

# Assimilating American Indians in James Fenimore Cooper's Novels?<sup>1</sup>

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*The article employs critical concepts from sociology and anthropology to examine the stereotype of the Vanishing Indian and disclose its contradictory character. The article argues that in James Fenimore Cooper's late novels from the 1840s a type of American Indian appears who can be regarded as a Vanishing Indian in many respects as he displays some slight degree of assimilation but at the same time he can be found to reveal a surprising amount of resistance to the process of vanishing and marginalization. His peculiar mode of survival and his mode of living demonstrate a certain degree of acculturation, which comes close to Gerald Vizenor's survivance and for which I propose a term critical integration. I base my study on Susquesus (alias Trackless), Cooper's less well-known character from The Littlepage Manuscripts, a three-book family saga.*

## Keywords

James Fenimore Cooper; assimilation; survivance; acculturation; Vanishing Indian; *The Littlepage Manuscripts*; American Indian

James Fenimore Cooper's Native Americans are generally considered the Vanishing Indians; they must either die, or go and vanish<sup>2</sup>. They vanish because they are, allegedly, unable or unwilling to assimilate, or if they appear somewhat assimilated, they fall victim to the white man's vice, alcoholism. Actually, there are some American Indian characters who undergo some kind of cultural adaptation, if not an assimilation, in Cooper's novels. Such characters can be found in his late novels from the 1840s, in *Wyandotté* (1843), *The Oak Openings* (1848) and in the trilogy *The Littlepage Manuscripts* (1845-46). The American Indian characters who assume a more prominent role in the narrative display a very special mode of acculturation. Rather than assimilation it can be regarded as a form of *survivance* (Gerald Vizenor's concept) but since the concept of survivance is bound to the more contemporary context of Native

American literature, and we deal with literary works written by a white man, I suggest we call this kind of acculturation *critical integration*.

First, we need to clarify the relation between two related terms: assimilation and acculturation. According to Milton Gordon, still considered one of the major authorities on this topic, the term acculturation tends to be used by anthropologists, and assimilation by sociologists (Gordon 1964: 61). In his famous table of assimilation variables the concept acculturation designates cultural assimilation, defines as a “change of cultural patterns to those of the host society” (71). This kind of cultural adaptation is what is relevant for our purposes because the other forms of assimilation listed in the table (structural assimilation<sup>3</sup>, marital assimilation, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional and civic assimilation (71)) do not feature in Cooper’s novels. Cooper’s American Indians never take up jobs and are never offered offices in the American administration, with one (tragic) exception do not intermarry, do not join any social clubs, never settle down in a city; they may serve as scouts, guides, hunters, or temporary military allies, but that is the highest degree of acculturation they are allowed in Cooper’s fiction. Thus both social and structural assimilation has to be excluded from our study, and only the field of cultural assimilation (acculturation) remains for our examination.

We need, however, a more detailed classification of acculturation (cultural assimilation). I believe John Berry’s theory of acculturation can serve as a useful point of departure. Acculturation, in John Berry’s four-fold model, comprises assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. He defines it as follows:

Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person’s behavioral repertoire. (Berry 2005: 698-699)<sup>4</sup>

Assimilation occurs when individuals adopt the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture in preference to their original culture (this corresponds to Gordon’s cultural assimilation). According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, assimilation is “the most extreme form of acculturation”:

Assimilation, in anthropology and sociology, the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society.<sup>5</sup>

Separation comes about when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin. Separation is often facilitated by immigration to ethnic enclaves. Integration takes place when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture while maintaining their culture of origin. Integration leads to, and is often synonymous with, biculturalism. Marginalization occurs when individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant host culture (Berry 1997: 9).

Berry's four-fold classification of acculturation will provide a useful conceptual framework for this study, although its application has some limits because it is primarily concerned with immigrants in a host country<sup>6</sup>. As Robert Blauner points out, the context in which Native Americans' cultural adaptation should be examined is that of colonialism (Blauner 52), or as Berry has more recently suggested, in the context of neo-colonialism (Berry 2005: 700). Native Americans are not immigrants, but indigenous people, who were conquered, colonized, and subjugated. According to Blauner, colonization is a different process from immigration and the social realities of the colonized Native Americans "cannot be understood in the framework of immigration and assimilation that is applied to European ethnic groups" (Blauner 52) and such indigenous people are more likely to display resistance especially to assimilation (see Berry 2005, 700). The Native American experience of being colonized on their own territory also sets them apart from African Americans, who were enslaved and dislocated from their original cultural environment (Blauner 53-54). At the time at which Cooper's novels were published, the Native Americans could still, to some degree, resist or avoid assimilation because many of them lived in autonomous territories and were exposed to the colonists' cultures only at the points and zones of contact, be it the frontier or the trading stations on their territory, or indirectly, through visitors and traders and government agents.

In the past, the process of acculturation was studied as a one-way impact of the dominant culture on the indigenous peoples and then of the receiving culture on the immigrants, now the emphasis is laid on *dual*, or even multiple,

interactions of cultures in culturally pluralistic societies (Berry 2005: 700). Acculturation is a very complex process and it does not involve a mere transfer of skills, technology, and values from the colonists to the indigenous people. The colonists' cultural norms, values, and practices are never simply reproduced. As Naylor puts it, "[m]embers of the focal groups are not passive participants in the interaction required for change, but active respondents to what they are being asked to accept [...]" (Naylor 184).

The representation of the North American Indian in 19th-century American literature is supposed to have a weakened referential link and is believed to be the product of the discourse of savagism rather than a reflection of the reality<sup>7</sup>. As Roy Harvey Pearce explains in his seminal study *Savagism and Civilization* (1953), savagism is a way of thinking about the Native Americans as the cultural other, the opposite to the idea of civilization. "Savage life and civilized life are realms apart" (Pearce 103). The savage state was believed to be an earlier, more primitive stage of civilization but the gap between the Native Americans and Euro-Americans seemed too wide, their cultures too different. The Native Americans, as Scott R. Lyons puts it, "were described as tragic figures incapable of civilization and destined to vanish" (210), because their cultural practices, their religious principles, and their concept of economy were fundamentally incompatible with the Euro-American way and American identity. The assimilating Indians were portrayed as the dregs of society, living at the geographical edge of American civilization, as dirty degenerate beggars, drunkards, or basket or broom makers, as Cooper's first American Indian character, Chingachgook in *The Pioneers* (1823), demonstrates. The true Native Americans were said to be wild, untamed savages and those either died in wars or went west to become the Vanishing Indians because even their days were numbered.

James Fenimore Cooper wrote 12 novels with American Indian characters; in some of these novels they make only episodic appearances (*Afloat and Ashore*, 1844; *The Redskins*, 1846). A more careful examination of other American Indian characters will reveal that although most of those characters may be classified as Vanishing Indians, some of them are not assimilated and develop a mode of survival at the cultural interstices, for which we need a more accurate concept than assimilation, adaptation, or acculturation.

Cooper's first American Indian character, Chingachgook, started his literary life in *The Pioneers* (1823), the first book in the *Leatherstocking Tales*. Chingachgook had come to the frontier settlement of Templeton approximately two years before the start of the novel, and came to live with his old friend

and battle companion Natty Bumppo in his log cabin above the lake. At first glance he appears to be an assimilated Indian. He buried the hatchet a long time ago, he is a Christian, baptized by the missionaries of the Moravian Church, he attends Mass in the local church, he earns his living by making baskets, and he goes to the local inn and gets drunk.

Using Berry's scale of acculturation, he might be in the state of integration because he has adapted to village life and at the same time he maintains some Native American cultural practices: he still dresses according to the Native American fashion, he may have buried the hatchet – but strangely enough, he still carries his hatchet in his belt not merely to the forest, but also to the inn and even to church, no matter how uncomfortable it must be. On top of that, at the end of the novel he *goes Native* again, leaving behind the thin layer of acculturation, returning to his old faith and religious practices; he dies chanting his death song, decorated with a warrior's insignia and, to the exasperation of a minister of the Anglican Church, he says he is departing for the eternal hunting grounds instead of the expected white man's heaven. According to Berry's classification system he finally chooses separation, that is, a rejection of the dominant or host culture in favor of his culture of origin. His departure for the eternal hunting grounds comes very close to another feature of separation in Berry's theory – immigration to ethnic enclaves. His heaven is in fact a segregated ethnic enclave; there are no white men there, only the "just and brave Indians", as he explains in his dying words to his old companion Natty Bumppo (*Pioneers* 427). Because of this ending, the Chingachgook of *The Pioneers* encourages the reader to think that Cooper's American Indians are the Noble Savages, the Vanishing Indians, incapable of assimilation or integration, whose choice is cultural separation. On the other hand, for the greater part of the novel, Chingachgook was living in contact with the white man's culture, neither assimilated nor separated from it. He had accepted Christianity but remained an Indian in his mind, conduct, and manners. And for such a form of acculturation based on a symbiotic relationship we need a more accurate term than integration. I propose we start from Gerald Vizenor's term *survivance*.

*Survivance* covers a more hybrid concept of identity which allows for a dynamic process where different codes may coexist or clash among themselves, or temporarily succeed one another. For Gerald Vizenor, this concept denotes active survival, endurance, and resistance as opposed to victimization and defeat or survival in the ruins of tribal culture. In Vizenor's words, *survivance* comprises "natural reason, remembrance, traditions and

customs [...] the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage. The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry" (Vizenor 1). This notion of "active sense of presence" (1) is of crucial importance.

If we seek such American Indian characters in Cooper's fiction, we have to skip those in *The Last of the Mohicans* because both Uncas and Magua, though they display some level of cultural assimilation, are conceived as Vanishing Indians. A type closer to the notion of survivance is the young Pawnee chief Hard Heart, a variant on Uncas, another Noble Savage, in *The Prairie* (1827). He at least survives and his tribe still lives on its own territory. Another variation on Uncas and star-crossed love is Conanchet from *The Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish* (1829), set in King Philip's War (The First Indian War) in the 17th century<sup>8</sup>. All these characters keep their own cultural identity and do not assimilate, and their behavior can be classified, using Berry's concept, as separation. Their rejection of the colonizer's culture often does not extend to individuals, and thus they can become, for a time, friends, faithful allies, and protectors of some white people. Their goodness, however, or their mercy, does not result from their exposure to the white man's culture, or from acceptance of the white man's ethical and cultural values and norms, but from their own sense of duty, value, and virtue.

So far the evidence has gone against any prospect of successful assimilation or integration. Even when such a possibility is opened up, as in the case of Uncas, the resolution of the novel closes it down. But Cooper was always experimenting with new varieties and choices – in the 1840s he wrote, apart from two more volumes of the *Leatherstocking Tales*, *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1841), several novels with new types of American Indian characters, through which he probes further possibilities of acculturation – *Wyandotté* (1843) and *The Oak Openings* (1848). American Indian characters also appear in the trilogy called *The Littlepage Manuscripts* and in an episode from the West Coast in *Afloat and Ashore* (1844). I will focus on the *Littlepage* trilogy because it allows us to view a new direction in the conception of the American Indian character.

*The Littlepage Manuscripts* consist of three novels, *Satanstoe* (1845)<sup>9</sup>, *The Chainbearer* (1845), and *The Redskins* (1846). The family saga maps the rising fortunes of the New York gentry, a gentleman class of small landowners, from the 1750s to the 1840s in *The Redskins* and dramatizes the problems associated with establishing settlements in the West and maintaining order and prosperity.

All three books of *The Littlepage Manuscripts* feature an American Indian called Trackless or Susquesus, of the Onondaga tribe, a member of the Iroquois League. He never becomes a major protagonist and is usually cast in a supporting role as a loyal ally of the Littlepage family. Susquesus survives several generations of the family and makes his appearance in *The Redskins* as a venerable patriarch. He is neither an assimilated nor an assimilating Native American, though he has adapted, to some degree, to the changed natural and cultural environment, and has obviously undergone partial acculturation, though he shuns true integration. Neither can his mode of life and thought be described as separation or marginalization. Having no family and no children to carry on his lineage, he can be regarded as a Vanishing Indian, but he takes a very long time indeed to vanish. His remarkable longevity implies his rather successful acculturation and adaptation to the social changes, and his mode of survival at the margins of the colonists' society can be called, with good reason, a critical integration.

Susquesus has chosen voluntary exile. He left his native Onondaga tribe for reasons which come out in the third part of *The Littlepage Manuscripts*, *The Redskins*. In *Satanstoe* (1845), the first part, we learn that he was living for some time with the Mohawks, and now he lives on the frontier. Susquesus calls himself Tribeless; in the second book, *The Chainbearer*, he explains: "Susquesus got tribe no longer. Quit Onondagos t'irty summer, now; don't like Mohawk" (2: 103). Although he does not belong to any tribe any more and lives in exile among the whites in a frontier settlement, he keeps some distance from the host culture. The distance is both figurative and literal. He does not live in the village but in a hut in the forest. He is in touch with the settlers but he does not assimilate – he does not give up his own culture and he does not seem to accept the American culture either. Instead, he has developed some kind of symbiotic relationship to the American colonist culture, which is close to survivance.

In the first part of the trilogy, *Satanstoe*, he appears relatively late in the plot – when the setting shifts from the cities to the frontier. He is one of the two American Indians who are hired by the surveyor's party because they know the place and as hunters they can provide the party with meat. Susquesus's occasional absences and his exile status attract the suspicion of some of the characters because it is not clear what his tribal affiliations and political sympathies are. Nevertheless, he proves to be a faithful ally and efficient guide, even though sometimes especially a modern reader may have misgivings, for example when he urges the three young men to join the English

army in its offensive against the French, and thus deprive the frontier outpost of three able men in times of unrest and military conflict. He brings them to the battlefield in a canoe on time. Disregarding this exception, his services prove to be invaluable. He is the one who takes the three young men back when the battle is lost. He warns the surveyor's party against the enemy attack and proves his courage as well as his resourcefulness during the siege of the blockhouse where the surveyor's party seeks shelter from the vengeful band of Hurons. When the Hurons are driven back, he does not follow the white masters back to New York but he remains in the area where he was found and lives in the vicinity of the newly established frontier settlement.

In more than one respect Susquesus falls under the stereotype of the Noble Savage, who will not change his lifestyle but is willing to accept stoically the white man's conquest and the tribal disposessions, and thus becomes the wishful fantasy American Indian, a loyal ally and friend, but still preserving his own cultural integrity. As Sherry Sullivan puts it, "The final stroke of absolution comes from the Indian characters themselves, who always concur with the necessity of their own decline from power by accepting their fate and forgiving the injustice done to them" (66).

The stereotype is, however, far from being a simple structure. Thus both Chingachgook from *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Pathfinder* and Susquesus are Vanishing Indians in the sense that they do not assimilate into the mainstream of dominant colonial culture and they do not leave any lineage to continue the family but their positioning on the frontier and their cooperation with the white men demonstrate the possibility of some acculturation and cultural exchange, which is both a result of the desire of such an outcome as well as a realistic (mimetic) reflection of similar cases in the historical reality (Native Americans often served as scouts, guides, and hunters, first in the English and then in the American army). One important difference between both Chingachgook or Susquesus and Uncas from *The Last of the Mohicans* or Conanchet from *The Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish* is that the former do not die in a heroic manner in the prime of their lives, but live long enough to serve as the connecting links between the archaic (heroic) past and modern present<sup>10</sup>.

How far does Susquesus's acculturation go? The way he lives indicates that he did not adopt the white man's lifestyle and he still lives like an American Indian. This is evident in the second part of the trilogy, *The Chainbearer*, which takes place north-east of Albany, shortly after the American Revolution, like *The Pioneers*. The reader learns that Susquesus's aid to the Littlepages



during the Huron attack on the blockhouse, depicted in *Satanstoe*, was not his only engagement as an American ally. He won a reputation for his excellent services to the American army during the Revolution, under the nickname Sureflint. After the Revolution he goes on living among or near the white settlers but he does not adopt the white man's manners and customs. Unlike old Chingachgook in *The Pioneers*, he neither frequents local inns nor attends Mass on Sundays. His voluntary exile in fact does not entail a rejection of his own culture. For example, he does not work, he does not have a farm, he breeds no cattle or poultry, and he lives by hunting birds and fishing. Unlike old Chingachgook in *The Pioneers* Susquesus does not convert to Christianity and he does not mix too much with the white settlers, although he has a few friends, for example Dus Malbone, Chainbearer's niece, or her brother Frank. Dus in fact helps him to run the house and brings some baked food.

Cooper skillfully maintains a tension between cultural difference and some kind of acculturation. This is already evident in Susquesus's very first appearance, when he meets Mordant on the road:

In the first place, I was soon satisfied that my companion did not drink, a rare merit in a red man who lived near the whites. This was evident from his countenance, gait, and general bearing, as I thought, in addition to the fact that he possessed no bottle, or anything else that would hold liquor. What I liked the least was the circumstance of his being completely armed; carrying knife, tomahawk, and rifle, and each seemingly excellent of its kind. He was not painted, however, and he wore an ordinary calico shirt, as was then the usual garb of his people in the warm season. The countenance had the stern severity that is so common to a red warrior; and, as this man was turned of fifty, his features began to show the usual signs of exposure and service. Still, he was a vigorous, respectable-looking red man, and one who was evidently accustomed to live much among civilized men. (*Chainbearer* 1: 100)

While his calico shirt, good gun, and steel knife suggest technological appropriation, other details establish his cultural difference – he wears moccasins and he carries a tomahawk. He also walks silently side by side with Mordaunt for a couple of minutes before he greets him, and again in the Indian manner – Sa-a-go. Mordaunt politely respects the cultural difference and waits patiently until the American Indian speaks first. After the greeting another three-minute pause follows, and only then can a real conversation

start. It is a great scene because it contains some suspense springing from the fact that the American Indian is better armed and his intentions are unknown for some time.

His cultural difference is apparent when the question of land ownership comes up. In contrast to the settlers, he rejects the concept of possessing land. "Injin own all land, for what he want now. I make wigwam where I want; make him, too, when I want" (*Chainbearer* 1: 103).

While in *Satanstoe* Susquesus helped to establish and protect the settlement against an external enemy, in the second part his potential for action is much diminished because there is no war and no attack on the frontier post occurs in which he could excel. But he proves to be useful in more than one way. It is he who discovers an illegal sawmill, set up by a squatter family, the Thousandacres, who cut down the trees in Mordaunt's forest and want to float them down the river for sale. When Mordaunt and Susquesus are imprisoned by the suspicious Thousandacres, Susquesus manages to slip away and pass a warning message to his friend Jaap, who later brings a rescue party.

The spatial location of Susquesus's hut, apart from but close enough to the settlement, indicates his mode of adaptation. He is free to choose isolation or participation, depending on the occasion. So none of Berry's concepts fits this case, whether it is separation or marginalization. Susquesus is situated in the interstices between two different social, economic, and moral orders. If he thinks it is right, he does not hesitate to act against the norms of the colonist culture. When his friend, the honest Chainbearer, is killed by Thousandacre, Susquesus takes the law into his own hands, and shoots the villain dead.

This incident finely demonstrates the interaction of the two cultural systems and readiness to negotiate and strike compromises; his act contains both resistance to and acceptance of the colonists' social and moral order. Susquesus follows his own notion of justice and but he does it secretly, to avoid open confrontation with the colonists' law, and he never confesses to it. His response cannot be classified as Berry's integration because his acceptance of the colonists' law is only formal. Nor can it be regarded as Berry's separation because he does not cultivate any bitter antagonism. So neither integration nor separation fits his mode of life.

The conception of this American Indian character undergoes another transformation in the third, and artistically poorest, volume of *The Littlepage Manuscripts, The Redskins; or, Indian and Injin* (1846), where Susquesus has become a venerable patriarch. Obviously, because of his old age, he has become more dependent on the support of the Littlepage family. From what

Susquesus says in his formal speeches at the end of the novel to a delegation of American Indians from the West, it follows that he has become an integrated Indian. He politely rejects their invitation to live among them with all the honors and respect (separation) that this entails, pointing out that he is too old for such a journey and he has lived too long among the white people not to be affected by their culture:

I have lived with the pale-faces, until one half of my heart is white; though the other half is red. One half is filled with the traditions of my fathers, the other half is filled with the wisdom of the stranger. (*Redskins* 2: 207)

By the wisdom of the stranger, and let us notice that after all those years of living among the white people, he still considers the white people strangers, he seems to mean friendship and Christianity, with its ethics of compassion and brotherly love and its conception of the afterlife. The problem is, however, that Cooper does not develop this theme in the novel and provides no examples of the clash of the two systems in Susquesus's mind. Susquesus is actually absent from the scene of action for the greater part of the novel and is brought on stage only at the dramatic climax. Susquesus appreciates the wisdom of "the stranger" (white man) but his further and more thorough integration is hampered by the failure of the stranger to live up to those ethical and spiritual standards. Later in his speech he criticizes the contradiction between the white man's theory and practice:

My children, never forget this. You are not pale-faces, to say one thing and do another. What you say, you do. When you make a law, you keep it. This is right. No red-man wants another's wigwam. If he wants a wigwam, he builds one himself. It is not so with the pale-faces. The man who has no wigwam tries to get away his neighbour's. While he does this, he reads in his Bible and goes to his church. I have sometimes thought, the more he reads and prays, the more he tries to get into his neighbour's wigwam. So it seems to an Indian, but it may not be so. My children, the red-man is his own master. He goes and comes as he pleases. (*Redskins* 2: 218-219)

If we bypass Cooper's rather utilitarian exploitation of the rhetoric here, using or abusing it for his agenda in this novel (protecting property rights), and consider it as an attempt to construct an alternative, a cultural other as the moral exemplar, there is one important implication of this speech – no sense

of vanishing or ending is expressed here. The visiting party of chiefs, who are on their way back home to the West, and Susquesus, who prefers to stay where he is, represent two kinds of responses to colonization, separation as a way of preserving traditional values, or survivance, neither full assimilation, nor integration nor marginalization, but cooperation while maintaining a critical distance from the enslavement of the material world and upward/moving socio-economic mobility. Susquesus's kind of survivance can also be called *critical integration* because he prefers to follow the simple American Indian ethics, keep a critical distance from the colonists' culture and their confusing blend of political and ethical idealism with its stress on self-centered individual freedom and pragmatic and greedy materialism, topped off with disrespect for the laws they are so proud of.

## Conclusion

Contrary to the critical myth, there are American Indian characters in James Fenimore Cooper's novels who are involved in the process of acculturation. In the 1840s, the trilogy *The Littlepage Manuscripts* introduces a new type of American Indian, who displays more adaptability and whose mode of life can be characterized as developing from survivance to what I call critical integration. This new type of American Indian, Susquesus, lives outside his tribal culture and at the margins of the Euro-American culture. Although Susquesus is still a rhetorical product of the white man's primitivist fantasy and is used as a moral exemplar, he opens up space for a type of American Indian who is neither tragic hero, nor demonic villain, but a protagonist who retains his moral integrity in the face of the contradiction between the white man's ethics and his practice.

## Notes

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2. See Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968) 118. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*, rev. ed. (1953; Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 74, 207, 209. Anna Krauthammer, *The Representation of the Savage in James Fenimore Cooper and Herman*

- Melville* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 25. For a succinct summary of the representation of American Indians from a historical perspective see Brian W. Dippie, "American Indians: The Image of the Indian," *Nature Transformed*, TeacherServe®. National Humanities Center, accessed November 3, 2015, <<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/indimage.htm>>. One of the few authors who challenge the notion of the Vanishing Indian is John McWilliams; see his book *The Last of the Mohicans: Civil Savagery and Savage Civility* (New York: Twayne, 1993) 106.
3. By structural assimilation, Gordon means membership in all kinds of clubs and participation in the institutions of the host society (Gordon 1964: 71).
4. Compare to Vincent N. Parrillo brief definition: "Eventually, most minority groups adapt their distinctive cultural traits to those of the host society; this process is called acculturation." Parrillo 1994: 32.
5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/39328/assimilation>
6. For example, Nathan Glazer's analysis of the discrimination against African Americans is based on the color marker – their color sets them apart and continues to make their integration difficult. See Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (1997; Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998) 115, 117.
7. I shall use the collocation American Indians when literary representations are concerned, and Native Americans when the indigenous population is referred to in a historical or anthropological sense.
8. See the discussion of Conanchet and the theme of miscegenation by James D. Wallace. Wallace argues that both Uncas and Conanchet embody a belief in some kind of blending of the two races because they still have, in spite of many differences, a lot in common; they just need to know each other better. James D. Wallace, "Race and Captivity in Cooper's *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*," *American Literary History* 7.2 (Summer 1995): 205-206.
9. *Satanstoe; or, The Littlepage Manuscripts: A Tale of the Colony* (1845), *The Chainbearer; or, The Littlepage Manuscripts* (1845), *The Redskins; or Indian and Injin: Being the Conclusion of the Littlepage Manuscripts* (1846).
10. James D. Wallace goes as far as to say that even Conanchet represents a hopeful blend of the two cultures: "... he is a kind of bridge between the cultures, an image of perfection [...]" Wallace, "Race and Captivity in Cooper's *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*" 207.

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