

# The Creation of Art for the American Republic by Sculptor, Crawford and Poet, Longfellow

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## Introduction

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the world witnessed the rise of neoclassical sculptors from the United States, such as Horatio Greenough (1805-1852), Hiram Powers (1805-1873), and Thomas Crawford (1813-1857).<sup>1</sup> From the 1820s to 1830s, these artists were among the first generation of Americans who moved to Italy, particularly to Rome and Florence, to learn and absorb the popular art of sculpture. Before this time, in America, one could not find a longstanding tradition or prominent predecessors in this art, nor fine marble and skilled artisans who could transform the plaster models created by an artist into finished works in marble.<sup>2</sup> Each would-be sculptor was exploring his or her own style; to make a living, most sculptors were also willing to accept private commissions to create portraits of individuals. Many sculptors of the period found the American government commission for public art to be compelling. The formal museum system did not appear in America until 1870;<sup>3</sup> as a result, sculptors competed over opportunities to display their own works in public area. In the 1850s, the United States government expanded the Capitol in Washington, D.C., and planned to decorate it with sculptures. On this occasion, the chief engineer, Captain Montgomery C. Meigs (1816-1892), searched among the artists whom he considered to be most suitable to receive such a commission. After a semi-nude statue of George Washington by Greenough became controversial, Meigs was cautious and sought advice from Edward Everett (1794-1865), who was then an influential advocate and politician. With the recommendation of Everett, the captain wrote to Crawford to request that the work be of value to art specialists and amateurs alike:

Permit me to say that the sculpture sent here by our artists is not altogether adapted to the taste of the people. We are not able to appreciate too refined and intricate allegorical representations, and while the naked Washington of Greenough is the theme of admiration to the few scholars, it is unsparingly denounced by the less refined multitude. Cannot sculpture be so designed as

to please both? In this would be the triumph of the artists whose works should appeal not to a class but to mankind (August 23, 1853; emphasis mine).<sup>4</sup>

In the same letter, regarding what would be considered the most favorable subject of sculpture, Meigs suggested a dimension of American history that highlighted “the struggle between civilized man and the savage, between the cultivated and the wild nature.”<sup>5</sup>

Crawford responded to the request from Meigs by submitting his pediment *Progress of Civilization* (1854-1856) and a set of “Bronze Doors” (1856). Once purchased by the United States government, both works of art were placed in the east wing of the Senate building: the pediment was on top of the front entrance and the doors were in the eastern portico. The sculptor had sought sources of inspiration chiefly in Greco-Roman myths and the Bible. Yet, for the first time in his career, he used material indigenous to the United States and produced a challenging historic project of considerable grandeur. In his *Progress of Civilization*, Crawford represented the Native Americans as a dying race, driven off by White men. The replica of the Native American chief from that sculpture is still preserved in the collection of the New York Historical Society today.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, in contrast, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) wrote plain-language poetry for a readership of his fellow Americans.<sup>7</sup> During that period, Longfellow created epic poems such as *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (1847) and *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Whereas the former takes the French and Indian War as its backdrop, the latter presents a young Native American man as its hero. Both his works and Longfellow himself were extremely popular among his contemporaries.<sup>8</sup>

Given this, how are the aforementioned American subjects represented in the quite-different genres of sculpture and poetry? What messages do the artistic works by Crawford and Longfellow, which can be understood and appreciated by anyone, convey? In this essay, I will attempt to answer these questions by examining the imagination and the pioneering works of these two artists, or that which can be called art for the American Republic. More specifically, I will focus on the pediment *Progress of Civilization* by Crawford and the epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha* by Longfellow, along with other relevant works. In the modern era, when global capitalist competition is in the forefront of cultural priorities and aesthetics remains in the rear, it is worth remembering how art became grounded in the United States. Although one can still see sculpture by Crawford in a variety of places—atop the Capitol building, in major

museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, in a Harvard University lecture hall, and in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts—the works of Crawford have not been extensively studied.<sup>9</sup> Many scholars may hardly recall that Longfellow and Crawford were contemporaries who treated the challenging themes of their era. Because the intertextuality that surpasses the differing genres of sculpture and poetry has not been much researched, I aim to fill this void in the literature and to create a stir, even if merely humble, in the economy-dominant tendencies of modern society. Chapter 1 will survey the genre of the American Indian and Chapter 2 will present profiles of Crawford and Longfellow. In Chapter 3, I will examine the particular source materials that the sculptor and the poet used to ensure that the works they were creating would be acceptable to their contemporaries. In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate how the key concept of sentimentalism operates in the work of these two artists. In the following discussion, I will sometimes refer to Native Americans as American Indians because the sculptor and the poet each used the term “Indian.”

## **1. The American Indian Genre**

As Meigs observed, the subject of Native Americans became trendy in the fields of fine arts and literature during his lifetime. According to Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., this tendency became conspicuous between the War of 1812 and the Civil War (1861-1865), influenced by cultural nationalism and the Romantic movement.<sup>10</sup> Considering the policy enacted by President Andrew Jackson in 1835, in which Native Americans were forcibly displaced from the lands where they had lived for centuries, the reality that Native Americans, as a people, might soon vanish made them an ideal, romantic subject for artists. Native Americans became known among the White public as so-called noble savages, rather than blood-thirsty demons. Besides, the Wild West, the original territory of Native Americans, was also a welcome setting for romantic literature. Against such a backdrop, novelists such as James Fenimore Cooper and Lydia Maria Child repeatedly disseminated images of Indians being repelled by Western Civilization.<sup>11</sup> This portrayal was not limited to literature; artists in other disciplines, such as history, philosophy, and folklore, considered American Indians to be their major subject. One such example was the famous book, *Algic Researches* (1839), by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.

In the 1850s, the American Indian theme was most favorably accepted in

mainstream American culture. In other words, in this decade preceding the Civil War and its division of the nation, readers became fed up with the theme of the noble savage. By this time, the subject of American Indians was dominant as a source of inspiration in American literature and fine arts; in popular culture, it built the foundation for the genre of the “Western.”

In his book *The White Man's Indian*, Robert F. Berkhofer studies the relationship between American Indian and American culture/literature. He also briefly refers to sculptural works; he discusses only *The Rescue* (1853) by Greenough, in which a male pioneer tries to rescue his wife and child from the tomahawk attack of an American Indian. Berkhofer seems to mistake *Progress of Civilization* by Crawford for a work by Powers.<sup>12</sup> This is a deplorable mistake, considering that Powers had declined an invitation by Meigs to enter the competition for a commission to provide sculptures to be displayed on and in federal buildings in Washington, D.C. Powers, in his pride, detested such evaluation, whereas Crawford was willing to take advantage of the opportunity and immediately applied himself.<sup>13</sup> In any case, *Progress of Civilization* by Crawford resulted from the maturation of the American Indian genre. Unlike *The Rescue*, which no longer is on display, the pediment by Crawford stands among the public works of art in the Capitol building and is worthy of scholarly reconsideration.

By contrast, regarding *The Song of Hiawatha* by Longfellow, which was published in the same era as the sculptures of Crawford, Berkhofer admits that its success was merely temporary. After he mentions that the epic poem was later parodied, he concludes that the poem is strong evidence of the theme of the American Indian as unfitting for serious literature.<sup>14</sup> *The White Man's Indian* does not present any specific analysis of *Progress of Civilization* or *The Song of Hiawatha*, nor does Berkhofer examine their contemporary relevance (or lack thereof). In the following chapter, I offer such analysis, in response to the lack thereof in the literature. Before starting my analysis, however, I will present profiles of the sculptor and the poet.

## **2. Thomas Crawford and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

*Progress of Civilization* and *The Song of Hiawatha* were presented to the public in the mid-1850s. Despite their different modes of expression, the two works share a commonality other than the theme of the dying American Indian: both works were created by socially privileged White, male artists who had close relationships with

culturally elite Bostonians. At the time of the publication of his epic poem, Longfellow was a Harvard University professor; similarly, Crawford was known in Rome as a famous American sculptor. Strictly speaking, the original social positions of the two artists were somewhat different. Longfellow came from the New England socio-cultural establishment; by contrast, Crawford, the son of obscure Irish immigrants, struggled to overcome an upbringing that lacked socio-cultural clout. Not following his father into the legal profession, Longfellow pioneered a path to literary scholarship and became the first American poet to be buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey in London. Comparatively, Longfellow was much more privileged than Crawford.<sup>15</sup>

These two artists became friends by chance. After completing his stone-carving apprenticeship at the Frazee and Launitz stone-cutting firm in New York City, Crawford left for Rome to pursue sculptural arts, bearing a letter of introduction to the famous neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1768/-70–1844). His relocation to the Eternal City opened many doors for the young, unknown, would-be sculptor. First, he became acquainted with the man who was then the United States consul at Rome, George Washington Greene (1811-1883). Because there was no American artist colony in Rome at the time, Greene was eager to help Crawford, who was struggling artistically and financially, by introducing him to potential clients. When Crawford fell ill from overwork, Greene devotedly cared for him and even supervised his studio. To express his deep gratitude, Crawford carved a bust of Greene. The consul gave the bust to his friend Longfellow, hoping to spread the name and reputation of Crawford. As if to prove the friendship among the three men, the bust of Greene is still on display in the Craigie-Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the time of its creation, the bust was favorably accepted in the Craigie-Longfellow House; its presence made public the artistry of Crawford.

Further, Greene had initially assisted Crawford by inviting his close friend Charles Sumner (1811-1874), a lawyer and future Senator, to the artist's studio. Sumner was impressed by *Orpheus and Cerberus*, an ongoing project on which Crawford had been working since approximately 1839. Sumner also befriended and championed this young American talent on many occasions. It is worth mentioning that Sumner started a fundraising campaign to solicit donations from cultured Bostonians to pay to have the plaster model of *Orpheus and Cerberus* carved in marble and then to be displayed in the Boston Athenaeum, an independent library. Among the contributors was Longfellow, who clearly helped the unfolding of the talent of Crawford as a sculptor.

His friendship with Greene, Sumner, and Longfellow brought Crawford a rare opportunity to be incorporated into the privileged network of culturally elite Bostonians. Also, via their circle, he met Louisa Cutler Ward (1823-1897) and eventually married her.<sup>16</sup> Obviously, the new friendships of the sculptor helped him to materialize what would originally have been an unthinkable match. Hence, I point out the contribution of cultured Bostonians to the nurturing of Crawford, the American talent from New York City.

The following decade was the most productive period for Crawford as a sculptor. In 1843, he completed *Orpheus and Cerberus* and received the official commission by the United States federal government to create public art for display in Washington, D.C. His major achievements were the *Washington Equestrian Statue* (1854) placed near the Virginia Capitol; the bronze figure *Freedom* (1856) atop the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.; and *Justice and History* (1856), placed at the door head of Senate Wing, East Front. In 1857, Crawford died of a brain tumor, which had blinded his left eye, before witnessing where all of these works were placed.<sup>17</sup>

Although the backgrounds of Longfellow and Crawford seem different, the two men were comrades in the sense that they endeavored to root art in American soil. Similarly, both had chosen their vocations and established themselves in their respective fields based on their own efforts; their life stories were quintessentially American in some respects. Their cosmopolitan way of living preceded that of later expatriate American writers and artists. In the next section, I will examine how these privileged White artists interpreted the popular theme of the American Indian.

### **3. American Narratives and the European Mode of Sophistication**

Crawford and Longfellow treated the American Indian theme in their works; however, their respective encounters with it were different. Whereas Crawford drew on the information given to him by Captain Meigs, Longfellow had been highly interested in the topic since boyhood. He had grown up in Maine, the culture of which was rich in Native American folklore and history,<sup>18</sup> and had read the writings of John Heckewelder, who was a Christian missionary to the Native Americans.<sup>19</sup> In any event, both had worked with vernacular material, especially on the theme of American Indians, in their creative processes for the first time; as a result, *Progress of Civilization* and *The Song of Hiawatha* became landmarks in their respective careers. (In a similar vein, Crawford

created *The Mexican Princess* (1848), which involved his sole indigenous subject among his collected works, which thematically span the North, Central, and South American continents.)

On June 22, 1854, Longfellow wrote in his diary about his inspiration for his famous poem about the American Indian: "I have at length hit upon a plan for a poem on the American Indians, which seems to me the right one, and the only. It is to weave together their beautiful traditions into a whole."<sup>20</sup> The diary successively records how Longfellow developed his idea, from the appropriate "measure" for the theme to the hero to the contents. When actually creating their American Indian-themed works, Longfellow and Crawford relied on secondary sources of information. Crawford used government documents sent to him by Meigs,<sup>21</sup> whereas Longfellow referred to *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* by Schoolcraft. In the introduction to *The Song of Hiawatha*, Longfellow also mentions that he had included American Indian legends in his work.<sup>22</sup> Such facts show that both artists had a certain artistic detachment from, rather than full commitment to, their subject.

One can observe commonality in the treatments of Longfellow and Crawford of their subject matter in such a way that the final product would be generally acceptable to the public. In other words, Crawford and Longfellow made their art comprehensible for anyone while also being suitable for well-educated people. For this purpose, both men took advantage of their familiarity with European artistic tradition and catered to the popular appetite for sentimentalism. I will now examine their works specifically.

*Progress of Civilization* and *The Song of Hiawatha* conspicuously share a strong narrative message, which evokes visual images of how the White men drove the Native Americans off their ancestral lands.<sup>23</sup> The shape of the pediment is reminiscent of the Parthenon in Greece; in the middle of its triangle stands a statue of a woman, named "America," which symbolizes the American Republic; the left half of the work shows a group of White pioneers and the right half shows a family of Native Americans, who were being driven off their ancestral lands.<sup>24</sup> "America" is accompanied by another national symbol, the eagle, which is at her feet. With the backdrop of the shining sun, "America" looks up radiantly to the heavens. The beautiful female body and mild facial expression of the statue represent the bright and promising future of the new nation (fig. 1).

To the left of "America" stands the figure of a soldier about to draw a sword. To

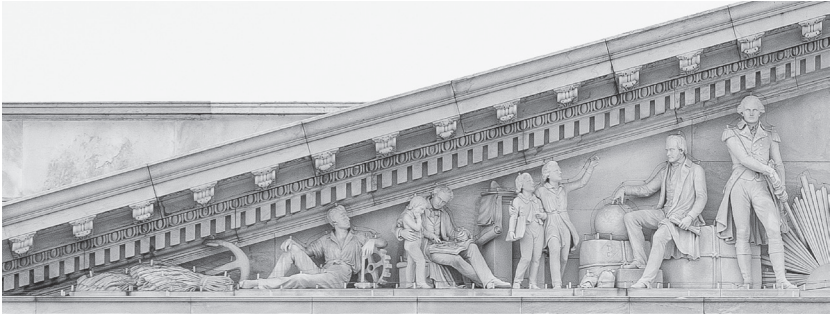


(fig. 1) The marble sculpture “America,” which is part of the larger marble sculptural piece *Progress of Civilization* by Thomas Crawford, located on the top-outside region of the United States Capitol building, Washington, D.C. (copyright: the Architect of the Capitol).

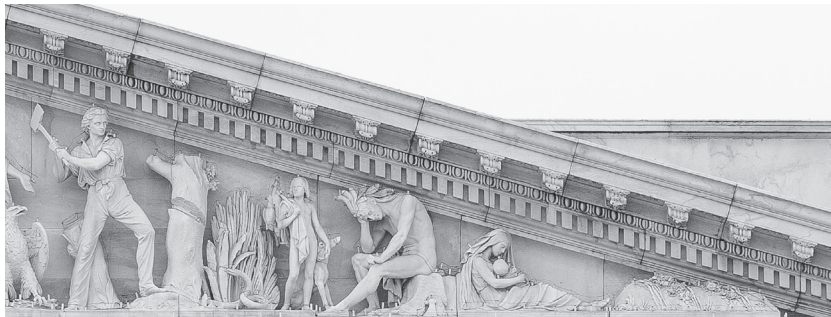
the left of him appears a merchant, who holds an item in his left hand and rests his right hand on a globe. There follow two boys, a pair made up of a teacher and a pupil, a relaxed-looking mechanic holding a set of tools on a cogwheel, ears of corn—a symbol of hope—and an anchor. Such figures envisage the nation’s future industrialization and its central characters. The image of a merchant suggests global trade.<sup>25</sup> It is clear that the boy and the pupil symbolize those who would be educated in support of the new nation and that the cogwheel would be maintained smoothly by the mechanic, as a sign of national stability (fig. 2).

To the right of “America” is located a woodcutter or frontiersman. Next to him is an American Indian hunter boy; a melancholy chief; a young American Indian mother, her baby held to her bosom; and finally, a small American Indian tombstone. The woodcutter and the stump at his foot suggest civilization; by looking up at the man, the boy foresees that his hunting grounds will be lost eventually. Here, the destiny of a





(fig. 2) Left-hand side detail of the marble sculptural piece *Progress of Civilization* by Thomas Crawford, located on the top-outside region of the United States Capitol building, Washington, D.C. (copyright: the Architect of the Capitol).



(fig. 3) Right-hand side detail of the marble sculptural piece *Progress of Civilization* by Thomas Crawford, located on the top-outside region of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. (copyright: the Architect of the Capitol).

dying race is represented; the symbolic contrast between hope/abundance and death is obvious from the arrangement of the component parts in the piece (fig. 3).

This contrast, which can be observed in the right and left sides of the pediment, seems to echo the contrasting structure of *The Song of Hiawatha*. This epic poem introduces an initiation story of the eponymous Ojibwa hero. The setting is the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the distant past. In composing the poem, Longfellow re-interpreted the Native American folktales collected by Schoolcraft rather than performing original research into the history of the Ojibwa people and actual Ojibwa figures such as famous chiefs. The poem starts with the birth of Hiawatha, the fantastical hybrid child of Wenonah (the daughter of the Moon, or Nokomis) and

Mudjekeewis, the West Wind.

The structure of the poem reminds one of the similarly curving structures of the pediment. Charles C. Calhoun calls this “an overarching structure.”<sup>26</sup> The plot of *The Song of Hiawatha* offers a narrative surge through its delineation of adventure, fulfilled romance, and marriage in the first half. That is, it depicts the growth of the hero as he undergoes various initiations, such as his first time hunting and his confrontation against his father, who betrayed his mother. He grows to win the respect of his fellows by instructing them in agriculture and picture writing. He even succeeds in reconciling opposing American Indian peoples by marrying the Dacotah maiden Minnehaha. Afterwards, however, the story presents the downward spiral of the hero’s fate. He experiences the loss of his two best friends and comrades, famine, the death of Minnehaha, and the arrival of the White missionary. The narrative takes on a more somber tone at this point, and the ending implies the death of Hiawatha, who entrusts his people to the control of the missionary. In the last part, Hiawatha addresses to his fellows:

I am going, O my people,  
On a long and distant journey;  
Many moons and many winters  
Will have come, and will have vanished,  
Ere I come again to see you.  
But my guests I leave behind me;  
Listen to their words of wisdom,  
Listen to the truth they tell you,  
For the Master of Life has sent them  
From the land of light and morning! <sup>27</sup>

Then, he leaves by himself in his canoe, bound for the West. This is quite an unexpected ending, considering the hero’s achievements as the leader of for his people: he has conserved food, taught agricultural skills, and brought about public peace and foreign diplomacy. Longfellow does not explain why Hiawatha accepts Christianity as the superior philosophy and how he hands over his nation to the White people. His mourning for Minnehaha would not be a sufficiently convincing explanation for his seemingly sudden resignation to the will of the White conquerors.

As explained earlier herein, via the contrasting structures of their respective art



(fig. 4) Marble sculpture *Dying Indian Chief* by Thomas Crawford: Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

forms, Crawford the sculptor and Longfellow the poet present a vivid narrative of disappearing American Indians, increasingly dominant White settlers, and the invasion of the wilderness by civilization. The message presented visually by Crawford is clear, and the imagistic language of the provocative poem by Longfellow helps readers to easily understand the situation being depicted. In other words, the new art for the Republic displayed and approved the recent Manifest Destiny ideology that had become dominant in the 1840s. To these artists, questioning the creed itself seems to have been out of the question.

The decision by both artists to employ European modes of expression, instead of the cultures and languages of Native Americans, contributed to the impression of their works as being sophisticated. For example, the art made by Crawford is based on neoclassicism. His skill is well demonstrated in *Dying Indian Chief* (1856, fig. 4),

which is presently owned by the New York Historical Society. Although the pediment is of the bas-relief type, because the sculptural piece is placed on its pedestal, the sculptures and pediment can be easily observed from multiple angles. Other than explicit signs such as his feathered headdress and moccasins, the figure of the chief looks like a White man who has an ideal-masculine type of physical beauty. His features are not rendered via sculptural realism but rather seem like those of an ancient Greek sculpture. Crawford removes from his chief the dirt and historic bloodiness associated with American Indians. The chief seems to be taking a dramatic pause, which emphasizes his anguish.

Meanwhile, when creating *The Song of Hiawatha*, Longfellow took as his inspiration the Finnish epic *Kalevala* (1835) by Elias Lönnrot. Longfellow adopted the rhyming, eight-syllable trochaic verse of *Kalevala*. To demonstrate the rhythm of this type of verse, I cite the portion of the poem that appears shortly after the previous quotation I cited.

And the evening sun descending  
Set the clouds on fire with redness,  
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,  
Left upon the level water  
One long track and trail of splendor,  
Down whose stream, as down a river,  
Westward, westward Hiawatha  
Sailed into the fiery sunset,  
Sailed into the purple vapors,  
Sled into the dusk of evening.<sup>28</sup>

Here, “down,” “westward,” and “sailed into” are repeated; the seeming monotone sounds of these words seem to evoke for readers the American Indian culture and its music. The plain, sonorous wording also allows readers to easily recite the poem. Even if readers only understand the poem through the act of speaking it aloud, it is easy to visualize the scene: how the colors of the water and sky change as the sun sets—from red to purple to black—and how the hero fades out of the scene by canoeing away. Although the similarity in the narrative situation and rhyming between this poem and *Kalevala* caused heated arguments in which Longfellow was accused of plagiarism,<sup>29</sup>

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson highly praised the poet for finding appropriate rhymes that many readers could easily recite.<sup>30</sup> Kate Flint explains the transatlantic appraisal and popularity of the poem by Longfellow as follows: “The combination of the unfamiliar and the exotic—to an English audience—with the sustained atmosphere of nostalgia....”<sup>31</sup> This is an entirely plausible explanation. In his poem, Longfellow incorporates not only certain Native American words but also Native American nouns that he uses as proper names for his characters. At the end of the poem, the poet gives footnotes that alphabetically define these exotic words; this gives his work authenticity. Chiefly relying on the European tradition and borrowing from American Indian languages (Ojibwa and Iroquois) in an appropriate way, the poet thus offers a story set in a mythologized past without courting controversy and successfully appeals to wide audiences on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

#### 4. Sentimentalism

In addition to the aforementioned European sophistication, the conspicuous tendency common to Crawford and Longfellow is their inclination toward sentimentalism, which can be defined as excessive presentation of emotion. Generally, that which is known as sentimental fiction underscores domesticity and the family; therein, someone or something, including time, is lost. Mourning and union with others and God are key concepts.<sup>32</sup> In their portrayals of Native Americans, Crawford and Longfellow portray scenes full of sorrow.

On the right half of the pediment of *Progress of Civilization*, the image of American Indians is colored with aspects of loss and lamentation. Here, although his entire family is still alive, the patriarch resigns himself to his fate. Also, his wife does not look up, his son looks overwhelmed by the White pioneers, and the tombstone suggests the baby’s future. In contrast, the left half of the pediment displays civilization, or the agricultural, commercial, and educational development of the American nation. No sign appears that would suggest salvation for the American Indians, which enhances the tone of the depiction of their tragic destiny.

At this point, I refer to the aforementioned figure of the *Mexican Princess* by Crawford (1848, fig. 5). The image of the Princess, who is about to die, is as dramatic as that of the doomed Indian chief. The difference is that the Princess holds a cross tightly in her left hand. In the pagan land of Central America, the theme of the dying



(fig. 5) Crawford, Thomas(1813-1857). Mexican Girl Dying, By 1846;carved 1848. Marble, 20 1/4 x 54 1/2 x 19 1/2 in. (51.4 x 138.4 x 49.5cm). Bequest of Annette W. W. Hicks-Lord, 1896. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY 1. D00116574 ART 448944

young noblewoman—who probably accidentally sustained her fatal wounds during the fighting—is already romantic. A sense of relief was likely experienced by the White viewers of this tragedy because of the presence of the cross, which signifies the Christian faith of the Princess. In other words, the sculptor may have indirectly tried to save the souls of the heathens via Christianity, which in that part of the world at the time was primarily the White man's religion, through his work. This portrayal of an indigenous person contrasts with his portrayal of such persons in his pediment, in which redemption via Christianity is not even suggested.

In *The Song of Hiawatha*, Longfellow presents the image of a literally noble American Indian. Although his description is obscure, we know that the hero is a good-looking, fast runner. He is a supernatural character who can communicate even with

birds and the gods. One can observe his high spirituality in the following examples: Hiawatha acts in a disinterested manner for the sake of his people; he is merciful even to his enemies; and although he mourns for his late wife, he more deeply mourns, and for a longer period, for his best friends.

In the final scene of *The Song of Hiawatha*, readers can foresee not only the death of the hero but also the loss of the final remaining territory of the Native Americans. Regarding this point, Eric J. Sundquist points out that Hiawatha tacitly approves the conquest of his people by the White men. As Sundquist explicitly writes, “Hiawatha’s message ameliorates white conquest, and in his death and disappearance he, like the Indians of America, is symbolically absorbed by the West—the Christian eternity, the temporary home of removed Indians, and the ultimate goal of Euro-American manifest destiny.”<sup>33</sup> Also, the esteemed leader and his wife had no children; this implies a dark future for his people. The latter part of this epic poem is filled with scenes of death, parting, and loss; like Crawford, Longfellow does not offer any hope in this work.

Curiously, what the sculptor and the poet do not depict in their representation of American Indians is similar. Examining the images of the American Indians who do not resist the advance of the White men, I point out that the two artists never depict any historic confrontation between the White men and the American Indians, bloody wars, or scalping. Also, villainous White men do not appear in their depictions. The chief depicted by Crawford does not rise in armed or violent resistance but meditates in a melancholic manner. Despite his masculine physicality, he seems to be emasculated as his tomahawk is covered with a fur pelt. In *The Song of Hiawatha*, although battle scenes do appear, the enemies are animals and spirits, such as a big fish, a corn spirit, an evil magician, etc., rather than the White men who invaded their territory. Longfellow so completely idolizes Hiawatha that he omits the original trickster dimensions of his model from the folktale, a demi-god named Manabozho.<sup>34</sup> The name of the character was changed into the easier-to-pronounce name Hiawatha; this name comes from the actual Iroquoian American Indian chief who contributed in uniting different Native American nations and was well respected among members of those cultures.

The major difference in the representation of American Indians by Crawford and Longfellow is the inclusion in *The Song of Hiawatha* of a romantic episode featuring the hero. Hiawatha marries for love, based on his personal decision. That is, he falls in love with Minnehaha, the “handsomest of all the women”<sup>35</sup> from Dacotah, and chooses

her as his mate after declining his grandmother's advice to marry a maiden of his people; thus, he makes his own family. The marriage also results in helping to quell the long-term enmity between the Ojibwa and the Dacotah peoples. With this in mind, the hero asks the father of Minnehaha for the hand of his daughter in marriage. On this occasion, the attitude of Minnehaha is reminiscent of the ideal heroine of Victorian fiction. Hearing the answer of her father that the decision whether to marry Hiawatha is hers, she responds and answers:

And the lovely Laughing Water  
Seemed more lovely as she stood there,  
Neither willing nor reluctant,  
As she went to Hiawatha,  
Softly took the seat beside him,  
While she said, and blushed to say it,  
"I will follow you, my husband!"<sup>36</sup>

Thus, Minnehaha changes her affiliation from her father to her soon-to-be husband. Despite her agency, this can be seen as the exchange of a woman between men from two tribes. What is more striking, however, is the humble, desirable image of the heroine, who obeys the patriarchs. This sweet episode, which represents the maturation of romantic love, precedes Victorian romantic stories and stands out among the supernatural incidents in the rest of the narrative, such as the story of the origins of the hero and his communication with animals.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, readers are likely to sympathize with and weep over the unexpected death of the heroine due to famine and fever; this increases the sentimentalism of the poem. When Minnehaha is on her deathbed, not only her husband but also Nokomis deeply laments the death of her dutiful and hard-working daughter-in-law. As when she had lost her biological daughter, Nokomis cries over the loss of Minnehaha, speaking resonant, mournful words:

Wahonowin! Wahonowin!  
Would that I had perished for you,  
Would that I were dead as you are!  
Wahonowin! Wahonowin!<sup>38</sup>



## Conclusion

*Progress of Civilization* by Crawford became a landmark in his career, particularly considering its public display. *The Song of Hiawatha* by Longfellow was a major best-seller: 4,000 of the 5,000 copies in the first printing were sold, and an additional 3,000 copies were created and sold in later printings.<sup>39</sup> In examining these works, it is undeniable that the representations of Native Americans by the two artists were based on a (privileged) White-dominant vision, the result of the union between art and politics. There, one cannot find criticism of American Imperialism from the artists in their works. In other words, likely without realizing it, the two artists indirectly supported the Manifest Destiny policy through their public art and popular poem, respectively.

In the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, the art of sculpture was not yet grounded and the idea and role of the poet laureate had not appeared. In an environment that was relatively barren artistically, the sculptor and the poet dared to create pioneering works in their respective emerging fields of expression by using indigenous source material. It seems that the artists sympathized with their objects of representation, though they surely detached themselves from the plight of actual American Indians. By considering what would be acceptable by and for unrefined audiences, these artists transfigured vernacular material into sophisticated artwork in a European style. This resulted in their making conspicuous the Native American as a subject in the genres of visual and poetic representations and in their demonstrating certain achievements of their aims. In other words, Crawford and Longfellow were among the first White American artists to present their versions of archetypes of American Indians, which would be developed and surpassed by later artists. For example, George Catlin and S. G. Goodrich would revive the *Dying Indian Chief* by Crawford in his prints (1857) and his sketch (1865), respectively. Similarly, Mary Edmonia Lewis and Augustus Saint-Gudens created their own Hiawatha statues in the 1860s and 1870s. Further, in 1900, *The Song of Hiawatha* was adapted into a play by the Ojibway Indians and was performed by them on an island in Lake Huron. By witnessing such cultural enrichment that crosses the border of different genres, it is clear that Crawford and Longfellow each created seminal works of art. Also, it is noteworthy that cultured Bostonians such as Sumner and Greene enabled the blooming of the talent of obscure American artists. Their connoisseurship certainly contributed

to the international development of American arts. It would be no exaggeration to consider that the patronage of the Bostonian cultural circle served as the germination for art created for the emerging American Republic.

Thus, by examining the-then fashionable representation of American Indians by Crawford and Longfellow, the intertextuality between their two most central works, beyond genres, becomes clear. Although there is no record that the sculptor and the poet exchanged opinions about their projects depicting American Indians, it was a curious coincidence that both of these White male artists had resorted to sentimentalism as if it were the sole way to pay respect to the endangered Native American peoples. Crawford and Longfellow both visualized the contradictions of nation building by depicting the conquering of Native Americans by Whites. These artists, however, never addressed the ills of Manifest Destiny but merely pitied their fictionalized subjects and accepted the societal situation in which the only options for American Indians were to be Christianized or to be forced to vanish. Crawford, who was busy establishing his reputation as a sculptor, produced works successively and probably had little time to reflect on the meaning of his own works before his early death. By contrast, following the influence of his mother, Longfellow espoused pacifism and had a long-time interest in abolition. After resigning from his position at Harvard University, however, he actively engaged himself in producing new works.

In a sense, Crawford and Longfellow were too preoccupied with keeping and developing their artistic footing in the competitive American milieu to become politically involved with the cause of the American Indians, whom they had taken as their subject matter. Their romantic and sympathetic representations of those people seemed to be the best they could do for the Native American peoples. Further, they depicted American Indians as being socially Other, with whom one can only sympathize and not necessarily get involved with directly. In this sense, via sorrowful representation, the artists suspended the political seriousness of their subject; in the same manner, the judgemental tendencies of the creators and the audiences were also suspended. Here, one can witness the destructive power of supposedly innocent sentimental works. Such an outcome probably transcends the original intentions of the artists.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Greenough and Powers went to Florence in 1825 and 1837, respectively. Crawford arrived in Rome in 1835. Regarding these sculptors and their successors, see William H. Gerdts, "The Neoclassic Relief," in Thayer Tolles, ed., *Perspectives on American Sculpture before 1925* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 2-19; 2-23.

<sup>2</sup> A similar point is made by Daniela Daniele in her article, "In Canova's Traces: Thomas Crawford, American Sculptor in Rome," in *A Hundred Years After: New Light on Francis Marion Crawford*, ed. Gordon M. Poole, ed. (Sorrento: Franco di Mauro Editore, 2011) 127; and by Henry Hope Reed in *The United States Capitol: Its Architecture and Decoration* (New York and London: Norton, 2005) 23.

<sup>3</sup> The three major museums in the United States were established in the following order: The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston were opened in 1870 and the Art Institute of Chicago was opened in 1882.

<sup>4</sup> Robert L. Gale, *Thomas Crawford: American Sculptor* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1964), 109.

<sup>5</sup> Gale, *Thomas Crawford: American Sculptor*, 109.

<sup>6</sup> The history of the transition of the display of the statue is detailed in the following publication: The Henry Luce III Center for the Study of American Culture, *Perspectives on the Collections of the New-York Historical Society* (New York: New York Historical Society, 2000), 60-61.

<sup>7</sup> Leslie A. Fiedler and Virginia Jackson point out that the poet spoke to his readers in plain language and achieved public acknowledgement: Leslie A. Fiedler, *Waiting for the End: The American Literary Scene from Hemingway to Baldwin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964) 197-199; Virginia Jackson, "Longfellow's Tradition; or, Picture-Writing a Nation," *Modern Language Quarterly* 59.4 (December 1998): 471-96, 471-473, 495-496.

<sup>8</sup> Even in the revisionary Norton Anthology Edition detailing American literary history, Longfellow is considered “the most beloved American poet of the nineteenth century”: Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature Volume B: 1820-1865*, 7th edition (New York and London: Norton, 2007), 1495-1507, 1495.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding this point, the work of Robert Gale is the most significant example, although it more directly concerns the biography of the sculptor. The dissertation by Laurretta Dimmick is the strongest critical work on the sculptures of Crawford, excluding his public art: *A Catalogue of the Portrait Busts and Ideal Works of Thomas Crawford (1813?-1857)*. Diss., U of Pittsburgh, 1986. Although “In Canova’s Traces: Thomas Crawford, American Sculptor in Rome” by Daniela Daniele is concise, the work by Dimmick is the most recent solid critical study of the works of Crawford.

<sup>10</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 86.

<sup>11</sup> *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (1826) by Cooper and *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times* (1824) by Child are typical examples.

<sup>12</sup> Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian*, 91-2.

<sup>13</sup> Gale, *Thomas Crawford*, 104; Reed, 121. Powers sculpted “America,” which represents the American ideal, from the 1840s through the early 1850s, hoping that it would be purchased for display in the Capitol. However, because his wish was not granted, he seemed to have rejected the offer by Meigs. Regarding this discussion, see Thayer Tolles, ed., *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Volume I: A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born before 1865* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 8; Vivien Green Fryd, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992), 111.

<sup>14</sup> Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian*, 95.

<sup>15</sup> Regarding the biography of Longfellow, besides the Norton edition, I have referred to the following works: Cecil B. Williams, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (New York: Twayne, 1964); Edward L. Hirsh, “Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,” in *Six Classic American Writers: An Introduction*, ed. Paul Sherman (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1970) 122-159; Newton Arvin, *Longfellow: His Life and Work* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962); Charles C. Calhoun, *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Louisa’s elder sister was Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), who was later known for her song “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” and her elder brother was Sam Ward (1814-1884), a banker and a friend to Longfellow.

- <sup>17</sup> In addition to the work of Robert Gale, Crawford-related biographical information can be found in Charles Edwin Fairman, *Works of Art in the United States Capitol Building: Including Biographies of the Artists* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913); Samuel Osgood, *Thomas Crawford and Art in America* (New York: John R. Trow & Son, 1875); Thomas Hicks, *Thomas Crawford, His Career, Character, and Works: A Eulogy* (New York: Appleton, 1858); George S. Hillard, "Thomas Crawford: A Eulogy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 24 (July 1869), 40-54.
- <sup>18</sup> Jason Almus Russell, "Longfellow: Interpreter of the Historical and the Romantic Indian," *Journal of American History*, 22 (1928), 327-347, 327.
- <sup>19</sup> Edward L. Tucker, "Longfellow's Bowdoin Dialogue," in *Studies in the American Renaissance*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1983), 89-100, 94, 97. Longfellow wrote other poems on the subject of Native Americans, such as "The Battle of Lovell's Pond" (1820), "Ode written for the Commemoration at Fryeburg, Maine, of Lovewell's Fight" (1825), "Lover's Rock" (1825), "Burial of the Minnisink" (1825), "The Indian Hunter" (1825), and "To the Driving Cloud" (1845). These works present conventional narratives of dying American Indians who are driven to ruin by White people or the tragic love of a young American Indian maiden.
- <sup>19</sup> Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: With Extracts from His Journals and Correspondence* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886), II, 247-8.
- <sup>21</sup> Gale, *Thomas Crawford*, 116, 220.
- <sup>22</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Longfellow's Note," *Poems and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 2000), 831-832, 831.
- <sup>23</sup> In the similar context, Joy S. Kasson argues that the nineteenth-century viewers find diverse narratives when viewing sculptures; she explores the case of a very popular statue by Hiram Powers in "Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, Shirley Samuels, ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992): 172-190.
- <sup>24</sup> These are called "America," "[figures that represent the] early days of America," and "[figures that suggest the] diversity of human endeavor" on the official website of the United States Capitol: [http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/pediments/prog\\_sen.cfm](http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/pediments/prog_sen.cfm). (accessed 17 January 2014).
- <sup>25</sup> Fryd made a similar point in *Art and Empire*, 121.
- <sup>26</sup> Calhoun, *Longfellow*, 213.
- <sup>27</sup> Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* in *Poems*, 141-279, 278 (chap. 22).
- <sup>28</sup> Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* in *Poems*, 141-279, 278 (chap. 22).

- <sup>29</sup> Longfellow mentions accusations of plagiarism and his response in *The Song of Hiawatha with Illustrations, Notes, and a Vocabulary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901), 7-8. Also, the similarity of this poem to *Kalevala* is discussed by Russell in the earlier-cited article "Longfellow: Interpreter of the Historical and the Romantic Indian."
- <sup>30</sup> Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life*, II, 263.
- <sup>31</sup> Kate Flint, "Is the Native an American? National Identity and the British Reception of Hiawatha," in Meredith L. McGill, ed., *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008), 63-80, 71.
- <sup>32</sup> Mary Louise Kete, *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000), 31-49. Following works by Nina Baym, Ann Douglas, and Jane Tompkins, Kete theorizes about the mode of sentimentality and gives special focus to the power of verse. Chapter 2 of the book explores the poetics of sentimentalism. With Kete's "Afterword," the latest discussion on sentimentalism from multiple angles by various critics appears in *Sentimentalism in Nineteenth-Century America: Literary and Cultural Practices*, Mary G De Jong and Paula Bernat Bennett, ed. (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2013):197-204.
- <sup>33</sup> Eric J. Sundquist, *Empire and Slavery in American Literature 1820-1865* (1995; Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2006), 111.
- <sup>34</sup> Cecelia Tichi, "Longfellow's Motives for the Structure of 'Hiawatha,'" *American Literature*, 42.4 (January 1971): 548-553, 550.
- <sup>35</sup> Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* in *Poems*, 141-279, 199 (chap. 10).
- <sup>36</sup> Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* in *Poems*, 141-279, 203 (chap. 10).
- <sup>37</sup> Concerning this point and how it relates to Victorian romance, see: Kirsten Pai Buick, *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the Problem of Art History's Black and Indian Subject* (Durham: Duke UP, 2010), 118-129.
- <sup>38</sup> Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* in *Poems*, 141-279, 199 (chap. 20).
- <sup>39</sup> Samuel Longfellow, ed., *Life*, II, 263; Calhoun, *Longfellow*, 211.