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Peace, Friendship, and Financial Panic: Reading the Mark of Black Hawk in *Life of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak*

Kendall Johnson

*I tell you what's a goine to happen now very soon,
De United States bank will be blown to de moon,
Den all de oder bank notes well be mighty plenty,
An one silver dollar will be worth ten or twenty.*

“Zip Coon” (1834)¹

Black Hawk, a Sauk chief in frequent negotiation with the US in the decades before the disastrous Black Hawk War, tells us in his autobiography *Life of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak* (1833) that he never accepts or wears a US peace medal.² The medals were based on a design commissioned by Thomas Jefferson after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and were maintained through the administration of Zachary Taylor. On the obverse appears the image of the sitting president, like that of President Martin Van Buren (see Figure 1), and on the reverse appears (see Figure 2) the treaty motto of “Peace and Friendship,” a crossed tomahawk and calumet, and two hands, one of a uniformed officer and the other of a braceleted Indian, clasping each other in ostensible accord.

Such images belie the disastrous Black Hawk War of 1832, and the diplomatic and legal duplicity that removed the Sauk and Mesquakie/Fox people west of the Mississippi, dispossessing them of their traditional village of Saukenuk at the mouth of River Rock during Andrew Jackson’s presidency. The war had begun in

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Fig. 1. Martin Van Buren medal. Obverse: "Martin Van Buren President of the United States, A.D. 1837." From The American Numismatic Society, New York, NY.



April when approximately 2000 Saukies of the "British Band" and some Mesquakie/Fox and Kickapoos, including entire families and 500 warriors, came back across the Mississippi River, challenging the terms of the removal initiated by an 1804 treaty. The federal and Illinois state governments used the return to wage war, and Black Hawk fled with his people into Wisconsin. After weeks of pursuit, federal soldiers cornered those who had not starved on the banks of the Mississippi. At the Battle of Bad Axe on 2 August 1832, the federal steamship the *Warrior*, aided by Sioux warriors hired by the US, massacred hundreds of people in what the *North American Review* characterized as "the most disastrous Indian

Fig. 2. Martin Van Buren medal. Reverse: "Peace and Friendship." From The American Numismatic Society, New York, NY.



campaign of modern times" (Snelling 84).³ Black Hawk finally managed to surrender to the Winnebago and was jailed at Jefferson's Barracks in Missouri.⁴ To impress upon Black Hawk the futility of his resistance, William Clark, the superintendent of Indian Affairs and Meriwether Lewis's expeditionary partner, ordered him and fellow leaders (Napope, Pamaho, White Cloud, and others) to tour major cities—Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Detroit, and Washington D.C., where Black Hawk met with President Jackson. After being returned to Iowa, he "dictated" his life to the newspaper publisher John B. Patterson through army interpreter Antoine LeClair. Patterson then edited and published *Life of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak or Black Hawk—dictated by himself*, which became known as Black Hawk's *Autobiography* in 1882 when Patterson published a revised edition as *The Autobiography of Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak*.

By understanding the history behind peace medals and the hallmark phrase "peace and friendship," we can better understand the autobiography's more general condemnation of US practices of treaty negotiation. Black Hawk shuns US medals, but he does mention wearing British medals—particularly during the War of 1812 (66, 97). He insists that: "Whilst the *British* made but few [promises]—we could always *rely upon their word*" (60). Whereas, in regard to the US, he exclaims, "*I had not discovered one good trait in the character of the Americans that had come to the country! They made fair promises but never fulfilled them!*" As the narrative ends, Black Hawk recounts his punitive tour of the east coast and visit to the mint in Philadelphia, the place where the US "make[s] medals and money." When presented with a number of coins as they "fell from the mint," he declares them "very handsome," an ironic comment that joins money and peace medals to imply that US currency, like its policies, cannot be trusted (147).

At stake in my reading of peace medals is the potential to read irony into a text whose initial reviewers authenticated it as a literal expression of Black Hawk's unlettered rage. In the January 1835 *North American Review*, William Joseph Snelling's unsigned review classified *Life of Black Hawk* as "a curiosity; an anomaly in literature" constituting "the only autobiography of an Indian extant" (68). The review dismisses William Apess's *Son of the Forest* (1829) as non-Indian because, although Apess was "born of aboriginal parents," "[his] taste, feelings and ideas were derived from the whites, and [he is] in all essential particulars a civilized [man]" (68). Conversely, Black Hawk's autobiography displays the "wild, unadulterated savage, gall yet fermenting in his veins, his heart still burning with the sense of wrong, the words of warpath and scorn yet scarce cold upon his lips . . . and his hands still

reeking with recent slaughter” (69); the reviewer concludes that “No white man, however great his ability may be, could have executed a work so thoroughly and truly Indian” (69). In the 1955 re-publication of the book by the University of Illinois Press (which was reprinted again in 1990), the editor Donald Jackson adopts the title *Black Hawk: An Autobiography* and explains that, “To evaluate the autobiography properly we must take care to distinguish between *accuracy* and *authenticity*. The accuracy we may test by checking with contemporary documents; the authenticity—the genuineness of the book as an utterance of Black Hawk—is harder to determine” (28). Jackson finds that historical documents verify much of Black Hawk’s account. As to which version is more authentic, he concludes “If we are to evaluate Black Hawk’s story properly, we must disregard the 1882 edition and stick with the 1833 edition, which, despite the intrusive hands of interpreter and editor, is basically a tale by an Indian from an Indian point of view” (30). Jackson’s distinction between *accuracy* and *authenticity* is vague and leaves little room for gauging potential irony. Is it possible for the written translation of Black Hawk’s “utterance” to be both sarcastic and “genuine”?

In *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (1985), Arnold Krupat adumbrates the plot coordinates of surrender and subjection that oriented the Indian figure within the nineteenth-century national romance of frontier expansion, a romance that plots the subjected Indian’s voice as that of either a merciless savage, whose vicious presence is a comic barrier to be overcome by the righteous strength of the Western project, or a tragically doomed noble who fades stoically into the past, counterbalancing the dramatic swell of America’s manifest destiny. Since Jackson’s introduction and Krupat’s study, a host of scholars have gauged the degree to which *Life of Ma-Ka-Tai-She-Kia-Kiak* reflects Black Hawk’s “point of view,” discounting textuality as capable of conveying the injustice of Sauk/Fox dispossession,⁵ suggesting strategies through which Black Hawk’s “captive utterance” may convey his version of traumatic events,⁶ and proposing a tribal basis of interpretation and re-interpretation of the Black Hawk text.⁷ Despite varied interpretative tacks and conclusions, critics seem to concur that the book’s conclusion rings hollow as a flat ventriloquy of the ideology rationalizing Indian Removal:

It has always been our custom to receive all strangers that [sic] come to our village or camps, in time of peace, to share with them the best provisions we have, and give them all the assistance in our power. If on a journey, or lost, to put them

on the right trail—and if in want of moccasins, to supply them. I feel grateful to the whites for the kind manner they treated me and my party, whilst traveling among them—and from my heart I assure them, that the white man will always be welcome in our village or camps, as a brother. The tomahawk is buried forever! We will forget what has past [sic]—and may the watchword between the Americans and Sacs and Foxes, ever be— “*Friendship!*”

I am now done. A few more moons, and I must follow my fathers to the shades! May the Great Spirit keep our people and the whites always at peace—is the sincere wish of BLACK HAWK. (154)

William Boelhower argues that Black Hawk here seems “scripted” as a “pacified hero” who “narrate[s] an exemplary life” before going the “way of all Indians” (337). Even Neil Schmitz, who emphasizes the book’s general “defiant, litigious, maledictory” tone, notes that Black Hawk’s final statements seem to be Patterson’s “Jacksonian Indianizing” (70).

I read these final paragraphs differently, as a wry allusion to the phrase “peace and friendship” that appears on the back of US peace medals and in a series of broken treaties, beginning in 1804, through which the US dispossessed the Sauk and Fox peoples of land.⁸ In the Black Hawk narrative, peace medals circulate in intersecting imperial economies (those of England, France, Spain, and the US) and in Native communities (the Cherokee, Mesquakie/Fox, Sauks, Sioux, and Winnebago, etc.) whose welfare depended on the sustenance of trading networks. The autobiography’s final sentences highlight the hospitality of the Sauk and Fox toward peaceful strangers, a hospitality matched in form by the US only after the devastation of the war, during Black Hawk’s tour of the east coast. However, throughout the narrative, the US peace medal is Black Hawk’s “watchword,” designating America’s projection of “peace and friendship” as an act of war.

My goal here is to reverse the dynamics of authentication that have framed critical interpretation of Black Hawk’s text. I separate questions regarding the autobiography’s authenticity from a more general reading of peace medals to suggest a broader economy of authenticity in which the US was itself riddled with anxiety over an identity that was not yet manifest. Thus, the autobiography is part of a cluster of texts, including Charles Bird King’s portrait of Black Hawk in Thomas McKenney and James Hall’s *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* (1837–44), a picture of an incarcerated Black Hawk by George Catlin from 1833, and the newly minted US nickel of March 2004 that

commemorates the Louisiana Purchase. In this broader context, it is plausible to appreciate how Black Hawk might use the phrase “peace and friendship” sarcastically. From our historical perspective, his skepticism toward peace medals seems quite canny, presaging a broader crisis in the trustworthiness of US currency during the years of Indian Removal, when Jackson’s hard currency policy and abolition of the federal bank precipitated a crisis in fiduciary trust, triggering deep depression and wrecking Van Buren’s administration. Thus Black Hawk’s narrative impugns the authenticity of an American nation soon to be split in the Civil War.

1. The Mark of Black Hawk

Black Hawk’s narrative traces medal-giving back to what Donald Jackson interprets as the forays of Champlain into Canada in the early 1600s, when the Sauk and Fox were living in what is today Ontario, before migrating through Michigan and Wisconsin, and then into Illinois. Black Hawk begins with an account of his “great grandfather” Na-na-ma-kee (Thunder) who first dreams about and then meets “the white man,” a “son of the King of France” who presents Na-na-ma-kee with the fateful medal (41). Na-na-ma-kee tries to give the medal to his elder brother, but his father insists that Na-na-ma-kee continue wearing it to designate that he outranks all the other “civil chiefs” and is uniquely empowered to declare war (43).⁹ In a sense, this seems a colonial fantasy: in designating a leader, the French medal designates a single “chief” who speaks for the collective. Nevertheless, Black Hawk represents the French medals as registering the conditions of mutual respect and reciprocity that substantiate peace in the community’s welfare.

It is difficult to pin-point a precise origin of peace medals. A colorful component of Catholic missions and commercial ventures, medals of gold, bronze, and copper circulated in the trans-Atlantic theater of seventeenth-century conflicts between Spain, Holland, France, Portugal, and England.¹⁰ George Washington adopted peace medals in his first presidential administration, refiguring a centuries-old practice to designate US influence over tribes formerly allied to European powers. When Jefferson outfitted Meriwether Lewis and William Clark’s Corps of Discovery with newly designed medals, they seem to have taken their place in an ideological arsenal of Indian Removal, translating Native peoples into Western laws of property in order to dispossess them of the literal ground on which their communities were living.

In 1829, when serving as the head of the War Department's Indian Office, Thomas McKenney insisted to John Heaton, the Secretary of War, that without medals "any plan of operations among the Indians . . . is essentially enfeebled. This comes from the high value which the Indians set upon these tokens of Friendship" (qtd in Prucha, *Indian* 48). In hindsight, McKenney's phrase "plan of operations" seems an ominous euphemism for the pragmatics of Indian removal. Beginning with George Washington's administration, government agents distributed peace medals to foster a ruse of alliance and reciprocity, what Francis Paul Prucha calls an "umbrella of magnanimity," which was eventually betrayed in the westward course of land capture (*American* 48). In 1797, Thomas Jefferson outlined the role of peace medals when responding to Spanish protests over the dealings of US traders in the Southwest (what would become Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi) with the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek. In a letter instructing the US ambassadors in Madrid on an appropriate diplomatic response, Jefferson characterizes "Giving medals and Marks of distinction to the Indian Chiefs" as "an antient [sic] Custom from time immemorial." He continues that "[Medals] confer no power, and seem to have taken their origin in the European practice of giving medals and other marks of friendship to the negotiators of treaties, and other diplomatic Characters, or visitors of distinction" (410). Although the hollowness of "peace" is clear here, "giving medals" nevertheless plays an important rhetorical role for Jefferson, enabling him to assert the sovereign legitimacy of the US through a diplomatic prerogative in the Southeast. Peace medals aver a national continuity that supplants both "Savage" indigenoussness and British precedent, whose mere "practice" has become American "Custom."

Peace medals figured prominently in contemporary portraits of Native leaders. Consider Charles Bird King's portrait of Black Hawk from 1837 (see Figure 3), painted five years after the Black Hawk War and published in the third volume of Thomas McKenney and James Hall's *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* (1836, 1838, and 1844). The effigy on the peace medal around Black Hawk's neck resembles President Martin Van Buren, who succeeded Jackson and presided over the Cherokee removal from Georgia.¹¹ King's portrait was initially part of a collection known as the "Indian Gallery," maintained by the War Department beginning in 1821 through the initiative of McKenney, whom President Madison had appointed in 1816 as the first Superintendent of Indian Trade. McKenney regarded himself as an advocate for Native Americans in the face of predatory settlers,

Fig. 3. Charles Bird King, "MA-KA-TAI-ME-SHE-KIA-KIAH or Black Hawk A Sauk Brave," in Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, *The Indian Tribes of North American: With Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs*, 3 vols., ed. Frederick Webb Hodge and David I. Bushnell (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1934), unnumbered page between pages 58 and 59. Courtesy of McCabe Library, Swarthmore College. The three volumes of the first folio edition were first published respectively in 1836, 1838, and 1844.



liquor-peddling traders, and the corporate muscle of the fur industry, particularly John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company.

McKenney and Hall describe Black Hawk's *Life of Black Hawk* as a "small volume published at Cincinnati in 1833, and said to have been dictated by himself, and which we know to be acknowledged by him as authentic" (58). Hall continues by debunking Black Hawk's putative heroism, characterizing him as subordinate to another Sauk chief named Keokuk, who accommodated US removal of the Sauk and Foxes. The very title of the section—"Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiah [sic] or 'Black Hawk' A Sauk Brave"—belittles Black Hawk as "the principal person engaged in the brief and hopeless war waged by a faction of the Sauk tribe against the United States." Hall claims that Black Hawk is "by no means a hero," not even "a person of remarkable abilities" (58); the description of his 1837 Washington visit dismisses him as a lost man with no standing in "council":

Black Hawk was one of the party which [sic] attended Keokuk in his journey He was, however, not one of the delegates, but was taken with them to prevent him from engaging in their absence in intrigues which might disturb the harmony of the tribe. He accompanied them to all public

places, and was treated as a friend and equal, but did not sit in council, except as a spectator. (91)

King's peace medal seems to punctuate Black Hawk's defeat while memorializing him under the seal of Van Buren's visage. Black Hawk sits before our eyes, dressed in a white blouse, resting in a peace that foreshadows his literal death. He meets our gaze in what seems an eternal surrender, fixed by the very US peace medals that he shuns in his narrative. A final footnote reports his death on 3 October 1838.

King's use of the Van Buren peace medal to memorialize Black Hawk makes sense within the context of federal Indian law that facilitated removal in the 1830s by literalizing Native peoples as child-like savages in need of a federal protection premised on the rights of conquest. In *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (1991), Eric Cheyfitz develops the notions of translation and metaphor by explaining the intersecting locative politics of the foreign and domestic, the figurative and literal, and the savage and proper. Within the epic history of *translatio studii et imperii* that Cheyfitz outlines, metaphor drives a "European process" of translation that has "displaced or attempted to displace . . . Native Americans into the realm of the proper [or the literal], into that place where the relation between *property* and *identity* is inviolable, not so these [Native] Americans could possess the proper but so that having been translated into it they [can] be dispossessed of it (of what, that is, they never possessed [in a Western sense]) and relegated to the territory of the figurative" (59). Jefferson's peace medals seem metaphor's vehicle of translating Indians into the Western discourse of property in which they figure alternatively as kings, chiefs, warriors, domestic dependent nations, savages, and wards of the US. Functioning as the domestic language of the US, peace medals reach to the ground of the alien, foreign, or savage in order to carry them back (metaphorize and translate them) through a language of peace and friendship. Native kinship systems and methods of negotiation are overlooked as medals designate individual leaders, "kings" or "chiefs" who speak representatively for the community, and sign treaties of cession. Peace medals do this not to substantiate Indians as actually sovereign in their difference (i.e. like foreign nations of France or England), or recognize them as property-holding citizens of the US in their similarity, but rather to maintain Indians' figurative status as savages who only think in literal terms.

The dynamics of peace medal translation are central to the first two rulings of the Supreme Court's Marshall Trilogy that

Functioning as the domestic language of the US, peace medals reach to the ground of the alien, foreign, or savage in order to . . . metaphorize and translate them . . . through a language of peace and friendship.

justified Indian Removal contemporaneous to the Black Hawk War. In *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), the Court ruled that white settlers could buy land only from the US government, not from Indians, whom the Court excluded from the right to have written title to the land and thereby to hold land as property. The Marshall court supplanted Indians' ongoing life on the land by asserting that "discovery gave an exclusive right to extinguish the Indian title of occupancy, either by purchase or by conquest" (Prucha, *Documents* 35). The ruling then explains that "Conquest gives a title which the Courts of the conqueror cannot deny"—even if that conquest has been "passed to" the US from the British government. Thus, Indians are to be regarded as "inhabitants" and "to be considered merely as occupants, to be protected, indeed, while in peace, in the possession of their lands, but to be deemed incapable of transferring the absolute title to others" (37). When, in 1831, the Cherokee sued the state of Georgia to prevent being removed, the Court ruled that "Though the Indians are acknowledged to have an unquestionable, and, heretofore, unquestioned right to the lands they occupy, until that right shall be extinguished by a voluntary cession to our government; yet it may well be doubted whether those tribes which reside within the boundaries of the United States can, with strict accuracy, be denominated foreign nations" (59). Instead, the Cherokee were denominated "domestic dependent nations," in a "state of pupilage" with a relation to the US as that of "a ward" to "his guardian" (59). The Supreme Court thus abjured "jurisdiction of the cause" and dismissed the written documents that the Cherokee had marshaled, deeming de facto literate Indians as figuratively illiterate, and their written protest as legally illegible. The peace medal around Black Hawk's neck in King's portrait is a symbol of the very way in which the US attempted to literalize Native peoples as savage figures who had no *legal* ground on which to stand in their occupation of the actual, literal ground that "white" citizens attempted to "protect" in the civil language of property. Read in the context of the war and court rulings, the final paragraphs of Black Hawk's autobiography challenge the authenticity of an American "protection" based in what Marshall calls the "right" and "title" of "discovery" and "conquest."

Throughout Black Hawk's *Life*, peace medals function very differently than in King's picture. Black Hawk in fact refuses to accept or to wear them, and he derides the treaty language of "peace and friendship" as unfair and dishonorable. Although Black Hawk's War technically lasted a few months, one could say that it started decades before in St. Louis with a disputed treaty. In 1804, in the wake of the Louisiana Purchase, future president William

Henry Harrison, then “Governor of the Indiana Territory” and “commissioner plenipotentiary of the United States” in the region, engineered an agreement whereby the Sauk relinquished the village of Saukenuk (i.e. River Rock) to the US. In the autobiography, Black Hawk registers the event with one of several references to peace medals, highlighting the bad faith of American policy by insisting that British medals can be trusted whereas the American medals portend broken promises. Black Hawk introduces the treaty as a debacle by recalling his first encounter with General Zebulon Pike who requested that the Sauk “pull down our *British Flags*—and give them our *British Medals*—promising to send us others on his return” (52). The Sauk refused. Their skepticism proved prescient when other “chiefs high up on the Mississippi” who had complied with General Pike’s request “never received any [American peace medals] in exchange for the [British medals]” (53).

With Pike’s empty promise, Black Hawk foreshadows the treaty of 1804. He explains that the Sauks sent four men, including Quàsh-quà-me, to St. Louis to negotiate for the life of a young Sauk man, imprisoned for killing white settlers who were “trespassing on Indian hunting lands on the Cuivre River” (Wallace 18). When Quàsh-quà-me returned from St. Louis, he and the other three representatives “appeared to be dressed in *fine coats*, and had *medals!*” (Black Hawk 53). Black Hawk initially “hopes that they had brought good news” (53). Instead, he learns that Harrison had wanted Sauk and Fox land. Quàsh-quà-me recalled being drunk “the greater part of the time” in St. Louis and was disappointed with the outcome of the negotiations. After agreeing to “give [Harrison] some [land] on the west side of the Mississippi, and some on the Illinois side opposite the Jeffreon,” Quàsh-quà-me expected to have their friend released, but instead he was “*shot dead*” (54). As US peace medals recur throughout the narrative, they not only signal dishonesty but outline the rhetorical pattern of marking peace with Indians in the act of dispossessing them.

Black Hawk emphasizes that he knew very little of the 1804 negotiation with Harrison. He notes that after the treaty had “been explained” to him, he “[found], by that treaty, all [their] country, east of the Mississippi, and south of the Jeffreon [sic], was ceded to the United States for *one thousand dollars* a year!” (54). Black Hawk challenges the treaty by denaturalizing “property,” declaring that “My reason teaches me that *land cannot be sold*. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon, and cultivate, as far as necessary for their subsistence; . . . Nothing can be sold, but such things as can be carried away” (101). Black Hawk continues by appealing to his reader’s sense of fairness: “I will leave it to the people of the United States to say, whether our nation was properly

represented in this treaty? Or whether we received a fair compensation for the extent of country ceded by those *four* individuals? I could say much about this treaty, but I will not, at this time. It has been the origin of all our difficulties” (54). In 1829, Black Hawk had tried to plead his case directly to James Hall and Edward Cole, the former governors of Illinois, explaining that “Quàsh-quà-me and his party *denied*, positively, having ever sold my village; and that, as I had never known them to *lie*, I was determined to keep it in possession” (103); Hall and Cole were powerless to help. To make matters worse, Illinois Governor Ninian Edwards protested to William Clark, decrying Black Hawk’s presence as an “invasion of the rights of a sovereign and independent State [of Illinois]” (qtd in Wallace 1: 28).

The historian Anthony F.C. Wallace troubles the treaty agreement of 1804, explaining that the validity of the Sauk and Fox negotiation depended on consensus-building practices involving not only warriors but also the women of the community, who cultivated the cornfields.¹² There remains controversy as to whether Quàsh-quà-me was intimidated into signing, and whether Harrison plied Quàsh-quà-me with alcohol to secure his mark (Wallace 1: 21). In designating Quàsh-quà-me as the representative voice of the tribe, the US foreshadowed its recognition of Keokuk as the representative leader of his people, a move that dismissed the very process of Sauk and Fox governance. In addition, the treaty’s language is itself fundamentally disingenuous, asserting an “umbrella of magnanimity” to cloak removal and usurpation in the language of federal protection and friendship. For example, Article 2 presents the cession in the following terms:

And the said tribes, for and in consideration of the friendship and protection of the United States which is now extended to them, of the goods (to the value of two thousand two hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty cents) which are now delivered, and of the annuity herein-after stipulated to be paid, do hereby cede and relinquish forever to the United States, all the lands included within the above-described boundary. (Kappler 2: 74)

Article 4 continues by promising that “the United States will never interrupt the said tribes in the possession of the lands which they rightfully claim, but will on the contrary protect them in the quiet enjoyment of the same against their own citizens and against all other white persons who may intrude upon them” (75). The representation of fairly negotiated exchange here is perhaps crucial to maintain a sense of credibility to the US’s diplomatic reputation;

as the 1804 Treaty continues, “protection” euphemizes removal as it would in Marshall’s 1831 *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* decision.

Throughout the decades of increasing conflict between the Sauks and the US government, Black Hawk insisted, as did Quàsh-quà-me, that the Sauks had never surrendered access to what had become their traditional town at River Rock. Nevertheless, Black Hawk’s “mark” does appear on an 1816 treaty entitled *A treaty of peace and friendship made and concluded at St. Louis between William Clark, Ninian Edwards, and August Chouteau, commissioners plenipotentiary of the United States of America, on the part and behalf of the said states, of the one part, and the undersigned chiefs and warriors of the Sacs of Rock river and the adjacent country, of the other part* (my emphasis). Black Hawk designates William Clark as the “great chief at St. Louis” who sent “word for us to go down and confirm the treaty of peace” in the aftermath of the War of 1812 during which Black Hawk was, in his version of events, forced into British alliance when the US reneged on crucial extensions of credit necessary for the community’s sustenance (86). This credit, and the corresponding necessary provisions, had been formerly secured with the British, and the US promised to sustain the credit in exchange for Sauk neutrality. Four years later, as the war ended, Black Hawk notes that he did not “hesitate” to meet Clark so that “we might smoke the *peace-pipe* with him” (86). The preamble of the 1816 treaty avers the eagerness of the Sauk and Fox to “return to the habits of peace and friendship with the United States”; Article 1 reads:

The Sacs of Rock river, and the adjacent country, do hereby unconditionally assent to recognize, re-establish, and confirm the treaty between the United States of America and the United tribes of Sacs and Foxes, which was concluded at St. Louis, on the third day of November, one thousand eight hundred four; as well as all other contracts and agreements, heretofore made between the Sac tribe or nation, and the United States. (Kappler 127)

The phrase “[unconditional] assent” ignores the vexing issues of representation, coercion, and translation raised by Black Hawk’s account of the 1804 treaty. Perhaps nesting these contrived Indian “assents” builds a rhetorical honesty through a self-referential function, an autotelic treaty discourse of “peace and friendship,” the diplomatic version of what Mary Poovey describes, in a different context, as the “paradoxical phenomenon of self-actualizing fictions,” stunningly manifested in King’s yoking of Black Hawk

with the very medal rejected in *Life* (58). One is reminded of De Tocqueville's characterization of Indian Removal in *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840): "It is impossible to destroy men with more respect for the laws of humanity" (339).

In October 1829, the federal government advertised Saukenuk land for sale, a boon to white settlers who had been squatting since spring of 1829 and sabotaging the Sauk and Fox encampments. When Black Hawk protested, he was profoundly disappointed by William Clark's reply that "The whites were *complaining* at the same time that *we* were *intruding* upon *their* rights! THEY made themselves out the *injured* party, and *we* the *intruders*! and called loudly to the great war chief to protect *their* property" (102); Black Hawk then wonders at "How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right" (102). In this rhetorical chiasmus, Black Hawk not only charges the US with breaking its promises, but with relying on a corrupt system of representation. Black Hawk's chiasmus (right→wrong; wrong→right) alerts the reader to the deceptive premise of William Clark's treaty of 1816 in which William Harrison's treaty of 1804 is not regarded as unfair, but rather as the premise of negotiation. In thus characterizing "white" language, Black Hawk marks the gross disparity between sign and act, treaty and policy, promise and action.

Black Hawk's *Life* attacks the validity of the 1816 treaty by challenging the treaty mark that supposedly signifies his consent. *Black's Law Dictionary* defines the act of signing as "affix[ing] one's name to a writing or instrument, for the purpose of authenticating or executing it, or to give it effect as one's act." If, however, one is not able to write, then he or she may, under the *Black's* definition of *sign*, "make any mark as upon a document, in token of knowledge, approval, acceptance, or obligation" (1381). Black Hawk acknowledges the physical action that has produced the literal "mark," but he contends that it does not represent his assent to either the treaty of 1816 or the preceding 1804 treaty. He characterizes the 1816 treaty in St. Louis as "inauthentic" (to borrow *Black's* terminology), the result of a duplicitous signing procedure:

Here [in St. Louis, 1816], for the first time, I touched the goose quill to the treaty—not knowing, however, that, by that act, I consented to give away my village. Had that been explained to me, I should have opposed it, and never would have signed their treaty, as my recent conduct will clearly prove. What do we know of the manner of laws and customs of the white people? (87)

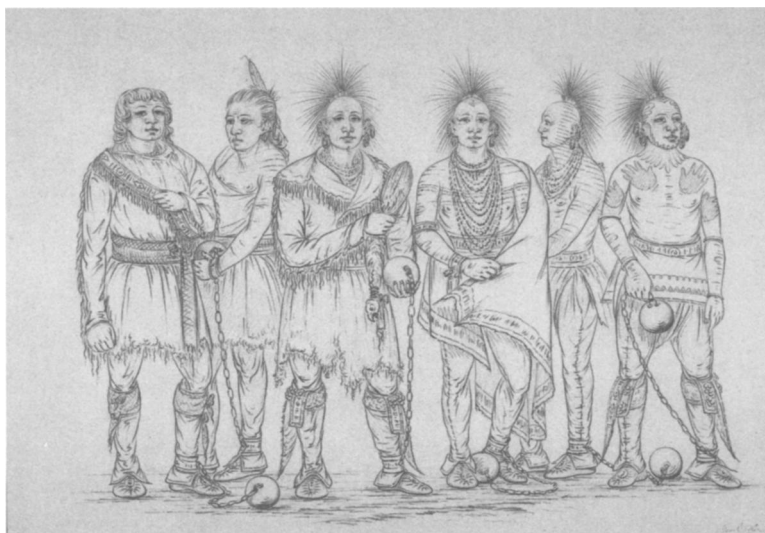
Crucially, Black Hawk omits mention of the “mark” or “sign” that would have resulted in touching the quill to parchment—as if to stop the literal process of signing before it manifests his symbolic consent. His final question is rhetorical in the sense that by the time he dictates *Life*, Black Hawk knows the “manners of laws and customs of the white people” well enough to challenge the very premise of assent at the heart of treaty protocol. He not only draws attention to the difference of the Sauk’s cultural system (“reason teaches me land cannot be sold”) but also indicates the ways in which he has been figured in a federal discourse of “voluntarily cession” (viz. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* decision) through the treaty token of his “mark.”

The condition of hyperlegibility accorded to Black Hawk’s mark by the federal government is countered by the determined unwillingness of the federal troops or Illinois militia to register the British Band’s white flags of surrender during the so-called war. Black Hawk recounts having twice raised a white flag. Both times, the Illinois militia and federal troops refused to read it as a sign of surrender. In the first instance, at the so-called Battle at Stillman’s Run (May 1832), the Illinois militia shot the bearers of the white flag; in the second, just before the Battle of Bad Axe (August 1832), the captain of the *Warrior* believed that the white flag was a trick. Although the Sauk can never seem to raise a white flag of surrender properly, there seems no way Black Hawk can avoid “touching the goose quill to the parchment”—a phrase that punctures the fiction of treaty negotiation with sardonic literalness. In Black Hawk’s text, the treaty process is “white” “language,” registering the contradictions of being recognized as an Indian in the system of American law during the 1830s—a position in which treaty “marks” of cession are obdurately legible whereas Cherokee appeals to the Supreme Court are refused recognition. Within the federal “plan of operation,” the Sauk and Fox are just literate enough to sign treaties of “peace and friendship,” but incapable of raising a legible white flag that would prevent their execution.

Although Black Hawk never mentions wearing a US peace medal, he does recall being “forced to wear the *ball and chain!*” when “confined to the [Jefferson] barracks” in 1833 (142). He exclaims:

This was extremely mortifying, and altogether useless. Was the White Beaver [General Atkinson] afraid that I would break out of his barracks, and run away? Or was he ordered to inflict this punishment upon me? If I had taken him prisoner on the field of battle, I would not have wounded his

Fig. 4. George Catlin, *Souvenir of the N. American Indians, as they were in the middle of the nineteenth century. A numerous and noble race of human beings, fast passing to extinction, leaving no monuments or records of their own, in existence*, 3 vols. (London: Author, 1850), plate 29. The caption reads, “Saukie. 87. Muk-a-tah-mish-o-ka-kaik (the Black Hawk) War Chief of the Saukie tribe . . . 88, 89. Nah-se-us-kuk (the Whirling Thunder), Wa-saw-mee-saw (the Roaring Thunder), the two sons of Black Hawk, taken prisoners with the Chief; 90–92. Pash-e-pa-ho (the Younger), Nah-po-pe (the Soup), Wah-pe-kee-suk (the White Cloud), three of the most influential warriors of Black Hawk’s army.” From the Rare Books Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.



feeling so much, by such treatment—knowing that a brave war chief would prefer *death to dishonor!* (142)

Black Hawk’s appeal to the reader is predicated on honor between equals, enabling what Cheryl Walker calls the text’s structure of “transpositional discourse” (18).¹³ The language of sentiment (“wounded his feeling”) assumes a mutuality of respect between adversaries that the US violates by accepting Black Hawk’s word of surrender only to tether him with the ball and chain. In the narrative, Black Hawk finally personifies the US’s lack of honor in the unnamed person who has “ordered” General Atkinson “to inflict” the “ball and chain” on him—President Andrew Jackson, a “*great brave*” (145) who does not keep his promises.

When Black Hawk was imprisoned, George Catlin painted a very different portrait than that of King (see Figure 4). It appears in Catlin’s self-published *Souvenir of the N. American Indians as they were in the middle of the nineteenth century. A numerous and noble race of human beings, fast passing to extinction, leaving no monuments or records of their own, in existence* (1850). The peace medal in King’s portrait consolidates a defeat that seems still raw in Catlin’s sketch of Black Hawk standing with Nahseuskuk, Wasawmeesaw, Pashepaho, Napope, and Wahpekeesuk. In lieu of the peace medal, Black Hawk holds up an iron ball in his left hand, and in his right, a hawk, which perhaps stands in for the actual “great medicine bag of [his] forefathers” to which he had “[fallen] heir” many years before, after his father was killed in a battle (Black Hawk 49). In *Life*, Black

Hawk mentions having given the actual medicine bag to Winnebago chiefs for safekeeping before his surrender. Returning from the east coast, he mentions hoping to retrieve the medicine bag, which is “dearer than life,” the very “soul of the Sac nation,” and which has never “been dishonored in any battle” (139).

In the context of Catlin’s showmanship and drive to capitalize on his images of vanishing savages, the medicine bag is a sign of Black Hawk’s savage defiance and primitive belief in a “totem,” a word originating in the Algonquin dialect and defined by the *OED* as “the hereditary mark, emblem, or badge of a tribe, clan, or group of Indians . . . and treated as an object of friendly regard, or sometimes even as incarnating a guardian spirit to be worshipped.” In this sense, the medicine bag mystifies Sauk culture even as it serves as a pathetic signifier of Black Hawk’s savage literalism, encoding his enduring but futile belief in the totem object’s power to overcome the federal troops and regain River Rock.¹⁴

However, there are other ways of framing and interpreting Black Hawk’s medicine bag. In proposing a Sauk and Fox audience for Black Hawk’s *Life*, Neil Schmitz resists speculating on the meaning of such sacred bundles, and proposes considering them as a “Mee-sham effect,” or as that “which marks what is averted from Euro-American knowledge, what will not be captured,” that “mysterious something” which “always escapes the captures of Euro-American knowledge” (68).¹⁵ In the context of the Black Hawk War, the medicine bag can be both an unknown “mysterious something” and Black Hawk’s refutation of the peace medal as fundamentally dishonest. Through the medicine bag, he emphasizes the trust that enables material to convey meaning in particular communities and locations. When Black Hawk equates the “Black Hawk” medicine bag with the “soul of the Sac nation” and his own life, he is not Catlin’s unwitting primitive who confuses the literal and figurative in a totemic superstition, but rather a Sauk warrior whose pledge folds him into the consensus of the British Band’s resolve to remain on the ground of Saukenuk. Conversely, the ball and chain manifests the violent consequence of America’s pledge of peace and friendship.

2. Peace, Friendship, and Financial Panic

The legacy of peace medals resonates today to suggest a willful forgetting of the Black Hawk War. To commemorate the Louisiana Purchase, President George W. Bush enacted Public Law 108–15, which stamped a new image on the reverse of the

nickel for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005 (see Figure 5).¹⁶ As these nickels circulate, the US has absorbed all land contested in the Black Hawk War, and presently claims the authority to exercise pre-emptive war throughout the world, using billion dollar weapon systems named after Native peoples (i.e. the Black Hawk, Apache, and Chinook helicopters, Tomahawk missiles, etc.). Today we read Black Hawk's autobiography in a post-gold standard world of "free trade" where the US dollar is underwritten globally by the economic influence and military might of the US government itself. However, as audiences in the 1830s read the book, the US was on the verge of financial panic precipitated by two of Andrew Jackson's dramatic executive decisions: the abolition of the Second Bank of the United States (BUS) in 1832 and the "Species Circular" of 11 July 1836, which prohibited the purchase of western land with anything but "hard money or the notes of banks that redeemed their notes in specie" (Galbraith 88).

Historians have characterized Jackson's abolition of Philadelphia's BUS as "the most important presidential veto in American history" (Remini 82).¹⁷ Jackson refused the legislation to renew the BUS Charter because he suspected that the Bank's president Nicolas Biddle (who, incidentally, had compiled and edited the Lewis and Clark journals from 1810 to 1812) was using it to sustain his family privilege, to fund political candidates, and to gain favor from international investors. In September 1833, Jackson ordered Treasury Secretary Roger B. Taney to shift federal deposits out of the BUS and into particular state banks, or

Fig. 5. Reverse of commemorative US nickel, "Louisiana Purchase/Peace Medal" (2004). Scanned by the author.



pet-banks. This promoted the interests of corporate speculation (key among them the fur and mining industries) by vilifying the east coast banking elite; the policy did nothing to redistribute wealth or to extend credit to the working class. In *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975), Michael Rogin charts the irony of Jackson's identification with the very working people adversely affected by his monetary policies. Uncannily, before his meeting with the Bank supporters on behalf of the "people" (Rogin 235), President Jackson donned Black Hawk's headdress, acquired during Black Hawk's 1833 tour of Washington, and joked: "I don't think those fellows would like to see me in this" (qtd in Rogin 281).

Jackson's veto of the BUS and designation of pet banks severely hampered the nation's ability to establish monetary supply elastic enough to support the frenzied speculation on usurped western lands. But, Jackson did not stop there, and rounded out his fiscal policy by abolishing the use of paper money to purchase government lands. Having lost a fortune speculating on western lands in the early 1820s, he blamed promissory notes and paper money. William Gouge, a hard-money booster, advocated for Jackson in *A Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States, Including an Account of Provincial and Continental Paper Money to which is Prefixed an Inquiry into the Principles of the System, with Considerations of its Effects on Morals and Happiness. The Whole Intended as a Plain Exposition of the Way in Which Paper Money and Money Corporations, Affect the Interests of Different Portions of the Community* (1833). This not-so-short title indicates the odd literalism pervading a monetary policy in which precious metals provide the foundation of moral, political, and national trust. In addressing the growing concentration of wealth, Gouge passes over what might be seen as the underlying causes of fiscal instability (e.g. an overabundance of western land the accumulation of which outpaced any regulatory function of monetary supply), and focuses instead on the proliferation of paper, alerting the reader that, "In the great game we have been playing, much of the wealth of the country has passed into a few hands" (93). At one point, Gouge brings the extent of the crisis to bear by looking at Philadelphia, where:

The condition of a multitude of poor women in our large cities, has lately attracted the attention of the benevolent. It appears from the statements that have been published, that they can, by working ten or twelve hours every day, earn no more than from seventy-five cents to a dollar a week. Half of

this sum goes for house rent and fuel, leaving them from thirty-seven and a half cents to fifty cents a week for food and clothing for themselves and children. Some thousands are said to be in this situation in Philadelphia alone. (93)

Gouge's answer to Philadelphia's poverty seems as simple as "getting rid of paper money and money corporations," which he calls the "very efficient *instruments* of evil." For Gouge, this is the only way in which the political institutions can have their "proper influence" and thus "[Conjoin] equality of commercial privileges with equality of political rights" (235).

In line with Gouge's logic, Jackson's executive order of the "Specie Circular" discredited the paper currency and promissory notes in circulation, resulting in a run on the banks; in 1837, as King painted Black Hawk's portrait, state and private banks throughout the US suspended payment on all notes. As this essay's epigraph from "Zip Coon" indicates, a crisis in fiduciary trust ramified throughout the US in the ensuing decade, tracing the sectional antagonisms that would erupt in the Civil War. There was no federal system in place to buffer frequent bullion shortfalls that resulted from having to transport precious metals by boat, barge, and rail from one state and pet bank to another; of course, a federal banking system would have made such transportation unnecessary by providing more efficient accounting systems to represent the distribution of specie. Jackson and Gouge's insistence that gold and silver guarantee "political rights" suggests that it is their fetishistic literalism that would confuse us.

Black Hawk does not mention the "condition of a multitude of poor women" during his tour of Philadelphia, but he does mention the federal mint in Philadelphia. He notes, "We left Baltimore in a steam boat, and traveled in this way to the big village [Philadelphia], where they make *medals* and *money*. . . . We visited the place where they make money, and saw the men engaged at it. They presented each of us with a number of pieces of the *coins* as they fell from the mint, which were very handsome" (147). The pairing of medals and money suggests irony to Black Hawk's characterization of the *coins* as "handsome" as he challenges readers to consider that if the "smooth language" of the US cannot be trusted to sustain reciprocity with Indian peoples, how can members of the US trust each other in networks of trade? How can citizens trust the paper money, promissory notes, and deeds which supposedly secure their property? How can England, France, and Spain trust the national debt of a country that violates its treaties? How can anyone trust Philadelphia's "handsome" coins?

Read in the context of international trade, diplomacy, and Indian Removal, the last two paragraphs of the autobiography are not necessarily evidence of Black Hawk's subjection to Jackson. Rather, the final pages seem to emphasize Jackson's broken promises and the corresponding "smooth" "language of the whites" that "can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right" (102). Black Hawk notes that during his tour of the east coast, "Everybody treated us with friendship, and many with great liberality" (148), but this "friendship" costs hundreds of lives and Saukenuk. Black Hawk relates his meeting with President Jackson in crucially equivocal terms, complimenting him as "a *great brave*," but noting that they "had very little talk with him, as he appeared to be busy, and did not seem much disposed to talk" (145). After Jackson asks Black Hawk the cause of the war, Black Hawk says "little to him about it," thinking that he ought to know about it already. When Black Hawk expresses his desire to return to his people, Jackson orders them first to Fort Monroe and, Black Hawk comments, "as our interpreter could not understand enough of our language to interpret a speech, I concluded it was best to obey our Great Father, and say nothing contrary to his wishes" (146). Black Hawk finally returned west and upon nearing Iowa he called on the "father of the Winnebagoes," General J. M. Street, to whom Black Hawk had surrendered. He tells Street, "I had left my great *medicine bag* with the chiefs before I gave myself up; and now, that I was to enjoy my liberty again, I was anxious to get it, that I might hand it down to my nation unsullied" (149). Street reassures Black Hawk that the medicine bag is safe, that he (Street) has heard the Winnebago chiefs talk of it and will return it to Black Hawk. Black Hawk concludes, "I hope he will not forget his promise, as the whites generally do—because I have always heard that he was a good man, and a good father—and made no promises that he did not fulfil [sic]" (149). However, as Black Hawk approaches the new ground of the Saukies (what would later become the state of Iowa in 1846), he indicates that President Jackson has not kept his word when he discovers "a large collection of people in the mining country, on the west side of the river, *and on the ground that we had given to our relation, Dubuque, a long time ago*" (150). Black Hawk claims that he was "surprised" at the white settlers' breach of the Mississippi boundary, because he

had understood from our Great Father [Jackson], that the Mississippi was to be the dividing line between his red and white children, and that he did not wish *either* to *cross it*. I was much pleased with this talk, as I knew that it would be much better for both parties. I have since found the country

much settled by the whites further down, and near to our people, on the west side of the river. I am very much afraid, that in a few years, they will begin to drive and abuse our people, as they have formerly done. (150)

Black Hawk is perhaps unaware of the so-called “Black Hawk Purchase” that Keokuk negotiated during his incarceration, and through which white settlement extended across the Mississippi. The point of Black Hawk’s remark, though, is that he does not trust Jackson’s word, and demonstrates this distrust by alerting readers to the literal ground of white settlements.¹⁸

As Black Hawk derides Jackson, there appears one person whom Black Hawk greets as an “old friend”: Ramsay Crooks, the lead agent of the American Fur Company’s regional headquarters during the 1820s, and John Jacob Astor’s successor as president of the company in the 1830s. Anthony Wallace notes that the American Fur Company initially opposed the removal of the Sauk and Fox communities from land west of the Mississippi (near Dubuque) because it threatened pre-arranged investments; in 1832, Ramsay Crooks probably hoped to broker another treaty that would have guaranteed payments from the Sauk and Fox to the American Fur Company, or to guarantee access to mineral rights in what would become eastern Iowa (Wallace 33, 35). Nevertheless, Black Hawk characterizes Crooks as “treat[ing] us with marked friendship, by the presentation of many valuable presents” (148). Black Hawk vouches for Crooks and “always found him to be a good chief—one who gives good advice, and treats our people right” (149). He concludes, “I shall always be proud to recognize [Crooks] as a friend, and glad to shake him by the hand” (148). Black Hawk does not say the same for Jackson, Van Buren, or Van Buren’s presidential successor, William Henry Harrison, whose signature represents the US on the Treaty of 1804, what Black Hawk calls the “origin of all our difficulties” (54).

As our “handsome” nickel commemorates Jefferson’s peace medal, Black Hawk’s text marks the peace medal as a “smooth language” that cannot be trusted. Figures 6 and 7 are a silver peace medal minted by Crook’s American Fur Company in 1837 to pursue its own plan of operation through the Upper Missouri Outfit.¹⁹ On the obverse is the effigy of John Jacob Astor. The reverse echoes the treaty phrase “peace and friendship,” the shaking hands, and the crossed tomahawk and pipe which now appear on the US nickel. Black Hawk’s text makes us look twice at these watchwords of “*Friendship*” and challenges us to account for the symbols in which we place our trust.



Fig. 6. John Jacob Astor Medal. Obverse: "President of the American Fur Company." From the American Numismatic Society, New York, NY.



Fig. 7. John Jacob Astor Medal. Reverse: "Fort Union, U.M.O. [Upper Missouri Outfit]" and "peace and friendship." From the American Numismatic Society, New York, NY.

Notes

1. Qtd in Eric Lott, *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (1993), 178–79.

2. In regard to naming, I use the term "Sauk" as opposed to "Sac," although both seem to be correct. It is a complex matter to settle on a historically appropriate name. Just as "Black Hawk" is a translation of *Ma-Ka-Tai-She-Kia-Kiak* (itself a transliterative approximation), so Sauk stands in for *Asakiwaki*. According to Frederick E. Hoxie's *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* (1996), "the Sauks call themselves *asa-ki-waki*, meaning 'people of the outlet' in their Algonquian language" (566). Donald Jackson notes that: "Throughout Black Hawk's story his people are called Sacs, but the name has had many variations. The Indians called themselves 'Saukies,' and contemporary documents refer to

them as Sockeyes, Socks, Sacques, Sackies, Sauces, etc. They have generally come to be called the Sauk” (Black Hawk 41). Anthony Wallace also uses the term Sauk in “Prelude to Disaster: The Course of Indian-White Relations Which Led to the Black Hawk War of 1832,” *The Black Hawk War, 1831–32*, 2 vols., ed. Ellen M. Whitney (1970).

The Fox or Mesquakie (“people of the red earth”) are a separate but inter-related Algonquin group. *The Encyclopedia of North American Indians* lists the terms “Sauk” and “Fox/Mesquakie” separately. In the autobiography, Black Hawk identifies himself as a “SAC” chief (111). However, when giving the history of his “great grandfather” receiving the peace medal, he charts his family back to the Mesquakie/Fox who were then living in regions north of Lake Ontario in what is present-day Canada (41). In *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (1896–1901), the “Foxes” are designated as an Algonquian tribe and referred to variously as the Outitchakouk, Outagamies, and Rénards. Black Hawk’s term “Sac” generalizes a communal wholeness across centuries-long tensions that involved several different Algonquin communities, including the Kickapoo and Potawatomi.

3. From an 1835 unsigned review of *Life of Black Hawk. The Life of Mal-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak or Black Hawk, dictated by Himself*, that appeared in *The North American Review*. Maureen Konkle attributes the unsigned review to William Joseph Snelling (150).

In 1838, Benjamin Drake described the Battle of Bad Axe: “The destruction of life in the battle of the Bad-axe, was not confined to the Indian warriors. Little discrimination seems to have been made between the slaughter of those in arms and the rest of the tribe. After they had sought refuge in the waters of the Mississippi, and the women, with their children on their backs, were buffeting the waves, in an attempt to swim to the opposite shore, numbers of them were shot by our troops. Many painful pictures might be recorded of the adventures and horrors of that day. . . . When our troops charged upon the Indians, in their defiles near the river, men, women and children were so huddled together, that the slaughter fell alike upon all of them” (170).

4. In addition to Drake, I rely on the historical accounts by Cecil Eby, “*That Disgraceful Affair*,” *the Black Hawk War* (1973); Roger L. Nichols, *Black Hawk and the Warrior’s Path* (1992); and A. Wallace (1970).

5. See Mark Wallace, “Black Hawk’s An Autobiography: The Production and Use of an Indian Voice,” *American Indian Quarterly* 18 (1994): 481–94; and Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (1998).

6. See William Boelhower, “Saving Saukenuk: How Black Hawk Won the War and Opened the Way to Ethnic Semiotics,” *Journal of the American Studies* 25.3 (1991): 333–61; Timothy Sweet, “Masculinity and Self-Performance in the Life of Black Hawk,” *American Literature* 65 (1993): 475–99; and Cheryl Walker, *Indian Nation: Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalism* (1997).

7. See Neil Schmitz, *White Robe’s Dilemma: Tribal History in American Literature* (2001). Recent considerations of Black Hawk’s text disagree whether the text is a true collaboration or Patterson’s fictive ventriloquism. Boelhower,

Sweet, Walker, and Schmitz have emphasized the degree to which the text encodes criticism of the US. Boelhower's essay claims to sidestep the "narratological quicksands" of "translator-author-editor" to propose a reading of the text that enacts a Heideggerian nostalgia for the dwelling of Saukenuk on the Rock River (334). Boelhower finds it particularly significant that the dwelling is never literally named, as the actual word *Saukenuk* never appears. In Black Hawk's telling of community movement around and through the unspoken *Saukenuk*, Black Hawk builds "a memory system of Sauk dwelling" (348). This deep appreciation of inhabited space, of locality, of regional specificity manifests in the text as both an *ethographein* (or "spatialization of the behavioural practices of two different people" [339]) and a means of reaching out to a broader, transhistorical network of "englobing cultural structures" (334).

8. According to Charles J. Kappler, the first treaty between the US and the Sauk was the Treaty of Harmar of 1789, which Black Hawk does not mention. The treaty with the "Wiandot, Delaware, Ottawa, Chippewa, Pattawatima, and Sac Nations" attempted to regulate trade and set boundaries in what is now the state of Ohio. Article XIV reads: "the United States of America do also receive into their friendship and protection, the nations of the Pattiwatimas [sic] and Sacs; and do hereby establish a league of peace and amity between them respectively; and all the articles of this treaty, so far as they apply to these nations, are to be considered as made and concluded in all, and every part, expressly with them and each of them" (qtd in Kappler 2: 21). The subsequent treaties were in 1804, 1815, 1816, 1822, 1824, 1825, 1830, 1832, 1836, 1837, 1842, 1854, 1859, 1861, and 1867.

9. In the "Memorial of Father Loyard: Upon the Present Condition of the Abnaquis" (c. 1722) from *Jesuit Relations*, Father Loyard recommends that the "best way in which to fix and to render perpetual [the Abnaquis'] attachment" is to increase the "annual gratuity" and "to give *each one of the five villages* a Royal medal, which will be, as it were, a constant and indubitable promise, *by which* which [sic] will ever tell them that the King continues to honor them by his Royal Protection" (LXVII: 125).

10. Charles Wyllys Betts's *American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals* (1894) presents a fascinating catalogue of medals, locating early medals of England in late seventeenth-century Virginia. One medal bears the image of the Native "Queen of Pamunk" and the phrase "Charles II King of England Scotland Ireland and Virginia." Citing William Waller Henning's *Statues at Large, State of Virginia* (1823), Betts explains that the Queen Pamunk medals were to be worn by chiefs of various tribes who came into the "limits of white settlements," to indicate "who was to be responsible for pilfering" (26).

11. The profile resembles Van Buren's profile; it has too little hair to be that of President Jackson. Also, the effigy faces to the right, unlike the left-facing medal of President Tyler.

12. A. Wallace notes that: "Sauk and Fox women informed General Edmund P. Gaines in 1831 that the sale of 1804 was invalid because the women, who cultivated the cornfields, had neither agreed to the sale nor ever been consulted in the matter. The need for consent by all the citizenry was the reason for the large deputation of women and children which almost invariably was in attendance at treaties of cession. In the Sauk and Fox case, furthermore, it probably was

considered essential for *both* of the tribal councils and populations separately to give their consent to the sale of land" (7).

13. In *Indian Nation: Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms* (1997), Cheryl Walker defines transpositional discourse as the strategic emphasis on "the essential parity of Indians and whites," for example Black Hawk's representation of "president [Jackson] as a mirror image of himself, someone who has seen a great many winters and is a 'great brave'" (18). By asserting an equality, instead of merely inverting the hierarchy, Black Hawk's autobiography abides by a "principle of reciprocity" which "[levels] the playing field" (19) and in so doing leverages a "moral force that cannot be gainsaid" (60).

14. Sweet reads Black Hawk's text in relation to Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (1841) in which Black Hawk seems subdued and passive in Catlin's portrait. Sweet distinguishes Catlin's feminizing depiction of Black Hawk, who sits passively cradling his medicine bag, from Catlin's portrait of an aggressive Keokuk, arrayed in the accoutrements of Native masculine agency (scalp locks, horse, and spears). Sweet reads Black Hawk's *Life* as resisting Catlin's rubric of subjection by emphasizing a code of warrior masculinity that implicitly feminizes Keokuk, who had not performed, in Black Hawk's estimation, the feats requisite to a warrior's respect. Thusly, Black Hawk criticizes Keokuk for treating with the US and surrendering Sauk land.

15. For Schmitz, Black Hawk's medicine bag is the obscure and incongruous term that Black Hawk holds back from explanation. Black Hawk's refusal establishes a structural irony to the narration, which holds the dominant reader at bay in the very language of apologia (67–68). The insight of Schmitz's book is the potential tribal basis for reading Black Hawk. In this case, it is not so much an author (Black Hawk) but members of a reading community (the Sauk and Fox peoples) who recognize a narrative that acquires specific communal relevance, political meaning, and therefore an authenticity as a "Sauk history, a Sauk version of the so-called Black Hawk War" (85). Schmitz leaves it up to the reader to "judge how altered it is, how sullied, by the devices of Patterson and LeClair" (85), but declares that as a "Sauk history," the text is "very barbed, reproachful, scathing in its irony" suggesting that Black Hawk seems "not to address us, Patterson's Jacksonian public, but some transcultural justice, some future, multiracial United Nations or sovereign Alongonquian nation" (72).

16. The US Mint explains on their website (http://www.usmint.gov/mint_programs/) that these nickels "reflect images evocative of [Lewis and Clark's] historic expedition into the Louisiana Territory." Instead of Jefferson's Monticello, the reverse of the nickel minted in March 2004 recalls, "the original Indian Peace Medal commissioned for Lewis and Clark's expedition, bearing the likeness of America's third president on one side, and symbols of peace and friendship on the other. The medals were presented to Native American chiefs and other important leaders as tokens of goodwill at treaty signings and other events."

To unveil the commemorative designs in Philadelphia on 6 November 2003, the Mint enlisted Gerard Baker, "a Native American and Superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail." His characterization of the Lewis and Clark expedition promotes a national romance propelled by a courageous desire for exploration. Thus, his rendition of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, in the context of the commemorative nickels, overlooks episodes such as the Black Hawk War.

17. In addition to John Kenneth Galbraith, *Money: Whence It Came, Where It Went* (1975), and Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War: A Study in the Growth of Presidential Power* (1967), I rely on Peter L. Rousseau, "Jacksonian Monetary Policy, Specie Flows, and the Panic of 1837," *Journal of Economic History* 62.2 (2002): 457–88; Larry Schweikart, "Jacksonian Ideology, Currency Control and Central Banking: A Reappraisal," *Historian* 51.1 (1988): 78–102, for my account of Jackson's monetary policy.

18. It is also significant that Black Hawk refers to Julien Dubuque as "our relation" instead of a white interloper. James Patterson notes that Dubuque was the "first white man to settle in Iowa," having received permission in 1788 from the Fox (Black Hawk 150). Trading relations seem to have incorporated Dubuque into the extended Fox/Sauk community. Black Hawk's racial terminology ("red and white") seems, then, strategic, recognizing in Jackson's segregationist mandate ("dividing line between his red and white children") a means of reclaiming the Mississippi as a boundary against the ongoing claims of settlement that continued to alienate the Sauks not only from Saukenuk, but also from the land west of the Mississippi. For more on the Mesquakie's relationship with Julien Dubuque, see Chapter 3, "The Expansion of Native American Lead Mining," in Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737–1832* (2000).

19. Francis Paul Prucha notes that Crooks attempted to diffuse the federal government's strong opposition to these medals by insisting that they be called "ornaments" (*Indian* 139).

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