wild passages of the landscape. At one with their habitat and stripped of any signs of



FIGURE 4.15
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 3,
right side (plate 6);
P.939.19.9.*

cultural organization or accomplishment, Indians function as more than mere “staff-
age” in American landscape painting. Rather they imply that, like the wilderness,
Native life will be extinguished by the inevitable encroachment of progress. In the
parallels between the action of lightning and the “doomed to perish” ideology, we
can also see a disavowal of the effects of settlement on the very wildness that at once
defines and serves as an Other to U.S.-American identity.

But can we assume that Humphrey’s inclusion of this landscape trope is his way of

speaking to the deleterious effects of European settlement on the region's indigenous people? Not exactly, for the Native figures in Humphrey's mural are not, in the end, representations of indigenous peoples but, rather, images of Dartmouth Men. As a writer for *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* noted early in the mural's progress, "certain anomalies" appear in Humphrey's interpretation of Hovey's song, most notably, "'the Big Chief who met him' will wear a large D."³⁸ "Bleeding Green" and imbibing in college drinking traditions, the "big chief" is none other than a "natural" letterman. The figures and objects gathered in the scene over the grill's hearth illustrating the chorus reveal that these men are not really Native Americans; they are Dartmouth students in Indian disguise. Humphrey proclaimed as much in his *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* piece when he wrote, "My forms aboriginous will all be indigenous To the haunts that as students we knew."³⁹

In this final image filled with visual codes that would be legible to any Dartmouth Man, Wheelock dons a "friendship medal" and ladles rum from a metal bowl (plate 7). This is likely a reference to the silver monteith given to Wheelock by royal governor John Wentworth at the college's first commencement ceremony in 1771 and passed on subsequently by each president to his successor at his inauguration. Not only does the "big chief" sport a green "D" on his broad chest (a reference to the "war paint" Dartmouth students slathered on their bodies for athletic events), but also he wears the green key pendant on a chain around his neck, signifying his membership in one of Dartmouth's traditional honorary service societies (fig. 4.16). The physiognomies of the Native Men in this scene no longer resemble the "noble" or "savage" profiles seen in earlier scenes. Rather, they appear suspiciously like portraits of white men in "redface."

It is known that Humphrey based his image of Wheelock on his father-in-law, and it is rumored that one non-Native woman posed for all the images of indigenous women in the mural. It is therefore likely that Humphrey immortalized students or friends in this final scene. This is particularly evident in the man who places his tankard between Wheelock's legs to catch the stream of golden rum cascading from his bowl (see fig. 2.9). His features are too specific and anglicized to be those of a generic Native figure. The location of the stream evokes thoughts of urine and lore about hazing rituals in male fraternities, an inside joke that is underlined by the fact that this Indian wears a "freshman beanie" signaling his lowly status within the group.

As my analysis suggests, the panel illustrating the Hovey chorus, in particular, as a kind of coda to the mural as a whole, depicts Dartmouth Men "playing Indian." This is in keeping with the tendency at the college to don Indian disguise or engage in Indian rituals during key ceremonial moments, such as athletic games or graduation. As part of the now banned practices associated with the "Dartmouth Indian," the Hovey mural represents what Philip Deloria chronicles as a "persistent tradition in American culture," from the Tea Party Mohawks to the contemporary New



FIGURE 4.16
Detail of the Hovey
mural, chorus panel
(plate 7); p.939.19.10.

Age movement.⁴⁰ He writes that at different historical moments, “Americans have returned to the Indian, reinterpreting the intuitive dilemmas surrounding Indianness to meet the circumstances of their times.”⁴¹

Humphrey’s mural embodies the contradictory attitude toward Indianness that structures national identity within the United States. Through the contrast between Wheelock and the “Sachem,” the mural sets up a familiar opposition between the “civilized” white settler and his “savage” Indian Other. But at the same time the indigenous men are also configured as emblems of an authentic Americanness in their relationship to the regional landscape and their healthy athletic physiques. “By imagining Indian Others as a kind of us rather than a them,” Deloria explains, “one could more easily gain access to those Indian/American qualities and make them one’s own.”⁴²

But while Humphrey’s mural is consistent with early American modes of “playing Indian,” it also betrays what Deloria describes as a “shift” in the modern period from identifying with an “internal” Indian Other to constructing the Indian Other as an “exterior authenticity.”⁴³ This shift coincides, he argues, with the final stages of the reservation system. White perceptions of the negative consequences of this policy for Native Americans — “drinking, tramping, and laziness” — were now viewed by some as “examples of the corrosive evil of modern society.”⁴⁴ As if to counter this perceived threat to Americanness, antimodernists now hailed an Indianness exterior to mainstream society, paradoxically embracing these “sins” as evidence of a more authentic lifestyle. Thus, Deloria writes, “laziness became freedom from labor, tramping became a carefree lifestyle, and refusal to leave the reservation meant a folk rootedness to rural place.”⁴⁵

In Humphrey’s comical celebration of drunkenness we see this paradoxical imaginary at work. His Indians, on the one hand, demonstrate the evils of civilization, while on the other hand, the very effects of this Fall (drunken debauchery) are lovingly embraced as evidence of a robust, masculine, life lived outside the moral constraints of modern society. “Going Native,” in this instance, represents an anti-modern primitivism that must be read in contrast with the modernist primitivism of Orozco’s *mestizaje*. For it was Orozco’s progressive vision of a mestizo modernity as well as his modernist aesthetic that Humphrey used as a “foil” when working out his “real Dartmouth mural.”⁴⁶

It is telling that Humphrey executes the scene that Orozco decided not to portray in his coda. Recall that Orozco eschewed not only a panel devoted to Wheelock teaching Native students but also an image of a square-jawed athletic male undergraduate reading a book. Orozco converted the Dartmouth Man into a working-class mestizo, thereby reflecting a radically subaltern image of the library’s public or student reader.⁴⁷ Humphrey, on the other hand, reflects the Dartmouth Man as he prefers to see himself, as an American Indian in disguise. Instead of making a bid for

a future in which the colonial legacies of encounter and Conquest might be reconciled, he opts for a classic endorsement of settler identity politics.

In this elision between the Native body and the Dartmouth undergrad, Humphrey repeats, albeit “in a lighter vein,” Wheelock’s betrayal of both Samson Occom and the college’s original mission when he converted his school for Native youth into a college for white men. The insensitive symbolic politics of “playing Indian” at a college that had only recently reactivated its commitment to Native education, I submit, is why Humphrey’s “Hovey mural” came under attack in the 1970s and Orozco’s *Epic of American Civilization* did not. For while *mestizaje* and “playing Indian” are both expressions of settler identity politics, the former was articulated to a radical, anticolonial social and cultural agenda while the latter partook of a reactionary, antimodernist Colonial Revival. Ironically, Humphrey’s solicitous attempt to avoid controversy with a “real Dartmouth mural” would backfire, as his “Hovey mural” was viewed as not only kitsch but also a source of “cultural harm” out of step with Dartmouth’s increasingly diverse faculty and student body.⁴⁸

Whereas President Hopkins defended Orozco’s mural against calls for its destruction in the 1930s, President John Kemeny decided, reluctantly, to shutter Humphrey’s mural in 1979 amidst a chorus of protests against “censorship.” As part of a broader attempt to squelch the multifarious modes of “playing Indian” at Dartmouth, the concealing of Humphrey’s murals was an initial step in the college’s efforts to reckon with the legacies of its origins in the material and symbolic violence of colonialism.⁴⁹ This decision was more a temporary expedient than a final solution, but it has proved difficult over the years to uncover the murals without reactivating their potential to harm.

In a refreshingly balanced and well-argued student editorial in *The Dartmouth* in 1976, Ted Kutscher (Class of 1974) argued:

To cover the murals would be to deny the imperfections of our background, and to leave them in their present place would be to deny our sensitivity for the composition of our modern society. If we can preserve them and present them in a way which does not condone their implications, then we will be practicing a certain amount of cultural maturity which has been a long time in coming.⁵⁰

The essays in this book suggest that we have reached a level of “cultural maturity” in which we can acknowledge the “implications” of Humphrey’s “Hovey mural” without “condoning” them. By situating Humphrey’s mural within a comparative framework, I have endeavored to continue Orozco’s challenge to his U.S. public. For Humphrey’s “foil” reminds us that the cultural politics of indigeneity take many forms. And Orozco’s presence at the college in the early 1930s reveals, pace Kutscher’s claim, that the “composition of our modern society” has always been more diverse than either artist imagined.

NOTES

1. Walter Beach Humphrey, "The Song of Five Hundred Gallons: A Proposed Mural Pic-turization of Richard Hovey's 'Eleazar Wheelock'; Not Art for Art's Sake," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* (October 1937), 15. Author's note: This essay is indebted to the many conversations, debates, and projects I have overseen with students in a sequence of courses I have taught (Public Art in the U.S., Art from Latin America, Mexican Muralism, and 20th Century U.S. American Art) at Dartmouth College. I'd like to single out for particular mention Catherine Roberts, who worked as my research assistant combing the college's archives for material on both the Orozco and the Humphrey murals; Mary Cooper and Nichola Tucker, who devel-oped novel interpretations of Orozco's mural in my senior seminar on Mexican muralism that have informed my own understanding of the mural; Hanh Tran, whose research into the "Dartmouth Man" for a final paper in my first-year seminar Public Art in the U.S. helped me to unpack some of the "hidden symbolism" in Humphrey's chorus panel; and my students in ARTH 16 (Spring 2010), whose term-long wiki project on Orozco's mural has enriched my understanding of the cycle in ways I am only beginning to integrate into my scholarship. My understanding of the "Hovey Mural" has also been shaped by many conversations, tours, and lectures I have engaged in with students and faculty in the Native American Studies Program, in particular Bruce Duthu, Mishuana Goeman, Darren Ranco, and Dale Turner. I have also been aided in many ways by the highly professional and dedicated staff at the Hood Museum of Art, who have routinely made the "Hovey Mural," Orozco's preparatory sketches, prints, and drawings, and the holdings in Mexican and U.S.-American art accessible to me and my students. In particular, I would like to thank Cynthia Gilliland, Kathy Hart, Brian Kennedy, and Bonnie MacAdam.

2. See Hopkins-Humphrey-Hayward correspondence in reference to the "Rathskeller Room" murals in DP-11 (262): Thayer Hall files, Dartmouth College Library.

3. Ibid.

4. "Hovey Grill," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* (October 1938), 17.

5. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

6. For analysis of post-Conquest constructions of Quetzalcoatl see Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of the Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813* (Chi-cago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For critiques of the theory that indigenous peoples viewed Cortés as Quetzalcoatl see James Lockhart, ed., *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*, Repertorium Columbianum, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Camilla Townshend, "No One Said It Was Quetzalcoatl: Listening to the Indians in the Conquest of Mexico," *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (2003), and "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003).

7. See Mary K. Coffey, "Toward an Industrial Golden Age? Orozco's *The Epic of American Civilization*," in *Orozco at Dartmouth: The Epic of American Civilization*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth Libraries (Trustees of Dartmouth College, 2007), 12-15, for a more elaborated discussion of Orozco's mural and the coda.

8. See, for example, Manuel Gamio, *Forjando Patria (pro nacionalismo)* (México: Porrúa Hermanos, 1916); Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (New York:

Knopf, 1946); or Adolfo Best-Maugard, *A Method for Creative Design* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926).

9. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, Xavier Guerrero, Fermín Revueltas, José Clemente Orozco, Ramón Alva Guadarrama, Germán Cueto, and Carlos Mérida, *Manifiesto del sindicato de obreros técnicos, pintores, y escultores de México*, flier published by *El Machete* (Mexico City) 2, no. 7 (15–30 June 1924), translated and reprinted in Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea, *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press in association with The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2004), 461.

10. See Museum of Modern Art, *American Sources of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1933).

11. Karal Ann Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 12.

12. Jacquelynn Baas, “Dartmouth College and *The Epic of American Civilization*,” in *Jose Clemente Orozco in the United States, 1927–1934*, ed. Renato Gonzalez Mello and Diane Miliotes (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum, Dartmouth College; New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 4.

13. Jacquelynn Baas, “*The Epic of American Civilization*: The Mural at Dartmouth College,” in *Orozco at Dartmouth*, 155.

14. See Mary Cooper, “New England as America: José Clemente Orozco’s Anglo-America,” *The Collegiate Journal of Art* 4 (Spring 2008), 82–96.

15. See, for example, “A Synthesis of Life in America: Orozco’s Mural at Dartmouth College,” *Survey Graphic* (March 1934), 119; Lewis Mumford, “Orozco in New England,” *New Republic* 80 (October 10, 1934), 231–35.

16. See articles written by Churchill Lathrop, Stacy May, Artemas Packard, Kimball Flaccus, William Gaston Raoul, and Gobin Stair in Kimball Flaccus, ed., *Orozco at Dartmouth: A Symposium* (Hanover, N.H.: Arts Press, 1933).

17. See personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Ellen A. Lewis of March 8, 1934; personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Albert I. Dickerson of August 1, 1934; personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Lucia Ames Mead of November 7 and 13, 1934; personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Lewis Parkhurst of April 20, 1934; personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Harvey Watts of August 7, October 11, and October 16, 1934; and personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Albert Frye of August 5, 1935, in “Orozco Murals, 1934–35” file, Dartmouth College Library.

18. See personal correspondence between President Hopkins and Walter B. Humphrey, August 27, 1934, and Roald Morton, August 10, 1934, respectively, in “Orozco Murals, 1934–45” file.

19. Personal correspondence between Walter B. Humphrey and President Hopkins, letter dated August 23, 1934, in “Orozco Murals, 1934–35” file.

20. *Ibid.*, 3.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 5.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 8.
25. Siqueiros et al., *Manifiesto del sindicato de obreros técnicos, pintores, y escultores de México*, 461.
26. Personal correspondence between Sidney Hayward and Walter Humphrey, dated August 16, 1937, in DP-11 (262): “Thayer Hall, 1987–38” file.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Personal correspondence between Walter Humphrey and Sidney Hayward, dated August 30, 1937, in CP-11 (262): “Thayer Hall, 1937–38” file.
29. All quotations about the narrative of the mural are from Hovey’s song, unless otherwise noted.
30. “Imperialist nostalgia” is Renato Rosaldo’s term. See *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).
31. For a discussion of the “doomed to perish” ideology see Katheryn S. Hight, “‘Doomed to Perish’: George Catlin’s Depictions of the Mandan,” *Art Journal* 49 (Summer 1990), 119–24.
32. See Ann Uhry Abrams, “Benjamin West’s Documentation of Colonial History: *William Penn’s Treaty with the Indians*,” *Art Bulletin* 54 (March 1982), 59–75.
33. Humphrey, “The Song of Five Hundred Gallons,” 43.
34. *Ibid.*, 15, 43.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Barbara Novak, “Man’s Traces: Axe, Train, Figure,” in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting, 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 157.
37. Angela Miller, *Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825–1875* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
38. “Gradus ad Parnassum,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 30, no. 7 (April 1938), 4.
39. Humphrey, “The Song of Five Hundred Gallons,” 15.
40. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 7.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, 103.
43. *Ibid.*, 104.
44. *Ibid.*, 105.
45. *Ibid.*
46. “Gradus ad Parnassum,” 4.
47. For an elaborated discussion of this figure’s relationship to the presumed viewer see Nichola Tucker, “The Epic of American Civilization as Performative Epic: Student Viewers as Heroes and the Re-enactment of History,” *The Collegiate Art Journal* 4 (Spring 2008), 97–110.
48. Rebecca Tsosie argues that the appropriation of Native American culture, rituals, or symbols by non-Native Americans is a form of “cultural harm” because: it interferes with Native Americans’ ability to define their own identity; it can result in the creation of derogatory stereotypes about Native Americans; it can transform cultural practices through commodification and the exacerbation of intragroup conflict; it allows outsiders to materially benefit from Native American culture while Native Americans are often denied access to the markets that exploit them; and it can convert Native American culture into property, further depriving Native American communities of the right to protect and safeguard their ways of life, rituals, and

cultural practices. See Rebecca Tsosie, "Reclaiming Native Stories: An Essay on Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Rights," *Arizona State Law Journal* 299 (Spring, 2002).

49. See campus letter from President Kemeny, September 21, 1979, in "Hovey Grill 1979" file.

50. Ted Kutscher, "College Murals," *The Dartmouth*, November 9, 1976, 4.



FIGURE 5.1
Walter Beach
Humphrey, The Wild
West, 1930, oil on canvas.
Courtesy of Treadway
Gallery.

The Indian in the American Literary Imagination

Walter Beach Humphrey and the “Forms Aboriginous” of American Fictions

MELANIE BENSON TAYLOR



Like countless other “Dartmouth men” in the 1930s, Walter Beach Humphrey, Class of 1914, was furious to see the hallowed walls of his beloved alma mater painted — and hence, tainted — by the “one-armed Dago Communist” José Clemente Orozco.² In a rancorous letter addressed to the president and trustees of the college, Humphrey expressed in painstaking detail the objections he shared with his fellow alumni, collectively incensed that a Mexican socialist had been permitted to stain the walls of the college library with a visual narrative deeply critical of American national progress:

Pity the art which can find no other means of stimulating the beholder than that of giving offense to reason and normal sensibilities by the conscious distortion of things which in natural and reasonable form and relation we enjoy seeing. Weak indeed the artist who must substitute crudity for strength and by the manner and matter of his work achieve merely sensation and evoke distaste if not disgust.³

Humphrey was apparently so rankled by Orozco’s offensive artistry and politics that he was inspired to create his own reactionary mural in response just a few years later. The “Hovey murals,” as they have come to be known, represent his corrective

It needs but little familiarity with the actual, palpable aborigines to convince anyone that the poetic Indian — the Indian of Cooper and Longfellow — is only visible to the poet’s eye. To the prosaic observer, the average Indian of the woods and prairies is a being who does little credit to human nature — a slave of appetite and sloth, never emancipated from the tyranny of one animal passion save by the more ravenous demands of another.

HORACE GREELEY,

“LO! THE POOR INDIAN”¹

to Orozco's anti-imperial, anticapitalist critique. Humphrey's mural commemorates a narrative of origins that he found more pertinent to the "place" and more reverent to the "reason and normal sensibilities" of its denizens. In particular, he uses the "forms aboriginal"⁴ to Dartmouth — that is, Dartmouth's own mythicized New Hampshire indigenous — rather than Orozco's "Mayan legend . . . [which] though the subject is American . . . bears no direct connection with us, our antecedents or our culture."⁵ By producing his own staunchly "realistic" iteration of a near and dear history, one exchangeable in many ways for American progress writ large, Humphrey endeavors to restore his own imperial cosmology to its proper and "natural" order, complete with the civilization and assimilation of the aborigine. And yet, in the process, he accomplishes even more enduring "offense," "distortion," and the very "distaste if not disgust" that he and his peers experienced in their confrontation with the Orozco narrative.

How can two versions of a distinctly imperial history be so essentially divergent — one deeply critical of American progress, the other rabidly celebratory and nationalistic — to the point that "reality" itself becomes contested territory? What is fundamentally at issue here is the idea of "narrative" in a broad sense, and in particular the ways in which a "natural" and orderly history can be fundamentally distorted by the mechanisms of colonialism. As Humphrey's critique of Orozco demonstrates, even visual art can no longer be appreciated for its ability to capture a freestanding truth absent the underlying narrative that fundamentally conditions it, rendering it appealing to some and unpalatable to others. A detached observer would surely glean the symbolism of Orozco's heavily stylized reality much as Humphrey's bright, rubicund, Disneyesque figures and landscapes strike one as superficially mimetic, even while they proclaim a reality far more sanguine than the veiled historical truth. Simply put, it is neither the methods nor the artistic merits that matter in either case, but the way in which each artist vies for the validity of contradictory narratives. Transposed into a visual economy, both depictions clash for superficial authority over the plot of American history as experienced in radically divergent ways by the privileged (e.g., Humphrey) and the marginalized (e.g., Orozco). Because this project is essentially (if not always obviously) *narratological*, we ought to turn to precedents, not just in visual art or in the historical record, but perhaps more aptly in the literary narratives that explicitly underwrite, corroborate, and occasionally challenge our national mythologies.

For Humphrey, the figure of the American Indian was — as he or she has always been — a key figure as well as a crisis in the construction of an American national romance. As a successful illustrator for popular magazines in the vein of his friend Norman Rockwell — whose great gift was that, in the words of Beverly Gherman, "his paintings told stories without using a single word"⁶ — Humphrey also endeavored to bring to life tales of natural, pleasing, universal appeal and significance. While that

vision was often explicitly nationalistic, featuring scenes of revolutionary and colonial glory, his pictures occasionally also included portrayals of Indians. The two most striking examples include *The Wild West* (fig. 5.1), a painting completed in 1930 that features a brave warrior on horseback facing down a vicious bear raised up in massive stature with teeth and claws at the ready. With his mouth similarly open in what appears to be a war cry, the Indian clearly mirrors and resembles a potent match for the savage animal. His intrepid form poses in distinct contrast to the background figures: a white man holding a gun, reduced in both perspective and might; two frightened frontiersmen trying to escape in their covered wagon; and four horses, including the Indian's own, all rearing away in terror. The only other figure in the painting approximating the Native in bravery is a small dog in the foreground, who approaches the bear with reckless curiosity and intent; the suggestion, it seems, is that Indians are fearless, savage hunters with the courage and the simplicity of animals.

A second suggestive illustration is more obviously in the pictorial realism tradition that dominated commercial art in the 1920s and '30s: in this untitled painting (fig. 5.2), an Indian and a Pilgrim face one another in profile over the carcass of a turkey. An arrow (apparently discharged by the Indian) and a dark wound (obviously the result of the Pilgrim's smoking gun) appear on the turkey's corpse, making its ownership uncertain; accordingly, a question mark appears at the bottom of the print, beneath the turkey, implicitly raising the specter of property rights that haunts the national narrative. The provenance of the piece is unknown, but it bears a stunningly uncanny resemblance to J. C. Leyendecker's December 1, 1923, cover for *The Saturday Evening Post*: in *Trading for a Turkey* (fig. 5.3), the jolly, rubicund Pilgrim figure and the menacing, lean, savage Native are rendered in detail nearly identical to that in Humphrey's later version. While Leyendecker's colonial figures barter seemingly amicably for a Thanksgiving meal, Humphrey seems at pains explicitly to echo — and rewrite — an imperial narrative continually haunted by the territorial claims of the nation's indigenous, particularly in the early decades of the 1900s, which saw rapid and tumultuous changes and debates over the federal government's custodianship of Indian country and a dwindling desire to share or barter over the national pie. In American literature spanning the entire colonial trajectory, Humphrey would have found ample precedent for such interrogative — and ultimately affirming — narratives about the legitimacy of national land claims:⁷ repeatedly, these stories construct characters and plots that confirm the inherent (even if occasionally noble) savagery and inveterate “otherness” of indigenous peoples, who become increasingly remote and immaterial figures.

Perhaps Humphrey's most revealing illustration was completed at least a decade prior to the Hovey mural: *Book Characters Coming to Life as Boy Reads* (fig. 5.4) features a young child in the foreground, lounging on the floor with a book spread open in front of him and another to his right. Surrounding him is a collage

FIGURE 5.2
Walter Beach
Humphrey, art
illustration for cover
of Collier's Magazine,
ca. 1935–40, oil on
canvas. Image courtesy
of Heritage Auctions,
HA.com.



of figures and scenes derived clearly from the literature swelling his young brain: pirates, athletes, animals, exotic soldiers, ships, and planes cram the air around him. Closest to the boy's head, significantly, are a roaring lion and a noble-looking Indian chief wearing full headdress and with a distant, faraway gaze. What is striking about this picture is Humphrey's tacit admission that the stuff of literary romance and fiction fill not just our heads but the very rooms and reality of our lives: with his eyes downturned — but seemingly closed — the boy gazes at what appears to be an atlas; and beside him lays an *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Straddling a world somewhere between fact and fiction, maps and mythologies, waking and dreaming, the boy is both

This image has been
redacted.
Please refer to the
print edition to see
the image.

FIGURE 5.3
*Joseph Christian
Leyendecker (1874–
1951), Trading for a
Turkey, illustration for
cover of The Saturday
Evening Post, ca. 1923.
Courtesy of Curtis
Publishing.*

present and absent in a world that balances precariously on the rim of such fantasies. Taken together, Humphrey's body of work prior to the Hovey mural project affirms the underlying commitment in the Dartmouth panels to "bring to life" characters from history books and fanciful romance simultaneously. Humphrey makes us at least implicitly aware that our most fervently treasured histories may be, at bottom, just stories. Yet his artistic mission is to render those fantasies in the full color and

FIGURE 5.4
Walter Beach
Humphrey, Book
Characters Coming
to Life as Boy Reads,
1920–1925. Courtesy of
Corbis Images.

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redacted.
Please refer to the
print edition to see
the image.

glory that they assume in the minds of Dartmouth men, who were all once boys splayed on the floor with picture books and encyclopedias. Threatened by men and movements like Orozco, Humphrey labored to emblazon and protect on the walls of the Hovey Grill a sweeping American colonial narrative with all its attendant values and privileges — a fiction that he needed to make “real” in order to preserve its

ideological command. As an artist of the 1930s, however, the unique challenges of his own moment required him to revise the most menacing, terrifying features of those narratives, rendering the Indian ally a figure at once hostile and hospitable, savage and salvageable, generous and greedy — and, finally, an immaterial anachronism ensuring the survival of the Dartmouth and the American legacy against and above all else.

A vast body of literary precedents similarly caresses local histories and invents mimetic illusions in order to legitimate U.S. national validity and exceptionalism; in such a world, the most violent “distortions” of fact are transmuted into “natural,” “normal,” pleasing forms and scenes. Indeed, the most surprising thing about viewing the Hovey mural is that it is, as Humphrey explicitly intended, neither very surprising nor immediately “disgusting” at all. In the literary worlds of authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, and even Mark Twain and William Faulkner, we find the imaginative seeds for the distinctly savage and yet utterly fleshly and corruptible types that appear in full color on the walls of Thayer Dining Hall. Constructed largely to satisfy American national ideologies — ones that needed to establish an indigenous type as simple, sensual, heathen, and doomed — the stereotypical Native American “type” steadily replaced the reality of the surviving, evolving, diverse indigenous cultures nationwide. The rise of dime novels, cinema, and the Western genre in the early decades of the twentieth century — precisely the era when Humphrey was designing and executing his vision — further ossified in the cultural and visual consciousness the striking stereotypes that had long been staples of popular fiction. Well before Humphrey raised his paintbrush to adorn the walls of the Hovey Grill, the “real” Indian had already become a vestigial reminder of an obsolete past, an icon of primitivism and savagery naturally overtaken by the forces of civilization and progress. “The true story,” reminds Paul Chaat Smith, Comanche art historian and Smithsonian curator, “is simply too messy and complicated. And too threatening. The myth of noble savages, completely unable to cope with modern times, goes down much more easily.” To acknowledge otherwise, Smith suggests, would require dredging up the disquieting fact that America was “built on the invasion and destruction of a populated land with hundreds of distinct, complex societies. . . . This unpleasant truth is why Indians have been erased from the master narrative of this country and replaced by the cartoon images that all of us know and most of us believe.”⁸ With his own “cartoon images” — rendered with the kind of engaging, brightly hued realism that highlights the comfortable strangeness of these remote types — Humphrey participates in a long history of subsuming historical reality with vibrant fictions.

Indeed, Humphrey seems aware from the start that “realism” might indulge in romance and symbolism in order to underscore its point and purpose. In the October 1937 issue of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, the artist published a witty verse

intended to explain his project: “give me some paint and a wall-space that ain’t / All done on the Mexican plan, / And I’ll make it sing with the verses that ring / In the heart of each true Dartmouth man.”⁹ Humphrey thus prominently allies himself with the “poet” Richard Hovey and the song that glorified Dartmouth’s founding; emphatically, Humphrey’s companion vision of Dartmouth’s glory is a “lyric” and a staunchly American one, and so, the primitive Indians who appear throughout the mural are part of a mythology whose “truth” need only be allegorical. As Roland Barthes once noted, the desire to represent an exotic “other” often draws deliberately on impression and stereotype rather than realism; in writing a book about Japan, for instance, Barthes argues that the essence of Japan itself is beside the point: “the Orient is a matter of indifference, merely providing a reserve of features whose manipulation — whose invented interplay — allows me to ‘entertain’ the idea of an unheard-of symbolic system, one altogether detached from our own.”¹⁰ This neo-primitivist maneuver becomes a distinctly modernist trope, as it allows the artist to fashion a spectral “other” as a foil to Western culture while escaping charges of direct misrepresentation or stereotype.

On the one hand, Humphrey’s efforts to represent the Dartmouth Native seem to run counter to this impulse, at least in their earlier iterations. Several years before either Orozco’s or Humphrey’s own murals existed, Humphrey took on a different indigenous representation altogether: a more accurate illustration of the Dartmouth Indian mascot. On February 26, 1932, the *Manchester Union* reported that a Dartmouth alum — none other than Walter Beach Humphrey — had recently “discovered” that the prevailing icon was inaccurate; as Humphrey recounts, “Two years ago, when I went to see my brother in law, Bill Morton, play his first hockey game in Madison Square Garden, I happened to take a good look at the old Indian design. ‘Eleazar Wheelock,’ I said to myself, ‘would never recognize this lad as the Sachem of the Wah-Who-Wahs.’ I didn’t know much about the Indians, but I did know that the feathered and tasseled war bonnet belonged to the Western Plains, still unknown when Eleazar Wheelock mixed his first drink for the heathen. Those benighted ones sported a close shave around the ears and a bristling scalplock on top of their heads. Why not have a Dartmouth Indian like his prototype?” Humphrey set about to produce a more accurate model: “I started my sketch,” he recalls, “trying to convince myself that my idea was right, and that a typical Eastern woods Indian would make a good spot on a white man’s jersey.”¹¹ Humphrey’s commitment to the “idea” of authenticity despite his professed lack of knowledge is striking. Indeed, even when he was planning to render those “benighted heathen” in full color and stature on the walls of Thayer, he reportedly conducted his research by “going to the State museum in Albany where there is a collection of Indian implements [figs. 5.5–5.7], and life-size figures adorned in the primitive costumes of the various Indian tribes.”¹² Again, he maintains the pretense of veracity even as he must have known that the



FIGURE 5.6
Illustration of an Iroquois headdress (gusto weh) from the Parker-Reuss Presentation Book, 1849, graphite and watercolor. Courtesy of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY.



FIGURE 5.5 (top)
Unknown artist (Iroquois), band from elaborate headdress (gusto weh), silver. New York State Museum; 51150. Photograph copyright of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY.

FIGURE 5.7 (bottom)
Unknown artist (Iroquois), ball-mouth-type war club (ga-je-wa), wood and leather. New York State Museum; 36700. Photograph copyright of the New York State Museum, Albany, NY.

New York State tribal groups on display differed from those of the New Hampshire woods¹³ — just as those northern communities would have diverged even from their neighbors along the Maine and Massachusetts coasts, though he is at pains to elide them, too.¹⁴ In the final depictions, Humphrey places in ludicrous juxtaposition what appear to be Mohawk Indians (possibly the result of the “research” he undertook in Albany) (fig. 5.8.) along with a big chief in Plains attire (much like the original, “wrong” mascot image) (fig. 5.9), all accompanied by a harem of “cute little Nannies”¹⁵ who resemble faintly exotic but phenotypically Caucasian women (reportedly modeled by a Smith College coed). For Humphrey, the brilliantly talented and

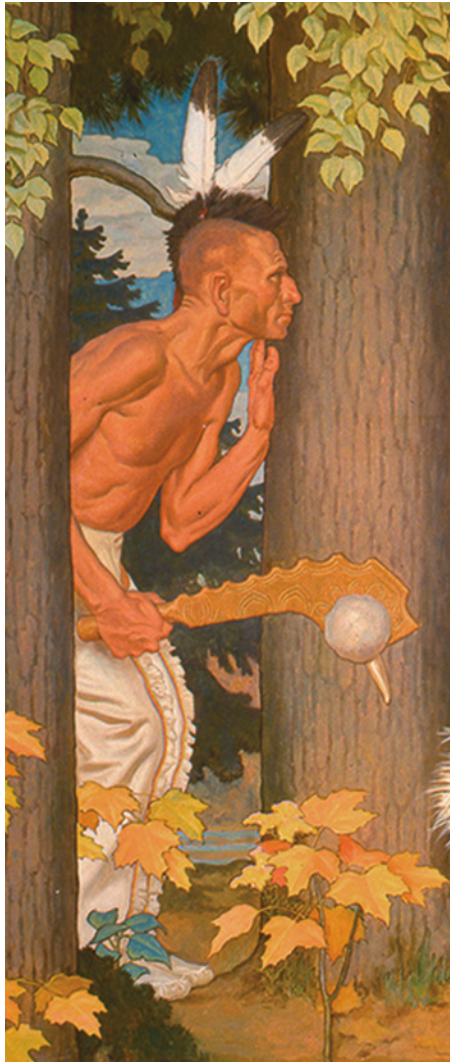


FIGURE 5.8
*Detail of the Hovey
 mural, panel 1,
 left side (plate 1);
 P.939.19.1.*

meticulously realist painter, it was the “idea” of reality and the illusion of authenticity that counted above all else.

Humphrey’s illustrations thus implicitly participate in a long tradition of what David Treuer calls white America’s “exoticized foreknowledge” about Indians, that “legendary mist” that overtakes reality to the point of no return.¹⁶ The textures and implications of these representations have shifted with the ideological needs and anxieties of the storytellers; but from the earliest moments of American settlement, as Gordon M. Sayre details in *Les Sauvages Américains* (1997), early ethnographic reports exercised a profound impact on the way Native cultures came to be understood and represented in French and English colonial literatures. Many of these writers lacked any firsthand knowledge about indigenous cultures, yet through the obviously biased observations of explorers committed to the project of settlement, they felt they knew exactly who these savages were. More to the point, they *needed* to know exactly who the other was, as they gauged their own civility, piety, and endurance against the evident indications of a doomed and heathen race.¹⁷

Indeed, representations of the Indian tend to keep pace with the current crises in the dominant society; as the values and the legitimacy of American civilization are routinely stressed or tested, refigurations of the Indian serve as a foil or a convenient receptacle for national anxieties. In the aftermath of Reconstruction, for example, white Southerners reached deeply into their own regional history to resurrect Native ancestors that would ideologically validate their own claims to a territory in which they had been economically dispossessed and temporarily colonized by the North.¹⁸ Quickly, it became common for Southerners to depict Indians as noble al-

lies whose humanist, anticommercial values might stand as a bulwark against the industrial nation and its economic exploitation of Southern resources and production. Such alliances grew widespread in literary works well into the twentieth century by writers such as Stark Young, Allen Tate, Eudora Welty, and William Faulkner. Throughout *I’ll Take My Stand* (1930), the Nashville Agrarians (who champion their own version of regional nationalism apart from and against the industrial, imperial North) in fact ally themselves *with* Native Americans as a group similarly victimized by America’s material aggressions.¹⁹ And yet, once again, their endgame is to replace the Indians as doomed casualties of this process, one that white Southerners could only hope to better withstand.

Long subjected to the needs and narratives of others—stories that have only

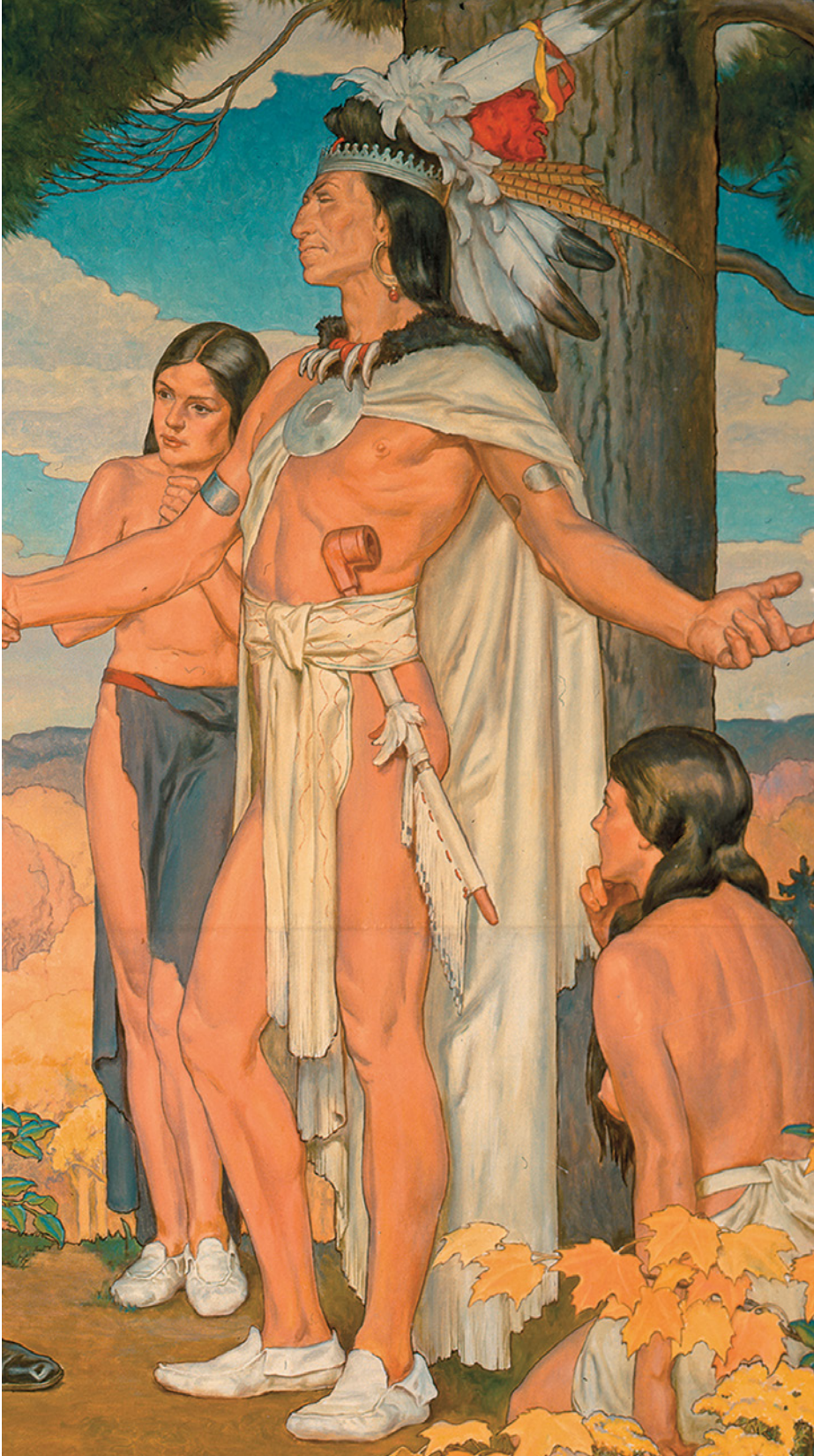


FIGURE 5.9
Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 2,
left side (plate 3);
P.939.19.4.

limited, explicitly self-serving roles for Indians to play—Natives themselves become ghosts haunting the pages of American history.²⁰ In the fragile early days of national settlement, American writers were crafting their own advance obituaries for the Indian race to authenticate America's status as a fledgling nation distinct from Britain. Features of Indian nobility were lauded and borrowed even as the Indian himself needed to make way for the advance of civilized Western society. Around the same time that Wordsworth wrote about his imaginary, forsaken Indian woman, the New York poet Philip Freneau was similarly eulogizing America's Natives in works such as "The Dying Indian" (1784) and "The Indian Burying Ground" (1788). By yoking together the essential goodness of nature and the wisdom of the ancient Indian, Freneau first glorifies the indigenous past and then bids it a fond and inevitable farewell. The lesson for Americans, he avers, is to eschew the avaricious legacies carried over from Britain and England, and instead to absorb some of the quiet reverence and natural philosophy embodied by the Indian. In the nineteenth century, novelists James Fenimore Cooper and William Gilmore Simms were the most prominent and energetic chroniclers of the early frontier and the role of indigenous precedents in the formation of the American character. Even though works like Cooper's and Simms's are often viewed as "open-minded" efforts to "take seriously" the portrayal of their Indian characters,²¹ the end results are nonetheless invariably tragic. As Ojibwe author and critic David Treuer puts it, Simms in particular "is at pains to show Indian daily life, Indian lifeways, if only to better understand what is really going on here — Indian death."²² At the same time that such passing is figured incessantly as fated, it also becomes spectacle: "Indian death is never private, it is always attended by larger meanings."²³ Those "larger meanings" have little to do with Indians themselves, and everything to do with establishing and supporting whatever features of the American ideological narrative need shoring up at the time. Such narratives have had the dual effect of cementing in the American imagination lasting stereotypes of stoic, mystical warriors who ally with whites to help shepherd forth a new nation, and then they simply disappear to make way for the natural progress of civilization.

Of course, real Indians did not vanish quite so readily; therefore, part of the process of subsuming them within the American populace involved sending those copper-colored youths back to school, where they were clothed and endowed with all the physical and intellectual trappings of civilization, mechanisms that promised eventually to convert the savage into a proper American citizen. The insidious narrative underlying the apparently beneficent project of educating the Native was apparent to Indians as early as 1744. In an account related by Benjamin Franklin, an Iroquois chief named Canassatego entered into treaty negotiations with Virginia's Indian commissioners and politely declined efforts to send the tribe's young men away to a local college (probably the College of William and Mary):

we know, says he, that you highly esteem the kind of Learning taught in those Colleges, and that the Maintenance of our young Men while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinc'd therefore that you mean to do us Good by your Proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you who are wise must know, that different Nations have different Conceptions of Things, and you will therefore not take it amiss if our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some Experience of it: Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us they were bad Runners ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters Warriors, or Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing.

With what sounds like carefully constrained sarcasm, Canassatego extended a counteroffer: “if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take great Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.”²⁴ In Freneau’s poem “The Indian Student” (1788), another Iroquois Indian is similarly lured into attending Harvard for his ostensible edification (a narrative echoing the origins of Dartmouth College, founded almost twenty years earlier), yet also quickly realizes the “tricks”²⁵ and eschews the draw of “wealth and honor”²⁶ for the more humble wants and joys of his sylvan home. Casting off his college robes, the “copper-colored boy” heads back to the woods — never again to return to civilization: “Where Nature’s ancient forests grow, / And Mingled laurel never fades, / My heart is fixed; — and I must go / To die among my native shades.”²⁷ Freneau was among the first Americans to find in America’s indigenous predecessors a model of anticapitalist subsistence and reason, an ideal fusion of commerce and moderation that might form the temperate foundation of the new American nation. As he warned presciently in a much earlier poem, “Gold, fatal gold, was the alluring bait / To Spain’s rapacious tribes — hence rose the wars / From Chili to the Caribbean sea.”²⁸ Indians had the sagacity to avoid the temptations of “wealth” and its trappings; thus, Freneau poses an indigenous America — minus the actual indigenous — as a stay against the rapacious avarice of gold-hungry European and British “tribes.” The new, Enlightenment-driven model of education, one based on natural laws, reason, and moderation, was apparently one that drew lessons implicitly from the notion of indigenous culture but had no room for Natives themselves.

Dartmouth’s own history is, of course, implicated in this vexed tradition — one that comes more to resemble the boarding school history of forced assimilation and cultural demise well into the twentieth century. But Humphrey seems less interested in the implications of this history or the enrollment figures of actual Native students

at Dartmouth; indeed, he seems more overtly concerned with the political and economic turmoil of the 1930s than with the colonial mystifications of an earlier era. While the Dawes Act of 1887 allotted parcels of land to individual Indians in order to encourage private property ownership, and the practice of sending young Indian children to boarding schools continued to spread, many Americans labored to demonstrate Indians' essential "humanity, artistry, community, and spirituality."²⁹ Such efforts to recognize and endorse the resiliency of Native culture, while not always beneficent, certainly helped influence legislation leading to the Indian New Deal, also known as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which reversed the Dawes allotment policies and restored some degree of sovereignty and self-governance to federally recognized tribes. The message from many of these authors (such as George Bird Grinnel, Walter McClintock, Mabel Dodge Luhan, and others) was that "Indians are more like you and me than either noble or savage would suggest."³⁰ Humphrey seems interested neither in depicting the burgeoning pluralist harmony expressed by some early twentieth-century writers — that world where Indians are "just like you and me" — nor in slipping on a mask and headdress to "play Indian" himself. Instead, when Humphrey paints his own version of American (and Dartmouth) glory, he does so implicitly to defend a society — and its underlying economic order and coherence — that was under attack, conceptually invaded by the likes of a "one-armed Dago Communist." Such a context helps us to understand more precisely what is at stake for Humphrey when he paints ludicrously unreal Indians into the "authoritative" Dartmouth history — and how little it all has to do with Indians per se, but rather with broader American anxieties in the 1930s.

The trope of Indian education becomes, on Humphrey's palette, a mere proxy for the intensifying communist threat to capitalism embodied by the Orozco presence on his beloved campus. As national economic growth and development has progressed — sometimes soaring, occasionally plummeting — American writers have routinely turned anxiously to (what looked like) the simpler, anticommercial teachings of the Indians as a balm for the increasingly destructive, dehumanizing mechanisms of U.S. capitalism. Previously just the *idea* of a commonwealth, subsistence economy — one that in theory seemed logical and laudable — Indians increasingly seemed like prototypically communist societies, just another "red" threat. In 1935 a cartoon appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* — a venue that Humphrey was publishing in regularly, and almost certainly reading as well — that establishes vividly the prevalence of this fear: as Peter G. Beidler and Marion F. Egge describe it, "Indians on horses (tagged 'the new economics,' 'confiscatory taxes,' and 'share-the-wealthers') shoot at a racing covered wagon called 'wealth, pioneering, new production'; all are headed toward the sunrise and a hill marked 'undeveloped future national resources.'"³¹ Another, published the following year, shows Franklin Delano Roosevelt standing on a hilltop in Indian costume, with bits of paper labeled "check"

and “spending” falling from the sky; another man, marked as “taxpayer,” shouts “Hey! Now how about some flood control!”³² In both cartoons, Indians are marked implicitly as natural communists, anxious to “share the wealth” and incite rain dances that cause money to pour indiscriminately from the sky. Another 1936 cartoon shows a young boy wearing Indian feathers bringing home a dog: the animal is tagged “Taxpayer,” and the boy asks his mother (called “Bureaucracy”), “Mamma, can’t we keep him forever?”³³ While such barbs obviously have much to say about the federal government’s financial support specifically for Indian country, they also disclose a much larger discontent with the prospect of “spreading the wealth” to those who do not deserve it. The tacit message of all three cartoons — and in scores of others with similar themes — is that such impulses are inherently greedy, that the “Indian” will take and take from the hard-working capitalist until nothing is left; perhaps more importantly, the Indian has become simply a trope and a costume, a headdress beneath which lurking communists of all colors and stripes — from young boys to American presidents — may hide.

As the country was hobbling forth out of the depths of the Great Depression, the cataclysmic, global economic catastrophe stoked the socialist fervor of artists like Orozco and, in turn, the reactionary conservation of capitalist defenders like Humphrey and his fellow alums. Yet Humphrey must have felt the distressing conflict of being both a free-market zealot and an artist — one who could have benefited directly from FDR’s Works Progress Administration and its funding for artistic projects across the country. Indeed, in his plans to commission the Hovey mural, President Hopkins wrestled with the issue of compensation; he wrote to Secretary of the College Sidney Hayward, “The last few years have been pretty hard on artists and I happen to know that Walter’s own path has not been an easy one.” While he was certainly hoping that Humphrey might yet “suggest doing the thing without recompense,” he wanted to give at least the facade of offering payment as handsome as what had been extended to Orozco (“the one-armed Dago Communist”).³⁴ While there are some indications that Humphrey may have struggled from time to time, those impressions seem relative to a high-class standard; indeed, while he worked intermittently as a teacher (of both art and marketing, significantly³⁵), he seemed to maintain a comfortable lifestyle, with houses in both New York City and Lake George.

Perhaps as a result of this vexed position — straddling both worlds and having constantly to market and sell his own art in primarily commercial venues — Humphrey’s own economic anxieties become palpable in all that the Hovey mural represents. Such deeply rooted economic concerns may tell us volumes about the motivation for pushing the Indians further and further afield, backward into the annals of a tragic but natural history, relics of an obsolete order rather than lurking competitors within American economic space; acknowledging otherwise would

expose the fragile foundations underlying the national economy — indeed, the very idea of the nation itself. We can see a similar, contemporaneous phenomenon in William Faulkner’s infamous depictions of Native characters, which expose an analogous anxiety about the increasing commodification of his own art, with the Indian emerging as a symbol for unworthy, inappropriate opponents in a difficult marketplace. Despite occupying relatively little terrain in either Faulkner’s canon or his modern Southern landscape, the Native American characters in several of his “Wilderness” stories,³⁶ *Go Down, Moses*, and *Requiem for a Nun* have inspired considerable scholarly output and little critical consensus.³⁷ In Robert Dale Parker’s words, these characters are, from a social realist or historical perspective, total “nonsense.”³⁸ Faulkner could not distinguish between a Chickasaw and a Choctaw — and did not care to — and so, his hybrid “Chickachoctasaw” Indians feature stiff, monosyllabic speech patterns, curiously oriental and effeminate appearance, bizarre and homicidal lusts and compulsions, and wildly implausible and inconsistent genealogies.

Like so many of Faulkner’s apparent “mistakes” of fact, though, these curious Indian characters serve a distinct, self-serving purpose in his postplantation, biracial, and painfully modernizing South — a purpose that has nothing to do with their identity as Indians but instead with the biracial economy that supplanted them, and the diminished position of the natural white aristocracy within the new order. Faulkner’s Indians represent clear tropes for this anxiety: they are, practically speaking, either white or black in resonance and implication, an elision in accord with Faulkner’s professed assumption that any remaining Choctaws in Mississippi had long since faded into the two races. He resurrects them only as handy signifiers for the kind of money lust that (to Faulkner and others) was the imminent disgrace of the modern world: in many of the short stories, his Chickasaws own plantations and slaves and behave very much like white Southern aristocracy. In fact, Faulkner pointedly used the little-known historical fact of slaveholding Indians to pitch his 1930 story “Red Leaves” to *Scribner’s*: “Few people know that Miss. Indians owned slaves,” he informed them; “that’s why I suggest you all buy it. . . . I need the money.”³⁹ Not coincidentally, his own bitter need for cash drives him to a critique of the modern economy — and its perceived beneficiaries and “cheaters” with whom he felt in tacit competition, and whom he had to implicate with the perversions of capitalism. Faulkner sent the letter just a month after moving into the dilapidated plantation manor Rowan Oak, a once-grand house built in 1844 on land sold in 1836 by a Chickasaw chief as a direct result of Jackson’s removal policies. Equally fascinated and disgusted by the seductions of an imposed economic order — significantly, the one prompting him to peddle his artistic wares in the first place — Faulkner views the region’s Natives not as victims but as willing participants in a corrupt and exploitative system, the ones who committed the original sin of “selling” the land to the whites in the first place when it was “not theirs to sell.”⁴⁰

Similarly, Humphrey employs his Indians to achieve a mystification of capitalism's excesses and foreclosures, finding in them convenient expressions of both the failures of capitalism and the inherent, acquisitive hypocrisy of its alternatives. In Humphrey's narrative of generosity and munificence — one that that belies the true record of flimsy commitments to a forsaken Native community — we are urged to conclude that the real problem lies not in capitalism itself but in those who would misuse and abuse its privileges and rewards, much as the greedy Natives appear to do under Humphrey's hand. What is glorified in the Hovey mural is not the noble savage but the pious benefactor: on the receiving end of Eleazar Wheelock's bountiful generosity, the Indian receives a first-class education — along with an enormous amount of rum. In his vigorous defense of this local history of largesse, it seems, Humphrey is at pains to communicate the triumph of all that Dartmouth embodied: the privilege of education, of tradition, and of patriarchy — complete with the token gesture of goodwill and charity, an ideal lodged in the college's founding ethos but not yet borne out in reality, for no fault of the college's. The mural explains the absence of real Natives in the student body by suggesting that they have faded — as they have elsewhere in the country — into the American public as a whole, by their own weakness and susceptibility to temptation. By making his Indians appear both corruptible and benighted, Humphrey is able to tacitly excuse the relative absence of “real” Natives from Dartmouth's history (as opposed to its mythology): they simply were not equipped to survive and excel *as* Indians in such an environment. Whatever the modern Indian might look like, he certainly does not resemble the big chief in the New Hampshire woods, who functions instead as a scapegoat for the anxieties of the dominant class, which at Dartmouth was situated largely in the white patriarchy.

As entering Dartmouth students in 1910, Humphrey and his fellow classmates were expected to have read and demonstrated command of several works of classical literature — a list that included Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1793). While Humphrey would thus have been well schooled in Franklin's insistence on the virtues of temperance, he might also have been aware of Franklin's well-publicized empathy for the “savages,” whom he considered (as did other Enlightenment thinkers such as Freneau) more civilized than the barbaric British and European settlers. Despite his considerable involvement in the Indian cause, Franklin nonetheless saw clearly — and firsthand — how easily rum could be used as a tool of trade and persuasion. D. H. Lawrence was only mildly satirical when he remarked in 1923 that “Benjamin Franklin had a specious little equation in mathematics: Rum + Savage = 0”;⁴¹ Franklin, like many Americans, even those critical of early signs of American excess, saw the extinction of the savage as an ineluctable end, and through no fault but the Indians'. At the same time that Lawrence was critiquing Franklin and other American writers for their pious hypocrisy, Humphrey was beginning his illustrious career as a cover artist for popular magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* — a

publication that began, not coincidentally, as Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1728. Also on the rise in the 1920s — and often playing out on the editorial pages of the *Post* itself — were debates about granting U.S. citizenship to the nation's original inhabitants, a decision made finally in 1924 as part of the larger assimilationist project that had been dominating federal Indian policy for decades. Extending citizenship rights held the veneer of respect and equity but in reality simply facilitated the erosion of tribal sovereignty and, along with it, reminders of a disturbing colonial past. Such progress was quickly reversed, however, by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Indian New Deal, which just a decade later restored tribal property and governance rights (without stripping the Natives of their new citizenship status).

In order to illustrate how ill equipped the Indians were to absorb the trappings of white civilization, Humphrey explicitly poses the prototypical Dartmouth man against the lazy, drunken Indian. The former can hold his liquor — literally, as Humphrey depicts a portly Wheelock in the last panel hoisting a huge vat of rum into the air and letting it spill into the gaping maws of the prostrate Natives scattered beneath him. These savages care little about the education being extended to them, as predicted by the earlier panels (which feature a Native woman reading a book upside down in panel three, left side; and in the next scene, the big chief's matriculation papers are strewn carelessly about the ground where he sits drinking heartily). Instead, they seem enraptured only by lascivious prospects: in panel three, left, one of the gaggle of naked women from the previous scene appears wearing Wheelock's hat and carrying his long overcoat (see fig. 3.10), implying that she has been indulging in a sexual trade of her own; significantly, she stands with her impeccably toned back to the viewer, gazing casually to her right at a companion (who faces forward) trying vainly to read the upside-down book. Consistent with the animal lusts (as well as the actual animals) ubiquitously and wantonly on display throughout, the allure of liquor dominates every panel from beginning to end. As Wheelock first rolls into the forest, he totes behind him a gigantic barrel containing the fabled "five hundred gallons of New England rum." Clearly, it is his largest and most important cargo; to the Indians, it is a magnetic curiosity: while two watchful, weaponed Indians peer out from the trees, another two are already drawn out and to the barrel (fig. 5.10), presumably hiding behind it but clearly also inspecting it greedily. One of the men even seems as if he might be smelling it, with his nose and mouth pressed intently to the rim of the drum. By the end of the mural, the rum has prominently facilitated both the "civilizing" mission and the trade: land for liquor.

The notion that Indians might so easily be bought off and corrupted was a presumption that already held deep roots in the American social consciousness. Even by 1820, the conversion of Indians to the worship of rum seemed so complete and tragic that writers such as Washington Irving could comment with gravity and seeming authority:



FIGURE 5.10
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1,
left side (plate 1);
P.939.19.1.*

Poverty, repining and hopeless poverty, a canker of the mind unknown in savage life, corrodes their spirits and blights every free and noble quality of their natures. They become drunken, indolent, feeble, thievish, and pusillanimous. They loiter like vagrants about the settlements, among spacious dwellings replete with elaborate comforts, which only render them sensible of the comparative wretchedness of their own condition. Luxury spreads its ample board before their eyes, but they are excluded from the banquet. Plenty revels over the fields, but they are starving in the midst of its abundance; the whole wilderness has blossomed into a garden, but they feel as reptiles that infest it.⁴²

Humphrey's vision of Wheelock's abundant charity clearly stands opposed to such laments, and it allows him to figure the "drunken, indolent" Indian as a product of the Natives' own weakness and waste rather than any systematic exclusion by the white elite. In depicting an Edenic wilderness flush with rich, vivid foliage and robust, plentiful game, Humphrey makes clear that this paradise was traded freely by the big chief for a veritable mess of pottage — or a hearty draught of liquor. When we reach the penultimate panel (three, right side), we see a coiled serpent poised

expectantly between the splayed legs of the intoxicated, newly matriculated chief (see fig. 4.14) — a placement that evokes not just Irving’s identification of the Indian with the “reptiles” of the garden but, indeed, complicity with the symbol of temptation, sin, and greed that stares mirror-like at the chief. More accurately, the snake gazes at (the suggestion of) the chief’s genitals, which explicitly defuses his otherwise threatening physical presence. Clearly besting Wheelock in stature and might (if not in girth) in earlier scenes, the big chief is reduced now to a slumped state of drunken indolence; in the final panel, Wheelock stands tall above all the Indians, pouring rum as quickly as the heathen can catch and drink it — and thus effecting only indirectly the utter dissolution of which the Native himself seems finally culpable.

Given all that it has come to symbolize and connote, Humphrey repeatedly raises the specter of Native savagery and accompanying white anxiety in order to defuse its potency and reality. Returns to explicitly historic, obsolete figures do much to dispel apprehension over the return of the repressed — a guilty phenomenon that literature was displaying in increasing profusion during Humphrey’s lifetime. By midcentury, Leslie Fiedler published his classic work *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968), which begins with the observation that “all of us seem men possessed” by the soul of the Indian, and remarks that “[a]n astonishing number of novelists have begun to write fiction in which the Indian character, whom only yesterday we were comfortably bidding farewell . . . has disconcertingly reappeared” (13).⁴³ This was not a new phenomenon — Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) was one of the earliest and most well-known American novels to explore the haunting and eventual destruction of a genteel New England family by a colonial past that catastrophically underlies and undermines their privilege. An old Indian property deed is unearthed as a symbolic mechanism to delegitimize the Pyncheon family’s claim to the land on which their house and dynasty have been erected. Humphrey would have known this novel well, as it was (after Franklin’s *Autobiography*) the only other American literary text selected as required reading for Dartmouth’s incoming class of 1910. What Hawthorne’s novel unveils, on the very New England terrain that Humphrey and his classmates would soon occupy, is a growing sense of America’s foundational crimes and mythologies, and the sense that “the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones and . . . becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief.”⁴⁴

Such recognitions became steadily more frequent later in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries, evolving ineluctably into a foreboding that the repressed might return with savage intensity. Students of American literature would probably be familiar with Mark Twain’s Injun Joe — a character in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) whose evil nature derives explicitly from his Indian blood. However, Twain had already created much more pointedly vicious Indian portraits in earlier, lesser-

known works.⁴⁵ In his 1870 essay “The Noble Red Man,” Twain pointedly counters the mythical attributes of the Indian popularized by writers like Cooper:

In books he is tall and tawny, muscular, straight and of kingly presence; he has a beaked nose and an eagle eye. . . . Such is the Noble Red Man in print. But out on the plains and in the mountains . . . He is ignoble — base and treacherous, and hateful in every way. . . . The ruling trait of all savages is a greedy and consuming selfishness, and in our Noble Red Man it is found in its amplest development. His heart is a cesspool of falsehood, of treachery, and of low and devilish instincts. . . . To give him a dinner when he is starving, is to precipitate the whole hungry tribe upon your hospitality, for he will go straight and fetch them, men, women, children, and dogs, and these they will huddle patiently around your door, or flatten their noses against your window, day after day, gazing beseechingly upon every mouthful you take, and unconsciously swallowing when you swallow! . . . All history and honest observation will show that the Red Man is a skulking coward and a windy braggart, who strikes without warning — usually from an ambush or under cover of night, and nearly always bringing a force of about five or six to one against his enemy; kills helpless women and little children, and massacres the men in their beds.

Hyperbole (and possibly satire) aside, Twain uncovers what is at bottom a veritable and persistent fear of Indian savagery harbored by white Americans and intensified by decades of postcolonial estrangement and guilt.⁴⁶ In the very first panel of Humphrey’s mural, the Natives skulk in the bushes with knives clenched in their mouths and hands (fig. 5.11), silently waiting to outnumber and attack the bemused Eleazar Wheelock. Soon they evolve into the “greedy,” devouring hordes that Twain describes, arriving with a full harem to take possession of Eleazar’s bounty of rum, clothing, and matriculation papers. By the end of the mural, the Natives’ threat has been diminished, but so has any shred of their nobility: the utterly disheveled, drunken chief and his cohorts in the final panels of the mural eerily approximate Twain’s warning about the corrupting effects of these white gifts bestowed on a race ill equipped to appreciate or honor them. Such hysterical ruminations on Indian revenge seem less concerned with a remote colonial past, and more immediately attuned by nearer “honest observation” to the evidence of greed (possibly justified) that might slowly bleed dry the benevolent masters and rulers of this perpetually new world.

Given the potent economic and political angst suffusing Humphrey’s world, and given the long tradition in the American narrative of using the Indian to reflect, absorb, and alleviate such anxiety, the question we should now be asking is not “how could Humphrey have painted Indians in this way?” but rather “how could he have



FIGURE 5.11
*Detail of the Hovey
mural, panel 1,
left side (plate 1);
P.939.19.1.*

painted them any other way?” Most sobering of all, perhaps, is our quiet reckoning with the fact that these images have finally become so commonplace as to lose their power to surprise and disturb the contemporary viewer. Veiling the panels does little to erase the enduring impact and influence of the companion fictions that have defined the image of the Indian from the earliest moments of American settlement. Now ubiquitous and legitimated by the American media, pop culture, and ideological consensus, such narratives have permanently altered Native American identity from the outside in: as Paul Chaat Smith attests, “the tacky, dumb stuff” invented *about* Indians for non-Native needs “is the real thing now.”⁴⁷ Equally unsettling for non-Native viewers should be the recognition that the “real” narrative of the American nation has been hijacked as well, beginning with the appropriation of someone else’s land, history, identity, and stories. The real truth of the American narrative lies neither in Orozco’s vision nor in Humphrey’s, nor even in the brilliantly revisionary, indigenous counternarratives that have since emerged, but rather in the uncharted territory between them all — in some mystical land far, far away.

NOTES

1. From *An Overland Journey: From New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker and Co., 1860).

2. This phrase was used by then president of the college Ernest M. Hopkins in an August 10, 1937, letter to Mr. Sidney C. Hayward (secretary of the college) on the subject of commissioning Humphrey to undertake a mural project of his own in the basement of Thayer Dining Hall (later to be known as the Hovey murals).

3. Walter Beach Humphrey, “New Dartmouth College Case” (February 1934), Dartmouth College Library.

4. Walter B. Humphrey, “The Song of Five Hundred Gallons: A Proposed Mural Picturization of Richard Hovey’s ‘Eleazar Wheelock’; Not Art for Art’s Sake,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* (October 1937), 15–16.

5. Humphrey, “New Dartmouth College Case.”

6. Beverly Gherman, *Norman Rockwell: Storyteller with a Brush* (New York: Atheneum, 2000), 17.

7. In particular, James Fenimore Cooper’s 1823 novel *The Pioneers* — which features its own strikingly similar version of Humphrey’s visual turkey debate — is explicitly concerned with the legitimacy of an American nation on terrain occupied originally by Indians. For discussion, see Susan Scheckel, “‘In the Land of his Fathers’: Cooper, Land Rights, and the Legitimation of American National Identity,” in W. M. Verhoeven, ed., *James Fenimore Cooper: New Historical and Literary Contexts* (Atlanta: Rodopi Press, 1993), 125–150.

8. Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 20.

9. Humphrey, “The Song of Five Hundred Gallons.” (For the full text, see chapter 2 above, by Robert McGrath.)

10. Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 3.

11. "Wrong Indian Exploited by Dartmouth for Years," *Manchester Union* (Feb. 26, 1932).

12. *New Rochelle New York Standard Star* (May 16, 1938).

13. Dr. Betty J. Duggan, current curator of ethnography and ethnology at the New York State Museum, writes: "Many, if not all, of the permanent artifact displays and all of the several dioramas of village lifeways on view in 1938 resulted primarily from the work of noted anthropologist Arthur C. Parker, who was headquartered in the NYSM as State Archaeologist during the first third of the 20th century. There are a number of articles and three biographies of Parker and/or his work (Hertzberg 1979); (Fenton 1968); (Coldwell-Chanthapongh 2009), some of which mention the famous dioramas he researched and oversaw to completion for the NSYM. Parker was of Seneca descent on his father's side. We also have images of those six dioramas, and a period booklet that describes what each represented. The content of the dioramas and many, if not all, artifact displays in 1938 were based on Parker's own and earlier ethnographic and archaeological fieldwork and interpretations of historic through early 20th century Iroquois and archaeological cultures of New York State, including the work and collections of Lewis Henry Morgan, the 'father of American anthropology' and founder of Iroquois studies (who worked extensively with earlier generations of the Seneca Parkers), and several other avocational and professional ethnologists, whose 19th and early 20th century collections were foundational to the NYSM's anthropological artifact holdings" (e-mail, June 15, 2010).

14. In the aforementioned *Manchester Union* article, Humphrey is said to have declared: "when D hereafter cries Wah-Who-Wah (there was an Indian by that name) it will be the cry of the Mohegans, Pequots, Narragansetts, Abenakis and other New England Indians and not the cry of the Five Nations."

15. As Humphrey referred to them in his poem (cf. notes 4 and 9 above).

16. David Treuer, *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual* (Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 2006), 25.

17. Even the British Romantic writer William Wordsworth contributed his own Indian poem to this emerging canon in 1798, as part of his *Lyrical Ballads*: after reading the journals of a fellow Englishman, Samuel Hearne, an explorer and fur trader with the Hudson Bay Company, Wordsworth was moved to pen "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman." Inspired by the horrors of frontier violence that Hearne witnessed — horrors that ensnared women as well as men, to Wordsworth's stunned dismay — the poet fashions a desolate female figure whose child has been ripped from her arms and all her companions slaughtered. Alone, the woman meditates on her inevitable end: "Young as I am, my course is run, / I shall not see another sun; / I cannot lift my limbs to know / If they have any life or no. / My poor forsaken Child, if I / For once could have thee close to me, / With happy heart I then would die, / And my last thought would happy be; / But thou, dear Babe, art far away, / Nor shall I see another day." Thus ends both the poem and the life of the speaker; with her dies also the progeny and hope of a future, and implicitly of an entire race, abandoned and "forsaken." While Wordsworth takes pains to humanize this bereft young mother, he does so with an eye to "how wild!" such creatures essentially are, and how "helpless" and ultimately unfit for survival in the genteel society that was laboring at great cost to subsume them.

18. The nativism marking nearly every phase of American settlement, liberation, and “progress” repeatedly posits “white Americans” in the place of “native Americans.” For examples of whites who attempt to inhabit Indian identity in order to establish their authenticity as Americans, see Philip Deloria’s *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Alan Trachtenberg’s *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880–1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004). White Southerners have their own history of nativism, usually employed to separate the South from the rest of the nation.

19. The hypocrisy evident throughout the volume is striking. Despite a number of implicit and explicit references to Native Americans as kindred to Southerners in their harmonious relationship with nature, the Agrarians nonetheless glorify and sanitize the mythology of hardy New World settlement and refer to themselves (without irony) as “natives” and Northern carpetbaggers as “invaders.”

20. For more on the conversion of Indian subjects into ghosts (in the literary and cultural imagination), see Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), and Renée Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover, N.H., University Press of New England, 2000).

21. Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Frontier Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 241.

22. Treuer, *Native American Fiction*, 14.

23. Treuer, *Native American Fiction*, 16.

24. Benjamin Franklin, “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” (1784), in Franklin, *The Bagatelles from Passy*, ed. Claude A. Lopez (New York: Eakins Press, 1967); electronic edition, *Early Americas Digital Archive* (2005), http://mith2.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=franklin_bagatelle3.xml (accessed June 11, 2010).

25. Phillip Freneau, “The Indian Student,” l. 14. In Freneau, *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, ed. Fred Lewis Pattee, 3 vols. (Princeton: The University Library, 1902).

26. Freneau, “The Indian Student,” l. 38.

27. Freneau, “The Indian Student,” ll. 45–48.

28. Freneau, “The Rising Glory of America,” ll. 227–29, in Freneau, *Poems*.

29. Sherry L Smith examines this change in the representation of Indians, particularly in the period between the Dawes Act of 1887 and Reorganization in 1934. See her *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

30. Smith, *Reimagining Indians*, 15.

31. *The Saturday Evening Post* 208, no. 9 (Aug. 31, 1935): 6–7. Described in Peter G. Beidler and Marion F. Egge, *Native Americans in the Saturday Evening Post* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), 204.

32. *The Saturday Evening Post* 209, no. 18 (Oct. 31, 1936): 90.

33. *The Saturday Evening Post* 209, no. 1 (Jul. 4, 1936): 23.

34. Hopkins to Hayward, Aug. 7, 1937 (see note 2 above).

35. According to a December 1966 obituary in the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, “After achieving great success in the field of commercial art, in 1929 [Humphrey] joined the staff of the Phoenix Art Institute in New York as instructor in commercial illustration and lecturer in artistic anatomy. He was also an instructor in the department of marketing, School of Com-

merce, New York University.” He later retired to New Rochelle, New York, but continued as a teacher of commercial art at New Rochelle High School.

36. In stories: “Red Leaves,” “A Justice,” “A Courtship,” and “Lo!” as well as “Mountain Victory” and a “Bear Hunt”; and in *Go Down, Moses*: “The Old People,” “The Bear,” and “Delta Autumn”.

37. Beginning with Elmo Howell and Lewis Dabney’s pioneering works in the 1970s (the latter of which became a full-length study), critics have concerned themselves first and foremost with the historical accuracy of Faulkner’s depictions — and nearly all have concluded that both “accuracy” and “history” are far too generous descriptors for the grotesque, orientalized, ludicrous figures that Faulkner deigned to call Indians and about which, when queried in regard to their ethnographic sources, he confessed that he had simply “made them up.”

38. See Robert Dale Parker, “Red Slippers and Cottonmouth Moccasins: White Anxieties in Faulkner’s Indian Stories,” in special issue on “Faulkner’s Indians,” *The Faulkner Journal* 18, nos. 1 and 2 (Fall 2002/Spring 2003), 81–100.

39. From *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, ed. Joseph Blotner (New York: Random House, 1977), 46–47.

40. These possibilities and failures find their fullest expression in *Go Down, Moses*, where Isaac McCaslin resists the incursions of industrial processes and capitalist voracity on the ravaged Mississippi wilderness, inspired and mentored importantly by the mixed-blood Indian and African-American Sam Fathers, illegitimate son of Ikkemotubbe/Doom and one of his slave girls. Out of Ike and Sam’s partnership, Faulkner creates a trinity of the dispossessed: the reconstructed white Southerner, the freed slave, and the tragic Chickasaw. In this scheme, the Indian Doom becomes the white master whose son and progeny is also his property. Sam is thus perceived as more negro than Native; what indigenoussness this ambassador to the fragile wilderness retains is a romanticized, faux-ritualistic, mystical delusion. That seems all that Faulkner — and most Americans, for that matter — can conjure up in the way of a natural, pre-plantation, anticommercial order, an alternative method of land stewardship and ecological balance that Faulkner yearns for even as he misunderstands, romanticizes, and stereotypes it. Not surprisingly, Ike is unable to go forward with such obsolete and impractical guides; instead, he retreats backward into a paralyzed, racist impotence, the sins of slavery still very much alive in a land haunted by other, quieter ghosts. As figures of both racial and cultural hybridity — assimilating the practices and at times the blood of their white and black neighbors — Faulkner’s Indians thus abdicate all traces of indigenoussness and effectively reinstate an essentialist black-white binary. The ones who don’t are simply too bizarre, orientalized, and “other” to be taken seriously as members of either a Southern or even an American community; or, conversely, they are rendered flat, romantic reminders of an apocryphal past.

41. D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, ed. Ezra Greenspan et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42.

42. Washington Irving, “Traits of Indian Character,” in *The Sketch Book of Edward Crayon* (1820), Project Gutenberg, Apr. 28, 2010, <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/2048> (accessed June 11, 2010).

43. Works by Brian Dippie, Lucy Maddox, Walter Benn Michaels, and Renée Bergland variously explore the trope of the Vanishing American.

44. Nathaniel Hawthorne, preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*.

45. It is worth noting that none of these portraits has received the kind of attention or outrage that attended the minstrel-like depiction of black characters in *Huckleberry Finn* and precipitated its removal from school curricula nationwide.

46. For contemporary evidence of this, one need only survey the teeming array of “Indian burial grounds” and unleashed Native ghosts in horror novels and films. Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* is one such (often overlooked) example.

47. Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, 6.

I N D E X

- Abenakis, 9–12
- Adams, Cassily, 52
- alcohol and drunkenness, xvi, 2, 21–22, 32, 97, 100, 123–26, 125
- Algonquian Bible, 3
- American Bacchanal, 32, 34, 35
- American Indians. *See* Native Americans
- American national identity: and Indianness, 99–100; Native subordination to, 113, 116–18, 122, 126, 130n18; Native women as symbol of, 48; and political/economic anxieties, 120–22, 123, 126–28; visual history of, 46–47. *See also* settler identity
- American Renaissance, 22–26
- animal portrayals, 60
- anti-academic/anti-intellectual critique, 28, 30–32, 90, 96
- antimodernism, 90, 91, 100
- Art Deco, 56–57
- artistic influences and themes: American Renaissance, 22–26; anti-Orozco/foils for Orozco, 19, 22, 34; Bacchanal, 32–34, 35–36; Colonial Revival, 19, 26, 87; commissioning mission, xiii–xiv, 19–21; Cornwell, 24, 25, 40n9; drinking song as inspiration, xiv, 21–22; homosocial theme, 29–30, 32, 79, 112–13; illustrational style, 21, 23, 91–92, 108–13; Larson, 19, 26; modernist aesthetic, 80, 84–86, 89–90, 91, 100; and Native American iconic depiction, 26–27, 45–62; noble nature vs. corrupt civilization trope, 27–29, 31, 80, 97–98, 118; Parrish, 24–25, 57, 59; pictorial realism, 22, 56, 60, 109, 113, 115–16; postlapsarian content, 29; Remington, 26; Renaissance, 22, 29, 34, 35–36, 45–46; Rockwell, 21, 25, 108; social realism, 56, 60; transgressive anti-intellectualism, 28, 30–32, 90, 96; WPA Regionalist aesthetic, 26, 27, 37, 56, 57, 86
- artistic representation of Native Americans. *See* visual history of Native American representation
- Art Nouveau, 56–57
- autumnal palette, 23, 25
- Avery, David, 8
- Bacchanal trope, 32–34, 35–36
- Baker Library, xiii, 19, 26, 80, 87
- Barthes, Roland, 114
- Bartholdi, Auguste, 48
- Beaver Meadow* (Sample), 87, 89
- Beidler, Peter G., 120
- Belknap, Jeremy, 9
- Book Characters Coming to Life as Boy Reads* (Humphrey), 109–11, 112
- Bowen, John T., 13
- Brant, Joseph, 5, 12–13, 13
- Brouwer, G., 49
- Brown, Samuel E., 7
- Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, 50–51, 51
- buon fresco*. *See* fresco technique
- Canadian Native American communities, Wheelock's recruitment from, 9
- Canassatego, 118–19
- capitalism: alcohol trade as instrument of, 2; Humphrey's anxieties and opposition to Orozco, 120–21, 123; Orozco's critique of, 82, 84, 107–8
- Caracci, Annibale, 34, 36
- censorship issue, xiii, 36–39, 90, 101, 128
- Cherokees, 13–14
- Chocorua, Chief, 27
- Choctaws, 13–14
- Christianity, 2–3, 4, 5, 6, 10
- Christ in Orozco's mural narrative, 80, 82
- Christy, Howard Chandler, 56, 59
- civilization: as destroyer of nature, 12, 80, 96–99; encounter and civilization motif, 80–82, 84, 87–88, 93–99, 118; Native rejection of, 118–19; vs. noble nature, 27–28, 31, 80, 97–98, 118; Southern post-Civil War rejection of industrial, 116, 131; Wheelock as exemplar of, 124, 126
- Class of 1953 Commons (Thayer Dining Hall), xiii, xvii, 19
- clothing, Native American, history

- vs. popular culture, 5, 11, 13, 49, 50–52, 53
- colonialism: and distortion of historical reality, 108; and land appropriation, 109, 122; Native American depiction to justify, 118; Orozco's critique of, 84, 87, 93, 101; and preservation of Dartmouth Men myth, 112–13; white anxieties over, 116, 120–23, 126–28, 128n7
- Colonial Revival, 19, 26, 87
- communism, American fears of, 120–21, 123
- conflict/competition, Native and European American, 1–2, 10–11
- controversy over artistic representation: censorship issue, xiii, 36–39, 90, 101, 128; Hovey murals, xiii, xvi, 36–37, 101, 128; and judging past by present standards, 37–39; Orozco's Epic, 89–91; Renaissance period, 46
- Cooper, James Fenimore, 118, 128n7
- Cornwell, Dean, 24, 25, 40n9
- Cortés, Hernán, 80
- Crawford, Thomas, 48
- cultural image repertoire, artistic use of, 45–46
- cultural vs. religious assimilation, 3
- culture: appropriation by non-natives of Native American, 55–62, 104–5n48; clothing of Native Americans, 5, 11, 13, 49, 50–52, 53; Eastern Woodlands indigenous peoples, 115; standards for portrayal of women, 46–47. *See also* homosocial rubric; Native Americans
- Cutter/Shabazz Hall mural of Malcolm X, 39n3
- Dangers of the Mail* (Mechau), 37, 57
- Dark Man icon, 48
- Dartmouth Club of New York, 34
- Dartmouth College, founding of, 5, 7. *See also* *The Epic of American Civilization*; Hovey murals
- “Dartmouth Indian,” 45, 55, 60–62, 99, 114–16
- Dartmouth Men myth, 29–30, 99–101, 112–13. *See also* homosocial rubric
- Dawes Act (1887), 120
- Deloria, Philip, 99–100
- Depression and art, 26, 86–87, 91, 121
- dialectical narrative in Orozco's mural, 84–85
- Dickerson, Albert, 29
- Dorris, Michael, xvi, 36
- dress, Native American, history vs. popular culture, 5, 11, 13, 49, 50–52, 53
- drinking song origins of Hovey murals, xiv, 21–22
- drunkenness, xvi, 2, 21–22, 32, 97, 100, 123–26, 125
- Duggan, Betty J., 129n13
- Eastern Woodlands indigenous peoples: Cherokees, 13–14; Choctaws, 13–14; cultural artifacts, 115; Humphrey's “corrections” to Dartmouth mascot, 114–16; Iroquois, 4, 5–9, 10, 118–19; loss of identity to Plains Indians, 51–52, 57, 59; New England tribes, 3–4, 9–12, 53; New York State Museum's portrayal, 114–15, 129n13; in Thanksgiving mythology, 52–53, 110–11
- economic anxieties, Native American culture as foil for, 120–22, 123, 126–28
- economy, New England, Native American participation in, 1–2, 8, 10
- Edenic trope, 29–30, 93, 95, 96, 100, 125–26
- education: as assimilation tool, xvi, 3–4, 8, 118–19; critique of, 28, 30–32, 90, 96; of Native Americans in New England, xx, 3–14, 6, 7, 10; as theme in Orozco's Epic, 87–88, 88
- Edge, Marion F., 120
- Eleazar's Feast* (Humphrey), 34, 35
- “Eleazar Wheelock” (Hovey), 21–22
- Eleazar Wheelock Tavern, 34
- Eliot, John, 3
- encounter and civilization motif, 80–82, 84, 87–88, 93–99, 118
- The Epic of American Civilization* (Orozco): *Anglo-America* panel, 87, 88; *The Coming of Quetzalcoatl* panel, 85, 88; controversy over, xiii; *Gods of the Modern World* panel, 85, 87–88, 96; Humphrey's criticism of, 90–91; Humphrey's murals as oppositional, 19, 28, 29, 34, 60, 96, 107–8; *Modern Human Sacrifice* panel, 86, 88; *Modern Industrial Man* panel, 80, 83, 87, 89; *Modern Migration of the Spirit* panel, 78; narrative and philosophy, 80–90; and settler identity politics, 101; view of all panels, 81
- European Americans: anxieties over subjugation of Native Americans, 116, 120–23, 126–28, 128n7; influences on Native Americans, 1–2; and Native/European encounter motif, 80–82, 84, 87–88, 93–99, 118
- Fall from Grace symbolism, 93, 96, 100
- Faulkner, William, 122, 131n37–40
- females, portrayal of. *See* women
- Fiedler, Leslie, 126
- First Thanksgiving, Indian imagery trapped in, 52–53, 110–11
- Florentine Mannerism, 22, 29

- foundational myths, Humphrey's attachment to, xv, 27
- Founding of Dartmouth College* (Brown), 7
- Franklin, Benjamin, 118, 123–24
- Freedom, woman as symbol of, 48
- French and Indian War, 11
- French/English conflicts, 10–11
- Freneau, Philip, 118, 119
- fresco technique, 22, 86–87
- “frieze aesthetic,” Parrish's, 25
- “genesis icons,” 27
- Go Down, Moses* (McAslin), 131n40
- Gradus ad Parnassum*, 28, 28, 31, 32, 60, 61, 62
- Great Depression and art, 26, 86–87, 91, 121
- Greeley, Horace, 107
- Green Key honor society, 31
- Hall, John, 94
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 126
- Hayward, Sidney, 92
- Hiawatha, 51–52, 57
- Holland Recognizes American Independence* (Brouwer), 49
- homosocial rubric: and twentieth-century introduction of women students, xv; conceptual origins, 41n18; and Dartmouth men “playing Indian,” 99, 100–101; and Humphrey's college cultural background, 92; and hyper-masculine Indian males, 27; as primary theme in Hovey murals, 29–30, 32, 79, 112–13
- Hood Museum of Art, xvii
- Hopkins, Ernest Mark, xiii, 19, 39n3, 79, 87, 90–91, 121
- The House of the Seven Gables* (Hawthorne), 126
- Hovey, Richard, xiv, 21–22, 114
- Hovey murals: controversy over, xiii, xvi, 36–37, 101, 128; Humphrey's campaign for, 19–22, 79–80, 91, 107–8. *See also* artistic influences and themes; Humphrey, Walter Beach
- Humphrey, Walter Beach: attachment to foundational myths, xv, 27; campaign for Hovey murals project, 19–22, 79–80, 91, 107–8; commission for murals, xiii–xiv, 19–21; compensation for murals, 121; “corrections” to Dartmouth mascot, 114–16; dedication to Dartmouth Men myth, 99–100; economic anxieties of, 120–22, 123, 126; illustrational style, 21, 23, 91–92, 108–13, 110, 112; landscape destroyed by progress trope, 96–99; lettering skill of, 39n5; narrative influences, 108–13, 123–24; vs. Orozco, 19, 28, 29, 34, 41n20, 60, 90–92, 96, 107–8; photo of, xii; Pilgrim and Native over turkey illustration, 110; popular cultural Indian iconography as source for, 45, 55–62; professional career of, 130–31n35; romantic symbolism, 108–16, 112; stereotypical portrayal of women by, xv, 29, 30, 56–57, 58, 61, 95–96; Warren County Municipal Center murals, 40n9; Wheelock depiction, 18, 22, 27–28, 28, 29, 31, 60, 92–95, 100–101; *The Wild West*, 106, 109. *See also* artistic influences and themes
- Hurd, John, 34
- illustrational style, Humphrey's, 21, 23, 91–92, 108–13, 110, 112
- “imperialist nostalgia” in Humphrey's murals, 93–94, 108
- Indian Princess icon, 48, 57, 60
- Indian Queen icon, 48
- Indian Reorganization Act (1934), 120
- Indians. *See* Native Americans
- “The Indian Student” (Freneau), 119
- Indigenismo*, 84
- indigenous culture and “other,” 84, 109. *See also* Native Americans
- indigenous/European encounter motif, 80–82, 84, 87–88, 93–99, 118
- Iroquois Six Nations of New York, 4, 5–9, 10, 118–19
- Irving, Washington, 124–25
- Italian Renaissance, 22
- Johnson, Amy, 4
- Johnson, Joseph, 12
- Johnson, Sir William, 5
- Kahnawakes, 9
- Kemeny, John, xvi, 36, 101
- Kendall, Thomas, 9
- Kennedy, Brian, xvii
- Kim, Jim Yong, xvii
- Kirkland, Samuel, 6
- Kutscher, Ted, 101
- Lake George murals (Cornwell), 40n9
- landscape destruction trope, 12, 80, 96–99
- Larson, Jens Frederick, 19, 26
- Lathrop, Churchill, 87
- Lawrence, D. H., 123
- Lewis, Vincent, 9
- Leyendecker, Joseph Christian, 109, 111
- Liberty as American icon, 48
- literacy and writing, Native and European, 3–4, 60
- literary perspectives. *See* narrative perspectives
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 57
- Mahicans, 3
- The Maid of the Mist*, 59

- manhood, mural as metaphor for
 Dartmouth, 29–30, 99–101,
 112–13
- Manifeto of the Technical Workers,
 Painters, and Sculptors Union of
 Mexico, 84
- Mantegna, Andrea, 32, 33
- Marling, Karal Ann, 86
- marouflage* method, 22
- mascots, Indians as sports/college, 52,
 53, 56, 114–16
- Mathews, John, 6
- Mayhew, Thomas, 3
- McAslin, Isaac, 131n40
- Mechau, Frank, 37, 57
- mestizaje*, 81–82, 96
- mestizo legacy of indigenous/Euro-
 pean encounter, 80–81
- Mexican Mural Renaissance, 82, 86–87
- Mexican Revolution, 82
- Michelangelo, 22
- misogyny in Hovey murals, xv–xvi, 60.
See also women
- modernist aesthetic, Orozco vs.
 Humphrey, 80, 84–86, 89–90,
 91, 100
- Mohawk gospel, 5, 6
- Mohawk language, 10
- Mohawks, 4, 5, 6, 6, 10
- Mohegans, 4, 5, 12, 129n14
- Moor's Charity School, 3, 8, 9
- Morton, Roald, 90–91
- mural form, 22, 86–87, 91. *See also* *The
 Epic of American Civilization*;
 Hovey murals
- Narragansetts, 3
- narrative perspectives: and American
 political/economic anxieties,
 120–22, 123, 126–28; Dartmouth
 mascot, 52, 53, 56, 114–16;
 Faulkner's Indian stereotyping,
 122, 131nn37–40; "gullibility" of
 Natives to corruptions of liquor,
 32, 97, 100, 123–26, 125; Hum-
 phrey's narrative influences,
 108–13, 123–24; Humphrey's
 romantic symbolism, 108–16;
 introduction, 108; Native rejec-
 tion of "civilization," 118–19;
 Native subordination to
 American identity, 116–18, 122,
 130n18
- Nashville Agrarians, 116
- national identity. *See* American
 national identity
- Native American Council, 36
- Native Americans: as American
 "other," 27, 84, 114, 116; artistic
 depiction of, 26–27; citizenship
 for, 124; cultural appropriation
 by non-natives, 55–62, 104–
 5n48; dress in history vs. popu-
 lar culture, 5, 11, 13, 49, 50–52,
 53; education of, xvi, xx, 3–14,
 6, 7, 10, 118–19; and encounter
 motif, 80–82, 84, 87–88, 93–99,
 118; European influences on,
 1–2; "gullibility" to corruptions
 of liquor, 32, 97, 100, 123–26, 125;
 historical reality at Dartmouth's
 founding, xv, 1–14; literacy and
 writing, 3–4, 60; as merged with
 wilderness landscape, 97–98; as
 natural communists, 119, 120–21;
 participation in New England
 economy, 1–2, 8, 10; rejection
 of "civilization," 118–19; stereo-
 typed representation of, xv, 24,
 29, 30, 40–41n16, 44, 45–62, 58,
 61, 93–96, 116–17, 122, 124–26,
 131nn37–40; subordination to
 American identity, 113, 116–18,
 122, 126, 130n18; white anxieties
 over subjugation of, 116, 120–23,
 126–28, 128n7; women as symbol
 of America, 48; WPA problem-
 atic depictions, 37, 56, 57. *See also*
- Eastern Woodlands indigenous
 peoples
- nativism by European Americans, 116,
 130n18
- Natural Man, 48, 57, 93, 109, 113
- Neoclassicism, 27
- New Deal murals, 26, 27, 37, 56, 57, 86
- New England tribes, 3–4, 9–12, 53
- New York State Museum (NYSM),
 114, 129n13
- noble nature vs. corrupt civilization
 trope, 27–29, 31, 80, 97–98, 118
- "The Noble Red Man" (Twain), 127
- Noble Savage, 48, 57, 93, 109, 113
- Novak, Barbara, 96
- nudity, depiction of, 29, 40–41n16, 52
- Occom, Samson, xv, xx, 2, 4, 12,
 14–15n11
- Old King Cole* (Parrish), 59
- Oneidas, 6, 8
- Onondagas, 8–9
- Orozco, José Clemente: vs. colonial
 architectural style, 26; contro-
 versy over *The Epic of American
 Civilization*, 89–91; critique of
 capitalism, 82, 84, 107–8; cri-
 tique of colonialism, 84, 87, 93,
 101; *The Epic of American Civi-
 lization* mural, xiii, 78, 80–90,
 96, 101; vs. Humphrey, 19, 28, 29,
 34, 41n20, 60, 90–92, 96, 107–8;
 influence on Humphrey's mural,
 31; primitivism of, 100; xenopho-
 bia and opposition to, 19, 22
- "other": artistic use of Native Ameri-
 cans as, 27, 114; and distancing
 of indigenous people, 109; Euro-
 pean American appropriation
 of, 99–100; and exoticization of
 Native Americans, 116; Native
 as internal, 84; non-European
 female nudity, 29; wilderness
 as, 98

- Packard, Artemas, 87
 Parker, Arthur C., 129
 Parker, Robert Dale, 122
 Parrish, Maxfield, 24–25, 57, 59
 pictorial realism, 22, 56, 60, 109, 113, 115–16
 Pilgrim/Indian encounters, portrayal of, 109, 110–11
The Pioneers (Cooper), 128n7
 pious benefactor trope, 123
 Plains Indian iconography, 50–52, 57, 59
 “playing Indian” trope, 80, 99–101
 Pocahontas, 48, 48, 53
 Pohquonnapeet, Peter, 6
 political/economic anxieties, Native Americans as foil for, 120–22, 123, 126–28
Portrait of Thayendanega (Bowen), 13
 Posada, José Guadalupe, 85
 Powhatan Confederacy, 53
 primitivism, Orozco’s vs. Humphrey’s, 100
 pseudomedieval lettering, 22, 23
 public art during Depression, 26, 27, 37, 56, 57, 86–87, 91
 Quetzalcoatl myth in *The Epic of American Civilization*, 80, 88
 racism in criticism of *The Epic of American Civilization*, 90
The Red Man’s Fact, Niagara Falls, 59
 religion and assimilation through Christianity, 2–3, 4, 5, 6, 10
 Remington, Frederic, 26
 Renaissance, influence of, 22, 29, 34, 35–36, 45–46
The Return of the Vanishing American (Fiedler), 126
The Reverend Eleazar Wheelock (Steward), 24
The Reverend Samson Occom (Spilsbury), xx
- Rivera, Diego, xiii, 86
 Rockefeller, Abby, 87
 Rockwell, Norman, 21, 25, 108
 Romano, Giulio, 34, 35
 Russell, Charles, 34
 Sacajawea, 48
Sala Paolina (Vaga), 22, 23
 Sample, Paul Starrett, 87, 89
 satirical elements in Hovey murals:
 anti-intellectual critique, 28, 30–32, 96; scatology, 28, 31, 32, 32, 42n28, 78
The Saturday Evening Post, 109, 110, 111, 124
 Sauck, John, 9, 10
Les Sauvages Américains (Sayre), 116
 Savage, 48, 57, 93, 109, 113
 Sayre, Gordon M., 116
 scatology, disguised, 28, 31, 32, 32, 42n28, 78
 Scherr, Barry, xvii
 Sergeant, John, 3
 settler identity: and “imperialist nostalgia,” 93–95; and Orozco’s critique of colonialism, 84, 87; and tensions of Native relationship, 80, 97–98, 100–101, 118, 128n7
 sexism in Hovey murals, xv–xvi, 60.
 See also women
 sexuality, 20, 29, 57, 59–60, 124
 Shattuck, John and Tobias, 12
 Simms, William Gilmore, 118
 Simon, Abraham, 6
 Simon, Daniel, 6
 Simon, Sarah, 5–6
 Smith, Paul Chaat, 113, 128
Smith Rescued by Pocahontas (Virtue), 54
 Social Realism, 56, 60
 “Song of 500 Gallons” (Humphrey), 20–21
Song of Hiawatha (Longfellow), 51–52, 57
- Southern post-Civil War noble savage vs. industrial civilization trope, 116, 131
 sovereignty, tribal, 120, 124
 Spanish Conquest, 80
 Spilsbury, Jonathan, xx
 Squanto, 53
 Squaw, 20, 29, 48, 57, 59–60
 Steward, Joseph, 22–23, 24
 Thanksgiving, Indian imagery trapped in, 52–53, 110–11
 Thayer Dining Hall (Class of 1953 Commons), xiii, xvii, 19
Trading for a Turkey (Leyendecker), 109, 111
 tree stump trope and price of civilization, 96–97, 98
 Treuer, David, 116, 118
Triumph of Bacchus (Caracci), 34, 36
 Twain, Mark, 126–27
 Vaga, Perino del, 22, 23
 Vasconcelos, José, 82, 84
 Virtue, George, 54
 visual history of Native American representation: abstraction of “Indians” in nineteenth century, 50–52; colonial period, 49–50; early twentieth-century solidification of icons, 54–55, 55; influence on Humphrey’s work, 55–62; introduction, 45–48; New England Indian of 17th century, 52–53; stereotyped language and gestures, 53–54
 “Wah-hoo-wah” yell, 53–54
 Wampanoags, 3, 53
 Warren County Municipal Center murals, 40n9
Wedding of Amor and Psyche (Romano), 34, 35
 Weinberg, Jonathan, 27

- Wentworth, Benning, 11–12
- Wentworth, John, 99
- Wheelock, Eleazar: conversion of school from Native to white students, 101; and historical Native Americans, xv, 1–14; Humphrey's depiction of, 18, 22, 27–28, 28, 29, 31, 60, 92–95, 100–101; portrait of, 24; revisionist account from Hurd, 34; silver monteith, 99; as superiority symbol for handling “civilization/drink,” 124, 126
- White, John, 48
- white anxieties and Native depiction, 116, 120–23, 126–28, 128n7. *See also* European Americans
- wilderness paradise as destroyed by civilization, 12, 80, 96–99
- The Wild West* (Humphrey), 106, 109
- William Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (Hall), 94
- women: and American national identity, 48; cultural standards for portraying, 46–47; and Dartmouth's shift to coeducation, xv–xvi; Humphrey's portrayal of, xv, 29, 30, 56–57, 58, 61, 95–96; and sexism in Hovey murals, xv–xvi, 60; at Wheelock's school, 4–5; Wordsworth's portrayal of, 129n17
- Woodlands Indians. *See* Eastern Woodlands indigenous peoples
- Woolley, Jacob, 4
- Wordsworth, William, 118, 129n17
- WPA (Works Progress Administration) murals, 26, 27, 37, 56, 57, 86
- xenophobia and opposition to Orozco, 19, 22
- Zorthian, Jirayr, 37

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