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Dahia Messara

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**UNIVERSITÉ DE HAUTE-ALSACE**

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Ecole doctorale des Humanités (ED 520)  
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Thèse de Doctorat en Langue et Littérature Anglaises

**Puritan Discourse and Indian Voice  
in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century North American  
Captivity Narratives**

Thèse présentée et soutenue en public  
le 12 avril 2013  
par

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*To the memory of Nassim*

## Comment on Terminology

Although many scholars in the field of Native American studies have addressed the issue of what to call the original inhabitants of America at the beginning of their works, there exists no consensus as to the most appropriate designation for these people, as Calloway notes (vii).

At one point in the course of this study, I sent off an abstract in order to take part in a conference on the *Global Rise of Indigenous Languages* held in Tunisia. Although the organizer was pleased with my paper proposal, he kindly warned me about my use of the term “Indian”: “Amongst the Indigenous people of North America a large number don’t like the terms ‘Indian’, ‘Native’, or ‘Aboriginal’. So I advise to go lightly with these monikers when applying them to the North American Indigenous peoples. The word ‘Native’ in English, to them, has a very different meaning. Just as does the word ‘Savage.’” It is interesting to note however that there were Algerian Berbers among the panelists for whom the term “Indigènes” carries a whole different connotation and may be considered offensive due to its colonial origins at a time when the word was used to depreciate Muslim citizens who refused to adhere to French law.<sup>1</sup>

This remark did not make me give up the term “Indian” in my work, but it paradoxically strengthened my resolve to refrain from taking an ideological stance on this issue based on any form of “political correctness.” Moreover all the appellations—“Indian,” “Natives,” “Indigenous,” etc.—were coined by Europeans and reflect the settlers’ perspective.<sup>2</sup> For all intents and purposes, I usually use the terms “Indian” and “Native” interchangeably, depending on the wording of the different primary sources I examined. If anything, I tend to prefer the term “Native” when addressing early works, such as Bradford’s or other works published before. “Indian” lends itself best to an examination of the captivity narratives, as it

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<sup>1</sup> See Ernest Mercier, *La Question Indigène en Algérie* (Paris : L’Harmattan, 2006) 17.

<sup>2</sup> See my examination of an excerpt from *A Key into the Language of America* describing an exchange between Roger William and a native concerning the naming of the natives in the second chapter of the first section in this study.



is the most neutral word the narrators used themselves. I limited the use of offensive terms such as “savage,” “Heathen,” etc. to direct references from the source.

When quoting from the primary sources, I keep the original spelling and grammar.

## **Abstract**

This study is dedicated to the analysis of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Puritan discourse and the way in which the agency of Indian appears in writings penned by the Puritans, a prominent subsection of which falls under the genre known as Indian Captivity Narrative.

My main intention was to go beyond the initial characterization of captivity narratives and claim that these texts are not only about the actual physical and moral experience of the white Christian captives among the Indians, but also deal with more abstract and less often addressed forms of captivity. One such (less immediately obvious) form of captivity is, metaphorically speaking, that of the Indian “voice” in white narratives. This study therefore addresses the following questions: How does the Indian voice come across in such prose? What kinds of discourse do Mary Rowlandson, Hannah Swarton, and other former captives attribute to their former abductors? How do these former captives render and reconstruct dialogues that purportedly occurred between them and their Indian captors? This presentation of the Indian voice is not only conditioned by the former captive’s attitude (i.e., by the author’s voice), but it is also altered by the specific bias of those in charge of controlling the contents of the narrative, i.e., the editors and the publishers, such as Cotton and Increase Mather, who were the most influential representatives of the political and religious establishment of the time.

# French Summary

Résumé substantiel en français de la présente thèse

*Le discours puritain et la voix indienne dans les récits de captivité des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles.*

D'un point de vue historique, les récits de captivité retracent l'évolution des rapports entre les tribus indiennes et les générations successives d'Américains. La longévité de ce genre littéraire doit sans doute beaucoup à son caractère emblématique. Illustration dramatique du mythe de la frontière, le récit évolue avec la nation et les mentalités de ses habitants, tout en gardant son noyau dur idéologique : le triomphe de la civilisation sur la « sauvagerie » lors de la conquête du continent américain. (Savin 31)

Cette thèse propose d'étudier les récits de captivité nord-américains, notamment les récits puritains, de la fin du dix-septième et du début du dix-huitième siècle. Nous nous appuyons pour ce faire sur un corpus de récits écrits par des Puritains relatant les conditions de leur captivité (ou de celle de tiers) parmi les Indiens. Leur capture résultait en général de l'attaque de villages puritains par des Indiens. Évidemment, il y a eu des exemples de captivité de ce type bien avant la période de l'Amérique coloniale et en d'autres lieux. Que l'on songe notamment à l'exode à Babylone (également désigné parfois par l'expression « captivité babylonienne ») de l'Ancien Testament, mais aussi aux otages des guerres de Barbarie en Afrique du Nord, aux prisonniers de guerre des conflits mondiaux, ou, plus récemment, aux prises d'otages en différents points chauds de la planète, aux Européens ou Américains enlevés en Irak, ou même au calvaire

(très médiatisé en France) de la franco-colombienne Ingrid Betancourt, prisonnière des FARC<sup>3</sup> pendant plus de six ans (2002-2008).

Avant même l'apparition de récits traitant exclusivement des enlèvements de blancs par les Indiens en Amérique coloniale, de nombreux récits à vocation de témoignage (des récits de voyage pour la plupart) avaient contribué à l'exploration scientifique et ethnologique du nouveau monde<sup>4</sup>. Parmi les récits qui ont suscité l'intérêt des chercheurs, il en est qui traitent du sort de captifs des Indiens, par exemple le récit de Cabeza de Vaca (1542), de Juan Ortiz (1557), de Hans Staden (1557), ou de Job Hortop (1591). Mais même s'ils traitent en partie de ce que leurs auteurs avaient subi pendant leur emprisonnement, ces récits ne constituent pas un genre unique comparable à celui qui nous intéresse dans cette thèse, estiment Armstrong et Tennenhouse (391). Il n'en reste pas moins que ces récits et ceux de mon corpus partagent un certain nombre de thématiques telles que la mise en exergue des rudes épreuves subies au cœur de la nature sauvage (la *Wilderness*), la nature des relations entretenues avec les Indiens, mais aussi la place faite aux considérations spirituelles et à la présence de Dieu comme soutien moral.

L'existence de thématiques communes dans ces textes relatant l'emprisonnement d'un individu dans un milieu hostile laisse supposer l'existence d'un genre littéraire propre à la captivité. Bien que l'existence de ce type de captivité précède l'expérience qu'en firent les colons puritains aux mains des Indiens pendant la conquête du Nouveau Monde, du point de vue de l'historiographie littéraire, la naissance du genre littéraire qui s'y rattache, ou du moins sa conception en tant que tel, date bien de cette époque. En atteste notamment une des œuvres les plus marquantes de l'époque, récit de captivité d'une femme puritaine, Mary White Rowlandson (1682)<sup>5</sup>, qui peut être considéré comme l'archétype de ce genre littéraire.

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<sup>3</sup> Forces armées révolutionnaires de Colombie.

<sup>4</sup> Voir Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages d'Amérique* 55.

<sup>5</sup> Le récit de Rowlandson, "*The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*" à été traduit en français par Mariette Martin sous le titre *Captive des Indiens: Récit d'une puritaine de Nouvelle-Angleterre enlevée en 1675*. Nous

Dans ces récits, et notamment celui de Rowlandson, nous nous sommes particulièrement intéressés à la voix narrative, généralement celle des captifs, et nous nous sommes posés les questions suivantes: qui parle, au nom de qui, dans quel but? Nous avons d'emblée pris la mesure de la complexité de la tâche, une complexité encore accrue par le fait que la même voix qui relate les épreuves traversées par le captif se charge également de rendre compte des échanges de toute nature avec les ravisseurs. La description de ces rapports prend souvent la forme de dialogues (recréés), car, à en croire les narrateurs, la forme de communication principale passait par la parole. Le narrateur rapporte également de nombreux détails sur diverses formes d'interaction entre les prisonniers et leurs ravisseurs.

Les récits manquent évidemment d'objectivité en ceci qu'ils présentent une version unique des faits (celle des auteurs puritains des récits). Le problème de la subjectivité se pose d'autant plus lorsque l'on examine les paroles censées avoir été prononcées par les Indiens (les paroles que leur attribuent leurs anciens captifs). Ce constat nous a amené à poser la question suivante : par-delà la définition du récit de captivité au sens concret du terme (otages puritains entre les mains des Indiens dans le contexte précis de l'Amérique du Nord coloniale), n'y aurait-il pas lieu de postuler l'existence, au sein de ces récits (« en filigrane ») d'autres formes, plus abstraites, de captivité, comme celle que constituerait l'« emprisonnement » de la « voix » indienne dans des récits écrits par des blancs ? Cette voix indienne, comment se manifeste-t-elle dans les récits du corpus? Quels discours les auteurs attribuent-ils à leurs anciens ravisseurs ?

Afin de déchiffrer et de décoder les différents dialogues censés avoir eu lieu entre les captifs (auteurs et/ou narrateurs des récits) et leurs ravisseurs, il nous a paru utile de fournir des éléments de contexte (prise en compte de la situation sociopolitique et religieuse de la période de publication des récits). Se pose en

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donnons dans la présentation du corpus la date de la première publication de chaque récit. Dans notre analyse, nous serons amenés à utiliser d'autres éditions pour différentes raisons : soit à défaut de disponibilité des premières éditions, soit pour une analyse comparative entre les différentes éditions.

outre la question de l'évolution dans le temps puisque notre corpus recouvre deux siècles (dix-septième et début du dix-huitième siècles). En plus de l'évolution des thèmes dans le temps se pose la question de la pertinence ou non du classement des récits tel qu'il est proposé à ce jour par de nombreux spécialistes du domaine. Selon cette chronologie, on serait ainsi passé d'une approche plus factuelle (récits relatant des faits réels/vécus) au début de la période couverte par mon corpus à l'apparition, vers la fin de la période, des premières œuvres de fiction rattachées au genre faisant l'objet de mon étude (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian...* xii).

Or une telle périodisation s'avère quelque peu problématique dans la mesure où il est en réalité très difficile d'évaluer le degré d'authenticité d'un récit de captivité de cette époque. Qu'entendons-nous par la question de l'authenticité ? Quels en sont les critères. Mes éléments de réponse s'appuient sur les questionnements suivants :

1) Peut-on réellement parler de récits authentiques au dix-septième siècle sans tenir compte d'un facteur aussi déterminant que celui de la propagande puritaine qui se fait jour directement ou indirectement au travers de ces récits et dans le contexte de leur élaboration/publication ? Dans les récits puritains, outre le thème principal des conditions physiques de captivité, sont également abordés les thèmes du pouvoir, de la réputation, du statut social. Cela nous incite à nous interroger sur l'autorité et/ou la caution morale/religieuse qui se profile en arrière-plan de ces témoignages. En consignait leurs souvenirs ou en les confiant à la plume de rédacteurs professionnels, les captifs, dont beaucoup de femmes, tenaient compte (plus ou moins volontairement ou consciemment) des attentes des représentants de l'élite puritaine qui détenait le monopole de l'édition de l'époque et dont ils dépendaient pour transmettre leurs témoignages. Se pose donc la question de savoir à quel point ces récits ont pu être manipulés/ orientés par les éditeurs et dénaturés en faveur des valeurs puritaines de l'époque ?

2) Peut-on ranger ces récits dans le genre de l'autobiographie ? Et si oui, où se situe la frontière entre autobiographie et fiction ? Comment distinguer les faits réels des scènes fictives au sein d'un récit considéré comme autobiographique ?

3) Si certains faits semblent avoir été volontairement dénaturés par souci de convenance (crainte pour la réputation de l'ancien(ne) otage du point de vue des valeurs puritaines), d'autres l'ont été involontairement suite aux traumatismes subis pendant la captivité.

4) La barrière linguistique : dans les récits de captivité du dix-septième siècle, notamment celui de Rowlandson, la plupart des dialogues rapportés entre les captifs et leur ravisseurs ne contiennent aucune allusion à la langue utilisée par les protagonistes ni aux difficultés d'ordre linguistique qui auraient pu, dans une certaine mesure, perturber ou fausser la communication. Or ce type de problème est souvent évoqué dans les récits du dix-huitième siècle. Cette question linguistique qui a toute sa place dans les récits du dix-huitième siècle alors qu'elle brille par son absence dans ceux du dix-septième, doit-elle être prise en compte pour évaluer le degré de crédibilité / d'authenticité d'un récit (et de fidélité de l'auteur/narrateur au discours indien dont il se fait le porte-parole) ?

Ces quatre points nous permettent de pousser encore plus loin notre réflexion sur la question de l'authenticité des récits tant du dix-septième que du dix-huitième siècle. Cette remise en cause motive également une réflexion sur les techniques narratives employées : les récits ne se contentent pas de rapporter des faits et de décrire des épisodes vécus en captivité, ils retracent également les échanges verbaux entre les différents protagonistes. Ces échanges entre le captif narrateur et/ ou auteur et ses ravisseurs se présentent sous forme de dialogues dont l'analyse textuelle doit être envisagée en fonction de deux notions grammaticales structurantes : le discours direct, d'une part, et le discours indirect ou rapporté, d'autre part. Cette problématique fait justement l'objet de la dernière partie de cette thèse.

Mais avant de nous engager plus loin dans cette analyse et d'identifier les différents types de discours en présence dans les récits du corpus, pour plus de clarté et de cohérence, nous avons voulu définir les deux termes clés du titre, « discours » et « voix », et d'indiquer leur emploi dans ce travail.

Le terme « discours » est employé dans le sens d'idéologie, voire d'idéologie dominante. C'est sur la base de ce discours que nous abordons les diverses thématiques que sous-tendent les récits du corpus.<sup>6</sup>

Si le terme discours est assez clairement défini au sens d'idéologie, celui de « voix » est lui associé à une polysémie plus importante. En dehors de son sens acoustique habituel, il revêt une série d'acceptions (con)textuelles plus spécifiques. On distinguera, comme le fait Susan Lancer entre le sens idéologique de la « voix » et son sens narratologique :

The one general, mimetic, and political, the other specific, semiotic, and technical. When feminist talk about voice, we are usually referring to the behavior of actual or fictional persons and groups who assert women-centered points of view [...] When narrative theorists talk about voice, we are usually concerned with formal structures and not with the causes, ideologies, or social implications of particular narrative practices. (4)

Nous allons considérer la « voix » d'abord dans son sens idéologique puis narratologique dans l'analyse des récits pour apporter des éléments de réponse aux différentes interrogations sur le discours dominant, ainsi que sur les discours secondaires qui s'entrecroisent par le biais de voix multiples : la voix narrative, la voix de l'auteur, la voix éditoriale, etc. Si, comme postulé plus haut, nous entendons par « discours » l'idéologie dominante d'un texte, dans une société et à une période donnée, il s'avère par ailleurs que ce discours résulte, à son tour, de la confrontation entre plusieurs *voix* représentant différents courants idéologiques ou identités sociales, politiques, religieuses ou autres. Ces *voix* multiples peuvent, selon les cas, aller dans le même sens que le discours dominant ou dans le sens



opposé. Elles peuvent également influencer partiellement sur ce discours au point même parfois de le réorienter, y compris radicalement. Dans les récits de captivité puritains, on reconnaît évidemment le discours patriarcal dominant porté dans le texte par la *voix* de l'auteur ou celle du narrateur.<sup>7</sup>

Du point de vue narratologique, en plus de la définition que nous présente Lancer, nous nous intéressons à la conception polyphonique de la « voix ». Nous proposons en effet d'analyser dans cette thèse les récits de captivité de notre corpus dans leur aspect dialogique, ceci en nous intéressant tout particulièrement aux dialogues rapportés entre les captifs et leurs ravisseurs.

Pour une thématique de thèse principalement axée sur le discours et la voix indienne, d'aucuns pourraient s'étonner du choix d'un corpus privilégiant les écrits puritains au lieu d'ouvrages plus ethnographiques et donc davantage axés sur la communication entre les Indiens et les Colons tels que *Key into the Language of America* (1643) ou les différents traités de John Eliot. En effet, étant donné l'ethnocentrisme marqué des auteurs puritains (une circonstance bien connue des spécialistes), leurs récits ne s'attachent guère à décrire la culture de leurs ravisseurs et ne s'intéressent pas particulièrement aux dimensions scientifiques ou historiques des adversaires avec qui ils sont contraints de cohabiter, un aspect dont il est à plusieurs reprises question dans cette thèse.

Avant de répondre à cette objection, il faut savoir que de nombreux spécialistes ont travaillé sur la voix indienne à travers le prisme de la littérature et de l'histoire américaine. Colin G. Calloway, dans son ouvrage *The World Turned Upside Down: Indian Voice from Early America*, nous offre une sélection de passages attribués aux Indiens dans leurs premiers contacts avec les Européens:

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<sup>6</sup> Dans l'analyse textuelle des récits, nous allons également utiliser le terme « discours » dans son acception grammaticale en faisant référence au « discours rapporté », notamment dans la troisième partie.

<sup>7</sup> Dans certains cas, comme nous allons le voir dans le deuxième chapitre de cette thèse, on pourrait également évaluer la *voix* de l'éditeur. Dans les récits de captivité féminins, l'on distinguera par ailleurs une voix féminine.

Indian people have certainly been deprived of their voices throughout much of American history, but anyone who has delved deeply into the records of early America knows that they were anything but silent. Many of their words survive for us today, if we know where to look for them and how to read them.  
(v)

Calloway a, entre autres, découvert des traces de la dite voix indienne dans les traités conclus entre les Indiens et les Européens: “One of the most important arena for discussions between Indian and Europeans was treaty negotiations about land and trade, war and peace” (12). Sans nier le problème d’authenticité du discours indiens présenté à travers le filtre des Européens, Calloway n’en affirme pas moins que ces sources peuvent s’avérer utiles à condition d’user d’une dose judicieuse d’esprit critique :

Used critically and carefully, these sources offer us an opportunity to look back at early American history and see some occurrences through the words of native people rather than through the rhetoric so often employed by invading Europeans. (18)<sup>8</sup>

Les textes sélectionnés par Calloway reprennent dans l’ordre chronologique les thématiques clés de l’histoire américaine, des premiers contacts entre Européens et autochtones jusqu’aux lendemains de la révolution américaine.

En choisissant pour cette thèse un corpus composé principalement de récits de captivité, notre intention était de sortir du cadre purement politico-historique pour éclairer en priorité l’interaction au quotidien, y compris dans ses aspects personnels et de familiarité croissante, qui résulte d’une cohabitation forcée plus ou moins longue entre les captifs blancs et leurs ravisseurs indigènes. Il ne s’agissait pourtant pas d’extraire de ces récits une authentique voix indienne ou de servir de porte parole à un peuple sans voix. Notre approche se distingue de celle de Calloway en ceci qu’elle cherche avant tout à analyser la rhétorique employée par les auteurs blancs pour « représenter » les indiens et les « faire parler ». Il s’agissait en outre d’évaluer, grâce à des outils littéraires, le degré

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<sup>8</sup> Voir aussi Frederick W. Turner, *I have spoken: American History through the voices of the Indians*.

d'instrumentalisation d'une culture et d'une *voix* dites sauvages. Nous montrons ainsi dans ce travail comment les narrateurs/auteurs des récits de captivité sont parvenus à donner naissance à un genre littéraire nouveau dont les thématiques s'entrecroisent avec celles d'autres genres littéraires de l'époque tels que le sermon, le journal intime, les jérémiades, etc.

Toutefois, malgré la priorité donnée au traitement de ces récits sous l'angle d'une approche littéraire pouvant s'accommoder de la présence d'éléments partiellement fictifs plutôt que de nous attacher à évaluer le degré de vérité historique des faits décrits, nous n'avons pas fait l'impasse sur le contexte historique qui a par exemple permis de délimiter le corpus choisi. Vu le titre et l'axe principal de cette thèse, nous avons bâti un corpus autour du récit archétype que constitue pour les spécialistes celui de Rowlandson (1682). Nous avons également sélectionné des œuvres moins connues du grand public en intégrant au corpus des récits de Quentin Stockwell (1684), Hannah Swarton (1697), Hannah Dustin (1697). Ces trois anciens captifs, parmi d'autres dont il est question dans ce travail, n'ont pas rédigé eux-mêmes leurs souvenirs de captivité. Enfin, pour clore cette liste des principales œuvres du corpus puritain dont nous nous sommes servis, nous citerons encore les récits de John Williams (1707) et de John Gyles (1736).

Pour compléter notre analyse du discours puritain et de l'instrumentalisation de la voix indienne dans les récits de captivité, nous avons comparé et contrasté ces derniers avec d'autres récits d'auteurs non puritains. D'où la présence dans mon corpus du récit, d'inspiration catholique, du père Isaac Jogues (1655),<sup>9</sup> et celui d'une captive quaker, Elizabeth Hanson (1728). Les récits parus ultérieurement à cette date, dont celui de Robert Eastburn (1758), sont pour leur part dominés par les thématiques de la période pré-révolutionnaire et révolutionnaire (une période à laquelle, en dehors de quelques allusions aux récits qu'elle a engendrés) nous n'avons consacré que peu de place dans notre étude.

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<sup>9</sup> Écrit par le captif lui-même sous forme de lettre dans sa correspondance avec la Société des Jésuites.

Toujours du point de vue chronologique, nous constatons que les principaux récits puritains du présent corpus se concentrent sur une période de seulement deux décennies. Mais ce sont deux décennies transitoires à la charnière entre deux siècles (XVIIe et XVIIIe). Nous sortons ainsi du cadre habituel des découpages chronologiques habituels des spécialistes du domaine. Plutôt que de nous aligner sur telle ou telle chronologie, nous avons choisi d’approfondir l’analyse de ce corpus transitoire en contrastant les thématiques du genre en général et celles propres à chacun des récits concernés avec la polyphonie des textes étudiés pour mieux comprendre l’évolution du genre littéraire et faire ressortir la voix indienne en tant que mythe et partie intégrante de cette polyphonie.

Avant d’arriver au chantier central de cette étude consistant en l’analyse approfondie des scènes et dialogues pour décoder les dialogues entre les captifs (auteurs et/ou narrateurs des récits), nous avons présenté les récits principaux et secondaires du corpus dans leur contexte historique pour en identifier les principales thématiques ainsi que l’évolution de ces dernières dans le temps.

Intitulée Contexte historique des récits du corpus, la première partie aborde le contexte historique à l’origine de ces écrits, mais aussi le contexte politique des époques concernées et enfin—et surtout— l’historiographie littéraire du genre pour voir dans quelle mesure les autres genres littéraires de l’époque ont pu influencer les récits de captivité. Dans la deuxième partie, nous abordons les questions liées à l’authenticité et à l’influence des autorités morales et religieuses qui présidaient à la publication des récits de captivité puritains. Et enfin, dans la dernière partie, nous examinons les formes de communications, notamment verbales, entre les captifs et les Indiens et nous étudions les différentes représentations de la présence et de la voix indiennes dans ces récits.

Avant de s’attaquer aux récits de captivité de la période définie, nous avons jugé essentiel de bien comprendre le contexte historique et littéraire de la publication des récits. L’historiographie littéraire étudiée dans cette partie couvre une période allant de l’arrivée des Pères Pèlerins à bord du *Mayflower* jusqu’aux

guerres des premières décennies du dix-huitième siècle : la guerre du roi Philip (1675-1676) et la Première Guerre Intercoloniale (King William's War) entre 1688 et 1697. La littérature puritaine est révélatrice des mentalités et conceptions des époques traversées, de sorte que l'étude des ouvrages clés de cette littérature nous informe non seulement sur l'évolution de la vision puritaine des Indiens, mais aussi sur les manifestations et les formes de communication qui ont pu exister entre les Puritains et les Indiens.

L'objet de cette première partie est donc de retracer l'évolution de l'image de l'Indien à travers la littérature de l'époque. Nous avons entamé cette étude par l'analyse de l'ouvrage de William Bradford, *Of Plymouth*, qui fournit une chronologie des premiers pas de la colonisation anglaise. Nous constatons qu'à l'intérieur même de cet ouvrage se dessine une nette évolution dans la façon de représenter les autochtones. On distingue trois phases narratives : la première coïncide avec l'arrivée des colons et leurs premiers pas dans le Nouveau Monde ; dans cette phase, l'Indien est complètement déshumanisé. On lui attribue des cris proches de ceux des bêtes et on le présente comme un être sauvage vivant dans les bois. Dans la phase suivante, Bradford fait état de la première rencontre avec les Indiens. Cette rencontre est marquée par la mise en place d'un canal de communication rendu possible par la médiation de deux personnalités indiennes emblématiques que furent Squanto et Sagamore. Ces derniers avaient appris à parler l'anglais en captivité. Cette phase du récit est caractérisée par l'attestation de relations cordiales entre les deux groupes, qui plus sont consolidées par la signature de plusieurs traités bilatéraux. Ce n'est que vers la fin du récit que Bradford évoque brièvement le premier conflit armé entre les Indiens et les Anglais, la guerre des Péquots.

C'est John Winthrop qui est le premier, dans son *Journal*, à décrire la vie d'une colonie parvenue à maturité, en prise aux premiers accès de tension avec les Indiens. L'évolution historique va de pair avec une évolution du vocabulaire employé : si la terminologie du récit de Bradford est dominée par le champ lexical de la « coopération » et des échanges de cadeaux (« gift-giving »), celle de

Winthrop fait la place belle à des notions plus belliqueuses telles que « conspiracy » (conspiration) et « war » (guerre). Les deux auteurs observent cependant un ton narratif que l'on peut qualifier de séculier.

C'est avec John Eliot (1604-1690) que se déploie pour la première fois dans toute son ampleur la dimension spirituelle. Fort de son vécu de missionnaire, l'homme insiste notamment sur le caractère diabolique des pratiques spirituelles indiennes. À partir de là, on distinguera le « bon Indien »—celui qui s'est converti ou, au moins, reconnaît la validité du Christianisme—du « mauvais Indiens » qui refuse de renoncer à ses pratiques païennes. Les œuvres d'Eliot rendent également compte des efforts déployés pour apprendre les langues des l'Algonquins afin de propager la bonne parole, notamment par une traduction de la Bible en 1663.

Aux travaux linguistiques d'Eliot s'ajoute l'œuvre clé de Roger Williams, *Key into the language of America* (1643). Cet ouvrage nous renseigne non seulement sur les pratiques Indiennes d'un point de vue ethnographique, mais peut également servir, dans une certaine mesure, de contre-point à la pensée dominante (c'est-à-dire puritaine) étant donné les idées dissidentes de l'auteur.

On assiste à une tendance croissante de diabolisation des Indiens dans les écrits puritains des générations suivantes, notamment chez l'illustre pasteur et intellectuel Cotton Mather (1663-1728). Avec son père Increase (1639-1723), Cotton a laissé un florilège d'œuvres transdisciplinaires sur les maux de la société Puritaine et l'on constate sans surprise que l'Indien est représenté comme partie intégrante des maux à combattre. En plus d'avoir eux-mêmes consacré des ouvrages aux Indiens, les Mather furent très impliqués dans la rédaction et/ou la publication de récits de captivité d'anciens otages des Indiens. On a même attribué la préface du célèbre récit de Rowlandson signé « *Ter Amicam* » à Increase Mather.<sup>10</sup> C'est justement la politique éditoriale vis-à-vis des récits de captivité qui nous a incité à nous interroger sur l'authenticité des récits, notamment dans le cas de femmes captives.

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<sup>10</sup> Voir Lauter et Sayre (137).

Mais avant d'en venir à une réflexion sur les récits de captivité en tant que tels, il nous a semblé utile d'apporter un éclairage sur le monde de l'édition ainsi que du marché du livre de l'époque. Si nous disposons d'outils performants tels que la bibliographie MLA, des sites de vente de livre tels qu'*Amazon*, ou des catalogues de bibliothèques en ligne qui nous permettent d'accéder aux ouvrages secondaires consacrés aux récits de captivité (notamment ceux de Rowlandson et de Jogues), il est plus compliqué en revanche de se faire une idée de la façon dont ces récits furent perçus et appréciés à l'époque de leur publication. Pour définir la place spécifique qu'occupaient les récits de captivité parmi les autres types de publications qui leur étaient contemporains et pour expliquer l'importance et la notoriété des récits précités, nous avons cru bon de présenter le monde littéraire et le marché du livre dans lesquels ils s'inscrivent.

Dans « *The Uses of Literacy in New England, 1600-1850* », David Hall décrit le paysage littéraire de l'Amérique coloniale du dix-septième siècle comme un univers dominé par la Bible, les livres de psaumes, les abécédaires, et les ouvrages de catéchisme. Ces œuvres remplissaient les étagères des familles puritaines et constituaient la base de l'enseignement en Nouvelle Angleterre.<sup>11</sup> Il existait en outre une catégorie de livres que Hall appelle les *steady sellers* et qu'il définit comme suit: « *Steady sellers were books that remained in print for several decades. Some of these books showed an astonishing longevity, circulating among a popular audience for at least 200 years* » (29). Ce sont ces ouvrages-là qui ont servi de base à l'établissement de la liste des *best sellers* de Franck Luther Mott.

Cette liste reprend les deux récits de captivité clés de notre étude, ceux de Rowlandson et de John Williams. Il est par ailleurs intéressant de se pencher sur les circonstances de réédition de ces deux récits en termes d'évolution de la forme et de promotion/publicité. Notre étude a en outre révélé que ces récits de captivité

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<sup>11</sup> La Nouvelle Angleterre est en effet représentative du paysage littéraire de l'Amérique Coloniale. A titre de comparaison, David Hall choisit la Virginie, la colonie la plus lettrée après la Nouvelle Angleterre et écrit : « *The publisher of the Virginia Almanac managed an annual press run of 5,000 copies, at a time when New Englanders were buying up to 60,000 copies a year of a single almanac, and sustaining several others* » (27).

étaient généralement accessibles au plus grand nombre, même si le Puritain moyen n'avait pas forcément les moyens d'acheter des livres. En effet, le contenu des récits de captivité était souvent repris dans les sermons délivrés les jours de prière devant tous les paroissiens.

Vu la popularité du genre, l'élite politico-religieuse s'est fait un devoir de publier ces récits de captivité, soit en tant que tels, soit en intégrant ces histoires sous forme d'anecdotes dans des ouvrages traitant d'autres thématiques, comme le fait principalement Cotton Mather dans son illustre ouvrage *Magnalia Christi Americana*. L'hégémonie de l'élite puritaine peut soulever des questions quant à l'authenticité des récits attribués à d'anciens captifs, notamment lorsqu'il s'agissait de femmes.

C'est, entre autres, pour répondre à cette question d'authenticité que nous avons intégré à notre étude un mini corpus de récits de captivité de trois femmes puritaines : Rowlandson, Hannah Swarton (1697), et Hannah Dustin (1697). Nous y avons notamment étudié la voix narrative. Cet examen a permis de constater que même lorsque le narrateur est une femme, la voix « patriarcale » reste nettement en évidence. Il était donc important d'inclure aussi dans le corpus des récits concernant le vécu de captivité d'otages hommes, car de cette manière, il est plus facile de disséquer la voix narrative laquelle, à son tour, exerce son contrôle sur la voix indienne.

Outre la dimension patriarcale, une autre thématique joue également un rôle non négligeable dans les récits de captivité : le sentiment anti-catholique notamment présent dans des récits tels que ceux de Hannah Swarton, John Williams, ou John Gyles. De ce point de vue, il est intéressant de constater que dans certains cas, on assiste carrément à un détournement du récit pour s'en prendre aux Jésuites (la captivité jésuite prend alors le pas sur le thème de la captivité indienne). Notre étude a révélé à ce propos que la représentation du protagoniste indien en tant qu'allié des catholiques est utilisée par



l'auteur/narrateur à des fins de propagande non seulement religieuses mais aussi politiques.

Sur cette question de la propagande, notre thèse interroge aussi l'effet de la propagande anti-indienne sur le/la futur(e) narrateur/narratrice avant même que celui-ci/celle-ci ait été personnellement confronté(e) à l'expérience de la captivité elle-même. Ce conditionnement n'est pas sans conséquences sur l'objectivité des futurs témoignages concernant les Indiens. Ce sont des passages tels que celui-ci : "Now is the dreadful hour come that I *have often heard of* (in time of war, as it was the case of others, but now mine eyes see it" (Rowlandson 34, Je souligne)<sup>12</sup> au début d'un récit qui sont de nature à susciter des doutes quant à l'authenticité du récit. Et ce même sans tenir compte des questions d'ordre pathologique, tel que le traumatisme de certaines situations extrêmes qui peut induire une altération de la perception des événements et, en conséquence, de son traitement dans le récit.

Comme nous venons de le signaler, notre thèse évoque également les possibles symptômes du traumatisme subi dans ses manifestations au niveau de la narration. Pour les femmes, le traumatisme prend souvent appui sur leur statut de mère (enfant tué). Chez les hommes, les traumatismes sont principalement liés à des scènes de torture, voire de mutilation. Mais s'agissant du problème d'une restitution inexacte de la réalité (altération des faits, contradictions, manque de cohérence, omissions), ces failles et manquements à l'objectivité relèvent dans l'ensemble davantage de l'effet de la propagande puritaine (imposition d'une sorte de « politiquement correct » avant la lettre) qu'elles ne proviennent de causes pathologiques.

Ces axes sont explorés dans un corpus d'œuvres coloniales puritaines couvrant plusieurs générations et plus précisément dans les récits puritains relatant la captivité d'hommes ou de femmes (écrits ou non par les anciens captifs ; parfois la plume est tenue par des membres de l'élite politico-religieuse de

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<sup>12</sup> Voici la traduction du passage faite par Mariette Martin : « Alors me fut donné de vivre cette heure affreuse dont j'avais souvent entendu parler par d'autres, mais que je voyais maintenant de mes propres yeux » (52).

l'époque). Même si la question de la voix indienne semble absente dans les premiers chapitres de la thèse, elle y est présente en filigrane à travers l'étude des voix croisées du discours puritain « polyphonique ». C'est la résultante de ce croisement qui contrôle la voix narrative et, par extension, la voie indienne.

Malgré les efforts de propagande martelant le message de l'élite politico-religieuse à travers la voix narrative de l'ancien captif, l'effet n'est pas toujours celui visé. L'existence dans le texte de « failles » (de non-dits) est de nature à gripper la mécanique du discours dominant, voire à véhiculer (involontairement) un message en porte-à-faux avec ce dernier. Ces failles sont visibles à deux niveaux de la production littéraire puritaine. D'abord au niveau de la publication (censure plus ou moins visible exercée par les éditeurs de l'époque qui font partie du monopole politico-religieux de la communauté puritaine). La censure (intégrale, au sens de non publication) vise notamment le cas des « unredeemed captives », c'est-à-dire ceux qui ont fait le choix de ne pas revenir parmi les leurs alors qu'ils en auraient eu la possibilité. Un cas célèbre en la matière est celui d'Eunice Williams, la fille du révérend John Williams dont la famille était proche du clan des Mather. Mais en quoi cette histoire froissait-elle à ce point les susceptibilités de la classe dominante ? Que nous enseigne cette réticence de la part d'une élite littéraire par ailleurs très proluxe lorsqu'il s'agissait de propager des messages allant dans son sens ?

Le deuxième niveau qui laisse transparaitre ladite « faille » est celui du texte lui-même : le narrateur fournit en effet plus ou moins de détails suivant la nature des faits à relater, allant jusqu'à passer entièrement sous silence tel ou tel sujet délicat. C'est ainsi par exemple que nous constatons, chez Rowlandson, tout un florilège d'incohérences narratives : exposés minutieux sur certains faits et dosage homéopathe de l'information dans d'autres cas (quitte à laisser le lecteur sur sa faim voire perplexe par une succession de contradictions, d'interruptions et/ou de « silences narratifs ». Paradoxalement, ce silence se remarque surtout à travers le « trop dit » (en dire trop peut pour ainsi dire « mettre la puce à l'oreille » du lecteur qui se demande : pourquoi cette soudaine profusion de détails ? Que

cherche-t-on à nous cacher ?). Nous nous sommes donc attachés à interpréter ces deux niveaux de silence (éditorial et narratif) en rapport avec la représentation de l'Indien et de sa « voix » dans des récits de captivité.

Dans notre traque des dites failles (« non dit » ou « trop dit » narratif ou éditorial), nous nous sommes tout d'abord intéressés aux passages consacrés à la description directe des ravisseurs. Là encore, il n'existe pas d'homogénéité entre les différents récits, voire au sein d'un même récit. On constate par exemple un fossé important entre le récit de Rowlandson et celui de John Gyles en termes de considérations ethnographiques. La différence d'attitude s'explique sans doute en partie par la nettement plus longue durée de captivité subie par Gyles (presque neuf ans d'abord parmi les Indiens, puis parmi les Jésuites français), alors que Rowlandson, elle, n'avait passé « que » onze semaines entre les mains de ses ravisseurs. Un autre aspect qui distingue l'expérience de Gyles tient au fait qu'il avait travaillé au service du gouvernement du Massachusetts en qualité d'interprète et de négociateur pour les contacts avec les Indiens. Cela peut expliquer son intérêt pour l'ethnographie, mais aussi la géographie physique du Nouveau Monde, d'où la présence dans son récit de passages entiers consacrés à l'étude de la faune de la Nouvelle Angleterre.

À travers les passages consacrés à la description directe des Indiens dans les récits de captivité, notamment les deux sus-cités, nous avons comparé l'image de l'Indien qui s'en dégage dans les récits des différents (anciens) captifs et, au-delà, tenté, en confrontant les récits en question, de dégager une logique narrative dans la façon (spécifique aux récits de captivité) de représenter le monde sauvage, *wilderness*. C'est justement dans cette confrontation et juxtaposition des différents récits que nous avons pu faire ressortir le concept de silence narratif mentionné précédemment que nous avons surtout pu lui assigner son rôle paradoxal au service de la voix indienne.

À cette étape de la thèse (sa dernière partie), nous avons ouvert une parenthèse dans le développement de notre argumentation sur la voix indienne

pour mettre dans leur contexte un certain nombre de thématiques détectées dans les récits malgré leur caractère tabou à l'époque. Ces sujets tabou portent principalement sur la sexualité et sur le phénomène dit de « going native » (adoption par certains captifs du mode de vie de leurs ravisseurs, « indianisation »). L'indianisation concerne essentiellement les captifs de très longue durée. Sur le point du tabou sexuel, l'extrait suivant montre l'insistance de Rowlandson sur la conservation de sa « chasteté » tout au long de sa détention parmi les « cruels païens » (« cruel heathen ») :

I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and in company, sleeping all sorts together, and yet not one of them ever offered me the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action. Though some are ready to say I speak it for my own credit; but I speak it in the presence of God, and to His Glory. (70)<sup>13</sup>

Cet extrait s'accompagne chez Rowlandson de failles narrative comme expliqué précédemment. On relève par ailleurs qu'en d'autres endroits de son récit, la narratrice fait état de rapports amicaux avec certains représentants de la gent masculine (indienne) (en contraste avec l'hostilité mentionnée dans son interaction avec des femmes indiennes, notamment celle qu'elle appelle « my mistress »).

L'inconfort révélateur qui étire la narratrice nous a amenés à évoquer plus largement le thème de la sexualité tel que traité dans les écrits consacrés aux rapports entre blancs et indiens, mais aussi du point de vue de la conception qu'on en avait à l'époque dans les colonies de la Nouvelle Angleterre. Nous avons également analysé la notion de « master », vocable qui revient très fréquemment dans le récit de Rowlandson.

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<sup>13</sup> « J'étais au milieu de ces lions rugissants et de ces ours sauvages qui ne craignent ni Dieu, ni homme, ni diable, cela nuit et jour, seule parmi eux, dormant dans une totale promiscuité, et pourtant aucun d'eux ne se livra au moindre abus ou à la moindre impudicité, que ce soit en parole ou en actes. Même si certains sont prêts à dire que je parle en mon propre nom, je le fais en présence de Dieu et pour sa Gloire » (Traduction par Mariette Martin 98).

Nous avons par ailleurs également pris en considération trois récits de captivité publiés au milieu du dix-neuvième siècle, donc à l'extérieur de notre période de référence et du champ de notre corpus principal : *Manners and Customs* de John D. Hunter (1823), *Life of Mary Jemison* de James E. Seaver (1824) et *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* de Edwin James (1830). Ces récits traitent d'un phénomène auquel les spécialistes ont donné le nom de « White Indians ». Les indiens blancs sont des blancs (anciens captifs) qui ont pris le parti de rester parmi leurs anciens ravisseurs, un choix qui était très mal vécu à l'époque de son apparition, ce qui explique le long délai avant la première parution d'un récit concernant ce type particulier de captifs. Mais même au dix-neuvième siècle, les éditeurs ressentent encore une certaine gêne au moment de publier ces témoignages. Ce qui les a finalement persuadés de sauter le pas est sans doute le sensationnalisme de l'histoire et les promesses de ventes lucratives. Une telle approche eût été impensable à l'époque des récits de notre corpus principal comme le montre la censure du cas Eunice Williams, dont l'attitude avait gravement embarrassé l'élite puritaine du début du dix-huitième siècle.

Un dernier aspect étudié dans notre travail a trait au caractère partiellement « dialogique » des récits considérés. Dans notre traitement de la communication entre captifs et ravisseurs, cet adjectif (« dialogique ») se réfère aux dialogues (recréés), aux échanges oraux « rapportés » par les narrateurs. La première réticence à prendre la restitution de ces échanges pour argent comptant provient du fait que souvent, les narrateurs, dont Rowlandson, ne mentionnent aucune difficulté d'ordre linguistique, comme si aucune barrière linguistique n'avait pu exister entre les deux « parties ». Rowlandson introduit ainsi les échanges comme s'ils se déroulaient dans un contexte unilingue normal avec les verbes usuels du discours indirect (« to say », « to bid », « to ask », etc.).

Et non contente de transmettre des « citations » plus que douteuses, la narratrice (Rowlandson) se permet de porter des jugements et de commenter les « dires » des Indiens à travers un « filtre » narratif de validation (ou non) de telle

ou telle déclaration. Or en niant la véracité de tel ou tel énoncé attribué à l'interlocuteur indien, le narrateur ne fait pas que semer le doute sur la crédibilité de l'Autre, mais finit involontairement par remettre en cause sa propre crédibilité (à force de présager les pires exactions/d'attribuer aux « sauvages » les pires intentions, le narrateur se décrédibilise si rien de tel ne se produit au bout du compte).

De fait, la plupart des narrateurs puritains nous décrivent dans l'incipit de leurs récits une vision quasi apocalyptique de l'attaque de leur village par les indiens qui les ont faits prisonniers. Il y a vraisemblablement une volonté de diabolisation de l'Indien et l'accentuation d'un trait de caractère monstrueux et inhumain. Dans la même logique, ce noircissement du trait est repris dans le discours que les captifs/narrateurs attribuent aux « sauvages ». Que l'on songe par exemple aux menaces proférées (cf. la répétition d'expressions telles que « knock on the head »). Paradoxalement, le narrateur lui-même retire à ces menaces une bonne part de leur effet dramatique sur le lecteur en traitant leurs ravisseurs de « menteurs ». Ainsi, nous arrivons finalement, grâce à la déconstruction du récit, à attribuer aux protagonistes indiens des caractéristiques autres que celles dont on voulait les affubler.

De même, d'autres anecdotes, souvent répétées dans un même récit ou à travers tout le corpus, nous permettent d'aller plus loin dans notre interprétation du discours indiens et d'esquisser au final une représentation beaucoup plus nuancée de la « voix » indienne alors même que l'intention initiale des auteurs était au contraire d'en fournir une image biaisée et égocentrique, conforme aux canons de la littérature puritaine de l'époque.

The most prominent aspect of Indian-White relations as expressed in American literature of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries was the captivity experience. (Vaughan, *Narratives* xi)





# Introduction

The phenomenon of captivity itself did not begin with the discovery of the American continent and the events which, in the form of Indian captivity narratives, constitute the focus of the present study. Going back to ancient history and myths, one should mention the famous Babylonian captivity narrative of the Old Testament or, contemporary to the Indian captivity narratives in America, the Barbary Coast captivity narratives set between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For more recent accounts we need only turn on the TV for the latest updates on politically or otherwise motivated hostage dramas. One of the most prominent such story of the past decade in the French media was the abduction by the FARC,<sup>14</sup> a leftist guerrilla group, of the French Colombian Ingrid Betancourt. Betancourt's captivity lasted six years. She was released in 2008 and subsequently published her memoirs of captivity in French under the title *Même le silence a une fin (Even Silence has an End: My Six Years of Captivity in the Colombian Jungle)* in 2010.

The wish to document their experience of captivity among a hostile group of individuals is one that has been shared by a large number of captives throughout history. And where the captives did not undertake the task themselves, they could generally fall back on editorial support from ghostwriters eager to assist for a variety of personal, political and social purposes as this dissertation proposes to show. Betancourt reveals many details in the book as well as in TV interviews,<sup>15</sup> mentioning, inter alia, the exhausting marches through vast stretches of Colombian jungle and the complex nature of her hostility-ridden relationship with the hostage takers. She particularly focuses on her faith, emphasizing how God helped her endure the hardest episodes of her captivity.

These remarks are reminiscent of similar issues in those 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Indian captivity narratives that are the main subject of my study. The

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<sup>14</sup> Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, Betancourt's interview directed by Sylvain Attal, France 24 (July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008), five days after Betancourt's release from captivity.

accounts consist in biographic or autobiographical testimonies relating the experience of white Christians taken captive by groups of Native Americans. These accounts were either written by the captives themselves or by contemporary intellectuals on their behalf. The form and contents of the different narratives depend on a number of factors, including the political and historical context at the times of both the captivity itself and publication of the narrative, but also, and certainly not least, the reasons for the abduction and the nature of the interaction between the former captive(s) and the Indian abductors.

Scholars identify three main reasons for the kidnappings: revenge, ransom, and adoption.<sup>16</sup> Most of the time the narrators (i.e., the former captives) do not explicitly account for the reasons behind their abduction. For one thing, they might not have been aware of the motives possibly harbored by their kidnappers, even in retrospect. A close analysis, however, of the dominant narrative voice can prove helpful in identifying the individual motives behind this or that abduction. Narratives that reference violence generally suggest that the motive for the abduction is vengeance—the wish by the Indians to retaliate after suffering losses at the hands of their (white) enemies. Former captives who had been seized in the hope of securing a ransom tended to be treated in a less violent manner as they had to be returned in good shape if the kidnappers were to exchange their captives for money. As for cases in which the captives earmarked for adoption were meant to replace lost tribe members, the treatment afforded was usually even better, as such captives were considered as family members.

My corpus focuses on captivity narratives by or about former Puritan hostages, most prominently that—archetypal and extremely famous—by Mary White Rowlandson (1682).<sup>17</sup> Among other narratives, maybe less known to the public though not to the specialists of the field, I will mainly consider writings by

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<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity* (xv), June Namias, *White Captives* (3).

<sup>17</sup> In the following presentation of the corpus, I give the first publication date of each narrative. For further analysis of the different narratives, I will have to use different editions, mainly modern

Quentin Stockwell (1684), Hannah Swarton (1697), Hannah Dustin (1697), Sarah Gerish (1699), and Hannah Bradley (1707). These five latter Puritan captives entrusted the writing of their experience to the same man: a very influential Puritan Minister, Cotton Mather. Together with those of John Williams (1707) and John Gyles's (1736), these narratives constitute the main Puritan corpus of my study.

Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682) is to be the central narrative in the corpus of this study as it ranks among the best known specimens of the genre. In this retrospective account, Rowlandson shares her experience of eleven weeks' captivity in the wilderness among the Indians as a consequence of the Indian attack on her town, Lancaster, in 1676 during King Philip's war. The text is organized in twenty "removes," consisting in "departures from one place to the next. Over half of these departures 'remove' Rowlandson deeper into the wilderness and farther from home" (Logan 256). The notion of departure and travel reminds of travel accounts which appeared during the early modern period of the European exploration and colonization of the New Continent.

Most of these accounts relate the European settlers' encounter with the natives and very often deal with captivity experience at the hands of the Indians. Such are, among others, narratives of this nature by Cabeza de Vaca (1542), Juan Ortiz (1557), Hans Staden (1557), and Job Hortop (1591). Although these narratives include significant passages dedicated to the captivity experience of their authors, and although one finds them in some of the modern selections of captivity narratives, according to Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, they "never became an important genre in and of themselves, although they were certainly familiar enough to the reading public and could appear as interpolate tales" (391). In their categorization of captivity narratives as a literary genre, Armstrong and Tennenhouse even exclude two famous seventeenth-century

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ones, either because of the unavailability of the first editions or for the sake of comparison between the different editions.

captivity accounts by John Smith and by the Jesuit Father Isaac Jogues. In their own understanding of the genre, captivity narratives (the ones that would gradually evolve into the genre of the English novel) were “not produced by emissaries of church or state” and in them the “captives tend to be European settlers from ordinary backgrounds who wanted to find a home in North America” (392). Therefore, although captivity per se, as a phenomenon, obviously predates the specific experience of the white Christian settlers at the hands of the Indians during the conquest of the New Continent, the emergence of the theme as a literary genre essentially emerged—or at least was conceptualized as such—at that time, particularly with Rowlandson’s narrative.

However, if one sees Rowlandson’s narrative in the broader context of Puritan literature, it is obvious that her writing goes well beyond the scope of her personal story and embraces the whole Puritan community as suggested by Richard Slotkin: “[In Puritan captivity narratives], a single individual, usually a woman, stands passively under the strokes of evil, awaiting rescue by the grace of God. The sufferer represents the whole chastened body of Puritan society” (94). Therefore, although Rowlandson was not an official emissary of the Puritan parish, she must nonetheless be seen as a typical emanation of a community strongly rooted in a shared religious faith. It follows, as I will demonstrate, that her writing reflects and sponsors significant social, political, and religious goals in the general interest of the Puritan religious elite.

The hidden agenda in the narratives I have selected, particularly Rowlandson’s, raise other significant issues concerning the scholarly categorization of North American captivity narratives. Thus Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, for instance, lists three main chronological phases for the genre starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century as follows:

- Authentic religious accounts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Propagandistic and stylistically embellished texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Outright works of fiction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century (*Women’s Indian...* xii).

This classification would appear to be oversimplified as the following considerations will show:

1) Being accounts of personal experiences, the captivity narratives belong to the biographic and autobiographical genres. This being said, to what extent can one speak of authenticity when dealing with subjective accounts? In *Autobiography*, Linda Anderson quotes Shari Banstock as stating that autobiography “reveals the impossibility of its own dream: what begins in the presumption of self-knowledge ends in the creation of a fiction that covers over the premises of its construction” (66). So where do we draw the line between fact and fiction when attempting to classify autobiographical accounts of captivity? Moreover, if some of the related facts are deliberately distorted for social, religious and political motives, others yet might have been misrepresented for pathological reasons. Since most of the captives had suffered traumatic experiences, one may have reason to express doubt as to the reliability and objectivity of their memories and as to their moral and physical abilities in relating their experience with any measure of exactitude. One of the purposes of this study is therefore to focus on the specific aspect of authenticity based on autobiographical theories, especially in connection with traumatic events, and to define the symptomatic narrative elements questioning the above-mentioned truthfulness and authenticity of the narrated facts. The answers will show to what extent one might be justified to designate the captivity narrative genre as fiction.

2) Does not the distinct religious focus in 17<sup>th</sup> century narratives point in the direction of propaganda rather than suggest authenticity as claimed by Zabelle when she associates religiosity and authenticity in her above mentioned classification? My questioning here is substantiated by Lowance Mason’s statement: “It is important to understand that each biographer of the colonial period was less interested in fidelity to factual detail than in the more didactic emphasis of establishing his account in a religious or spiritual tradition” (67).

3) The language limits: In most seventeenth-century captivity narratives such as Rowlandson’s, the Puritan English-speaking protagonist/narrator curiously never mentions any difficulties that may have arisen from a possible language barrier

between the former captive and his/her captors in the way many non-Puritan former captives do. So how did they really communicate and what kind of tools may be used to decipher the text, the codes, and to interpret the meanings? Conversely, there are allusions to the language limit in non-Puritan and in 18<sup>th</sup> century captivity narratives. To what extent should one consider the references to the language issue (a characteristic of 18<sup>th</sup> century narratives) as an authenticity mark and as a token of fidelity in the representation of facts and discourses?

The three above-mentioned points, which are relevant throughout this study, clearly challenge Zabelle's classification of the captivity narratives and enhance our questioning of the authenticity of seventeenth-century accounts, especially when compared with eighteenth-century narratives. This questioning goes hand in hand with a discussion of the narrative techniques. The latter do not only describe scenes of captivity in general but also render elements of verbal communication between former captives and their abductors. The reported form taken by such communication from narrative to narrative depends on the religious affiliation, the gender of the former captive, the chronological aspect of the captivity and the time of the first publication of the narrative.

In the title and throughout this study, I use the word "discourse" in its ideological meaning, i.e., the dominant religious, political and social ideology within a particular social group, namely that of the seventeenth-century New England Puritans. Accordingly, the main narratives I will be discussing in this study were written by Puritans—either by the former captives themselves or by influent members of the congregation acting on their behalf.

While "discourse" is featured in the present study in its narrowly meaning, my use of "voice" is polysemic. Beyond the performative meaning of the word, I shall also make use of its general and textual meanings. I will rely on Susan Lanser's distinction between "voice" in its ideological (i.e., general) and its

narratological (i.e., semiotic and technical) meaning.<sup>18</sup> As a part of the above-defined “discourse,” the “voice” will be used in its ideological meaning in an attempt to answer the critical questions concerning the dominant Puritan discourse in captivity narratives as well as the secondary discourses manifesting themselves in a multiplicity of ideological and narratological voices. Here is the issue as I see it: if one agrees that the term “discourse” refers to the dominant ideology as reflected by a text within a particular period and a particular society, it follows that the said discourse is a composite creation resulting from the interrelation of multiple voices reflecting secondary ideological trends associated with various social, political and religious identities.

These voices may point in the same direction as the dominant discourse or go in another direction. They can also exert a significant influence on the dominant discourse to the extent of reshaping it entirely in some cases. In the Puritan captivity narratives, for instance, one recognizes the dominant patriarchal discourse even in narratives supposedly written by women. Therefore, I shall consider distinctions based on the former captive’s degree of involvement in the drafting of the narrative: does the captive express himself/herself with the “voice” of an author, a narrator or an eyewitness telling his/her story to a third party writing up the material on his/her behalf? This approach will help identify the presence of a male voice in Puritan captivity narratives written by women but also, more surprisingly, that of a woman’s voice in narratives written by men.

Beyond Lanser’s dichotomy of the ideological and narratological voices, I will also consider the polyphonic approach to “voice.” This consists in discussing the dialogical aspect of the captivity narratives, mainly by emphasizing the dialogues between the former captives and their abductors. I will then focus on utterances attributed to the Indians and how they were rendered by the white

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<sup>18</sup> Lanser distinguishes between two meanings of voice as follows: “The one general, mimetic, and political, the other specific, semiotic, and technical. When feminist talk about voice, we are usually referring to the behavior of actual or fictional persons and groups who assert women-centered points of view [...]. When narrative theorists talk about voice, we are usually concerned with formal structures and not with the causes, ideologies, or social implications of particular narrative practices” (4).

narrator/author of the narrative. This raises the question of the degree to which one can go beyond the general characterization of captivity narratives as the detention of Christian whites by the savage Indians and also take account of the abstract and less often mentioned forms of captivity including the “captivity” of the Indian “voice” in narratives written by white people. How does it come across in such prose? What kinds of discourses do Mary Rowlandson, Hannah Swarton, and other former captives attribute to their former abductors?

As the topic of this dissertation is the issue of voice—and primarily the Indian voice—some readers may wonder why I chose to approach the problem and create my corpus through the sole prism of captivity narratives rather than select colonial texts specifically devoted to the very issue of communication between white settlers and Indians (for example *Key into the Language of America* (1643) by Roger Williams or *Declaration of Former Passages and Proceedings betwixt the English and the Narragansets* (1645) by John Winthrop).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, some critics think that Puritan narratives such as Rowlandson’s are somehow ethnocentric, not to say egocentric. Michell Robert Breitwieser, for instance, writes:

The simple overwhelming presence of the Algonquian captors was not of itself sufficient to compel Rowlandson to perceive them as persons, as cultural subjects, rather than as retributive or malign force. [...]. The presence of the Algonquians is a necessary but not sufficient condition for what happens in the composition of the narrative: only with the incapacitation of typology by grief does a human Indian figure come into view at the margin of perception. (132)

Although Puritan narratives do not portray Indian culture in a detailed manner in the way the earlier travel narratives do for scientific and exploratory aims, it should nevertheless be stressed that the Puritan narrative in general and Rowlandson’s in particular lay emphasis on the dialogues the former captive allegedly conducted with his or her abductors. To some extent they portray the Indian “voice” by reporting such conversations.

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<sup>19</sup> These are considered as informative books on the Indian costumes and way of life (see Vail 6).



Many scholars have dealt with the issue of the Indian “voice.” Colin G. Calloway in his *The World Tuned Upside Down: Indian Voice from Early America* offers a selection of passages dedicated to Indian reactions to their first encounters with Europeans. Callaway writes:

Indian people have certainly been deprived of their voices throughout much of American history, but anyone who has delved deeply into the records of early America knows that they were anything but silent. Many of their words survive for us today, if we know where to look for them and how to read them.  
(v)

Calloway tracked down this “voice” in the first treaties signed between Indians and European settlers, noting: “One of the most important arenas for discussions between Indians and Europeans was treaty negotiations about land and trade, war and peace” (12). Although Calloway rightly poses the question of authenticity since the words attributed to the Indians are filtered by the whites, he nonetheless counters Native American scholars’ criticism on this issue by putting forward the following arguments:

Used critically and carefully, these sources offer us an opportunity to look back at early American history and see some occurrences through the words of native people rather than through the rhetoric so often employed by invading Europeans. (18)<sup>20</sup>

Calloway’s selection of texts is chronologically organized and covers a series of topics of American history from the first encounters between Native Americans and the first European settlers to the American Revolution. By all means Calloway’s book is a valuable source of comparison when discussing the question of the Indian voice in captivity narratives.

This being said, it should be stressed that I do not aim at providing an authentic Indian voice in the historical and political sense of the word, nor do I seek, as it were, to obtain justice for the Native American victims of colonial history in North America. The Indian voice is a literary Puritan production, which forms

part of the language of captivity and provides clues about the Puritan ideological discourse and literature; therefore, the focus is more on the symbolism and the narrative process of the text itself than on the actual historicity of the captivity narratives. One of the concerns is the rhetoric used by the former white captives or the “ghostwriter” who wrote on their behalf to represent the Indians as well as the rhetoric the white writers of the narratives attributed to the Indians as a part of their speech.

Although the intention here is to adopt a literary approach of the captivity narrative based on fictionalized elements of the text rather than on the historical and the exclusively reality-based element of the narratives, I do not exclude taking into account the historical context of the narratives. On the contrary I will take the historical context as well as the literary historiography of the colonial American period as a basis for the selection and the organization of the narratives in this study. A chronological organization of the narratives is important to reflect the changes in literary motifs through the history of the Puritan settlements and to take into account the impact of major political events, notably the frontier wars. Changing circumstances are also reflected in the form taken by Puritan propaganda in the narratives. Propaganda and the Puritans’ systematic demonizing of the Indians tend to distort the facts of captivity and the image of the Indians. Yet such distortion can paradoxically prove informative at times. Any deliberate distortion of facts tends to bring about inconsistencies. Noticing such discrepancies can help reach new interpretations and, in some instances, even let the Indian voice penetrate.

To understand the Puritan ideology and the way the Puritan elite branded the Indians as the *others*, Puritan accounts should be compared and contrasted with non-Puritan ones. I will mainly consider accounts by Catholic Father Isaac Jogues (1655), two narratives of the Quakers Jonathan Dickinson (1699) and Elisabeth Hanson (1728)—as well as later publications such as Robert Eastbun’s

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<sup>20</sup> See also Frederick W. Turner, *I have spoken: American History through the voices of the Indians*.

narrative (1758), which already exhibits the predominance of prerevolutionary topics. Although I do not intend to enlarge the scope to include the revolutionary period per se, I cannot go without referring to narratives from that period and beyond for the sake of comparison. But my main focus will be on tracing the evolution of the motifs of Indian captivity narratives based on the re-editions of Mary Rowlandson's and Reverend John Williams's accounts in the 1770's.<sup>21</sup> That decade was particularly important in instrumentalizing earlier Indian captivity narratives to serve pre-Revolutionary motives. The evolution undergone by these late publications of Rowlandson's and John Williams's accounts on the road to becoming tools of indirect revolutionary propaganda shows the successive phases of editorial manipulation at work along that road (from first publication to the pre-revolutionary versions). Although the motives were different with each publication of the narrative according to the respective historical context, the manipulation at work was similar all along. Greg Sieminski, for instance alludes to this point as follows: "In the years just preceding the Revolution, the Rowlandson and Williams narratives were popularized because they expressed the colonists' growing sense of themselves as a people held captive. Whether the politicization of these narratives was part of the colonists' widespread and sophisticated propaganda effort or merely a reflection of it is impossible to say. What can be asserted is that these Puritan captivity narratives were well-suited to support the revolutionaries' cause" (43).

I shall also refer to 19<sup>th</sup> century narratives about white captives, Puritans or not, who, even when they had a choice to go back to their white environment, chose to stay with the Indians. Such narratives include *Manners and Customs* by John D. Hunter (1823), *Life of Mary Jemison* by James E. Seaver (1824), and *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* by Edwin James

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<sup>21</sup> See chapter four of the first section of this study, which discusses the importance of the period in instrumentalizing earlier Indian captivity narratives to serve pre-revolutionary motives. If already pre-existing Indian captivity narratives were re-used in support of the revolutionary cause, the narratives that were first published at that time should be considered as a separate sub-genre within captivity literature.

(1830). These cases will help demonstrate the discomfort felt within the Puritan community at the notion that some of their members would NOT be redeemed.

Again from a chronological perspective, one notices that the main narratives in question for this study all fall within a time span of two decades. These years constitute a transitional period between two different centuries. As I question Zabelle Derounian-Stodola's above-mentioned classification, I intend to analyze this transitional corpus of captivity narratives and contrast the topics of the genre in general as well as those of each single narrative in particular with a special emphasis on the polyphony<sup>22</sup> of each text to better understand the evolution of the literary genre of captivity narrative and, most importantly, filter out the Indian voice—as a myth and as an integral part of the polyphony.

To identify the filter through which the Indian voice is passed on, one first needs to recall the main reasons behind the kidnappings. As the dominant voice in captivity narratives tends to be that of the former captive, it is through that filter—that “voice”—that the Indian abductors are described and represented. The “white” voice is therefore the main prism through which the reader is exposed to the Indian perspective, to echoes, as it were, of their own (often inevitably distorted) “voice.” This model of interpretation (based on an attempt at filtering out the Indian voice deductively by looking at more or less subtle variations in the dominant narrative voice) is particularly productive when it comes to the description, in the narratives, of the different ways in which the captors treated their hostages depending on their motives to kidnap them in the first place.

The special case of kidnappings motivated by the desire of the Indians to adopt the captives tended to be particularly embarrassing from a Puritan point of view. How does one describe the humane treatment rendered by those considered

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<sup>22</sup> The concept of “polyphony” will be fully discussed throughout this study. It was first introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Bakhtin sees in Dostoevsky's “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses. [...] A character's word about himself and his word is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; it is not subordinated to the character's objectified image as merely one of his characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author's voice” (6). Bakhtin sees Dostoevsky's text as dialogical in that each character has his own voice.

savage? This probably explains the scarcity of narratives depicting such situations. Indeed those former captives who were thankfully spared from Indian violence would not readily admit to it. The editing and publishing trade on the other hand would rather silence any positive accounts regarding, for example, the good treatment given to adopted (former) captives, some of whom even chose to stay in the wilderness: that category of former captives are referred to as “white Indians.” What is one to make of such “editorial silence”? To what extent can this silence be interpreted as the “mouthpiece” of the deliberately silenced “voice, “that of the Indian (abductor)?

Although scholars of Indian captivity narrative have not addressed the issue of Indian voice in captivity narratives, very significant works have been dedicated to an array of interrelated topics in captivity narratives. Among the issues which are closely related to this study, one can name: analysis of the narrative voice, the portrayal of the Indians and their way of life, gender issues, to mention but a few. These issues will be taken up in a new perspective in order to uncover and decipher the Indian voice in narrative written by the white. Both Robert F. Berkhofer’s *The White Man’s Indian* and Karen Ordahl Kupperman’s *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* respectively offer the European and, more specifically, the English conception of the Indians.

One of the major works challenging the scholarly dominant argument that Indians are deprived of their voice in history was published by Hilary E. Wyss. In *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity and Native Community in Early America*, Wyss points out that scholars have ignored a specific body of narratives from the time of the first encounters between Indians and European settlers. These narratives stand out from the rest of the genre in that they were written by Christianized Indians. While the first significant Native American narrative is generally attributed to William Apess who published his autobiography, *A Son of the Forest*, in 1829, Wyss suggests that there had been significant Indian testimonies as far back as 150 years prior to the publication of Apess’s work. These accounts were written by Native Converts to Christianity who learned to read and

write at Eliot's missionary schools. Hilary Wyss argues that Native Americans who converted to Christianity acquired a separate and specific identity as a result of which the narratives they produced offer a distinct perspective and a unique Indian voice that scholars should not simply reject as non-authentic because of the Christian influence.

In *The Indian Captivity Narratives, 1550-1900*, Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier offer a survey of the most recurrent issues and topics in a large corpus of the more or less prominent captivity accounts covering a period of more than three hundred years. The authors describe the evolution of the Indian as viewed by successive generations of authors of captivity narratives. The attitudes range from earlier depictions "harboring ingrained prejudices, not to mention outright personal vendettas" against the Natives to later portrayals by the so called "white Indians" (52-85). In Rowlandson's case, they identify a dichotomy between two voices, one "telling the plot details" and the other "interpreting them" (101). Gender is made out to be a factor in the way in which men or women describe their captivity and portray the Indians' way of life. This particular point is addressed thoroughly by June Namias in *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*. She believes that "from the beginning, gender constructed perceptions of 'the wilderness' and the ways in which men and women wrote about and acted in it" (263).

As for the specifically Puritan captivity narratives, in *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity*, Gary L. Ebersole approaches the genre of captivity narratives through the prism of Rowlandson's account as he believes that only when "we have reconstructed the word of Rowlandson's text in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries will we be prepared to appreciate the significance of the different ways the captivity topos has been represented and reinterpreted by diverse readers over the centuries" (15).

This study aims to approach a selected corpus of Puritan narrative from both a historical and narratological perspective and to shed new light on the Indian

agency in narratives written by the white. Interestingly, the new reading I will be proposing should to some extent challenge the argument, often repeated among scholars, of the non-existence, or at least non-authenticity of the Indian voice in colonial writings. An even greater challenge resides in the fact that most of the narratives in my corpus are Puritan narratives which are defined by scholars as “ethnocentric” in that they lack a direct description of the Indians, the kind that can be found for example in Spanish captivity narratives, in John Smith’s narrative or in other forms of frontier literature. For me, the challenge will be to use the above-mentioned tools and previous studies to decompose the ethnocentric discourse and look for instances of Indian narrative agency in order to offer a contribution to the several studies interpreting the early contacts between the Indians and the European settlers, particularly those with a Puritan background.

To best explore this topic and these themes, I have organized my study as follows: the first section sets out to contextualize the corpus in colonial New England history in order to identify the main topical issues closely related to the formation of the mainstream Puritan discourse and related secondary voices, including the said Indian voice. In other words, this section will place the captivity narratives in the broader literary context of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and, specifically, in the historical development of the Puritan settlements. Their development was accompanied by a surge in written records describing the early stages of contact and confrontation between the (mainly Puritan) settlers and the native Indians. A close analysis of these records provides information not only on the natives’ life and habits, but also on the developing terminology used by the Puritans to refer to the natives. We also find therein an account of the way in which some of the Puritans sought to immerse themselves into the Indians’ cultural and linguistic environment. For all the efforts deployed to uncover layer after layer of native reality, the Indian voice is still partly veiled by social, religious and, not least, political tensions that existed between rival sections of the educated Puritan elite, making it possible to observe the occasional emergence of dissident voices. It will be interesting to ask whether and, if so, to what extent those dissenting voices can arguably be considered as a counter-current to the hegemonic Puritan

discourse and whether the messages they convey served the Indian voice. This part of the discussion references such authors as William Bradford (1590–1657), John Winthrop (1587–1649), John Eliot (1604-1690), Roger Williams (1603-1683) or Thomas Morton (1579-1647), to name but a few. It will be followed by an examination of literary works by later Puritans including those contributed by the prominent Mather family. This initial survey of the literary landscape of the early Puritan colonies will be complemented by a study of the readership of this prolific literature and an assessment of the level of literacy among 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century New Englanders. This will allow an estimate of the reception given to the early captivity narratives by those people in the community who had the ability to read and write. In addition to remarks on the subject of audience reception, I shall consider the didactic role played by the captivity theme in its published form.

The second part weighs the different layers of the above-mentioned filter enveloping the Indian voice, and focuses on the different aspects of authorship and authority in and behind Puritan captivity narratives. We begin with a presentation of the main problem of the autobiographical genre, i.e., the question of the dominant narrative voice. Then the emphasis will shift to the key seventeenth-century captivity narratives relating the experience of Puritan women, who are either the author or a first-hand source talking to a ghost writer. Of importance in this part are *The Narrative of the Captivity and the Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), “A Narrative of Hannah Swarton” (1697), and “A Narrative of Hannah Duston’s Notable Deliverance from Captivity” (1697). After a discussion of the female voice in these three selections, I shall go on to examine religious political propaganda, a theme notably exemplified in Reverend John Williams’ *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1707). This will be followed by a subsection on “manly” issues (heroism, etc.) that also appear in captivity narratives alongside the more typically female narrative issues. Together both are pervaded by underlying values reflected in the use of a distinct subjective language. The last chapter in this second section examines involuntary elements that test the limits of the professed truthfulness and authenticity of the autobiographical accounts. The elements in question are mainly of a pathological nature. For example, one should



consider how the authors confronted the traumatic experience of captivity in the wilderness, or their recovery process to overcome the trauma. One typical way of addressing the issue of trauma is “adaptation and going native,” which leads to the last section of this study in which I look at the narrative voice of those former captives who *went native*. On this point, I will focus on inconsistencies and breaches in the narratives which can be seen as the narrator’s and/or the author’s attempts to deny the process of *going native*. Through its *narratological breaches*, that voice is more apt to afford us glimpses into manifestations of the ever elusive “Indian voice.”

Hence the third and last part of my study deals with the Indian voice in its indirect manifestations, such as deductions inferred from specific narrative techniques, including focalization. The narrator—often the former captive—provides subjectively colored information about his or her abductors and sometimes even includes references to alleged utterances supposedly made by the Indians. In addition to a detailed analysis of such quotations or summaries of pronouncements directly attributed to the Indians, a separate chapter will be used to “undo” the narrator’s silence in the face of delicate situations that could have compromised their reputation as good Puritans or in cases where the culture of the kidnappers is praised. This discussion of the so-called “narrative silence” will be followed by a discussion of the scarcity of captivity narratives dealing with the special case of those captives who made a conscious decision to stay with their erstwhile captors because they found advantages to the Indian life and therefore never returned to the white world. In this chapter we will address to what extent editorial silence can paradoxically be seen as strengthening the Indian voice. In other words: can narrative and editorial level “silences” be construed into eloquent tools at the service of the Indian voice?

# **1. Contextualization of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

## **Captivity Narratives**

As stated in the introduction, the main studies examining the Native American voice should be approached from both an historical and a political perspective and cover the full chronological range from the first contacts between New England Native Americans and the Puritan settlers to the period immediately preceding the American Revolution. The present chapter proposes to examine the Indian voice as documented in the early Puritan writings before moving to the specific corpus of captivity narratives.

### **1.1. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial America**

For the purpose of this study, I define the historical context of the 17<sup>th</sup>- and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century colonial New England from the point of view of the relationship between the Native Americans and the European settlers. Historians typically divide this period into the following subsections: the “fairy tale” period immediately after the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620 and their first encounters with the Indians, the Pequot War (1637), King Philip’s War (1675-1676), The French and Indian wars in North America (1688-1763),<sup>23</sup> and eventually the run-up to the American Revolution in the late eighteenth century.

Abductions described within most early American captivity narratives largely took place during the above-mentioned wars. Given the prevailing ideology and the fact that 17<sup>th</sup> century white settlements were comprised of highly literate Puritan colonists, it was only logical that the narratives portrayed settlers as civilized people and the Indians as primitive incarnations of the wilderness. My point here is to contrast the ideological representation of their respective voices: the voice of the purportedly civilized world vs. the voice of the wilderness (the primitives).

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<sup>23</sup> The French and Indian wars included four major conflicts: King William’s War (1688-1697), Queen Anne’s War (1702-1713), King George’s War (1744-1748) and The French and Indian War proper (1754-1763).

In this context, it is legitimate to discuss both civilization and primitivism through Claude Lévi-Strauss's conceptualization of both terms based on literacy and writing:

The way of thinking among people we call, usually and wrongly, 'primitive'—let's describe them rather as 'without writing,' because I think this is really the discriminatory factor between them and us—has been interpreted in two different fashions, both of which in my opinion were equally wrong." (15)

Lévi-Strauss questions the validity of two features very commonly attributed to 'primitive' thinking, one "determined by the basic need of life" and the second "entirely determined by emotion and mystic representations" (15). Bearing in mind the above-addressed criticism of this kind of inquiries about the so-called "Indian voice," when dealing with the authenticity of such a voice, one must admit that colonial narratives in general and those dealing with captivity in particular clearly tend to elide the Indian voice in favor of the white Christian one, since most of these texts were used as tools for proselytizing and faith-strengthening. However, as suggested by Calloway, the key to this investigation is to know WHERE to look for the Indian voice and how to approach these texts, even though they were written by Whites (v). Therefore to tackle the issue one needs to contextualize our narratives in history—in particular the history of the New England colonial period.

The most obvious difficulty in this respect is to adequately differentiate between actual history and literary myth. According to Sacvan Bercovitch, the Puritan conquest of the New World is a

conquest by arms and conquest by the word—the 'discovery of America' is the modern instance par excellence of how these two kinds of violence are entwined; how metaphor becomes fact, and fact, metaphor; how the realms of power and myth can be reciprocally sustaining; and how that reciprocity can encompass widely disparate outlooks. (35)

One must therefore make sense of the true nature of the encounter between the Puritans and the Indians before beginning to discuss the specific genre of captivity narratives as described earlier.

The relationship between the Whites and the Indians was one of antagonistic coexistence. This antagonism unfolds within the logic of racial alienation of minorities, which has been emphasized by literature and, more recently, film. In typical Hollywood westerns the white hero invariably triumphs over the “nasty savage.”<sup>24</sup> Movies generally legitimize hostile and violent actions perpetrated by the white man against the “savages” in the settler’s aim to build a new civilized world, an approach in contradiction with the earlier peaceful nature of contacts between the European settlers and the Natives.

Indeed the relationship between Indians and the whites in general and the Puritans in particular had not always been hostile and conflicting. According to Alden T. Vaughan, even before the Pilgrims’ arrival on the Mayflower in 1620, participants in earlier expeditions to America owed their survival, at least to an arguably quite considerable extent, to a reasonably positive relationship with the Indians:

BEFORE 1607, all English voyages to the area later called New England were intended to be transient. But with the chartering of the London and Plymouth companies in 1606, major colonization projects began, and a year later two incipient colonies had precarious footholds on American soil. Within another year the London Company’s settlement at Jamestown,

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<sup>24</sup> This was especially the case in earlier movies. “But, though they were more human than previous film presentations, the cinematic Indians of the fifties failed to achieve historic or anthropologic reality. They were still caricatures. More importantly, the problems confronting Indians were never presented as part of the whole system of white imperialism; as with blacks, Indians suffered at the hands of specific, atypical, usually neurotic, bad whites—the greedy trader, the vainglorious cavalry officer and so on” (Miller 333). This changed to some extent later on. As for the evolution of the Westerns in their portrayal of the Indians from the silent movies to the nineties, Bob Herzberg writes: “In the silent days, there seemed to be, more or less, a well-rounded portrait of the Indians. When talkies arrived, things were changed somewhat. In films like Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Plainsman*, the Indian was a murderous savage, with few, if any, redeeming qualities. By the 1990’s and beyond, in the wake of the release of the Best Picture Oscar winner *Dances with Wolves*, filmmakers would basically continue with this portrayal, not only forever destroying the picture of the Indian as a murderous savage, but unfortunately going to the other extreme. Tribes that had been responsible for some of the most vicious massacres in American history suddenly became lovable Teddy bears who helped lost white children and were more pro-environment than Ralph Nader” (1). In both cases, what Miller describes as the Manichean approach of Hollywood westerns neglected the very early encounters between the English settlers with New England Native Americans. More recently, one might also think of *The New World* (2005) by Terrence Malick. While some critics criticized the slow pacing of the picture, of the soundtrack as well as the long shots of the vast landscapes, the editing captures pretty well the descriptions of the wilderness in early travelers’ accounts.

though beset with troubles, held fast; its sister colony in Maine had already expired. In each case, relations with Indian tribes contributed to the fate of the colony. (Vaughan, *New England Frontier* 6)

Just as scholars have studied New Spain through the prism of exploratory narratives like that of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, New France through equivalent narratives by Samuel Champlain and the *Jesuit Relations*,<sup>25</sup> Chesapeake in John Smith's narratives, so for New England, too, there are high profile sources of the time when whose writings deal with the conquest of the New World. Hence in his introduction to the 1908 edition of *Winthrop's Journal*, James Kendall Hosmer writes:

Winthrop, Bradford, Adams, Quincy, Lowell, Hoar, Sherman, Savage, Saltonstall, Brewster, Eliot, Phillips, Brooks, Emerson, Hawthorne, Endicott, Winslow, Cushman, Higginson, and many more, are names in our own day, dominant, often brilliantly distinguished, in various ways, the same names that are borne on the lists of men who shipped for New England when the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court were pressing with heavy hand. (5)

These people were not only influential at the time in terms of the decisions they made and of the role they played in setting up the colony, but also indirectly through the written works they left behind. These texts prove important sources as historians set out to write the narrative of colonial history.

A study of Puritan discourse and the Indian voice requires consideration of at least three of these illustrious names: John Winthrop, William Bradford, and John Eliot, whom Bradford called a "Friend of the Massachusetts Indians" (ix). How did the Puritans portray the Natives from their first encounters to the outburst of the first conflicts some generations later? The following chapter deals

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<sup>25</sup> "The Jesuit missionaries who came to the French territory in America during the seventeenth century were required to submit written annual reports to their superior at Quebec or Montreal. Annually, between 1632 and 1673, the superior compiled and edited a journal, or 'Relation,' of the most important materials and forwarded it to the provincial. Known collectively as the *Jesuit Relations*, they were published in a series of volumes issued from the press of Sebastian Cramoisy in Paris." (VanDerBeets 3) For the sake of comparison, I will later discuss a Jesuit Martyrdom, *Novum Belgium*, by Father Isaac Jogues. The latter's captivity among the Mohawks in 1642 is related in a letter sent to his religious hierarchy (Sayres, ed. 93).

with those developments, placing a particular emphasis on the literary aspect and on the changes in imagery and terms most commonly employed in reference to the Natives.

While relying on the key works dealing with the subject, such as *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1856)<sup>26</sup> by William Bradford and the autobiographical *Journal of John Winthrop*, one must be aware of the problem of the absence of a countercurrent to the mainstream Puritan discourse. This poses a significant methodological challenge to scholars in quest of the Native perspective. How can one arrive at a fair contextualization of the present selection of captivity narratives and speak of an Indian voice in both its ideological and narratological meanings when the only primary sources available were written by the above-mentioned illustrious Pilgrims and Puritans? How can one expect to find a significant and/or credible Indian voice in these sources and in the captivity narratives?

In order to answer these questions and to assess the portrayal of the Indians by the early New England writers, the following chapter will be organized as follows: first, I will discuss the referential works such as *Of Plymouth Plantation* by William Bradford and John Winthrop's *Journal*. These two books offer a glimpse of the Puritan representation of the wilderness in general and of the Indians in particular. Second, I will discuss the evolution of the Puritan portrayal toward a more markedly religious perspective as demonstrated in the writings of the Puritan missionary, John Eliot. In contrast to his predecessors, Eliot put the stress on the Indians themselves and particularly emphasized the need to study native languages—an approach also to be found in Roger Williams's *Key into the Language of America* (1643). The latter is a prominent example of the countercurrent literature of the time, alongside *New English Canaan*, by the non-Puritan writer Thomas Morton. Finally, I shall close this chapter with a look at one of the most controversial figures of Puritan dissent, the “infamous” Anne Hutchinson, who challenged the patriarchal authority of her time. Hutchinson's

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<sup>26</sup> Bradford started writing his book in 1630 and put it aside until 1644 working on it through 1646, but the manuscript was not published until 1856 (see Lauter, *Heath Anthology* 311).

relevance goes beyond her role as a dissident among Puritans; she is also important as a woman writer in early American literature and through her, one can raise gender-specific issues relevant to her period decades before the publication of the key narrative in the present study: Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative.

### ***1.1.1. William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation***

Although it was not published before the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* addresses the very first incidents in the cohabitation between the Puritan settlers and the Indians. The book opens with the "discontent of the Puritans" (7) in England and describes the developments that ultimately resulted in their decision to leave for the New Continent following the difficulties they had experienced as refugees in Holland. Apart from its merits from the historical point of view, Bradford's work also provides interesting material for research on attitudes towards the Indians. Based on an examination of how Bradford refers to the Indians, one can distinguish different historical and lexicological stages in the narrative.

In the first section of his book, the author describes the Indians from an earlier European perspective. Bradford first refers to the inhabitants of the "vast countries of America" soon to be settled by the victims of religious persecution in England as follows:

The place they thought of was some one of those vast countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation, where the natives are only savage and brutish men, who range up and down like wild beasts. [...]. Those that should escape these miseries would be in constant danger of the savages, who are cruel, barbarous, and most treacherous, furious in their rage, and merciless where they overcome, not being content only to kill, but delighting to torment men in the most bloody manner.  
(17)



One can assume that the language used to describe the “savages” comes from the perspective of the European collective imagination of the time, which in turn resulted from various records of earlier expeditions to the New World:

[...] the French and the English would have approached the New World’s inhabitants with the same basic values and orientations as had the Spanish. Thus whether they were or were not influenced by Spanish reporters, French and English explorers saw Native Americans in light of the Christianity and civilization they knew and valued and therefore made the same comparisons as had the Spanish adventurers and settlers earlier. (Berkhofer 12-13)

Even after the arrival in the Colony and before the settlers first catch sight of the Natives, the word “savage” is recurrent in Bradford’s book.<sup>27</sup> This reference to the Natives as “the savages” comes within the over-generalizing perspective through which the settlers apprehended the strange and unknown inhabitant of the New World. As such, it was just a reflection of European collective imagination.

It was with this imagery in mind that Bradford makes his first reference to the “wilderness:”

Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? If they looked behind them there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and which was now a barrier and gulf to separate them from all the civilized world. (29)

His conceptualization of the Natives stems from his vision of the land that Puritans perceive as *the wilderness*. Roderick Nash, for instance, looks further into the use of the term by the American colonists:

Indeed, ‘wilderness’ may, in retrospect, be the wrong word to characterize North America at the time of European contact. But the colonists *did* use it, and they carried the full set of pastoral prejudices. Living on the edge of what they took to be a vast wilderness, they re-experienced the insecurities of the first farmers and town builders. There was, initially, too much wilderness for appreciation. Understandably, the wild people of

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<sup>27</sup> Although Bradford had sailed on board the Mayflower himself, he refers to himself in the third person and his narrative is related from a group’s (the settlers) perspective.

the New World seemed 'savages,' and their wild habitat a moral and physical wasteland fit only for conquest and transformation in the name of progress, civilization and Christianity. (xiii)

The term "wilderness" as it appears in Bradford's narrative reflects the settler's collective fears as they set out to explore the unknown, leaving behind their civilized world and embracing the new place after the many sacrifices of the daunting voyage across the ocean. This conception of the New World stems from already existing descriptions made by non-Puritan explorers, such as Captain John Smith. Smith's description of New England in *The General History of Virginia* and, more importantly, his map of New England capture the essence of the explorers' pragmatic conception of the New World.

It is worth mentioning Smith's representation of the New World as Bradford's text recaptures the pragmatism of explorers such as Smith, unlike the explicitly religious connotations encountered in texts authored by second and third generations of Puritans in their depiction of the wilderness in general and its inhabitants in particular. In Smith's map, the ocean occupies more than 50% of the space. This reflects Europeans' conception of the long voyage across the ocean. As for the destination, it is in turn depicted as a vast land with English-named places and hills and wild animals. Considering the absence of any human shape on the largely illustrated map, does the wild beast refer to the Natives of the land?

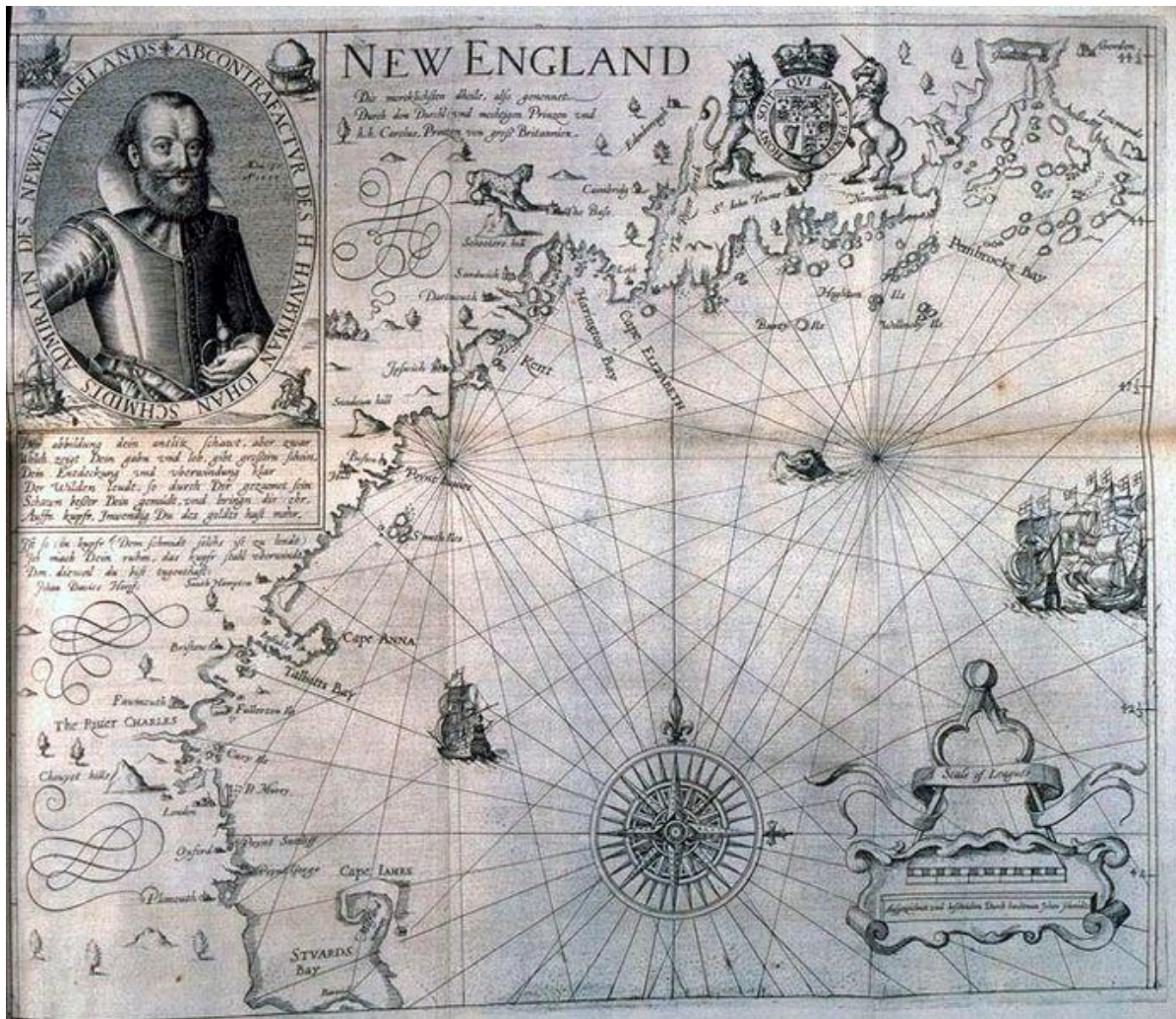


Illustration 1. Captain John Smith's map of New England. A Description of New England; or Observations and Discoveries in the North of America in the year of our Lord 1614. (x)

One can suppose so, considering that Smith's texts equates the Natives to animals:

They are very strong, of an able body and full of agilitie, able to endure to lie in the woods under a tree by the fire, in the worst of winter, or in the weedes and grasse, in Ambuscado in the Sommer. They are inconstant in everything, but what feare constraineth them to keepe. (62)

Smith goes further by writing: "It is strange to see how their bodies alter with their dyet, even as the deere & wilde beasts they seeme fat and leane, strong and weake" (65). Smith's tradition perpetuated in Bradfor's text, whose depiction of the "wild"

inhabitant in the wilderness is also characterized by recurring motifs of strangeness and the unknown.<sup>28</sup>

Bradford emphasizes the settler's complex attitude toward "the savages"—a complexity stemming from their mixed feelings: on the one hand, their fear of the unknown, on the other hand, some measure of intellectual curiosity regarding the Natives. In the following extract, for example, Bradford describes an inconclusive episode of attempted contact with the aliens:

[The settlers] saw five or six persons with a dog coming towards them. These were savages; but they fled into the woods, and the English followed them, partly to see if they could speak with them, and partly to discover if there might not be more of them lying in ambush. But the Indians, perceiving that they were followed, again forsook the woods, and ran away on the sands as hard as they could, so that our men could not come near them. (30)

Bradford's dehumanization of the Indians is not limited to his depiction of the elusive savages hiding in the woods, unable to communicate and constituting a threat. He even goes as far as to randomly attribute the strange sounds and noises coming from the woods to animals or to "savages:"

About midnight they heard a hideous cry, and their sentinel called "Arm, arm;" so they hurried themselves and shouldered their arms, and shot off a couple of muskets, and then the noise ceased. *They concluded that it must be a pack of wolves, or other wild beasts;* for one of the seamen told them he had often heard such noises in Newfoundland. [...] Presently, all of a sudden, they heard a great and strange cry, which they knew to be the same voices heard in the night, though they varied their notes, and one of their company being abroad came running in, and cried "Men, Indians, Indians!" and at the same time arrows came flying among them. The cry of the Indians was

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<sup>28</sup> In the History of New England, Smith refer to the Natives by their tribe names: "The principall habitation Northward we were at, was Pennobscot : Southward along the Coast and up the Rivers, we found Mecadacut, Segocket, Pemaquid, Nuscoucus, Sagadahock, Avmoughcowgen, and Kenebeke; and to those Countries belong the people of Segotago, Paghhuntanuck, Pecopassum, Taughtanakagnet, Warbigganus, Nassaque, Masherosqueck, Wawrigweck, Moshoguen, Wakcogo, Pasharanack, &c. To these are alied in confederacy, the Countries of Ancocisco, Accomynticus, Passataquack, Aggawom, and Naemkeck: All these for any thing I could perceive, differ little in language, fashion, or government, though most of them be Lords of themselves, yet they hold the Bashabes of Penobscot, the chiefe and greatest amongst them" (12).

dreadful, especially when they saw our men running out their rendezvous towards the shallop, to recover their arms. The Indians meanwhile were wheeling about on them. (31-32)

So far, Bradford has described the Indians as the settlers see and refer to them, the sounds they give off—which seem barely distinct from wild beasts’ and their initial escape upon first catching sight of the settlers.

This image of the unapproachable, dangerous and quasi animalistic Natives changes with the first actual encounter, the meeting between the settlers and the Indian chief, Massasoit, accompanied by Squanto:

About the 16th of March a certain Indian came boldly among them and spoke to them in broken English which they could well understand but were astonished at. His name was Samoset; he told them also of another Indian whose name was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England and could speak better English than himself. Being dismissed, after some time of entertainment and with gifts, he afterward came again, and five more with him, and they returned all the tools that had been stolen, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem, called Massasoit; who, about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and other attendants and with the aforesaid Squanto. (36)

This scene signals a major new development in the unfolding relationship between the two sides. One can see in it a form of rite of passage<sup>29</sup> which “humanizes” the Natives. Here the Indian ceases to be a mere savage making indistinct sounds in the woods and is shown as belonging to a social group of individuals with a leader and even interpreters.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the easing the communication between the

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<sup>29</sup> I use the notion of “rite of passage” as explained by Arnold Van Gennep: “The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another. Wherever there are fine distinctions among age or occupational groups, progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts, like those which make up apprenticeship in our trades. Among semicivilized peoples such acts are enveloped in ceremonies, since to the semicivilized mind no act is entirely free of the sacred. In such societies every change in a person’s life involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane—actions and reactions to be regulated and garded so that society as a whole will suffer no discomfort or injury. Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man’ life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings” (2). Here, “rite of passage” is applied to the presupposed description by Bradford, which elevates his narrative vision of a group (Indians) from the animalistic state to human beings.

<sup>30</sup> The role of Samoset and Squanto is not only crucial for the colony at the time but also very important as an early representation of the phenomenon of captivity. Samoset and Squanto can be

two sides and helping to bring about the eventual signature of a treaty of coexistence and good neighborliness, the interpreters, perhaps more importantly, made it possible for the Natives to make their voices heard for the first time.

In its earliest form, the Indian voice expresses itself in a series of agreements between the Indians and the settlers:

1. That neither he [Massasoit] nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of their people.
2. That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs [the settlers'], he should send the offender that they might punish him.
3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.
4. If any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; if any did war against them, he should aid them.
5. He should send to his neighboring confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
6. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them. (Bradford 37)

The terms of the treaty clearly stress the security aspect. The settlers are designated by “them” as a group while the Indians are represented by their Sachem referred to as “he.” Although the “he” and “them” seem to get along, the treaty

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seen as emblematic figures in discussing the dialogues in captivity narratives (in the last section of this study) in that these two Indians played a significant role in giving a voice to the earliest Indians encountered by Europeans, as the first victims of captivity were actually native Americans, as Ada Savin notes: “Les premières victimes furent en fait les Indiens qu’Espagnols, Français et plus tard Anglais capturaient afin de les réduire en esclavage ou de les exhiber publiquement de ce côté-ci de l’Atlantique. En somme, ils constituent une sorte de butin exotique. Ce qui était considéré comme une pratique acceptable de la part des Européens devenait un acte de barbarie et de sauvagerie contre l’être blanc civilisé, dès que celui-ci en était victime” (21) (“In fact, the first victims were Indians captured by the Spanish, the French and, later on, the English for the purpose of enslaving them or putting them on show on this side of the Atlantic, essentially parading them as some sort of exotic booty. But what was regarded as normal practice when perpetrated by Europeans became a barbaric and ruthless action if a civilized White happened to be at the receiving end of such treatment”) (My translation). Squanto also travelled to England as an Indian captive of the whites, a fact which may prompt one to question the classical characterization of the captivity phenomena of the Christian whites being captive of the savages. Richard Pointer, for instance, writes: “Europeans were usually inclined to speed up the process of language acquisition by taking Indians back to Europe, often against their will. There they expected that the natives in childlike fashion would quickly assimilate the Europeans’ language through imitation. Linguistically equipped Indians would then be returned to the Americas to serve as interpreters and guides” (147).

reflects both groups' concerns that the agreement may come to be infringed upon by new settlers from England or other Indian tribes.<sup>31</sup>

Bradford goes on to describe the role played by the Indians in the settlers' daily lives. Positive turns of phrase such as "friendly entertainment," "gifts given," "peace and acquaintance" take over from the wholesale dehumanizing condemnation of the Natives seen at the beginning of the text. Bradford cites several examples of the indispensable help the colonists received: "He [Squanto] directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never left them until he died" (37). Conversely, Bradford also cites the help proffered by the English to the Indians when a smallpox epidemic broke out:

But those of the English house, though at first they were afraid of the infection, yet seeing their woful and sad condition, and hearing *their pitiful cries and lamentations, had compassion on them, and daily fetched them wood and water, and made them fires*, got them victuals whilst they lived and buried them when they died. Few of them escaped, notwithstanding they did what they could for them, to their own hazard. The chief sachem himself died, and almost all his friends and kindred. But not one of the English was so much as sick, or in the least measure tainted with the disease. And this mercy which they showed them was kindly taken, and thankfully acknowledged by all the Indians that knew or heard of it, and the people here much commended and rewarded them for it. (61-62, my emphasis)

For all the apparent reciprocity and mutual benefit that would thus seemingly come about as a result of the agreement between the two sides, Bradford's narration strategy is not as innocent as it tends ostensibly to appear. The value which Bradford attaches to the respective bringing of aid is not equal. While the settlers gladly take advantage of the helpful guidance and interpreting services they receive from the likes of Squanto in pursuing the exploitation of the new land, Bradford makes it unambiguously clear that the Indians are not the colonists' equals. This comes out in the way the author depicts the hopeless plight of the

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<sup>31</sup> We will see later in this study that the terms of the treaty proved to be predictive in that the first conflict between the settlers and the Indians involved a different tribe (Pequot tribe) and that the

Natives in the face of the smallpox epidemic. Bradford stresses how critical the settler’s help had been in responding to the “cries and lamentations.” One may conclude that Bradford plays the race card by contrasting the Indians’ implicit lack of dignity with the settlers’ generous compassion, an attitude also seen in the first Massachusetts seal which features and Indian saying “come and help us.” (See the illustration below)



Illustration 2. The First Massachusetts seal. William Francis GALVIN. « The History of the Arms and Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. » *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. 4 Feb. <<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/presea/sealhis.htm>>

At the beginning of Bradford’s chronologically organized text, the Natives are referred to either as “savages” or “Indians” without any effort made to distinguish between the tribes. Later on in the narrative, the range of attitudes

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expansion of the colony caused the early discords between the two groups.



broadens somewhat to encompass not just general references to the Indians as a non-descript whole seen in terms of their relative “usefulness” to the settlers, but also descriptions of specific groups of Indians. Paralleling his description of the weakened tribe of the friendly Massasoit,<sup>32</sup> Bradford introduces the Narragansetts (“the great people of the Narragansetts”), remarking that “peace and acquaintance was pretty well established between the English and the Natives about them” (39). In the next chapter, Bradford establishes a direct link between the arrival of more settlers on board the *Fortune* (1621) and the *Charity* (1624) and the deterioration of the relations with the Natives.

Although the disputes to which Bradford refers in the title of the corresponding chapter do not degenerate into armed conflict, the new depicted tension does give rise to an exchange of recriminations and threats:

Soon after this ship's departure the great people of the Narragansetts, in a braving manner, sent a messenger unto them with a *bundle of arrows tied* with a great snake-skin, which *their interpreters told them was a threat and a challenge*. Upon which the Governor with the advice of others sent them a round answer that if they had rather have war than peace, they might begin when they pleased; they had done them no wrong, neither did any fear them, nor should they find them unprovided: and by another messenger sent the *snake-skin back with bullets* in it; but they would not receive it, and so sent it back again This made them more careful to look out for themselves, so that they agreed to enclose their dwellings with a good strong pale, and make flankers in convenient places, with gates which they locked every night, and kept a watch. (41-42, my emphasis)

Despite the bad blood in evidence within the preceding extract, Bradford still exhibits signs of genuine appreciation, as suggested by the use of the phrase “the great people of Narragansetts.” While already hinting at the conflicts to come, the passage has nothing of the implicit hatred that pervades the writings of future

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<sup>32</sup> Bradford refers to a plague which devastated the Indian tribe before the arrival of the Plymouth settlers: “there had been great mortality in these parts about three years before the arrival of the English, when thousands of them died—so many, in fact, that the living were not able to bury the dead, and their bones and skulls were found in many places still lying above the ground” (38).

Puritan authors, notably the Mathers, who consistently demonize the Natives, equating them to a “red devil,” as I will be examining this later on.

An important aspect of the relationship between the settlers and the Natives is the pattern of communication between the two sides. For all the martial rhetoric—symbolic threats in the form of arrows versus bullets in lieu of the earlier exchange of gifts<sup>33</sup>—the settlers prefer to express themselves in a form more in line with their own literacy-steeped culture by sending clear messages and resorting to interpreters.

The limitations brought about by the lack of a common language and the need for interpreters tends to receive more attention at the beginning of the narrative. In his account of the first meeting, Bradford describes in detail how the two groups communicate and notes that Samoset was the first native who stroked up a conversation with the settlers in “broken English,” adding that the latter subsequently introduced another native named Squanto who “could speak better English than himself” (36). From then on, Squanto is presented as the “guide and interpreter.” Later on, references to language and communication issues become less frequent with the contents taking the precedence over the form of interaction.

Form is not altogether forgotten, however. Bradford refers to it again when he relates the arrangement relative to peace-keeping between the settlers and the Indians. The interpreters assumed immense responsibility for maintaining the peace and settling disputes:

A treaty and agreement betwixt the commissioners of the United Colonies and the Sagamores and deputy of Narragansetts and Niantic Indians was made and concluded. Two Indians acquainted with the English language assisted therein; they opened and cleared the whole treaty, and every article, to the Sagamores and deputy there present. (64)

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<sup>33</sup> See p. 8 of this study. For more information about the interpretations of signs, gesture, coded messages, and the exchange of gifts see Richard Pointer’s “From Imitating Language to Language of Imitation” (147).

Aside from the question of interpreters, Bradford's attitude towards the Indians has been changing as well. In addition to the shift in terminology with the beast-like "savage" gradually advancing to the status of humanized "Indian," Bradford actually names the different tribes in the final part of his work. This can also be seen as a narrative strategy, as the author sets out to describe the Pequot War (1637), the first serious armed conflict between the settlers and the Indians.

Historians usually distinguish between the Pequot War and the previous conflicts between the settlers and the Indians. Alden T. Vaughan for instance writes:

The outlook of the Narragansetts, Mohegans, Massachusetts, and River tribes differed radically from that of the Pequots. And since *most of the tribes of New England were on the white man's side*, the Pequot War cannot accurately be described as an "Indian war" in the usual sense. *This was no racial conflict between white man and red, no clash of disparate cultures or alien civilizations.* (135, my emphasis)

However accurate that statement may be from a historical perspective, Bradford, for his part, presents the Pequot War as a break in the relationships between the colonists and the Indians:

By reason of the plotting of the Narragansetts, ever since the Pequod war, the Indians were drawn into a general conspiracy against the English in all parts, as was partly discovered the year before, and now made more plain and evident by the free confessions of sundry Indians upon several occasions, which gave opportunity to understand the truth thereof and to think of means to prevent their conspiracy. This made them enter into nearer union and confederation. (63)

It is with the term "conspiracy" that Bradford concludes his statements about the relationship between the colonists and the Indians. While Bradford introduces the term towards the end of his book, when describing the aftermath of the Pequot War, Winthrop in his *Journal* refers to Indian conspiracies as predating the infamous Pequot War in the chapter dedicated to the events which took place in 1632:

There was much suspicion, that the Indians had some plot against the English, both for that many Naragansett men, etc., gathered together, who, with those of these parts, pretended to make war upon the Neipnett men, and divers insolent speeches were used by some of them, and they did not frequent our houses as they were wont, and one of their pawawes told us, that there was a conspiracy to cut us off to get our victuals and other substance. (91)

It is worth comparing Bradford's perspective with Winthrop, noting that both their works give a chronological description of the events experienced by the colonists: Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* covers 1608 to 1645; Winthrop's *Journal* more narrowly focuses on 1630 to 1649.

### **1.1.2. Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation Versus Winthrop's Journal**

Although both Bradford and Winthrop are contemporaries, the latter's attitude to the Natives differs from the former, and the colony Winthrop describes seems more mature. In Winthrop's *Journal*, one can notice the first signs of mistrust towards the same Indians whom Bradford had portrayed in relatively friendly terms very early in his *Journals*:

Captains Patrick and Underhill, military heads, were also taken care of; measures were adopted to keep firearms from the Indians, for the husbanding of corn, and the prevention of drunkenness. Discipline was vigorous and most impartial, whipping and the 'bilbowes' often being resorted to. (52)

As Indians acquire firearms, Winthrop's focus shifts. No longer is he concerned with treaties on land and alliances, but instead concern for the safety of the colony consumes him. In his *Journal*, Winthrop nevertheless refers to the Indians in terms of the role formally assigned to them in the organization of the colony. His style is ethnocentric in the sense that the focus is solely on the plight of the Puritan family. The writer only deals with Indians from the point of view of their kindness and help to the stranded Whites.

If one compares Winthrop's text to Bradford's, one notices that both share their insights on the relationship between their fellow colonists with the Natives, which allows the reader to reach some conclusions with regard to the terminology used to refer to the Natives, on the one hand, and to the historical background in which the same terminology evolved, on the other. For instance, Winthrop does not use the term "savage" in his *Journal* the way Bradford does.<sup>34</sup> Yet both Governors' contributions to the colonial literature dealing with Indians relations are marginal issues in their discourse, which appear among other issues faced by the colonists.<sup>35</sup>

Both Bradford and Winthrop refer to the Indians as a distant entity. Their descriptive attitude has shifted from a depiction of Indians as animalistic beings to humanized helpers and then to fickle bands of roving warriors. These transitions should be kept in mind, as they constitute a descriptive pattern of the different captivity narratives that I will relate in the following chapters of this study, albeit drawn by different authorial motivations. Yet before embarking on the discussion of the captivity narratives per se, it is worth keeping up with the survey of the early colonial works and devoting the next chapter to the literature which is exclusively dealing with the Indians.

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<sup>34</sup> It seems that the use of the term is limited to Bradford's discussion of American Indians before the settlers come to meet them. The term *savage*, however, did have a strong comeback later on, particularly in the second generation Puritan literature.

<sup>35</sup> As I will show later in this study, one of the specificities of colonial literature in general and Puritan literature in particular is that the latter includes multidisciplinary works by the same authors. Some of the colonial writers, notably Bradford and Winthrop, held important political positions; others were socially and politically influential ministers such as John Eliot and Increase and Cotton Mather (later generations).

## **1.2. Colonial Literature Exclusively Devoted to the Indians**

While Bradford and Winthrop introduced the reader to the early encounters between the European settlers and the Indians, authors such as Roger Williams and John Eliot focused more on examining Indian society and languages. Both struggled to develop efficient communication patterns upon having considered the need to learn the native languages. Eliot was known as the “the famous apostle to the Indians”<sup>36</sup> for preaching the gospel among them, and more importantly for his linguistic works and his translation of the Bible to the Algonquian languages. Winthrop, for instance, first introduces John Eliot as the Friend of the Massachusetts Indian in his *Journal*, as he mentions Eliot’s sermons advocating peacekeeping between his parishioners and the neighboring Indian tribes (142).

### **1.2.1. John Eliot’s New England’s First Fruits**

Eliot published his first didactic work *New England’s First Fruits* in 1643. In it, he offers a review of some success stories resulting from Eliot’s evangelical endeavors among the Indians. Eliot opens with a listing of the main difficulties encountered by the missionaries while preaching the gospel to the Indians:

First, their infinite distance from Christianity, having never been prepared thereunto by any Civility at all. Secondly, the *difficulty of their Language to us, and of ours to them*; there being no Rules to learne either by. Thirdly, the diversity of their owne Language to it selfe; every part of that Countrey having its own Dialect, differing much from the other; all which make their coming into the Gospel the more flow. (4)

Eliot regards the language barrier as the main obstacle preventing Indians from assimilating into European civilization and accepting Christianity. The linguistic

issue led Eliot to focus his missionary efforts on teaching English to Indians and prompting even more English scholars to learn Indian languages; therefore, *New England's First Fruits* record the endeavors of both English scholars and Indians. In surmounting the linguistic barrier, only then could those like Eliot Christianize and “civilize” the Indians.

Similar to that of Bradford, Eliot considers Sagamore an example of the success of the Christian mission among the Natives and introduces him as follows:

*Sagamore John, Prince of Massachusettes, was from our very first landing more courteous, ingenious, and to the English more loving then others of them; he desired to learne and speake our Language, and loved to imitate us in our behaviour and apparrell, and began to hearken after our God and his wayes, [...] and being convinced that our condition and wayes were better farre then theirs, did resolve and promise to leave the Indians, and come live with us; but yet kept downe by feare of the scoffes of the Indians, had not power to make good his purpose; yet went on, not without some trouble of mind, and secret plucks of Conscience... (5-6)*

One may induce from this passage that, more than a communication tool between the Indians and the European settlers, the English language skills among the Indians actually helped to create a subcategory of Indians. In his narrative, Eliot clearly opposes Indians like Sagamore, who learned or were willing to learn English and take up the settlers’ religion and civilization, and those who not only refused to follow the English path but also threatened their fellow “good” Indians who followed the English path. This opposition in turn suggests an organic shift in Puritan concepts of Indian *Otherness*.

As for the concept of otherness, some scholars apply philosophical and anthropological definitions of the *other* to Native Americans. Robert F. Berkhofer, for instance writes:

As with images of other races and minorities, the essence of the White image of the Indian has been the definition of Native Americans in fact and fancy as a separate and single other.

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<sup>36</sup> See Winthrop’s *Journal* (70), Clifton Johnson’s *An Unredeemed Captive* (3), etc.

Whether evaluated as noble or ignoble, whether seen as exotic or degraded, the Indian as an image was always alien to the White. In the metaphysics of race and minority relations, such a dichotomy between the 'we' and the 'they' is common. (xv)

In contrast, Eliot's *other* differentiates the "bad" Indians from the "good" Indians. Eliot does not make a total break with the dichotomy of "we" and "they," but rather includes the Indian followers of the settler's path among the "we" category describing them as follows:

Divers of the *Indians* Children, Boyes and Girles we have received into our houses, who are long since civilized, and in subjection to us, painfull and handy in their businesse, and can speak our language familiarly; divers of whom can read English, and begin to understand in their measure, the grounds of Christian Religion. (6)

Eliot describes the affiliation of a part of the Indians who accepted the Christian path. The affiliation to this "we" group is even reinforced by a new characterization of the *other*. The latter now does not include the Indians as a whole but only those among them who stand up against Christianity and civilisation.

Not only does the *other* in his new definition exclude the good Indian, but they are a force that also hinders the Christianization of their fellow Indians. As already noted, Eliot writes that good Indians like Sagamore were afraid of the reluctant Indians. Although Eliot divides the Indians into two categories of the "followers" and the "reluctant"<sup>37</sup> to accept integration on terms of Christianization and cultural assimilation into a Western model, his terminology remains confusing. He keeps the word Indian to designate both groups and only adds a qualifier to refer to the friendly Indians. On some occasions he cites to the latter as "*Indian* of good quality" (4), but mostly Eliot rather commiserates with the Indians by calling them: "poore Indians" (19).

This commiseration in Eliot's narrative confirms two main Puritans attitudes towards the Indians. First, there is the colonial discourse aimed to

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<sup>37</sup> By the "followers", I mean the Indians who converted, and by the "reluctant," those who resisted conversion.



subjugate the Natives by depriving them of any kind of dignity. Doing so serves to legitimize the settlers' presence as well as their religious mission among the Natives. There is thus nothing new in this aspect of the Puritan discourse. In the chapter dealing with Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the motif of Indians calling out for help came into existence a long time before the Puritans settled New England and continued on until more recent colonial history.

Secondly, Eliot's narrative is among the first narratives to associate the Indian world in general and the Indian religious practices in particular with Satan. In the very first sentence of his work, Eliot qualifies those Indians as having "fate in hellish darknesse, adoring the *Divell* himselfe for their *GOD*" (3). Eliot's reference to Satan differs from earlier texts by Bradford and Winthrop,<sup>38</sup> both of which provide a contemporary and heavily troped Biblical representation of the devil of the time. Winthrop, for instance, writes, "Satan bestirred himself to hinder the progress of the gospel" (8) and the very few references to the devil which can be found Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* can be summarized in the following excerpt:

It is well known unto the godly and judicious, what wars and oppressions Satan hath raised, maintained, and continued against the saints, from time to time, and in one sort or other, ever since the first breaking out of the light of the gospel in our honorable nation of England. (7)

Although neither Bradford nor Winthrop make clear association between Satan and the Indians, they both utilize the Biblical characterization of the satanic obstacle to the spreading of God's word and will, and paved the way for Eliot's representation of the Indians as the Devil's worshipers.<sup>39</sup>

The character of the devil, here of undeniable utility, evolves a great deal in Eliot's work. Starting from his general statement of the Indians adoring the devil

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<sup>38</sup> With earlier texts, I mean narratives written earlier even if they were published later on. Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* for instance was written between 1630 and 1647 and was first published only in 1856.

<sup>39</sup> This equation of the Indians and the devil will become far more systematical among the second and third generation Puritans such as the Mathers, as this study will show later on.

and hindering the Christian mission, Eliot illustrates his claim with specific examples showing some of the Indians' demonic practices that will, in the end, not prevail against the Christian God. Eliot explains:

When he [poisoned Indian] lay upon his death bed, some Indians who were by him, wished him according to the Indian manner, to send for *Powow* (that is to say) a Wizzard; he told them, *If Jesus Christ say that Wequash shall live, then Wequash must live; if Jesus Christ say, that Wequash shall dye, then Wequash is willing to dye, And will not lengthen out his life: by any such* meanes. Before he dyed, he did bequeath his Child to the godly care of the English for education and instruction and so yielded up his soule into *Christ* his hands. (13, italics in the original)

The passage well exemplifies Eliot's missionary discourse. It simultaneously confirms Indian recourse to Satanism through the supernatural practices of Powwow and challenges the efficiency of such practices as a curative process; the obviously superior alternative being miracles, most notably those performed by Christ in the gospels. In this sense this passage purports Puritan evidence of God winning another battle over Satan.

More than emphasizing the Puritan characterization, Eliot exploits this episode to illustrate the success of his mission, which he subtly presents as a magnet attracting new followers. Eliot's text emphasizes the Indian converts will to follow the Christian path. He offers examples of Indians who, once convinced of Christian efficacy, reached out to any Puritan willing to teach them English and the Christian faith: "Others of them are very inquisitive after God and his wayes; and being themselves industrious in their Calling" (7).<sup>40</sup> Among this category of Indian followers, Eliot suggests an efficient missionary pattern of spreading of the good word. He calls its followers the *New England First Fruits*, as in the title of his work.

This far, the association between the devil and the Indians has been restricted to those Indians that have been painted in explicitly negative imagery as

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<sup>40</sup> Eliot names specific examples among these Indians (4-11).

“bad Indians” who hindered the mission and exemplified Eliot’s *new other*: “This course of his, did so disturb the Devils, that ere long some of the Indians, whose hearts Satan had filled, did secretly give him poyson, which he tooke without suspition” (13). Yet, Eliot does not seem to give up on this category of resilient and skeptical Indians, mainly advocating that the missionaries spare no effort whatsoever to convince even the most skeptical among the Indians. Eliot’s first instruction comes in the following passage:

Yet (mistake us not) we are wont to keep them at such a distance, (knowing they serve the Devill and are led by him) as not to imbolden them too much, or trust them too farre; though we do them what good we can. And the truth is, God hath so kept them, (excepting that act of the Pequits, long since, to some few of our men) that we never found any hurt from them, nor could ever prove any reall intentions of evill against us: And if there should be such intentions and that they all should combine together against us with all their strength that they can raise, we see no probable ground at all to feare any hurt from them, they being naked men, and the number of them that be amongst us not considerable. (16)

While warning his parishioners and his fellow missionaries about the devil’s mischief in controlling the Indians, he downplays the portrayal of the Indians’ harmful side by emphasizing their lack of both material and spiritual weaponry. Moreover, he only refers to that first conflict between the Indians and the settlers (Pequot War) as an isolated rebellion.

This attitude in Eliot’s educational strategy aimed at circumventing the difficulties in the way of the missionary works and at paving the way for his famous missionary strategy. This strategy was mainly based on promoting the linguistic aspect of the mission, as he urged his fellow missionaries to learn the Indian language:

By stirring up some to shew mercy to the *Indians*, in affording maintenance to some of our godly active young Schollars, there to make it their worke to studie their Language converse with them and carry light amongst them, that so the Gospell might be spread into those darke parts of the world. (42)

More practical actions followed Eliot's appeal. First, he preached his first sermon in the Indian tongue in Nonantum Hill in 1644.<sup>41</sup> He then established the first Praying Indian Village of Natick in 1651, and published a Catechism in the Indian tongue in 1653. In 1663, he completed and published his translation of the Bible into the Indian Tongue. Later in 1666, Eliot published *The Indian Grammar Begun: or, An Essay to bring the Indian Language into Rules, for the Help of such as Desire to learn the same, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them* (1666) among other works and tracts encouraging and assessing the progress of the Gospel among the Indians. Although the book is a study of Indian languages, it is mainly targeted at missionaries. For a more value-neutral work on Indian languages, one may turn to Roger Williams's 1643 publication entitled *Key into the Language of America*.

### **1.2.2. Williams's Key into the Language of America**

Williams's *A Key into the Language of America* offers two main approaches to the study of Native American languages and their speakers: A glossary of vernacular words translated into English and a section of observations, both on general and specific points. The section "observations" mainly deals with the various ethnographic and societal topics regarding the Indians. It is summarized by the author himself in the following prosaic table of contents:

Concerning them (a little to gratifie expectation) I shall  
touch upon foure Heads :  
First, by what Names they are distinguished.  
Secondly, Their Originall and Descent.  
Thirdly, their Religion, Manners, Customes, &c.  
Fourthly, That great Point of their Conversion. (18)

In contrast to Bradford and Winthrop, Williams's work, like Eliot's, focuses on the Indians themselves, but Williams's depiction of the Indians is more neutral in terms of religious value judgments than Eliot's. This is manifest in that his text,

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<sup>41</sup> See Clifton Johnson's *An Unredeemed Captive* (3).

unlike that of Eliot, is not permeated with religious references and does not give the impression of being motivated by any form of missionary agenda. A close analysis of *Key into the Language of America*, however, shows that the author does have a hidden political agenda rooted in his background as a Puritan dissenter. It prompts the following question: How does a Puritan dissenter depict the Indians and what “voice” does he endow them with?

To answer this question, I will contrast some terms included in Williams’s glossary with their use by the other Puritan writers (Bradford, Winthrop and Eliot). This will be followed by an overall description of Indian lifestyle and habits as portrayed by Williams. Finally, I will focus on some stereotypical aspect of the Indians as viewed by Williams. The aim of this study of Williams’s work is not to review the whole glossary, yet it is worth examining the terminology used to describe the Natives, and essentially the names used to refer to them. The point here is to contrast the terms used by Bradford, Winthrop, and Eliot with those of Williams’s choosing in order to determine the existing terminology before the publication of the first Puritan captivity narratives.

In the discussion about the different names given to the Natives, one can see a chronological evolution in both the characterizations and the designations. In earlier chapters, I showed that the terms used tended to evolve with changes in the communication pattern between the settlers and the Indians. Designations and qualifiers such as “savages,” “Indians,” “friends,” and/or “enemies” appear spontaneously in the narratives penned by Bradford, Winthrop, and Eliot; yet, these Puritan authors do not offer any manner of comment or justification for their choice of terms to refer to the Natives. Seemingly, the underlying reason for selecting one word or the other correlates with the various historical events to which they refer in their writings.

Accordingly, as stated in his table of content, the first aspects discussed by Roger Williams are the different names given to the Natives, from both the English and native perspectives:

First, those of the English giving: as Natives, Salvages, Indians, Wild-men, (so the Dutch call them Wilden) Abergeny men, Pagans, Barbarians, Heathen.

Secondly, their names, which they give themselves.

I cannot observe, that they ever had (before the coming of the English, French, or Dutch amongst them) any Names to difference themselves from strangers, for they knew none; but two sorts of names they had, and have amongst themselves.

First, generall, belonging to all Natives, as Ninnuock, Ninnimissinuock, Eniskeetompauwog, which signifies Men, Folke or People.

Secondly, particular names, peculiar to several! Nations of them amongst themselves, as Nanhigganeuck, Massachuseuck, Cawasumseuck, Cowweseuck, Quintikooock, Quinnipieuck, Pequttoog, &c. (18-19)

Roger Williams's first paragraph in his survey contains the different names used by both Bradford and Winthrop, as well as those used by the settlers (English and Dutch) that originated in earlier European imagination and that evolved through the different phases of the colonization of the New Continent. The survey also exhibits the well-established bipolarity that existed between the settlers and the Natives. This bipolarity, that essentially treated the Natives as a monolithic block, led to a disregard for any differentiation between the different existing tribes. In fact, Williams shows how the Indians eventually changed their perspective and surrendered to the (undifferentiated) bipolarity imposed upon them by the settlers.

Roger Williams reports an exchange he had with some Indians about the way they related to the names given to them by the Whites: "They have often asked mee, why wee call them Indians, Natives, &c. and understanding the reason, they will call themselves Indians in opposition to English &c" (19). Interestingly, as anachronistic as the term may be, Williams shows a measure of "political correctness" when using the designation "Indians." Although he used "Native" in the opening chapter of his work, he goes on to use the term "Indian"—a word

accepted by the Indians themselves. In fact, throughout the remainder of his book, Roger Williams uses both terms (“Natives” and “Indians”) interchangeably.<sup>42</sup>

As the bipolarity took root and became widely accepted even by the Indians whose social identity was diluted, a parallel development began to take place among the Indians to designate the white settlers: “English-men,” “coat-men,” “clothed-men,” “sword-men” (64). According to Williams, the Natives, too, occasionally inquired about the reasons for the Whites coming to their land. Williams refer to a recurrent question he heard in his encounters with the Indians as: “Why come the Englishmen hither?” (65). Although the tone of the question, as set within the context of Williams’s text, does not seem hostile, it nonetheless shows that the Indians were aware of the ulterior motives behind the English settlements—interest in access to urgently needed natural resources:

They say, it is because you want firing; for they, having burnt up the wood in one place, (wanting draughts to bring wood to them) they are faine to follow the wood; and so, to remove to a fresh new place for the woods sake. (65)

This approach reminds of Bradford’s early description—a description mainly based on the English conception of the New World before leaving England. Interestingly, the Indian perspective as presented by both Bradford and Williams can be read through the prism of primitivism questioned by Levi-Strauss. The Indians in both texts are reported to reduce the White colonial motives to the basic needs of life, which can be seen as a reflection of their own primitivism. For instance, when Bradford explains the settlers’ motivation in settling “those vast countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation” (17), he echoes Williams’s passage reporting the Indians’ interpretation of English presence in their lands.

As the Indians gradually adjusted their worldview in accordance with the imported dichotomy between “them” (as a monolithic entity of “all” Natives) and the white newcomers (the settlers), the English, for their part, remained ignorant of the Natives’ traditional identities (the tribes, the Nations). Before the arrival of

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<sup>42</sup> Williams also calls the natives “Americans” (two occurrences in his work)—a designation rarely

the settlers, the Indians' concept of the *other* was equal to someone from another tribe, a notion ignored in most of the colonial literature. Although both Roger Williams and Eliot refer to such plurality in terms of a linguistic challenge, other writers including Bradford and Winthrop differentiate between tribes. Distinctions like these would become even rarer in literature produced by second and third generation Puritan colonists, such as the Mathers.

Since this newer generation of writers—including most of the authors of captivity narratives to be discussed later—describe the Natives and present their “voice” (that of the Indians in general and of the Indian abductors in particular) in a manner most different from that seen in Williams, some analysis is required of Roger Williams's portrayal of the Indians and their daily lives. This survey will be used as a referential base to consider the kind of instrumentalization of the Indians used to promote the political and religious agenda of the second generation author.

In addition to its linguistic merits including a large body of Indian words and expressions, Williams's book also contains significant information about various aspects of daily life within Native society. This novel approach represents a breach from earlier seventeenth-century New England Puritan writing and also differs from subsequent religiously-inspired publications. Although one does find, for instance, earlier works by Bradford and Winthrop, who portray the Natives rather positively, they nonetheless remained subject to an overall ethnocentric<sup>43</sup> attitude manifesting itself in the glorification of the settlers' achievements. As for the writings by generation authors, not only do they adhere to ethnocentrism but they also abound in negative features attributed to the Natives and, in so doing, propagate a whole range of negative stereotypes.

Overall, Roger Williams's book offers a positive and to some extent even laudatory description of the Natives. One can find three different approaches in Williams's description of the Natives and their daily lives: a neutral description of some of their habits, a eulogistic list of Indian's qualities and virtues, and an

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found in the literature of the time (40, 61).



interesting presentation of some vices commonly and even stereotypically attributed to the Indians.

The general observations following different sections of the glossary bear witness to the author's keen interest in the people he writes about. Williams's description of the Indians' practices and customs are mainly neutral and include, inter alia, sections on the way they dress, their connection with land and nature, and their fishing and farming practices to provide for themselves. Williams's book is an expression of sympathy toward the Natives, being one of the first publications exclusively dedicated to them and including a fully fledged scholarly treatment of their languages. Williams's contribution breaks new ground from the point of view of the Indian voice. The book also helps redress some of the excessively negative portrayals of the Indians in earlier writings. While his predecessors long dehumanized the Natives by often equating them to animals or dangerously hostile groups, Williams describes them as a socially organized cohesive group for which he shows considerable admiration.

This judgment is reflected in highly positive observations and comments regarding the Indians' agricultural, hunting, and fishing skills. Williams praises Indian intelligence and mastery in dealing with the land and its natural resources: "Having no Letters nor Arts, 'tis admirable how quick they are in casting up great numbers, with the helpe of graines of Corne, instead of Europes pens or counters" (42). The comparison with Europeans' sophisticated tools serves not only to magnify the deserved praise for the Indians' skills, but it may also be understood as an implicit criticism or depreciation of European and Puritan delusional sense of supremacy.

Williams repeatedly pays tribute to Indian virtues and qualities and detracts his fellow Christians as in the following extract: "It is a strange *truth*, that a man shall generally finde more free entertainment and refreshing amongst these *Barbarians*, then amongst thousands that call themselves Christians" (36, original

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<sup>43</sup> Ethnocentrism was a specific hallmark of seventeenth-century Puritan literature.

italics). The term “barbarian” in this quote is derived from the contemptuous terminology used by those prejudiced “Christians” who feel empowered to vilify the Natives. Williams skillfully contrasts the two terms through his argument in favor of the Natives, thereby distancing himself from his Puritan contemporaries. He takes his argument even further when he affirms the common origins of the Natives and the Europeans: “For the temper of the braine in quick apprehensions and accurate judgements (to say no more) the most high and sovereign God and Creator, hath not made them inferiour to Europeans” (58). He goes on writing:

The generall observation from the parts of the bodie. Nature knowes no difference between Europe and Americans in blood, birth, bodies, &c. God having of one blood made all mankind. Acts 17. and all by nature being children of wrath, Ephes. 2. More particularly: Boast not proud English, of thy birth and blood Thy Brother Indian is by birth as Good. Of one blood God made Him, and Thee, and All. As wise, as faire, as strong, as personall. By nature, wrath's his portion, thin?, no more Till Grace his soule and thine in Christ restore. Make sure thy second birth, else thou shalt see. Heaven open to Indians wild, but shut to thee. (60)

The language is indeed exceptional for the time, even compared with other pro-Indian writings. Williams’s book categorically contrasts the Puritan perception of the Natives in that he not only places them on an equal footing with the Europeans theologically, but he also describes them in the most positive terms, notably emphasizing their courteousness (30), kindness, civility (32), and generosity:

Whomsoever commeth in when they are eating, they offer them to eat of that which they have, though but little enough prepar'd for themselves. If any provision offish or flesh come in, they make their neighbours partakers with them. If any stranger come in, they presently give him to eate of what they have ; many a time, and at all times of the night (as I have fallen in travell upon their houses) when nothing hath been ready, have themselves and their wives, risen to prepare me some refreshing. (36)

This passage echoes Bradford’s description of the settlers’ first encounter with the Natives. While Bradford brings attention to Indian generosity through the relation of anecdotes about the help repeatedly offered to the settlers, Williams is even

more solemn in his affirmation, thus presenting the reader with a quasi-axiomatic affirmation of the Indians' generosity.

In addition to qualities also mentioned by contemporaries—notably Bradford and Winthrop—Williams goes even further in his catalogue of positive attributions to the Indians as can be seen in the following example: “From these courteous Salutations, observe in generally There is a savour of civility and courtesie even amongst these wild Americans, both amongst themselves and towards strangers” (32). Passages like this appear very oxymoronic in the literary context of the time, even among the most favorable texts dealing with the Indians. Although some positive qualifiers such as “a good Indian” were occasionally to be found in some of the Puritan writings, “civility” was absent. Incivility and discourtesy ranks among the most common stereotypes attributed to the Indians by the Whites in general and the Puritans in particular.<sup>44</sup>

Williams does not, however, altogether ignore the most recurrent negative stereotypes, but he does treat them by keeping with his generally positive depiction of the Indians. He essentially tones down his discussion of the most despised allegedly characteristics or habits by the means of different narrative strategies. To assist my analysis of the Indian voice in captivity narratives, it should be noted how Williams differs from other writers and from most authors of captivity narratives in his treatment of the most recurrent stereotypes. These authors often orchestrated attacks on the savagery of Indians, accusations of cannibalism, torture rituals, and abuse of tobacco, to name but a few.

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<sup>44</sup> In *The Day-Breaking in not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New-England*, Eliot writes: “Wee are upbraided by some of our Countrymen that so little good is done by our professing planters upon the hearts of Natives; such men have surely more splene than judgment, and know not the vast distance of Natives from common civility, almost humanity it selfe” (19). In *Clear Sunshine of the Gospel*, Eliot refers to the rewarding aspect of their missionary works in bringing not only religions, but also civility among the natives: “Upon information that the Indians dwelling among us, and submitted to our government, being by the Miniftry of the Word brought to some civility, are desirous to have a course of ordinary Judicature set up among them” (22). “Winthrop for his part writes: “[T]he lord was by this means making a way to bring them to *civility*, and so to conversion to the knowledge and embracing of the gospel in his due time” (125, my emphasis).

To introduce some of the negative characteristics and the vices usually attributed to the Indians, Williams begins by drawing a generally favorable picture of the Indian way of life and by suggesting that the positive outweighs the exceptional infamous practices. When dealing with such problematic behaviors, he seeks to either soften some of the most revolting realities or to justify the excesses by reference to exceptional circumstances. For instance, he brings attention to the issue of Indian cannibalism, which extends back to the earliest exploratory voyages to the New Continent when Europeans first encountered the practice. Williams writes:

Mihtukméchakick, Tree-eaters. A people so called (living between three and four hundred miles West into the land) from their eating only *Mihtuchquash*, that is, Trees: They are *Men-eaters*, they set no corne, but live on the *bark of Chesnut* and *Walnut*, and their fine trees: They dry and eat this bark with the fat of Beasts, and sometimes of men: This people are the terrour of the neighbour Natives; and yet these Rebels, the Sonne of God may in time subdue. (34)

To avoid too crude a portrayal of the horrifying practice of cannibalism and adhere to the overall positive picture of the Natives, Williams emphasizes the isolated remoteness of the cannibals from the rest of the Indian community. He also stresses that this marginal group of cannibals was seen as a threat by all, including other Indian tribes. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that he uses the pronoun “us” when referring to a tribe that experienced such fears:

The Mauqúâogs, or Men-eaters that live two or three hundred miles West from *us*, make a delicious monstrous dish of the head and brains of their enemies; which yet is no barre (when the time shall approach) against Gods call and their repentance and who knowes but a greater love to the Lord Jesus? great sinners forgiven love much. (58, emphasis mine)

In a first step, Williams reminds the reader of the distance separating him and his Indian friends from the man-eater tribe by using the inclusive pronoun “us,” meaning himself and the “good” Indians.<sup>45</sup> Second, he catches the reader’s

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<sup>45</sup>This interpretation is based on the context of the whole book and on the author’s insistence that he spent long periods of time in the company of Indians.

attention with a provocative oxymoronic reference to the marginal tribe's culinary practice ("a delicious monstrous dish"). What Williams sought to do by resorting to such rhetoric is difficult to ascertain. Apart from an obvious attempt to tone down the significance of practices unanimously condemned by his European contemporaries, any definitive conclusion is elusive when considering Williams's work as a whole because it is not clear whether he deliberately chose to ignore the negative practices which were considered anathema by his contemporary Puritans. Finally, he concludes his mitigating statement with a spiritual note by focusing on God's forgiveness and stating that with the will of God, even the worst sinners can repent, thus implicitly trivializing the cannibalism by equating it to any other sin. This approach will prove in stark contrast with the narratives of the second and third generation Puritans and their often inflammatory descriptions of the Indians, and their deliberate emphasis on the dreadful practices. Most such Puritan literature contains descriptive passages structured around stereotypical and propagandistic references to all sorts of torture rituals.

True to his desire to cast the Indians in a good light, Williams deemphasizes some of the most horrible torture rituals that most 17<sup>th</sup>-century commonly attribute to the Natives. Some of the captives, mainly men, provide very detailed descriptions of mutilations, such as the cutting off of fingers or scalping. Again, Williams contrasts that arguably predominant picture of "bloody" and "barbarous" Indians:

Timequassin, To cut off or behead.—Which they are most skilfull to doe in fight: for whenever they wound, and their arrow sticks in the body of their enemie, they (if they be valorous, and possibly may) they follow their arrow, and falling upon the person wounded and tearing his head a little aside by his Locke, they in the twinckling of an eye fetch off his head though but with a sorry knife. (59)

As horrendous as it may seem, the above passage does not truly read like a condemnation of the atrocities described. Instead there is a "subtext" that tones down the cruelty of the whole procedure. Contrary to the mainstream literature of the time, Williams presents the decapitation practice as a byproduct of war rather

than a beastly act. He even expresses admiration for the skills exhibited in the quick and efficient performance of the act of cruelty. Moreover, Williams leaves out any references to the joyous rituals following such killings, thereby implicitly dignifying the Indians as he substitutes the image of barbarous individuals with that of warriors. By the same token, scalping, as horrifying as it may be, comes to be presented as a regrettable action imposed on the Indians by their warrior status rather than as an act performed out of perversion and lack of human decency.

### **1.2.3. Puritan Dissenters and Their Portrayal of the Indians**

Roger Williams's approach arguably constitutes a countercurrent to the mainstream Puritan depiction of the Natives. Was Roger Williams a true ethnographer or an efficient Puritan dissenter?<sup>46</sup> So how reliable and genuine is Williams's description of the Natives? Is he, out of intellectual and linguistic curiosity, objective in his documentation of the Indians and their practices or does he only use his pen as a weapon to indirectly criticize his Puritan detractors?<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Roger Williams was banished from the Puritan colony. In his introduction *As to Roger Williams*, Henry Martyn Dexter writes about this banishment as follows: "A FEW excellent—if not erudite—people last winter petitioned our General Court to revoke 'the sentence of banishment against Roger Williams,' which was decreed in 1635. They urged such action, in the interest of 'historical justice,' on the ground that that decree was in the nature of punishment for the 'offence' of his advocacy of 'perfect religious liberty'" (v). Dexter adds details explaining the practice of banishment and its causes as follows: "banishment involved a State which could banish, and that the banished parties be members of it; conditions which could hardly be claimed here to exist. There is no evidence that this plantation had by this time come to regard itself as being strictly a civil government at all. It acted in this—as it was then acting in regard to all other matters—as a Company, on those simple principles of natural justice which give to any association the right to decline to admit or to exclude, unsuitable and incompatible members. It acted, moreover, in exact accordance with that provision of its Charter which had been inserted to meet an exigency almost sure to arise, and which—if it could be met in any other way at all—could be met in no other way so well. While the facts : that the plantation had a religious basis, which itself might suggest exclusions possibly unsuggested by its commercial aspects, yet on that account rather the more, than the less, to be considered; that they were in the dangerous neighborhood of they knew not how many, nor how bloodthirsty, savages ; and that certain threatening circumstances, which remain to be explained, were glooming the horizon at home, and exciting special solicitude as to the immediate future of the enterprise; urged them to exercise the extremest care to knit themselves, as soon as might be, strongly together—to make their company spiritually homogeneous, their policy' humane and benevolent toward the Aborigines, and their entire life such as would triumphantly bear even hostile scrutiny" (18).

<sup>47</sup> On balance, I would tend to support this point of view, since William's pro-Indian bias did not last forever while the anti-Indian attitudes only worsened in the following generations.

After all, it would be only natural to imagine that he might have been tempted, as a dissident, to use his pen in a provocative manner, pleading the cause of the Natives merely in order to contradict his mainstream Puritan rivals. One may observe in passing that Williams was not the only Puritan dissident writer to have penned pro-Indian literature.

Thomas Morton, another anti-Puritan author, also drew attention to himself because relations with the Indians. The Puritan elite of the time failed to reach a consensus of opinion in their condemnation of Morton. On the one hand, they dispraise him for his ill treatment of the Indians as Winthrop states: “Thomas Morton adjudged to be imprisoned, till he were sent into England, and his house burnt down, for his many injuries offered to the Indians, and other misdemeanors” (53). On the other hand, some authors blame him for his close relations with the Indians as follows:

And here I may take occasion to bewail the mischief that Morton began in these parts, since base covetousness has now at length got the upper hand, and made this thing common: for, notwithstanding laws to the contrary, the Indians are fully supplied with both fowling-piece, muskets, and pistols. (Bradford 55)

Henry Martyn Dexter for his part lists the common offences leading to the banishment from the colony—a list, which he illustrates with names of banished offenders:

(1) incorrigible, unmanageable and intolerable wickedness, like that of the profane, drunken and ruffianly Gray; (2) *dishonesty toward, and ill-treatment of, the Indians, like that of Morton and Frost* (3) action and speech tending to overthrow the government of the plantation, and the order of its churches, when so violent and persistent as to break out into the beginnings of something like mutiny, as was the case with the two Brownes, Walford, Ratcliffe, and Stone; and (4) sending home to England malicious misrepresentations of the management of the 'affairs of the Colony calculated to strengthen the hands of its enemies there, and so to endanger its prosperity, if not its very existence— as was the fact with Lynn. (19, my emphasis)

Once the Puritan reprehending consensus toward Morton is taken for granted, what should one make of his dissenting position in depicting the native? What kind of pro-Indian portrayal can one find in Morton's text? How can one compare Morton's account to Roger Williams's *Key into the Language of America*?

### **1.2.3.1. Roger Williams versus Thomas Morton**

Roger Williams can be considered as a Puritan dissident on account of his extreme views. Bradford refers to him as follows: "Mr. Roger Williams, a godly and zealous man, having many precious qualities, but very unsettled in judgment, came over first to (Salem) Massachusetts [...]" (59). Later on Winthrop writes:

At the general court, Mr. Williams of Salem was summoned, and did appear. It was laid to his charge, that, being under question before the magistracy and churches for divers dangerous opinions, viz. 1, that the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table, otherwise than in such cases as did disturb the civil peace; 2, that he ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man; 3, that a man ought not to pray with such, though wife, child, etc. ; 4, that a man ought not to give thanks after the sacrament nor after meat, etc. ; and that the other churches were about to write to the church of Salem to admonish him of these errors. (Winthrop 154)

Both of Williams and Morton drew blame from the Puritan elite who eventually expelled them from the colony, yet the harsher criticism was targeted at Morton. His only work, *New English Canaan* (1637), was read by most contemporaries as an Anti-Puritan pamphlet.<sup>48</sup> Moreover while Williams remained a Separatist, albeit with more fervent and severe views than the rest of the Pilgrim forefathers, Morton, for his part, was not a Puritan at all and he was very critical of them in his *New English Canaan*.

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<sup>48</sup> Jack Dempsey writes about Morton's thin literary production as follows: "It is remarkable that such a literate and socially-connected Elizabethan gentleman—an avid outdoorsman, attorney in the high courts of Crown and Council, a New World colonizer, American poet, man of letters, and long-lived 'notorious' exile—could leave behind so few verifiable records" (xxiv).



The sharp criticism of Morton by the Puritan elite should encourage scholars of the New England colonial period to dig deeper into Morton's text, which Jack Dempsey characterizes as "a counter-text to The Bible" (xxxix), "full of cultural relativism, religious parody" (xxxviii). His Puritan detractors, however, directed most of their criticism towards Morton's connections with the Indians. He was strongly criticized for his contacts and commercial dealings with them. Since there are no existing written Indian sources to juxtapose to the mainstream Puritan writings, to what extent can books like Morton's serve to balance the predominant literature of the time? I.e., to what extent can one use Morton's text as a plea in support of the Indians and assume that Morton actually gives a voice to the New England Indians? Is there a fundamental difference between the way Indians are portrayed in the works of Bradford and Winthrop and in those of the non-Puritan and the *less ethnocentric* colonial American writers? Hence, how does Morton's depiction of the Indians differ from other less ethnocentric writers like Williams?

The above quotes show that Bradford's and Winthrop's criticism hit harder at Morton than at Williams. Differences are also apparent in the non-conformist writers' attitudes towards the Puritans. While Williams's *A Key into the Language of America* draws a highly positive picture of the Indians in addition to its contribution to the study of Indian languages, the author's criticism of his Puritan detractors often seems more subtle than Thomas Morton's. This is no surprise as Williams was a fervent separatist who criticized the colonists for their lack of firmness in their creed whereas Morton was an all-out critic of all things Puritan. Despite, however, their differences on the subject of Puritanism, the two took very similar or at times complementary attitudes towards the Natives.

A common point, albeit with nuances, is that both writers see a direct opposition between the settlers ("the Christian") and the Indians whom Morton, for all his sympathy, mainly refers to as "savages." Williams's claim that the Indians were of the same origins as the Whites, as well as his direct or indirect comments in favor of the Indians and against to the Christians, can also be found

in Morton's writings, perhaps even more forcefully so: "IT is a thing to be admired, and indeede made a president, that a Nation yet uncivilized, should more respect age then some nations civilized; since there are so many precepts both of divine and humane writers extant" (24). Later on, he writes in terms of Indians versus Christians as follows "but I have found the Massachusets Indian more full of humanity, then the Christians, & haue had much better quarter with them" (77), and then he adds: "The more Salvages the better quarter, the more Christians the worser quarter I found, as all the indifferent minded Planters can testifie" (78). Both Morton and Williams challenge Eliot's redefinition of the *other* as solely including the non-converted Indians (opposed to the "good" praying Indians). Not that Morton and Williams would be opposed as a matter of principle to spreading the Gospel among the Indians, but both perhaps believe that exposure to the Christian faith would in fact only bolster their already good nature rather than make them radically different people. Although Morton and Williams differ on their views as to the Natives' attitudes towards religion, gradually their positions draw closer because of their common rejection of Eliot's point of view.

While Eliot shows instances of "wrong" religious practices among the Indians and draws clear parallels with Indian Satanism, Williams prefers to see similarities between Indian forms of worship and Judeo-Christian practices, although the examples he gives paradoxically tends to support Eliot's arguments. Though Williams did not pioneer the theory of the Ten Tribes origin of the Natives, he did echo it by citing elements of Indian practices he claims to have personally witnessed, writing for example:

First, others (and myselfe) have conceived some of their words to hold affinitie with the Hebrew.  
Secondly, they constantly anoint their heads as the Jewes did.  
Thirdly, they give Dowries for their wives as the Jewes did.  
Fourthly (and which I have not so observed amongst other nations as amongst the Jewes, and these) they constantly seperate their women (during the time of their monthly sicknesse) in a little house alone by themselves foure or five dayes, and hold it an Irreligious thing for either Father or Husband or any Male to come neere them. (20)

Although Judaism was far from receiving Puritan approval, Williams shows the Natives as human beings and implies that because of their “godly” origins they would be more receptive to the Christian faith.

To demonstrate the potential in spreading the Christian faith, Williams describes situations in which individual Indians welcomed his religious teaching by using a narrative technique very similar to Eliot’s:

I once travailed to an Hand of the wildest in our parts, where in the night an Indian (as he said) had a vision or dream of the Sun (whom they worship for a God) darting a Beame into his Breast which he conceived to be the Messenger of his Death: This poore Native call'd his Friends and neighbours, and prepared some little refreshing for them, but himself was kept waking and Fasting in great Humiliations and Invocations for 10 dayes and nights: I was alone (having travailed from my Barke, the wind being contrary) and little could I speake to thtm to their understandings especially because of the change of their Dialect or manner of Speech from our neighbours: yet so much (through the help of God, I did speake, of the True and living only Wise God, of the Creation: of Man. and his fall from God, &c. that at parting many burst forth, Oh when will you come againe, to bring us some more newes of this God. (39)

The example depicts a complicated situation in which the author, acting as a missionary, has to reach out to a sun worshiping Indian in a linguistically unfavorable setting. The result, however, turns out to be favorable in the author’s eyes. Most of Williams’s anecdotal passages follow this pattern, implying the Indians’ good predisposition in welcoming the right path materialized in their readiness to accept the “English” God.

Williams’s positive stance, however, essentially restricts itself to praise of the Native’s good will vis-à-vis the Gospel. Williams’s attitude towards the Christian mission is rather less enthusiastic than Eliot’s, as evidenced, in the following passage:

Now because this is the great Inquiry of all men what Indians have been converted? What have the English done in those parts? what hopes of the Indians conceiving the knowledge of Christ!  
And because to this Question some put an edge from the boast of the Jesuits in Canada and Maryland, and especially from the

wonderfull conversions made by the Spaniards and Portugalls in the West-Indies, besides what I have here written, as also, besides what I have observed in the Chapter of their Religion. (23)

Williams never provides any answers beyond reiterating his professed belief in the good nature of the Indians and their propensity to accept the Gospel and his belief in God's will to bring about the Christianization of the Natives (24).

Morton's *New English Canaan* (1637) which predates both William's *Key into the language of America* (1643) and Eliot's *New England's First Fruits* in 1643 categorically refutes Williams's and Eliot's claims that the Indians had some sort of religion:

IT has bin a common received opinion from Cicero, that there is no people so barbarous, but have some worshipp, or other in this particular, I am not of opinion therein with Tully; and surely. If hee had bin amongst those people so longe as I have bin, and conversed so much with them, touching this matter of Religion, hee would have changed his opinion, neither should we have found this error, amongst the rest, by the helpe of that wodden prospect. [...] And me thinks, it is absurd to say they have a kinde of worship, and not able to demonstrate whome or what it is they are accustomed to worship. (21)

First, Morton contradicts an old precept attributed to the Roman philosopher Cicero and bases his declared legitimacy to do so on his contacts with the Natives. Then he moves on to challenge his contemporary William Wood, the author of *New England's Prospect* (1635),<sup>49</sup> to which he refers as "Wodden prospect." Surprisingly, for all the apparent fervor of his arguments challenging the validity of the existence of Indian forms of worship, some references appearing in other parts of his text rather suggest clear inconsistencies in that matter.

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<sup>49</sup> Wood's main argument (which is strongly refuted by Morton) is the following: "Now of their worships: As it is naturall to all mortalls to worship something, so doe these people, but exactly to describe to whom their worship is chiefly bent, is very difficult" (86). As for Wood's overall assertion regarding the description of the Indian worship as such, he maintains the widely established belief of the time (reaffirmed by Eliot, and even more so by later generation Puritans) that the Indians worship the devil: "Thus will hee continue sometimes halfe a day, spending his lungs, sweating out his fat, and tormenting his body in this diabolicall worship; sometimes the Devill for requital of their worship, recovers the partie, to nuzzle them up in their divellish Religion" (88).

Later on in his chapter, “Of their acknowledgment of the Creation and immortality of the Soule,” he writes the following:

Although these Salvages are found to be without Religion, Law, and King (as Sir Wilham Alexander hath well observed,) yet are they not altogether without the knowledge of God (historically) for they have it amongst them by tradition, that God made one man and one woman, and bad them live together, and get children, kill deare, beasts, birds, fish, and fowle, and what they would at their pleasure ; and that their posterity was full of evill, and made God so angry : that hee let in the Sea upon them, &; drowned the greatest part of them, that were naughty men, (the Lord destroyed so). (34)

Here not only does he seemingly contradict his earlier argument that the Indians lack of any sort of religion, but he even gives credence, apparently, to those authors who ascribe Judeo-Christian origins to the Indians with his reference to Noah’s Flood in the Old Testament.<sup>50</sup> Later on, he goes so far as to claim the existence of a circular pattern of worship led by the devil:

They may be rather accompted to live richly wanting nothing that is needefull: and to be commended for leading a contented life, the younger being ruled by the Elder, and the Elder ruled by the Powahs, and the Powahs are ruled by the Devill, and then you may imagin what good rule is like to be amongst them. (40)

In view of such inconsistencies, one may wonder about Morton’s real position regarding Indian religion. Why does he first engage in vigorous criticism of the notion that Indians have a religion at all only to later adhere to the Lost Tribes theory claim<sup>51</sup> on the one hand, and even to the very commonplace belief that Indians primarily worship the devil on the other hand? Is he solely interested in denouncing the Puritans who rejected him? To what extent can one assume that he in fact largely shares Williams’s strategy of making the Puritans look bad by praising the Indians and their habits and practices?

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<sup>50</sup> See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English: facing off in early America* (117).

<sup>51</sup> I mean by the Lost Tribe theory claim here the already discussed belief that the Indians came from the Lost Tribes.

Morton praises the Indians even more than Williams and contrasts his praise with an equally scathing treatment of the Puritans. He succeeds in minimizing the effect on the reader of the inconsistencies regarding Indian religion by marginalizing the issue and emphasizing instead the overall “good” nature of the Natives who, according to him, can live happily, as they are without recourse to either religion or other advantages to be derived from the imports of English civilization:

I cannot deny but a civilized Nation, hath the preheminance of an uncivilized, by meanes of those instruments that are found to be common amongst civile people, and the uncivile want the use of, to make themselves masters of those ornaments, that make such a glorious shew, that will give a man occasion to cry, sic transit gloria Mundi. Now since it is but foode and rayment that men that live needeth (though not all alike,) why should not the Natives of New England be sayd to live richly having no want of either: Cloaths are the badge of sinne, and the more variety of fashions is but the greater abuse of the Creature, the beasts of the forrest there doe serve to furnish them at any time, when they please: fish and flesh they have in greate abundance which they both roast and boyle. (39)

In addition to contrasting the *useless* benefits of English civilization with Natives’ love of Nature and contentedness with its gifts, Morton also takes a jibe at equally “tormented” Christians, writing:

According to humane reason guided onely by the light of nature, these people leads the more happy and freer life, being voyde of care, which torments the mindes of so many Christians: They are not delighted in baubles, but in usefull things. (40)

For all its positive undertone, Morton’s statement does not necessarily qualify this author as a pro-Indian writer because his obvious contempt toward the Puritans prompts doubt of his authenticity. Although the anti-Puritan discourse is less conspicuous in Williams, any sweeping conclusions concerning the supposed pro-Indian sentiment in both Morton and Williams should be avoided.

At this point I to reaffirm that the voice at stake here is limited to its literary representation and that I am not trying to redress any wrongs committed with

respect to people, i.e., the American Indians, whom historians have considered the “voiceless victims” of colonization; therefore my analyses of the significant gap in literary attitudes toward the Natives in Bradford/Winthrop on one hand and Morton/Williams on the other do not claim to arrive at an objective assessment of the degree of authenticity ascribable to the descriptions of people to whom one should refer as *penless*<sup>52</sup> rather than *voiceless*. Instead I shall aim to provide a wide array of depictions, nuances, and rhetorical as well as terminological associations that prevailed among first generation Puritans. The next chapter will explore the evolution of later generation Puritan conception of Indian society, notably in the context of the captivity narrative.

Before embarking on an analysis of the literary production of the next generation, and thus introducing the main topic of this study, I want to complement the short list of dissenters (Morton, Williams) with another famous name, that of Anne Hutchinson. Although, unlike her male counterparts, she left no written records of her thoughts, Hutchinson is a significant and exemplary figure in the evolution of the Puritan discourse. She also serves as a transitional character between the male Puritan authors and Mary Rowlandson. Hutchinson’s death and the captivity of members of her family also shed light on the topic of Indian captivity.

### **1.2.3.2. Anne Hutchinson: Female Dissenter, on Friendly Terms with the Narragansett Indians, a Victim of the Siwanon Indians**

Colonial New England women writers are far from cluttering the Heath Anthology of American literature. Among 17<sup>th</sup> century female writers, only two are listed. Anne Bradstreet was the first female Puritan to be published. Her work of poetry entitled *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America* was published in London in

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<sup>52</sup> See Lévi-Strauss’s characterization of “primitive” society.

1650. More than three decades later in 1682, Mary White Rowlandson had her captivity narrative published in London, too. While both Bradstreet and Rowlandson enjoyed a significant amount of support from the male elite of the time, another literate Puritan woman, Anne Hutchinson, faced strong resistance and mistrust from the contemporary elite two decades before Bradstreet came into the literary scene.<sup>53</sup>

Anne Hutchinson was the first Puritan woman to be revealed as a literary figure at a time when women had little access to education. She was the daughter of Francis Marbury, an English Minister who on account of his heavy criticism of the Anglican Church was placed under house arrest after serving time in jail. This paradoxically afforded him ample time to teach his children, including Anne, to read and write. Anne thus acquired a privilege (that of literacy) which was then largely restricted to men. Her ability to read thus proved a threat to the religious and political authorities in the Massachusetts colony. In 1634, she moved to Boston with her husband and children, where she led what may be seen as the first American female club. Men later joined her association and it soon became the target of the authorities because of the critical and confrontational nature of her teaching in respect to the established practices of the colony.<sup>54</sup> John Winthrop was a fervent opponent and first referred to her in his journal as follows:

One Mrs. Hutchinson, a member of the church of Boston, a woman of a ready wit and bold spirit, brought over with her two dangerous errors: 1. That the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person. 2. That no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification.—From these two grew many branches; as, 1. Our union with the Holy Ghost, so as a Christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath no gifts nor graces, other than such as are in hypocrites, nor any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost himself. (195)

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<sup>53</sup> The use of the word “revelation” is amply justified in view of what we know of her biography. Anne Bradstreet traveled with John Winthrop in 1630 aboard the *Arbella* but was revealed as a poet through her first publication only two decades afterwards. That explains why Anne Bradstreet tends to be mentioned mainly in works by later generation Puritans. See Cotton Mather (*Magnalia* 123).

<sup>54</sup> See Geraldine Brooks, *Dames and Daughters of Colonial Days* (1-30).



At first, Winthrop criticizes Hutchinson for theological reasons pertaining to the basics of the Puritan path,<sup>55</sup> but later he takes a different ideological tone, mainly related to gender issues:

This American Jesabel kept her strength and reputation, even among the people of God, till the hand of Civill Justice laid hold on her, and then shee began evidently to decline, and the faithful to bee freed from her forgeries. (254)

Winthrop's choice of the biblical character "Jesabel" to refer to Hutchinson is very significant in this context considering the typological<sup>56</sup> blame represented by the character. Jezebel is a well-known female representation of evil from the Old Testament. She is reputed to have played an evil role in corrupting the Israelites and was harshly criticized for her challenging attitude towards God, for murdering God's worshipers, and especially for indulging in ceremonies testifying to her perverted sense of idolatry. The type "Jesabel" lends emphasis to the gender dimension of the alleged distribution caused by Hutchinson, who was arguably seen as a significant threat not only in terms of the original theological charges

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<sup>55</sup> According to Andrew Delbanco, the most important issue in the Puritan religious quest was salvation, as he writes: "He [a Christian] looks at the favor of God, and the blood of Christ, and pardon of sin, the kingdom of glory" (111). Nevertheless, the theologians didn't always agree on the way to reach God's favors and on how to ensure for themselves the "the kingdom of heaven." This constituted a matter of controversy which we can understand by defining the principle of the "covenant." Brooks Holifield distinguishes between two kinds of covenant: the legal covenant (or covenant of work) and the covenant of grace. The first was "made with Adam, requiring obedience to moral law as a condition of salvation." The second was "made known by revelation to Abraham that offered salvation as a gift to faith alone" (39). This duality raised doubts as to whether good behavior alone was enough to guarantee eternal salvation. Holifield writes that "the legal covenant cast men and women on their own abilities; the covenant of grace provided the grace of the spirit. The first could ensure an orderly society, but only the second could ensure an eternal place in the kingdom of God" (40). The ideological disagreement between Hutchinson and Winthrop was a part of the already existing debate at the time. In a footnote to his edition of Winthrop's Journal, James Kendal Hosmer writes the following: "The ecclesiastical dispute as to justification by faith and justification by works is as old as the apostles Paul and James. Mrs. Hutchinson's idea was that saving grace went only to such as possessed faith, and that, this grace having been received, the recipient was above law. Hence the term "antinomian" was hurled at her and her sympathizers, a term expressly repudiated by Wheelwright, and certainly unwarranted; for the Hutchinsonians, while scorning "legalism," did not mean to cut loose for moral obligations. Undoubtedly, however, there was danger that in minds confused with the controversial jargon, Mrs. Hutchinson's ideas might be taken as countenancing licentiousness" (195).

<sup>56</sup> In Christianity the concept of typology refers to parallels drawn between the Old and the New Testament. Puritans took this approach further and sought to identify parallels between the Bible as a whole (i.e. the Old and the New Testament) and their own lives. In other words, the Puritans identified themselves with the biblical characters. The corresponding terminology speaks of types (the Biblical references) and antitypes (their translation into real life Puritan practices).

leveled at her, but also, and more importantly, as a threat to the patriarchal authority of the time.

While Winthrop used subtle typological references to denounce and condemn the charismatic outspoken Hutchinson, other ministers rather attacked her directly as a woman. Geraldine Brooks describes a particularly virulent such attack that took place during Hutchinson's trial:

At once the assault began anew. From ministers, magistrates, and elders came a fierce storm of abuse and a torrent of impetuous words. 'Her repentance is on paper,' shouted one; 'but sure her repentance is not in her face.' 'You have stepped out of your place,' cried another, scandalized by what he deemed her *un-womanliness*. 'You have rather been a *husband* than a *wife*, and a *preacher* than a *hearer*, a *magistrate* than a *subject*, and, therefore, you have thought to carry all things in church and Commonwealth as you would.' 'I cannot but acknowledge that the Lord is just in leaving our *sister* to pride and lying,' said one self-righteous inquisitor. 'I look upon her as a *dangerous instrument of the devil* raised up among us.' 'God hath let her fall into a manifest lie; yea! To make a lie,' declared another. 'Yea,' cried his echo, 'not simply to drop a lie, but to make a lie, to maintain a lie!' (23, emphasis mine)

It is clear from the above excerpt, rife as it is with gender connotations, that the issue at stake in Hutchinson's trial was nothing less than the preservation of Puritan patriarchal values. The ministers' line of argument at the trial ranges from the demand to restore submissiveness at the matrimonial religious and societal levels to a spiritual condemnation of rebellious women in general. The latter accusation ultimately leads from worldly charges of insubordination to the demands, social and legal, of patriarchalism to claims that the accused is an instrument of the devil. This can be seen as a "dress rehearsal" for subsequent "witch-hunt" trials against women accused of having made a pact with the devil to destroy the colony.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The Salem Witchcraft trials of 1692 are the best known case of Puritan legal action against women, mainly on charges of "signing devil's book." It all began in early 1692 with charges brought against Elizabeth Parris and Abigail Williams, daughter and niece respectively of Samuel Parris, a Salem minister. The children had exhibited mysterious behaviors and had suffered fits and hallucinations. Soon after, other girls in the village began manifesting similar "symptoms." Doctor

Hutchinson's case offers significant insight to status of women in general and of literate women in particular. This is at a time that predates by several decades the onset of the popularity of the literary genre of captivity narratives (in which women often were the main protagonists and some of which were authored by women). The gender aspect is not the only link that can be made between Hutchinson and captivity narratives. Namely, Hutchinson's fate after being exiled from the Puritan colony tragically crosses the path of attacking Indians. George E. Ellis writes:

The Indians of the main and of the Island were then in open hostility with the Dutch ; and in the summer of 1643, after a

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Griggs, who examined the girls, could provide no medical explanation and suggested that the girls' fits might be connected to supernatural forces. In view of this suspected association with witchcraft, Parris as well as the ministers of the neighboring villages put the girls under pressure to identify the persons who caused their fits. The girls soon started to name several people, mainly women, which paved the way for large-scale prosecution activity. The group of the accused gradually broadened as hysteria took over Salem, but women remained a majority among those accused. This specific trait (i.e. the fact that most of the accused were women) did not originate in colonial Salem, but in earlier witchcraft cases in the Old World where most instances of witchcraft typically involved women. Selma R. Williams and Pamela Williams Adelman provides a list of previously existing stereotypes linking witchcraft to womanhood:

- Women predominate among witches.
- Jesus preserved the superiority of men.
- Female weaknesses include superstition, stupidity, and carnal lust
- Female sexuality is dangerous.
- Beware of old women.
- Midwives are wicked witches.
- Evil began with Eve.
- Ancient writers recognized women's vices.
- Witches have a contract with the devil
- Women meet together in the night time.
- Witches cause storms, illness, and male impotence
- Witches can bewitch their judges.
- Never allow women to exercise power. (38)

Moreover, the alleged superiority of men over women takes its roots from the Scripture and is presented as God's will. In *Genesis*, to punish Eve, God establishes the superiority of man over women: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (*Genesis* 3:16). From this point of view, the situation of women was the consequence of their sinful nature. Scripture, once again, plays an important role in legitimating a hostile attitude toward women because of the original sin committed in leading men astray. For more details about Salem Witchcraft trials, see Godbeer Richard, *The Devil's Dominion*, Elliott, Emory. "The Language of Salem Witchcraft." *The Cambridge History of American Literature 1590-1820*. Ed. Sacvan Bercovitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. p.171-82, Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum. *Salem Possessed: Social Origins*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003, Starkey, Marion Lena. *The Devil In Massachusetts: a Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch trials*. New York: Doubleday & Co, 1969, Williams, Selma, and Pamela Williams Adelman. *Riding The Nightmare: Women and Witchcraft from The Old World to The Colonial Salem*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992.

battle between the Mohegans and Narragansetts, fifteen Dutchmen had been slain. It is altogether probable that Mrs. Hutchinson and her family, with some more of the English, were then settled upon the mainland, and scattered over a space of a mile in the territory claimed by the Dutch. They might have been supposed to be Dutch by a party of Indians, who, thirsting for blood and booty, fell upon their settlement in August, 1643. Mrs. Hutchinson, Mr. Collins and his wife, with all the rest of the family, save one child, who was carried into captivity, perished, as well as such members of two other families as were in their houses at the time of the attack. The whole number of persons thus slaughtered, without provocation or cause, was sixteen. Report indeed affirms, that the victims were confined to their dwellings and burned, as were their cattle. Such, amid an accumulation of horrors, was the close of the career of Mrs. Hutchinson. With the piercing yell of the Indians in her ear, with her children and grandchildren writhing in agonies before her eyes, her troubled, and yet not unhappy life, was ended. Many persons, men, women, and children, suffered by a like tragic fate in the perils attending the early settlement of all our colonies. Of the greater part of these, as well as of Mrs. Hutchinson, we must say, that they died without any of their kindred or race to soothe their pangs, without any fellow-believer to bear witness to their Christian constancy, and with none but barbarian hands to give them burial, even if this last service, which very seldom was the case, was granted. (352)

In addition to describing an early episode of Indian captivity experienced by the only member of Hutchinson's family who survived the massacre, this account also conjures images of dreary scenes of Indian ruthlessness the like of which are repeated in most of the narratives selected for this study. This obvious analogy, however, is embodied in the retrospective character of the narrative.<sup>58</sup> Later in this dissertation, I will show how similarly dismal scenes in the opening passages of most captivity narratives are sensationalized by either the narrator or the publishers. The exploitation of Hutchinson's fate at the hands of the Indians did by no means take the same orientation.

While later generation Puritans emphasize the violent, demonic, and merciless nature of the Indian for a variety of religious, ideological and political purposes, Winthrop and some of his contemporary ministers still associated the

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<sup>58</sup> George E. Ellis 's book was based on retrospective narratives and was first published in 1845.

Indians who massacred Hutchinson and who abducted her child with the figure of the devil. The chosen interpretation however differs from later narratives in that the decimation of Hutchinson's family is portrayed as "a token of an angry providence" (Ellis 354). Similarly, Brooks writes:

Of course Mrs. Hutchinson's enemies among the Massachusetts Bay ministers made of her terrible fate a powerful warning to schismatics and wrong doers. Her death, so they declared, was God's judgment on one led away by the wiles of Satan. (27)

Eliot sees the Indians as worshipers of the devil and instruments of evil out to sabotage the Christian mission. This idea prevails in captivity narratives written or supported by later generation Puritans. By contrast, in the case of Hutchinson's murder, the killers, i.e. the Indians, are seen as the agency by which God punishes the heretic woman who attempted to lead true worshipers astray. Yet to what extent did such contempt of the victim help make the image of the Indian abductor less vile? Were the Indians who captured Susannah less demonic than those who captured Rowlandson a couple of decades later? Or did they just take on another demonic role? To answer these questions, I will first look at the way in which 17<sup>th</sup>-century Puritans viewed the devil.

Since the Puritans' foremost source of inspiration was the Bible, and since they strongly believed in an eternal struggle between God and the devil, they relied on their different reading and interpretation of both the Old and the New Testament to enter the struggle on the side of the Creator in the hope of earning eternal salvation.<sup>59</sup> In so doing, they drew a picture of Satan that corresponded to the different roles ascribed to it in the Bible.

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<sup>59</sup> The most important issue in the Puritan religious quest was Salvation. Andrew Delbanco writes: "He [a Christian] looks at the favor of God, and the blood of Christ, and pardon of sin, the kingdom of glory" (111). However, the theologians did not always agree on how best to obtain God's favors and be admitted to Heaven. This constituted a matter of controversy which we can understand by defining the principle of the "covenant." Holifield distinguishes between two kinds of covenant: the legal covenant and the covenant of grace. The first was "made with Adam, requiring obedience to moral law as a condition of salvation" (39). The second was "made known by revelation to Abraham that offered salvation as a gift to faith alone" (40). This duality raised doubts as to whether good behavior alone was enough to guarantee eternal salvation. Holifield writes that "the legal covenant cast men and women on their own abilities; the covenant of grace provided the grace of the spirit.

The first biblical reference to the devil in *Genesis* explains the devil's responsibility in the fall of man. In the Garden of Eden, he takes the shape of a serpent: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (*Genesis* 3:1).<sup>60</sup> The devil is God's creation. He holds talents of manipulation and deception. Nevertheless, Puritans believe that God is above Satan and can even use him in the interest of good, for example, by tempting His people in order to test their faith according to an interpretation in the *Book of Job*. Job, the central character, was most important for the Puritans, not only because Job's suffering is taken as *type*<sup>61</sup> of Christ's suffering, but also because he was tested by God and the Puritans considered him as an example of faith.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, it was taken for granted among the Puritans that that the devil is likely to appear when a person has sinned and lost God's protection; therefore, the only way to resist the devil is total submission to God, as written in the Bible: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (*James* 4:7). Puritans perhaps understood this to mean that, despite the devil's talent for deceiving and alluring believers, God shows His people in the Bible how to avoid the devil's traps and how to gain God's kingdom; hence the Puritans' strong awareness of the eternal fight between God and the devil, a struggle they felt to be very much an integral part of their daily lives.

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The first could ensure an orderly society, but only the second could insure an eternal place in the kingdom of God" (40). These controversial ideas had huge consequences for the Puritan way of life; they created an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety in which the faithful were left wondering whether they were saved or damned. This state of mind paved the path for erroneous interpretations of fact; people could be considered as virtuous or sinful by any authority of the time, and this according to rather ambivalent criteria.

<sup>60</sup> King James Version of the Bible.

<sup>61</sup> See the definition of *typology* footnote above.

<sup>62</sup> "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and escheweth evil?" (*Job* 1:8). Since Job was a very wealthy man with a nice family, Satan said to God that Job obeyed him because he is a wealthy and a happy man: "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" (*Job* 1:9). God therefore ordered Satan to deprive Job of all that he had, but Job still feared and worshiped God. For the Puritans, in this episode of the Bible, God used Satan to allow Job to prove his unconditional faith in God and thus earn eternal salvation. Nevertheless, most of Satan's apparitions in the Bible are to deceive people and to lead them away from the kingdom of God.

It is also in the context of this everlasting struggle that they characterized the Indians as either the embodiment of the devil or God's tool in testing His people. While such associations were rather subtle in earlier Puritan literature, the notion gained considerable ground with the Mathers and successive writers. Given that both Bradford and Winthrop do refer to Satan's hindering of God's mission, they do not necessarily establish any tangible links between the Indians and the obstacles encountered by the Puritan mission in settling the new territories. John Eliot was in fact one of the first early authors to associate some of the Indians' practices with the devil and to posit that Indian resistance to evangelization was a case of a proxy war waged by Satan to thwart the plan that God set out to implement through His Puritan elect.

Now that I have shown how the devil was viewed in the Puritan tradition and established a trend, in the New World, to draw parallels between Satan, as an agent of evil and obstruction to God's plan, and a similar role played by the Indians, I want to go back to the main theme of the Indians as instruments of God's revenge as this theme is predominant in Hutchinson's case as well as in Puritan captivity narratives. Although Winthrop does not directly involve the devil when he mentions the abduction of Hutchinson's daughter, he does present the Indians who massacred Hutchinson's family and took her daughter into captivity, as a tool of God in punishing Hutchinson for her religious misconduct.

Regarding the abducted daughter, Winthrop writes:

A daughter of Mrs. Hutchinson was carried away by the Indians near the Dutch, when her mother and others were killed by them ; and upon the peace concluded between the Dutch and the same Indians, she was returned to the Dutch governor, who restored her to her friends here. She was about eight years old, when she was taken, and continued with them about four years, and she had forgot her own language, and all her friends, and was loath to have come from the Indians. (vol. 2, 276)<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> A footnote to the passage in the quoted version includes the following information: "She became reconciled, married in 1651 John Cole, and left descendants" (vol. 2, 276).

Winthrop approaches the topic of captivity somewhat differently compared with later generation authors who wrote about Mary Rowlandson or other Puritan captives at the end of the century. Among notable divergences, Winthrop's narrative is strictly fact-based and devoid of emotion or sympathy. And far from demonizing the Indians, Winthrop stresses instead the degree to which the former captive was, as it were, "indianized" as demonstrated in her estrangement from her own people after her return ("was loath to have come from the Indians"), an attitude that stood in stark contrast to later Puritan narratives describing the captive's release as a process of redemption. It can be assumed that Winthrop's narrative choice most likely stems from the author's (and many of his contemporaries') contempt of the girl's mother.

Leaving aside the specifics of the Hutchinson case, Winthrop's comparatively soft depiction of Susannah's abductors may also be seen through the prism of the broader literary context of the time in connection with the treatment of captivity stories.<sup>64</sup> Winthrop first refers to the case in 1646, forty years before the publication of Mary Rowlandson's narrative and other more renowned captivity tales. Just what was the Puritans' conception of captivity in general, and captivity by the Indians in particular, before the publication of the standard setting reference captivity narrative by Rowlandson?

The phenomenon of captivity as such long predated Rowlandson's experience which largely influenced the literary genre of captivity narrative and/or represented a turning point in its development. In the case of Winthrop, except for his deliberate instrumentalization of the abduction of Hutchinson's daughter, the use by him of the term *captivity* is restricted to its factual dimension. In his treatment of captivity, he avoids any religious and typological interpretations, such as resistance, redemption, and salvation to name but a few, all of which are common characteristics of captivity narratives that form the nucleus of this study.

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<sup>64</sup> Susannah's captivity was among the earliest cases to be referred to in Puritan literature before the publication of Rowlandson's narrative. Yet, except for anecdotal references by some writers to Susannah's captivity, little had been written about her captivity at the time. Katherine Kirkpatrick



As with the case of Hutchinson's daughter, Winthrop also writes about captivity in the context of his account of a long-lasting conflict between his fellow Puritan settlers and a very outspoken detractor of the Puritan dogma, Samuel Gorton.<sup>65</sup> This conflict is to be used to clarify the term "captivity" and its peripheral topics. Winthrop relates this captivity-related anecdote, which is not Indian-related and can in fact be compared to the status of modern-day prisoners of war. Winthrop himself uses the phrase "captives taken in war." As for the rest of the terminology used by Winthrop regarding this specific occurrence of "captivity" in his work, one can notice the commonly used reference to Providence:

So being before his door, the commissioners came in, and after the governor had saluted them, he went forth with them, and passing through the files, welcomed them home, *blessing God for preserving and prospering them*, and gave them all thanks for their pains and good carriage, and desired of the captain a list of their names, that the court, etc., might know them if hereafter there should be occasion to make use of such men. (vol. 2, 143, my emphasis)

God's role in "preserving captives" is actually a widely recurrent theme in most of subsequent captivity narratives, yet the situation Winthrop describes concerns Puritan captives at the hand of a non-Puritan enemy, in this case Puritan dissenters. When writing about the situation, which involves members of the enemy they (the Puritans) themselves captured as captives, Winthrop adheres to an exclusively factual style. This observation also proves true in attitude towards Hutchinson's daughter's captivity, as well as in the following text about three prisoners, whom Puritans suspected to be involved in rebellious conspiracy:

There were three more taken in the house with them, but because they had not their hands to the letters, they were *dismissed*, two of them upon a small *ransom*, as captives taken in war, and the third freely, for that he was but in his master's house, etc. (vol. 2, 149, my emphasis)

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published a fictional account, *Trouble's Daughter: The Story of Susanna Hutchinson, Indian Captive*, 1998.

<sup>65</sup> Gordon gathered a group of followers who antagonized the Puritan magistrates on both religious and intellectual grounds.

This passage dealing with dissenters' captivity at the hands of Puritans includes more fact-based presentation of the legal process of releasing/ "dismissing" the anti-Puritan prisoners of war.

The two quotes are symptomatic of the early Puritan tendency to consider captivity from a religious point of view (as an experience with a predominantly religious dimension) *when and only when* it involves their own people. Indeed, already at Winthrop's time, talk of imprisonment, whether termed *captivity* or otherwise, often comes with religious connotations (Godly preservation, salvation, redemption etc.) but where non-Puritans are the captives of the Puritans, the reports tend to be merely factual as can be seen in the use of legal terms.

Winthrop also explores inter-Indian captivity, notably citing the capture of Narragansett chief Miantonomo by the Mohegans. In the resulting narrative, Winthrop shows how the various alliances used enmities between Indian tribes to further their own interests, In other words they "instrumentalized" such cases of captivity. Given this background, written accounts of episodes of inter-Indian captivity also lack the Puritan religious dimension otherwise to be found in most narratives in my selection.

### **1.3. Later Generation Puritan Intellectuals**

#### **1.3.1. *The Mathers***

Like the very early New England literature, Puritan literature of the late seventeenth century is characterized by the dominance of a group of influential intellectuals. The major literary works of the time were attributed to influential intellectuals such as Increase Mather, Samuel Sewall, William Hubbard, and Cotton Mather. Although some of these early American writers are, as Everett Emerson observes, "known to most readers at best as historical personages or as names represented in an anthology by a few pages from their writings" (4), their works are indispensable in understanding many aspects of late seventeenth-

century New England literature. Most of these writers set the tone and define the context of any particular colonial literary genre, including that of Indian captivity narratives. Of these names, the most prevalent and recurring ones in the complete corpus of Puritan captivity narratives are those of Increase, and even more so, Cotton Mather.

The Mathers, father and son, belonged to a group of second and third generation Puritans who adopted the radical stance of claiming a return to Christian roots and warning their congregations against backsliding into an increasingly secular world when their parishioners seemed more interested in political and social issues than in theological matters. Cotton Mather writes in one of his diaries: “I saw, to my Sorrow, that there was hardly any but my Father and myself, to appear with any Strength of Argument, or Fortitude, in Defence of our invaded *Churches*” (*Diary* 358). One noteworthy aspect of the Mathers’ war of words against the said “invaders” was the sheer bulk of literary production; the Mathers dealt with a great variety of topics and issues. Cotton Mather, for instance, “wrote voluminously, more than four hundred and fifty titles, about almost everything—theology, history, biography, medicine, morals, and education, to name only some of his varied interests” (Vaughan 135). Most of his writings reflect his commitment to thwarting the designs of the church’s many enemies and are punctuated with stories, incidents, and testimonies related to the wilderness and Indians. In fact, most of the captivity narratives published by Cotton Mather are either appendices to major books or isolated stories disseminated across his entire literary production.

His masterpiece *Magnalia Christi Americana: The Ecclesiastical History of New-England* (1702), for instance, touches on a wealth of sometimes unrelated topics. The book is composed of two volumes of all together seven books with the following titles: “Antiquities...,” “Containing the lives of the Governours, and names of the Magistrates of New England...,” “The Lives of sixty Famous Divines, by whose ministry the Churches of New-England have been planted and continued...,” “An account of the University of Cambridge in New-England...”

“Acts and Monuments of the Faith and Order in the Churches of New-England...,” “A Faithful Record of many illustrious, wonderful Providences, both of mercies and judgments, on divers persons in New-England...,” and “The Wars of the Lord” (Vols. 1, 2). As one can infer from the preceding table of contents, Mather’s work has a distinctly multidisciplinary dimension. Through his writing, Mather exercised a form of literary supremacy and authority in the debate over a large number of issues facing the colony. To refer to these threats, he used the phrase “the invader of the church.” *Magnalia*’s table of content does not include any title dealing exclusively with captivity narratives; but the issue of captivity is referred to in each chapter and Mather uses the motif of captivity in a very broad sense, often randomly, whether in support of his wide-ranging religious and political reasoning or to illustrate an unrelated topic, as in *A Memorial of the present deplorable state of New-England* in which he denounces a corrupt New-England Governor, Joseph Dudley. This book also includes a separate section entitled “An account of several barbarities lately committed by the Indians in New-England” (31). Some of the captivity accounts it contains will be addressed later.

Mather’s interest in captivity stories are tailored for his discourse about other people’s lives in general and specific life experiences in particular; thus Mather’s use of the biography is not limited to the second chapter of his book—a section exclusively dedicated to the lives of New England personalities—but also features references to events in the lives of ordinary people used to illustrate his points. In his narratives, Mather uses these stories and related incidents to demonstrate what he believes to be God’s manifestations and what he commonly calls “God’s illustrious providences.” These providences mainly include conversion experiences, witchcraft, and testimonies, as well as reported cases of captivity in various forms. Before I embark on an examination of Cotton Mather’s interest in captivity narratives and his active direct or indirect contributions to the field in question, I shall map out his conception of the wilderness and the Indians.

### 1.3.1.1. Cotton Mather's View of the Indians

Understanding Cotton Mather's conception of the Indians requires reference to the Puritan conceptualization of satanic power, a force supposedly at work to disturb God's plan for Puritans to build "a city upon the hill."<sup>66</sup> Not only does Mather strongly believe in the omnipresence of the devil in his fellow Puritans' daily lives, but he also sees a clear link between the Indians and the devil:

The New-Englanders are a People of God settled in those, which were once the Devil's Territories; and it may easily be supposed that the Devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a People here accomplishing the Promise of old made unto our Blessed Jesus, That He should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession. (*Wonders* 13)

While this quotation states the link between the Indians—the first inhabitants of the land—and the Devil in a rather indirect manner, in the author's later work, a direct link is clearly established (or claimed to exist), as the following extract concerned with the early settlement period goes to show:

All the noted *powaws* in the country spent three days together in diabolical *conjurations*, to obtain the assistance of the *devils* against the settlement of these our *English*; but the *devils* at length acknowledged unto them, that they could not hinder those people from their becoming the owners and masters of the country; hereupon the Indians resolved upon a good correspondence with our new-comers; and God convinced them, that there was no *enchantment* or *divination* against such a people. (*Magnalia* 52)

Cotton Mather mentions the *powaw* figure again to establish a direct link between Indian practices and the devil. Also, much in the vein of John Eliot and other predecessors, Mather refers to Indian Satanism ("diabolical conjurations") while, interestingly and importantly enough, denying the efficiency of such practices when it comes to fighting against God's people. In other sections of his production though, Mather does not seem to go along with the devil's supposed submission to

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<sup>66</sup> The will to "build a city upon the Hill" is included in John Winthrop's famous sermon entitled *A Modell of Christian Charity*. The sermon was delivered on board of the *Arbella* before Winthrop and his group landed in America. It consists in what was believed by the Puritans to be their "promised land."

the power of the Puritans. He writes on several occasions about instances of satanic disturbance affecting Christians, particularly his fellow Puritans. For instance, there are references to episodes of witchcraft faced by the colony, especially the famous Salem witchcraft trials of 1692.<sup>67</sup>

Above all, Cotton Mather suggests the existence of a direct link between an alleged interference on the part of the devil, the disturbances that occurred in Salem's community life during the witchcraft craze and the Indians, as is clearly stated in *Magnalia*:

The story of the prodigious war, made by the *spirit* of the *invisible world* upon the people of New-England, in the year 1692, hath entertain'd a great part of the English world with a just astonishment. And I have met with some strange things, not here to me mentioned, which have made me often think that this inexplicable war might have some of its original among the Indians, whose chief *Sagamores* are well known unto some of our captives to have been horrid *sorcerers*, and hellish *conjurers*, and such as conversed with daemons. (Vol.2 537)

Before this pronouncement in *Magnalia* almost two decades after the events, Mather had persistently implicated the Indians in the Salem witchcraft episode, notably in a case study he wrote about one of the allegedly afflicted girls, Marcy Short.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Cotton Mather, who was an ardent believer in demonology and witchcraft, was strongly involved in the Salem witchcraft episode in 1692. Although he claimed later on that he had not attended any of the witchcraft trials, some of his contemporaries blamed him for the infamous outcome of these trials. See Richard Goodbeer's *The Devil's Dominion* (56, 192) and Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum's *Salem Possessed* (15)

<sup>68</sup> Mary Beth Norton argues for an examination of the link between the Salem witchcraft craze and the main Indian wars as she states: "Accordingly, had the Second Indian War on the north eastern frontier somehow been avoided, the Essex County witchcraft crisis of 1692 would not have occurred. This is not to say that the war caused the witchcraft crisis, but rather that the conflict created the conditions that allowed the crisis to develop as rapidly and extensively as it did" (298). In her analysis of the events, she shows the links between some key protagonists in the Salem event and the Indian world: "[Some], like George Burroughs, were suspected of the complicity with the French and the Wabanakis. The connection forged by Abigail Hobbs and Ann Putnam Jr. coupled Essex County residents' concerns about the conflict with the Wabanakis with their ongoing anxiety about bewitchment. [...] Who better than a man who had lived both on the Main frontier and in Salem Village to unite the visible and invisible devil worshippers who were together assaulting New England" (211).

Mather opens *A Brand Pluck'd out of the Burning* (1693), devoted to Mercy Short's illness after her release from captivity, as follows:

MERCY SHORT had been taken Captive by our cruel and Bloody Indians in the East, who at the same time horribly Butchered her Father, her Mother, her Brother, her Sister, and others of her Kindred and then carried her, and three surviving Brothers with two Sisters, from Nieuchewannic 2 unto Canada : after which our Fleet Returning from Quebeck to Boston, brought them with other prisoners that were then Redeemed. But altho she had then already Born the Yoke in her youth, Yett God Almighty saw it Good for her to Bear more of that Yoke, before seventeen years of her Life had Rolled away. (259)

Although Mather's narrative focuses on Short's fits during the Salem witch-hunt, its opening very much conforms to the conventional pattern of most of the Puritan captivity narratives selected for this study. The opening alludes to the connection Mather will make between the Indians and witchcraft through the agency of the devil, an evil power the author believes is incarnated in the Indians.

Mather's narrative begins with the typical terminology of captivity narratives, such as "cruel" and "bloody" Indians, and he moves on to a more supernatural dimension in which he demonizes the Indians by clearly suggesting their devilish implication in tormenting Marcy Short and others, alleged to have been "[t]ormented by Invisible Furies in the County of Essex" (260). Here, for example, is how he describes, with a wealth of detail how the devil himself allegedly manifested himself to Short:

There exhibited himself unto her a Divel having the Figure of A Short and a Black Man; and it was remarkable that altho' shee had no sort of Acquaintance with Histories of what has happened elsewhere, to make any Impressions upon her Imagination, yett the Divel that visited her was just of the same Stature, Feature, and complexion with what the Histories of the Witchcrafts beyond-sea ascribe unto him; he was a wretch no taller than an ordinary Walking-Staff; hee was not of a Negro, but of a Tawney, or an Indian colour; hee wore an high-crowned Hat, with strait Hair; and had one Cloven Foot. (261)

Mather also applies the same narrative strategy—incarnating the devil in his enemies’ features—to some Quakers and French Catholics, who were in disagreement with the Puritans.

References associating Quakers<sup>69</sup> with the Devil and qualifying Quakerism as a demonic religion often feature in works of Puritan literature, including Mather’s own publications. Whether of a general nature or specifically devoted to witchcraft, the author is still more prone to illustrate his narratives on demonology and witchcraft with direct examples of devilish performances implicating Indians and their French allies:

That at such Times the Spectres went away to Their Witch-meetings; but that when They Returned, the whole Crew, besides her daily Troublers, look'd in upon her, to see how the work was carried on; That there were French Canadiens and Indian Sagamores among them, diverse of whom shee knew, and particularly Nam'd em. (282)

Later on, in his masterpiece *Magnalia*, Cotton Mather makes no secret of his conviction that the French engaged in collusion with the devil as part of an unholy alliance with the Indians to thwart fulfillment of God’s plan by the Puritans:

I entirely refer it unto thy judgement (without the least offer of my own) whether Satan did not now “set umbushments” against the good people of Gloucester, with daemons in the shape of armed Indians and Frenchmen, appearing to considerable numbers of the inhabitants, and mutually firing upon them for the best part of a month together. (541)

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<sup>69</sup>Before the actual Salem Witchcraft events of 1692, Mather had witnessed another case of witchcraft in Boston to which he devoted a narrative, entitled *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcraft and Possessions* (1689). It is about the Goodwin Children whose strange behavior fuelled suspicions that they had become bewitched. Having been called upon to diagnose and cure them, Mather performed a spiritual experiment to identify the causes of their fits and soon set out to investigate whether the root cause of the symptoms could possibly originate from the influence of the Devil himself: “ Yet once Falling into her Maladies a little time after she had read the 59th Psalm, I said unto the standers by, ‘Poor child! She can't now read the Psalm she read a little while go.’ [...]. I brought her a Quakers Book; and That she could quietly read whole pages of; only the Name of God and Christ she still skip't over, being unable to pronounce it, except sometimes with stammering a minute or two or more upon it” (112). Mather’s demonstration in the case at hand casts the Quakers as the Devil’s allies based on the reasoning that that the evil spirit tormenting the child would let her read a Quaker book and prevent her from reading the Bible or pronounce the names of God or Jesus.



Demonization of the French by Cotton Mather and other influential Puritans is closely linked to the frontier wars, notably King Philip's War (1675-1676) and King Williams' War (1689-1697).

While King Philip's War pitted the Puritans against a coalition of Indian tribes, King William's War had its origins in a European conflict between the Protestant king, William III, and his Catholic counterpart in France, Louis XIV. When the conflict spread to America, it took the form of skirmishes between French Catholic colonies and their Indian allies against English Protestant (notably Puritan) colonies; hence, Mather's frequent coupling of the Indians with the French in designating the enemy. This point is particularly relevant to the study of those Puritan captivity narratives that were published shortly before, during and shortly after that war. As will be shown in the upcoming chapter, those captivity narratives dealt with what may be understood as a form of "double captivity." Hannah Swarton (1697) and John Williams (1707), for examples, were first abducted by the Indians and subsequently ended up in a French Catholic environment.

The study of the phenomenon of double captivity must begin with a contextualization of the literary genre concerned and then examine how influential authors such as the Mathers treated captivity from a historical perspective and from the literary point of view.<sup>70</sup>

### ***1.3.1.2. Increase and Cotton Mather's Contribution to the Captivity Narrative Genre***

Cotton Mather uses the term "captivity" to cover many different phenomena, including that of the "captivity" of an individual soul by what he considers to be a deviant form of Christianity, e.g., Quakerism (*Magnalia* 456). He also typologically

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<sup>70</sup> Mather dedicated a whole work to King William's war: *Decennium Luctuosom: a History of the Long War Which New-England Hath Had with the Indian Salvages* (1699).

deals with the Biblical captivity of the Jews called the Babylonian Captivity (*Magnalia* 280). As for the specific topic of Indian captivity, we find isolated stories about English captives by the Indians throughout his texts. These references do not necessarily constitute a fully-fledged captivity narrative, as the captivity aspect essentially serves as illustration to demonstrate daily manifestations of God's will in New England. For example, Sarah Smith was an ordinary woman who was executed for committing adultery after her husband was taken captive to Canada (*Magnalia* 48). In another instance, Mather relates the captivity of an ordinary Frenchman:

It is remarkable, that a Frenchman who not long before these transactions, had by a shipwreck been made a captive among the Indians of this country, did, as the survivors reported, just before he dyed in their hands, tell those tawny pagans, that God being angry with them for their wickedness, would not only destroy them all, but also people the place, with another nation, which would not live after their brutish manners. Those infidels then blasphemously replied, God could not kill them; which blasphemous mistake was confuted by an horrible and unusual plague, whereby they were consumed in such vast multitudes, that our first planters found the land almost covered with their unburied carcases; and they that were left alive, were smitten into awful and humble regards of the English, by the terrors which the remembrance of the Frenchman's prophesie had imprinted on them. (49).

The Frenchman's captivity features in Chapter Two of the first book on "the voyage to New-England" (45). Most captivity stories are used as illustrative material and tied to the context of life in the colony. Rowlandson's story, the most prominent and long celebrated case of Puritan captivity, is mentioned in just one paragraph in Mather's *Magnalia*:

And the French from Canada sending recruits unto the Indian is for that purpose, the Indians thus recruited on Feb. 10. fell upon the town of Lancaster, where they burned many houses, and murdered and captivated more than forty persons. The worthy minister of the town, Mr. Rowlandson, had been at Boston to intercede for some speedy succours; and though by this journey from home he was himself preserved, yet at his return he found his house on fire, his goods and books all burned, and which was worse, his wife, and children, and neighbours, in the hands of the worst barbarians in the world.

This good man, like David at Ziklag, yet believed, for the recovery of his relations out of those horrible hands, which about four or five months after was accomplished with wonderful dispensations of divine Providence, whereof the gentlewoman herself has given us a printed narrative. (493)

Mather does not in any way privilege Rowlandson's story, although her own printed narrative had the highest circulation of all such publications both in New England and overseas. His treatment of the material is cast into a short passage of roughly the same scope as the corresponding accounts relating to less prominent former captives, thus putting all such reports on an equal footing. One can deduce that the way in which captivity experiences are related in *Magnalia* follows a deliberate pattern and results from a conscious editorial choice or attitude on the part of the author.

Mather's writings exhibit paradoxical choices in the treatment of captivity. While the author makes abundant use of the motif in each and every book and chapter of his multidisciplinary *Magnalia* to illustrate and comment upon events having no direct bearing on individual captives, he nevertheless opts for a narrative technique aimed at indirectly raising the relative prominence of other former captives in his text.

Two exceptions are the publication in full of "The Narrative of Hannah Swarton, containing Wonderful Passages, relating to her Captivity and her Deliverance" (Vol. 2 306) and Hannah Dustan's captivity narrative "A notable exploit; Dux Faemina Facti" (Vol. 2 550). Mather had published both narratives twice before in his *Humiliations follow'd with deliverance* (1697) and in *Decennium Luctuosum* (1699). *Decennium* is verbatim appended to *Magnalia* (502). In addition to Swarton's and Dustan's captivity narratives, the appendix also includes two main chapters exclusively dedicated to captivity: "New assaults from the Indians, with some remarkables of captives taken in those assaults" (517) and "The condition of the captives that from time to time fell into the hands of the Indians; with some very remarkable accidents" (518).

One of the characteristic features in the writings of both Mathers—father and son—consists in making use of real events from the lives of ordinary people. Even before Cotton Mather took up Rowlandson’s captivity, Increase Mather had also thought of including Rowlandson’s story among the short providential stories concerning Puritan New England:

Sometime after May 1681, Increase Mather began collecting and then sorting the providential accounts he received concerning New England. Rowlandson’s narrative was probably among them, but owing to its length, local currency, and intrinsic merit, Mather may have suggested that she publish it separately. Certainly, he was already very familiar with the Rowlandson’s story before Mary’s narrative. As Richards points out, Joseph Rowlandson asked Mather himself to intercede with the Council to redeem his wife and children; moreover, Mather provided his own version of Rowlandson’s captivity experiences in several passages in his *A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England* (1676). (Derounian-Stodola, “The Publication...” 241)

Interestingly, the providential stories which both Increase and Cotton Mather were collecting were essentially aimed at passing on the Puritan message and above all “purifying” the church. Rowlandson’s narrative, although it was published independently from the Mathers’ significant works, therefore carried out the same Puritan task of cleansing the church.

Just after the publication of Rowlandson’s narrative, again in *Remarkable Providences illustrative of the earlier Days of American Colonisation* (1684), Increase Mather, precedes his son’s endeavor to clean the church of “its invaders” by emphasizing God’s “providences.” Increase’s essay basically consists of a recording of unusual and supernatural stories of different aspects of Puritan’s daily life, an exercise not specific to Puritan literature. Thus in his Introduction to Increase Mather’s *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684), Levernier writes: “The practice of recording unusual phenomena and events which somehow might be interpreted to reveal God’s ascendancy over the universe or his attitude toward mankind at a specific moment in history was as ancient as the Bible itself and continued long after Mather’s time” (156). In addition to relating his own experiences or events that occurred in New England, Increase Mather also

published and interpreted letters and testimonies written by contributors from all over the world.

The wealth of such contributions shows how important and influential a place New England was at the time. Even more importantly, he used other people's narratives in support of his own arguments, building on the moral authority of outside sources for the sake of enhanced credibility: "A Disturbance not much unlike to this hapned above twenty years ago, at an house in *Tedworth*, in the Country of *Wilts* in *England*, which was by wise men judged to proceed from Conjuraton" (*An Essay...* 156). Mather finds it even more convincing to report testimonies from other ministers: "The Relator had this from the mouth of Mr. Beaumont, a Minister of Note at Caon in Normandy, who assured him that he had it from one of the Ministers that did assist in carrying on the Day of prayer when this memorable providence hapned" (xxvii). In most cases, Mather provides long quotations from the letters.

In addition to the narratives themselves, Increase Mather provides bibliographical information insisting, in particular, on the faith and godliness of his witnesses. For instance, when relating an incident set in Hartford, New England, a place allegedly invaded by evil spirits, Mather has this to say about Ann Cole, a woman subject to strange fits:

Very Remarkable was that Providence wherein Ann Cole of Hartford in New-England was concerned. She was, and is accounted a person of real Piety and Integrity. Nevertheless, in the year 1662 then living in her Fathers House (who has likewise been esteemed a godly Man) She was taken with very strange Fits, wherein her Tongue was improved by a Deamon to express things which she herself knew nothing of. (135-36)

The emphasis on Ann Cole's integrity and the godly character of her background helps point out that no one can be totally safe from Satan's harmful designs. Mather's illustrious providences likewise portray striking examples of the manifestation of God's will in the form of extraordinary judgments and extraordinary shows of mercy.

The same logic of instrumentalization—the use of the true stories about average New Englanders who “lived to declare the works of the Lord” (20)—exists in Increase Mather’s passages on captivity, an example of which features in the second chapter of his book: “A Further Account Of Some Other Remarkable Preservations” (230) including “The relation of a captive” which tells the captivity of Quintin Stockwell (27). Mather uses this narrative, one among many similar captivity experiences, as a means of showing Providence at work:

Likewise several of those that were taken captive by the Indians are able to relate affecting stories concerning the gracious Providence of God, in carrying them through many dangers and deaths, and at last setting their feet in a, large place again. A worthy person hath sent me the account which one lately belonging to Deerfield (his name is Quintin Stockwell), hath drawn up respecting his own captivity and redemption. (*An Essay... 27*)

This introduction of Stockwell’s narrative by Increase Mather shows two particularities of the captivity accounts written by the Puritan elite on behalf of former captives. One is the obvious instrumentalization of the motif of captivity for the purpose of political propaganda through a religious discourse that includes the themes of God’s testing and the elect’s repentance—a technique which had already been used by Cotton to preserve the power of the Puritan elite. The second one consists in the authentication process emphasized by the Mathers, and especially Increase, while writing about others’ captivity experiences.

All was part of a set of literary tools through which the Mathers sought to counter the loosening of Puritan ethics in the third generation, a development that “posed a considerable threat to the authority of men like Mather, whose power became less absolute than it once had been.” (Levernier, “Introduction” xii ) This being said, the de facto moral authority over parish affairs that derived from the literary supremacy and intellectual monopoly exercised by the Mathers, and particularly Cotton Mather, inevitably prompted the emergence of a measure of criticism by some of Mather’s contemporaries who began questioning the authenticity of his writings and the credibility of his literary achievements as historical documents. For example Lincoln Charles Henry notes:

His *Magnalia* is more a series of sermons to prove the manner in which God's peculiar care over New England had been made *manifest* than a careful statement of the *exact facts* as they occurred. The result is a strange and *imperfect* thing, showing great knowledge and industry but giving almost as much irritation as pleasure to the reader. Among other advantages generally conceded to Mather was that of an excellent memory, but the critic is tempted to remark that it would have been better if our author had not trusted his memory so absolutely when writing his history. (176, emphasis mine)

Weak, faulty, or selective memories as well as narrative inconsistencies are liable to occur in any autobiographical work. This is all the more likely to happen when writing about someone else's personal experience. Logically enough the authenticity of Mather's main work is most questionable where he deals with third party accounts, as exemplified by a couple of captivity narratives featuring in the corpus of this study.

Unquestionably Increase and Cotton Mather manifest profound involvement in and influence on most seventeenth and early eighteenth century Indian captivity narrative writing. But what about their specific role with respect to the narratives per se? One can notice that this differs from one narrative to another, with the relative degree of involvement roughly falling into three categories: The first consists of captivity narratives whose authorship is directly claimed by Cotton Mather, such as narratives contained in the following chapters of *Magnalia*: "New Assaults from the Indians with Some Remarkable of Captives Taken in Those Assaults" (517) and "The Condition of the Captives that from Time to Time Fell into the Hands of the Indians, with Some Very Remarkable Accidents" (518). These two chapters contain a wealth of details about the captivity experience of once ordinary citizens who had been abducted by the Indians, but Mather does not in any way credit his sources. It remains unclear just where and how he acquired the information about these people and their ordeal in the wilderness. The narratives seemingly stem from his extensive knowledge of the subject-matter (as a historian) demonstrated earlier in this chapter.

The second category includes those narratives for which the Mathers “only” acted in their capacity as publisher, such as the captivity narratives of Hannah Dustan and Hannah Swarton. Mather uses quotation marks to refer to both narratives in *Humiliation Followed with Deliverances* (1697) and in *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702),<sup>71</sup> but the very origins of the narratives remain vague. Vail mentions that Mather obtained Dustan’s narrative from “her pastor, Rev. Benjamin Rolfe, minister of Haverhill” (189). As for Swanton’s narrative, we can find even less information about its origins. Quentin Stockwell’s narrative is presented by Increase Mather in the same pattern as Dustan’s narrative was. We can read in the introduction to the narrative:

A worthy person hath sent me the account which one lately belonging to Deerfield (his name is Quintin Stockwell), hath drawn up respecting his own captivity and redemption, with the more notable occurrences of Divine Providence attending him in his distress, which I shall, therefore, here insert in the words by himself expressed. (*Remarkable Providences* 28)

Thus we do not know the significance of the quotation marks or whether the Mathers obtained an oral narrative from a third person or a written testimony.

The third category embraces those narratives not clearly traceable to the Mathers, but for which scholars have found connections linking the alleged autobiographical authors recounting their captivity experiences to the Mathers. One example is that of John Williams, whom Vaughan introduces as follows:

Williams’s first wife, Eunice, was a member of New England’s most prestigious clan: daughter of Eleazar Mather of Northampton, granddaughter of Richard Mather of Dorchester, niece of Increase Mather of Boston (president of Harvard College during Williams’s student days), and cousin of Cotton Mather. Not surprisingly, John Williams’s narrative is heavily laced with Puritan piety. (167)

Similar suspicions of the Mathers’ possible participation in authoring or publishing Indian captivity accounts concern Rowlandson’s narrative (1682). Although the

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<sup>71</sup> In this paper I will use the text based on Mather’s last version of Dustan’s narrative published in his work *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), as selected in Vaughan’s *Puritans among the Indians*.



account allegedly stems from the pen of the captive herself, who appears as the narrator in the text, it has received significant support from an anonymous supporter who prefaced it. Scholars strongly suspect that the prefacer was none other than Increase Mather himself.<sup>72</sup>

With very few exceptions, in the Mathers' literary exploitation of the motif of captivity, both Cotton and Increase insist on the authenticity of the account as being based on the testimony they had either directly from the former captive or from a "trustworthy" third party. The Mathers cautiously make clear their roles as the "pen holder" of the captives, who did not have the chance to write about their own experiences themselves; hence the presence in most introductory passages of phrases such as the following: "A worthy person hath sent me the account" (*An Essay...* 27), "I must now publish what these poor women assure me" (Cotton, *Magnalia* 551). Similarly, Cotton Mather remarks that his edited version of Sarah Gerish's captivity narrative is "as communicated to the Reverend Dr. Cotton Mather, by the Reverend John Pike, Minister of Dover" (qtd. in Drake 68). But how specifically was this influence reflected in the narratives per se? At what level of the text can one see any trace of the Mathers' possible authorship and authority as a moral influence?

Although it would be exaggeratedly anachronistic to call the Mathers "ghostwriters" of most of these narratives, one can borrow and transpose Philippe Lejeune's notion of "collaborative" narratives to qualify the captivity narratives in which the Mathers were in one way or another involved. Lejeune writes:

Unlike the apocryphal autobiography, the autobiography composed in collaboration such as it is practiced today in a more or less acknowledged manner, introduces a flaw into this system. It calls to mind that the 'true' is itself an artifact and that the 'author' is a result of the contract. The *division of labor* between two people (at least) reveals the multiplicity of authorities implied in the work of autobiographical writing, as in all writing. (187-88, original italics)

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<sup>72</sup> Mary Rowlandson's and John Williams's captivity narratives are the most widely published captivity narrative ranking among the best sellers at the time. See Mott's list (81).

In the captivity narratives of the corpus of this study, the collaboration takes several forms according to various cultural, religious, and social factors, among which the gender issue is an integral part. There are indeed few women among the published authors of Colonial American literature, and those who made it to publication would appear to have enjoyed the support of influential men. While the likes of Mary Rowlandson and Anne Bradstreet<sup>73</sup> benefited from supportive men to reach an audience, other women such as Anne Hutchinson were silenced, as they were seen as subversive elements posing a threat to Puritan piety and authority. Thus later in this study, I will devote a chapter to the examination of gender issues in captivity narratives by assessing the narratives written by women or about women.

So far, I have examined the initial encounter between the Indians and the colonizers from a historical and literary point of view. I have presented the tools, including broad-based and multidisciplinary approaches with which I propose to subsequently analyze the captivity narratives. The approach selected shows, in chronological order, the unfolding of events related to the coexistence between the Indians and the settlers from the landing of the Mayflower to the first main armed clashes. My study shows how these events were recorded. Early the records form an anthology of more or less favorable depictions of the Indians by the literate settlers. Such literature must have had an impact at the time of publication.

That is why my next chapter will present the literary landscape of the time and seek to answer the following questions: Who were the audience targeted by these various and multidisciplinary Puritan publications? Who read Puritan literature in general and captivity narratives in particular? To what extent did the first instances of Puritan captivity narratives initiate a tradition that was to continually influence the genre to which it gave rise?

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<sup>73</sup> John Woodbridge took care of the publication of Bradstreet's first work, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up* in America, published in England in 1647.

## 1.4. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Literary Audience

The literary landscape of seventeenth-century colonial New England experienced a shift from the colonization of the first-generation Puritans of the New World in their attempt to establish a “city upon the hill” to the literary hegemony of the next generation. The authors of the second generation took an even more radical stand against the “backsliders.” In order to analyze the degree to which the literate elite was able to influence the course of events in the early colonial period and to better contextualize the specific literary genre of the captivity narrative in the early colonial book market, an assessment is mandated regarding the level of literacy among Puritan rank-and-files who served as the key target group of the works in question.

### 1.4.1. *Literacy and the Book Market in Colonial America*

Literacy in the English colonies was largely monopolized by the New England Puritans who placed considerable value on education. David Hall explains the main reasons of the high level of literacy among New England colonists:

The New England colonists, for example, were very largely literate, and because they were two or three generations removed from the coming of a vernacular religious literature, they were comfortably accustomed to a fusion of identity, print, and religion that the Welsh would not experience until the very end of the seventeenth century. It is difficult to believe, moreover, that a full-blown ‘peasant’ culture made its way across the Atlantic, though enough ‘bad’ books did worry the authorities. (20)

Hall bases his statement on the nature of the seventeenth-century colonial book market and cites a number of important figures active therein. He, for instance, compares the Almanac market of New England with that of Virginia and observes that “the publisher of the *Virginia Almanac* managed an annual press run of 5,000

copies, at a time when New Englanders were buying up to 60,000 copies a year of a single almanac, and sustaining several others” (27). In addition to sheer numbers, it is also interesting to note that the Puritan literary production of the time dealt with a broad spectrum of topics as I will show later in this study. Although it is commonplace to refer to seventeenth-century Puritans as highly literate people, one should be specific in using the term “literacy” in this context and notably clarify the following: Does “Puritan literacy” refer to the Puritan elites’ multidisciplinary contribution to the book market of the time as documented in the many anthologies of early colonial literature, or do we concern ourselves with the actual reading and writing skills of the average Puritan readers? Did the Puritans favor one skill over the other? If so, did the emphasis placed on one specific aptitude play a significant role in the coming into being and eventual prospering of the book market?

Despite the wealth of tools (MLA bibliography, library catalogues, online systems for archiving academic journals, etc.) available to contemporary scholars to assess secondary literature dedicated to colonial literature and captivity narratives, it is still difficult to assess how the readership received the captivity narratives and even to know with sufficient certainty who in fact the readers were. In order to show the relative position of captivity narratives in the overall literary landscape of the time and assess their popularity, I have availed myself of Frank Luther Mott’s inventory of early American best sellers.

I will first take a look at David Hall’s description of the 17<sup>th</sup>- century colonial American literary landscape. According to Hall, the Bible ranks first in the book sales of the time. Psalms, primers, and catechism books were also to be found on the shelves of average colonial families of the time. These served as teaching materials in Colonial America/New England. Hall also references a category of books that he defines as *steady sellers*: “Steady sellers were books that remained in print for several decades. Some of these books showed an astonishing longevity, circulating among a popular audience for at least 200 years” (29). These books also feature on Mott’s inventory. The list of “over-all best sellers in the United States”

covers a significant period extending from 1662 to 1945. For this study, I will only discuss the first part of Mott's list including late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century publications. This will show how literary tastes and interests developed over time and measure the relative popularity of (at least the most prominent) captivity narratives:

- 1662 Wigglesworth, Michael. *The Day of Doom*. Cambridge: Samuel Green.
- 1664 Baxter, Richard. *A Call to the Unconverted*. Cambridge: Samuel Green.
- 1665 Bayly, Lewis. *The Practice of Piety*. Cambridge: Samuel Green.
- 1679 Hardy, Samuel. *A Guide to Heaven*. Boston: John Foster.
- 1681 Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Cambridge: Samuel Green.
- 1682 Rowlandson, Mary. *Captivity and Restoration*. Cambridge: Samuel Green.
- 1688 Bacon, Francis. *Essays*. Philadelphia: William Bradford.
- 1699 Dickinson, Jonathan. *God's Protecting Providence*. Philadelphia: Reinieir Jansen.
- 1701 Russell, Robert. *Seven Sermons*. Boston: Bartholomew Green and John Allen.
- 1707 Williams, John. *The Redeemed Captive*. Boston: Bartholomew Green.
- 1709 Flavel, John. *Husbandry Spiritualized*. Boston: John Allen.
- 1719\* *Mother Goose's Méloides for Children*. Boston: Thomas Fleet.\*
- 1719 Watts, Isaac. *Divine and Moral Songs for the Use of Children*. Boston: Samuel Gerrish.
- 1721 Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Boston: publisher unknown
- 1733 *History of Doctor Faustus*. Boston: Thomas Fleet.
- 1741 Penn, William. *No Cross, No Crown*. Boston: publisher unknown.
- 1741 Rede, Sarah. *A Token for Youth*. Boston: Hopestill Foster.
- 1741 Watts, Isaac. *Horae Lyricae*. Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin.
- 1744 Richardson, Samuel. *Pamela*, v.p.
- 1745 *The History of the Holy Jesus*. Boston: Benjamin Gray.
- 1747 Pope, Alexander, *Essay on Man*. Philadelphia: William Bradford.
- 1750\* *Aesop's Fables*. Boston: Daniel Fowle.\*
- 1750 Hervey, James. *Meditations and Contemplations*. Philadelphia: William Bradford.
- 1751 Dodsley, Robert.\* *The Oeconomy of Human Life*. Boston: Daniel Fowle.

1768 Dickinson, John. *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, v.p.  
 1772 Goldsmith, Oliver. *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Philadelphia: William Mentz.  
 1774 Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Philadelphia: James Humphreys.  
 1775 Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. New York: Hugh Gainé.  
 1775 Gregory, John. *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*. Philadelphia; John Dunlap.  
 1775 Stanhope, Philip D. (Lord Chesterfield). *Letters to His Son*. New: Rivington & Gainé.  
 1776 Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense*. Philadelphia: John Bell.  
 1777 Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Philadelphia: John Bell.  
 1777 Thomson, James. *The Seasons*. Philadelphia: John Bell.  
 1777 Young, Edward. *Night Thoughts*. Philadelphia: John Bell.  
 (Mott 303)<sup>74</sup>

Mott's inventory omits utilitarian books such as the numerous editions of the Bible, hymnals, almanacs, cookbooks, doctor-books, etc. Works included in the first part of Mott's list show the full weight of the religious element whether it be in the form of religious poetry, sermons, or any type of Christian allegory. All such works were designed to inculcate Puritan piety and doctrine. Puritan schools, for instance, imposed *The Day of Doom* on New England children, who had to learn Wigglesworth's stanzas along with their catechism.

Three captivity narratives feature among these educational works. While David Hall introduces the qualifier "steady seller" in connection with Rowlandson's *Captivity and Restoration* and Williams's *The Redeemed Captive*, Mott assigns this label to Dickinson's *God's Protecting Providence* and other popular works on his list of 17<sup>th</sup> century best sellers. Mott explains that the popularity of the works on the top of his list resulted from the public's interest in both their religious and sensational aspects:

Pilgrim's Progress attracted its great audience partly through the interest in adventure and conflict. These elements are also the essential stuff in two accounts of Indian captivities which were very widely read in Colonial America. "Captivities" were popular in America for two hundred years. They were nearly

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<sup>74</sup> Mott's gives the following information about his list: "Dates and publishers given are believed to be those of the first American editions, so far as ascertainable. [...]. Asterisks follow disputed or conjectural dates, authors, or publishers." (Mott 303)

always sensational narratives, with their brutal massacres, tortures, and abductions. In the early ones, there was much religion, for the incidents were presented as examples of the workings of divine providence, and were liberally besprinkled with texts. (Mott 20)

The popularity of captivity narratives evolved through the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and all the way through the following century along with the evolution of the literary landscape itself. The latter as described by both Hall and Mott is firstly based on New England settlers' demand for utilitarian and educational literary works as these contributed to the religious education to which each good Puritan aspired. Eventually, New England's literary landscape experienced a progressive evolution toward secularized literature. This trend continued through the 18<sup>th</sup> century and corresponded with two main vogues: on the one hand, the public became increasingly interested in fiction and sensation; on the other, even formerly (in essence religious) genres came to be approached from a secularized point of view, as in the case of so-called *behavior books*: "The earliest of these behavior books were wholly devoted to telling their readers how to live the religious life; but by the middle of the eighteenth century, there were many which gave more attention to what might be called secular manners" (Mott 30). Now considering the trend of increasingly secularized publications throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, how did this influence the literary genre of the captivity narrative at the same period?

#### **1.4.2.      *Captivity Narratives in New England Book Market***

In fact, the captivity narrative genre seems to have undergone the same evolution as the literary landscape in general. Creg Sieminski, among other scholars, writes:

It is widely agreed that the captivity narrative underwent a significant change in the eighteenth century. Authors of the earliest narratives, like Rowlandson and Williams, interpreted their captivity as a form of divine testing in which their

rejection of Indian culture was equivalent to resisting a satanic temptation in the wilderness. However, in the hundred years following the publication of the first captivity narrative in 1682, as the genre spread beyond New England and as the claims of Puritanism lost their force, the narratives became increasingly secular and eventually gave expression to a potent cultural myth. (35)

While I expressed some reservation in commenting on Kathryn Zabelle's classification of captivity narratives from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> century in terms of authenticity, I do agree on the gradual secularization of the narratives during that period, but it is important to distinguish between the propaganda aspect of the genre—how captivity narratives served a variety of religious and political agendas—and the reality versus fiction aspect of captivity narratives.

Before citing some examples that demonstrate how the genre became first more secular and then more fictitious, I want to say a word about the publication history of the most prominent captivity narratives on Mott's list. Both Rowlandson's and Williams's narratives were periodically reissued for more than a century. Adding to the labels used by Mott ("bestsellers") and Hall ("steady seller"), Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney plead for the term "recurrent seller," a designation that "more precisely accounts for the text's persistence in American public life" ("Recurrent Seller" 342). What can be learned from the fact that these "recurrent sellers" kept being reissued for more than a century? How did the motivation for (re)publishing such a text change over time?

Evan Haefli and Kevin Sweeney give credit to Kathryn Derounian-Stodola and Greg Seiminski who "have identified close links between specific editions of the work and contemporary events, such as debates over the actions of the Massachusetts government during King Philip's War and the agitation preceding the American Revolution" (343). Haefli and Sweeney also claim that "when the publication history of *The Redeemed Captive* is similarly scrutinized, a distant pattern stretching from 1707 until the 1830s emerges: in making decisions to publish and republish the text, publishers, printers, and even the author were influenced by contemporary political considerations, some of them narrowly



partisan” (343). I mentioned earlier the influence of the Mathers, father and son, in both Rowlandson’s and Williams’s narratives. In addition to the illustrious name of the Mathers, that of Samuel Green appears repeatedly in Mott’s inventory.

The publisher’s role at the time proved very important. Not all former captives of Indian abductors were lucky enough to meet the right person to help them record, publish, or support their story. Haefeli and Sweeney write:

Even when in possession of a compelling story and literary skill, frontier residents, including ‘most pastors in war-torn areas,’ had little time to write. For those individuals who did write, writing did not automatically translate into publication. Stephen Williams, John’s son, wrote an account of his captivity sometime after his return from Canada in 1705, but it remained in manuscript until 1837, when Stephen West Williams, a collateral descendant, finally published it. Many other captivity narratives survived only as oral traditions and unpublished manuscripts. When captivity narratives did make their way into print in the later 1600s and early 1700s, they did so because family, friends, and (most often) respected acquaintances, such as prominent clergymen, intervened to transport promising stories from the murky realm of private memory into the light of print. (“Recurrent Seller” 344)

This particularly holds true of the publication itinerary experienced by Rowlandson and Williams.

As far as Increase Mather’s support for the publication of Rowlandson’s narrative is concerned, Zabelle Deounian-Stodola suggests that Rowlandson’s story was among those stories that Mather collected to publish *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*. She writes:

Sometimes after May 1681, Increase Mather began collecting and then sorting the providential accounts he received concerning New England. Rowlandson’s narrative was probably among them, but owing to its length, local currency, and intrinsic merit, Mather may have suggested that she publish it separately. (“The Publication” 241).

While Mather might well have been the first to push publication of Rowlandson’s narrative, both the actual process that led to the first publication of the work as

well as the circumstances surrounding the subsequent republications were conditioned by external events in the realm of politics and religion.

Derounian-Stodola argues that Reverend Joseph Rowlandson's former parish sponsored the publication of his sermon and that Increase Mather financed the publication of Mary Rowlandson's narrative for political reasons. Interestingly, although the first edition of Rowlandson's narrative came out with her husband's sermon, the publisher issued the sermon and the captivity narrative separately as well. Derounian-Stodola notes that "all involved were probably surprised at how quickly the narrative overtook the sermon in terms of sales, and subsequent editions presented the captivity as the major work" ("The Publication..." 243). Rowlandson's narrative was first published in 1682 in Boston. Three subsequent editions appeared the same year in Cambridge, Mass, and in England.

Derounian-Stodola discusses the question of how Rowlandson's narrative can be made to fit into Hall's category of steady sellers:

Technically it conforms to Hall's definition since five editions came out within fifty years: four in 1682 and the fifth in 1720. However, a sixth edition did not appear until 1770. I suggest that in Rowlandson's case, the American and then the English market thought it recognized a steady seller. After the initial success of the limited Boston edition, second and third editions were rushed off the antiquated Cambridge press. Meanwhile, the first edition was sent or carried to London and was used to set the fourth edition. By this time, however, the popular market was saturated in America, and apparently was not overly receptive in England, so the book did not appear again until 1720. Only with the sixth edition in 1770 do we see a regular pattern of reprinting established for the next century, by which time the Anglo-American book trade had superimposed 'impersonal and ideologically neutral modes of transaction' on the earlier religious, personal, and political networks. ("The Publication..." 248)

While Rowlandson's narrative indisputably fits Hall's criteria of *steady sellers*, it is still interesting to discuss the specific contexts that prevailed each time the narrative was republished (six republications in all). The answer thereto as well as the respective editorial objectives (hidden agenda of the supporter of the narrative)

can mainly be interpreted from (more or less explicit) “hints” included in the title page of each successive edition.

The title page of the first American edition features the following long addition:

The sovereignty & goodness of God, together, with the faithfulness of his promises displayed; being a narrative of the captivity and restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her, to all that desire to know the Lord's doings to, and dealings with her. Especially to her dear children and relations. *Boston in New-England Printed [by Samuel Green Jr.] for John Ratcliffe, & John Griffffin. 1682.* / [Title within border of type ornamental] [Second title:] The/possibility of God's for-/saking a people, / that have been visibly near & dear to him;/together, /with the misery of a people thus forsaken, /set forth in a /sermon,/preached at Weathersfield, Nov. 21.1678./ Being a day of fast and hu-/miliation./ By Mr. Joseph Rowlandson Pastor of the / Church of Christ there. Being / also his last sermon. / [4 lines quoted] / *Boston in New-England / Printed [by Samuel Green Jr.] for John Ratcliffe & John Griffffin. / 1682.* / [Title within border of type ornaments]. (qtd in Vail 167)<sup>75</sup>

Considering therefore the three American editions and leaving aside a few corrections and adjustments, there are no major changes that would point in the direction of possible shifts in the publisher's editorial choices. The second edition includes the same main text with slight additions or omissions as well as some typographical changes:<sup>76</sup>

The/Sovraignty & Goodness /of /God, /Together, / With the Faithfulness of His Promises / Displayed; / Being a / Narrative / Of the Captivity and Restoration of / Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. / Commended by her, to all that desires to / know the Lords doings to, and / dealings with Her. / Especially to her dear Children and Relations, / [rule] / The second Addition [sic] Corrected and amended. / [rule] / Written by Her own Hand for Her private Use, and now / made Publick at the earnest Desire of some Friends, / and for the benefit of the Afflicted. / [rule, 3 lines quoted, rule] / *Cambridge, / Printed by Samuel*

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<sup>75</sup> Slashes and square brackets as in the original.

<sup>76</sup> Derounian-Stodola points to some phonetic misspelling that most scholars attribute to James the printer. The latter might be an interesting figure to discuss later on in this study due to the fact that he was a Christian Indian featuring in Rowlandson's narrative. He was an apprentice to publisher Green. (“The Publication...” 245).

*Green [Sr.]*, 1682. / [title within heavy plain border] [Second title as in 1<sup>st</sup> ed. With imprint as above. Title within heavy plain border]. (qtd in Vail 168)

The most significant change in the narrative's title came with the London edition of 1682:

A true/history/of the/captivity & restoration of/Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, / a minister's wife in New England. / Wherein is set forth, the cruel and inhumane / usage she enderwent amongst the heathens, for / eleven weeks time: and her deliverance from / them. / Written by her own hand, for her private use: and now made / publick at the earnest desire of some friends, for the benefit / of the afflicted. / Whereunto is annexed, / a sermon of the possibility of God's forsaking a peo- / ple that have been near and dear to him. / Preached by Mr. Joseph Rowlandson, husband to the said Mrs. Rowlandson: / it being his last sermon. / *Printed first at New-England: And Reprinted at London, and sold / by Joseph Poole, at the Blue Bowl in the Long-Walk, by Christs- / Church Hospital. 1682.* / [Title within fleur-de-lis border]. (qtd in Vail 169)

This is one of the most significant and effective examples of such advertising titles. The American and the English marketing blurbs evidently reflect the publishers' different perspectives on what might appeal to the different readerships on both sides of the Atlantic. While the American version stresses the religious dimension of Rowlandson's narrative, the English version puts more emphasis on the historical and allegedly factual aspects of the narrative. This can be explained by the physical distance and the fact that English readers were especially interested in what transpired in the colonies overseas. While references to exotic and exciting descriptions of New World "otherness" (including information about the natives) aroused the curiosity of Old Continent readers, and catered to their appetite for sensationalism, expectations on the part of New England Puritans differed. There, the audience "relished religious works of all kinds." This would explain why the title of Rowlandson's narrative "conveyed general spiritual subject matter" and "establishes the author's willingness to convert personal experience to public belief" and mainly "anticipates the criticism that she has sought a wider sphere of influence than that permitted for a woman" (Zabelle, "The Publication..." 248).

This recalls the contrast between the support that Rowlandson received and the criticism and condemnation formerly faced by Anne Hutchinson.

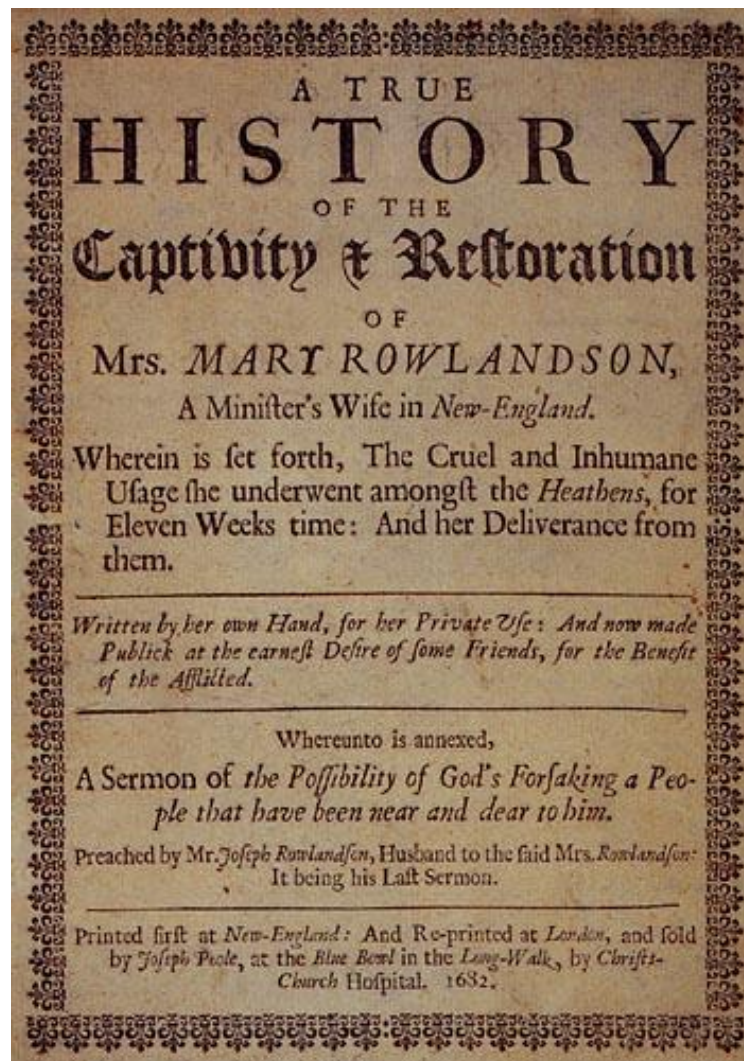


Illustration 3. Title page of the London edition of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative.  
Penn Library/Exhibition at  
< <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/kislak/colonial/rowlandson2.html> >

Albeit with some distinctions and a different promotional focus, the first four editions broadly qualify as “educational.” Besides, Rowlandson’s narrative contains a number of features (to be discussed later on) that may be regarded as elements of disinformation and indoctrination. In fact, the propagandistic dimension of Rowlandson’s narrative reached its climax with its sixth edition

issued in 1770.<sup>77</sup> At the dawning of the American Revolution, Rowlandson's narrative was republished with an undercurrent of revolutionary fervor. More generally (not just in the case of Rowlandson's and Williams's narratives), Puritan literature had taken a definite turn toward prerevolutionary orientation. Creg Sieminski writes:

The Puritan narratives—republished and, more importantly, imitated during the revolutionary era—were equally important, however, in defining the American character by proclaiming the rejection of British culture. Far from a regression in the evolution of the genre, the resurgent interest in the Puritan narratives represents a crucial development in the emergence of a national culture. (36)

With Puritan literature in general pleading for a rejection of British supremacy, the motif of captivity as a part of this literature began to take a revolutionary orientation, as Sieminski further argues:

During the Revolutionary era, the colonists began to see themselves as captives of a tyrant rather than as subjects of a king. While this image of collective captivity informed the pre-war political imagination in important ways—expressed, as we shall see, in the republication of the Rowlandson and Williams narratives—it became an even more vital metaphor for the Revolution during the war itself, when numerous Americans actually endured captivity. (36)

Sieminski argues that the republication of Rowlandson's and Williams's narratives must be understood in the context of the American Revolution and its immediate aftermath which also saw the emergence of a new genre: the prisoner of war narratives.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The fifth edition of Rowlandson's narrative appeared in 1720. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian explains that "the existence of over a dozen copies of the fourth edition and the fact that Rowlandson's work did not go into a fifth edition until 1720 imply that it needed to go out of print until a later, more exclusively intensive, readership could respond to its enduring qualities." (Zabelle, "the Publication" 257)

<sup>78</sup> Sieminski introduces the pioneer of the genre as follows: "Ethan Allen, the first American to write about his prisoner of war experience, patterned his *Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity* (1779) after the accounts of Indian captivities. In adapting the genre to serve political ends, Allen created, in effect, a second cultural frontier, this one to the East instead of the West. Crossing this frontier, Allen followed the pattern of earlier Puritan narratives in order to stress his resistance to the culture of his captors" (36). Interestingly, the motif of captivity was adapted to suit various

This edition and the next (1770, 1773) were both published in Boston. According to Sieminski, the time and the place of these republications were not chosen at random. Seminski finds significant connections between the publications and a historical event known as the Boston Massacre.<sup>79</sup> Sieminski demonstrates the relevance of the time chosen for republication by drawing the reader's attention at parallels between the contents of Rowlandson's narrative and the rhetoric used in an oration by Dr. Joseph Warren to commemorate the second anniversary of the Boston Massacre:

the horrors of that dreadful night . . . when our streets were stained with the blood of our own brethren-when our ears were wounded by the groans of the dying, and our eyes were tormented with the sight of the mangled bodies of the dead-when our alarmed imaginations presented to our view our houses wrapt in flames, our children subjected to the barbarous caprice of the raging soldiery, our beauteous virgins exposed to all the insolence of unbridled passion, our virtuous wives . . . falling sacrifice to worse than brutal violence. (qtd. in Sieminski 38)

The tone of this passage indisputably echoes Rowlandson's introductory paragraph describing the bloody attack on Lancaster. Besides, Seminski alludes to the title page of the 1773 edition of Rowlandson's narrative printed by John Boyle (see illustration v. below). As in the other editions of Rowlandson's narrative, the title page of the 1770's editions was revelatory of the promotional choice of the publisher in the political context of the time. The title page of the 1770 edition illustrates Rowlandson by herself carrying a rifle. The woodcut of the 1773 editions portrays Rowlandson pointing a rifle at a rank of four Indians, pointing their muskets and tomahawks (hatchets) at her.

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historical contexts. I mentioned in this chapter earlier allusions to spiritual captivity, which Puritans usually saw as being held captive by the devil. Such episodes were either associated with the Indians and the concept of the "red devil" or correlated with various forms of heresy. When Indian captivity literature emerged, another form of captivity appeared within those narratives, especially during King Williams's war. Most of the captivity narratives written at that period dealt with a double captivity: at the hands of the Indians and of the French Catholics.

<sup>79</sup> This massacre, which is also referred to as the Incident on King Street, took place on March 5, 1770. At this massacre, British troops killed five civilians and wounded six others (for more information on the Boston Massacre, see Stark Draper Allison. *Boston Massacre: Five Colonists Killed by British Soldiers*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, U.S., 2001).



Illustration 4. Title page of the 1770 edition of Rowlandson's captivity narrative  
The Library Company of Philadelphia at  
<<http://www.librarycompany.org/zinman/captivity.htm>>





Illustration 5. Title page of the 1173 edition of Rowlandson's narrative  
Penn Library/Exhibition at  
<<http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/kislak/colonial/rowlandson1.html>>

Although Rowlandson's narrative is about armed Indians attacking her village and family, Seminski argues that "the line formation from which the figures fight in the woodcut is more characteristic of British regulars than Indians" (39). The manipulation is even more blatant in another woodcut picturing Rowlandson as she supposedly stood outside her house in an attempt to repel the attackers, defiantly pointing her musket at the Indians. Regarding Rowlandson's representation in this woodcut, Sieminski writes:

The woodcut's depiction of Rowlandson also has no basis in the narrative. When she fled from her burning house, she carried in her arms her young daughter, not a musket. Nowhere did Rowlandson suggest that she actively participated in the

defense of the house, much less that she wielded a firearm. Representing her as militantly defiant of her captors is not only inaccurate, but contrary to a central spiritual lesson of her Narrative. Repeatedly, she affirmed that, because the Indians are God's instruments for the chastisement of His wayward people, patient endurance is obedience to God. But submission was far from the minds of most Bostonians in the aftermath of the Boston Massacre. (39)<sup>80</sup>

In fact, this propagandistic picture in the front page of the pre-revolutionary edition of Rowlandson's narrative ushers in a new phase of the literary genre of the captivity narrative in New England. The emphasis is no longer on the religious dimension of the testimonial narratives but on Rowlandson's invented combative stance to serve the propagandistic requirements of the revolutionary context at the time of republication.

The pre-revolutionary propagandistic message conveyed by the woodcut is accentuated by its accompanying title in the front page of the edition of the narrative, as may be gleaned from the sensationalism of the following passage from Illustration V. above:

A narrative of the captivity, sufferings and removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, who was taken prisoner by the Indians with several others, and treated in the most barbarous and cruel Manner by those vile Savages: With many other remarkable Events during her Travels. Written by her own Hand, for her private Use, and now made public at the earnest Desire of Some Friends, and for the Benefit of the afflicted.

While previous editions stressed central Puritan dogmas such as the precept of "God's sovereignty and goodness," this new edition, at the dawning of the American revolution, gives center stage to the suffering of a "prisoner" (a departure from the term "captive), thereby depriving the narrative of its classical religious dimension in favor of a more pragmatic and down-to-earth approach. Phrases in the original edition such as "true history," "commended by her, to all that desire to know the lord's doing to, and dealings with her," not only emphasized the spiritual dimension of the narratives but also stress on its testimonial aspect. Conversely,

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<sup>80</sup> Rowlandson's submissive attitude towards God's plans is to be discussed later on in this study.

the title of the versions published in the 1770 whets the reader's appetite by reference to the "most barbarous and cruel savages" and leaves the field open to further speculation as to just what misadventures Rowlandson might have experienced, as alluded in the following phrase: "With many other remarkable Events during her Travels."

In contrast to Rowlandson's narrative, Williams' text, first published in 1707, reads more as an anti-Catholic pamphlet than an Indian captivity narrative. In fact, the narrative was given a subtext adapted to the political situation at the time of publication, i.e. the ascent of the French Catholic "threat" Sieminski comments:

Its representation of a helpless New England Protestant being oppressed by French cultural and religious tyranny perfectly expressed the colonists' fear over Britain's conciliatory policy toward the inhabitants of the newly-acquired Province of Quebec. The British had adopted their policy of conciliation in the mid-1760s as the only means for controlling Quebec's large population of French Catholics. As part of that policy, the British had allowed the appointment of a Catholic Bishop to the See of Quebec in 1766, a position which had been vacant since the end of the French and Indian War. New Englanders were greatly disturbed by the Bishop's appointment. (42)

The political bias underlying the initial publication of this primarily anti-Catholic (rather than Indian-focused) narrative is not the only time when a decision to publish or republish a captivity story was taken with ulterior motives in mind. Indeed, the prevailing attitudes at the time of re-publishing Rowlandson's or other such narratives indisputably contributed to the politicizing of these accounts.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> By "politicizing" I mean using the narratives as a weapon in internal political disputes. Also, one should bear in mind that even the earliest works of American literature were in one way or another politicized as they took up such themes as early settlements in the colonies, the settlers' encounter with the Indians, Eliot's missionary works, etc. Haefeli and Sweeney write that "to this body of political literature—the dozen or so obviously political works published during 1720 and 1721 that debated the governor's constitutional authority, frontier policy, and currency issues—must be added the republications of Williams's *The Redeemed Captive*, Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, and a 1707 attack on Joseph Dudley, the *Deplorable State of New England by Reason of a Covetous Governour*, and *Pusillanimous Councillors*, first published in New England in 1721" (351). My point in this section is to discuss editorial choices for the publications/re-publication of these narratives for political reasons. The issue of internal political disputes, e.g.

Because of its lack of (primarily) Indian focus in the first place, Williams's narrative was prime material for eventual re-use, in successive pre-Revolution editions, in the service of anti-British propaganda. Like Rowlandson's narrative, it was ranked by Mott among the best sellers at the time of its first publication, and was re-published shortly before and during the American Revolution in 1773, 1774 and 1776. The publishers pursued other interests than the specific topic of Indian captivity and even relegated the original anti-Catholic message to the background. While the editions that came out in the 1720s can be seen as a political tool wielded by the influential Puritans to settle purely internal political issues and disputes,<sup>82</sup> the main purpose of the subsequent editions (in the 1770s) was, just like Rowlandson's editions of the same decade, to serve pre-Revolutionary propaganda.

This being the case a significant difference exists in the way both narratives (Rowlandson's and Williams's) came to be instrumentalized. The difference may be seen in the degree to which changes were made to the promotional focus vs. the original publication as well as in possible deviations from the contents of the original narratives. As I have maintained that the promotional intent manifest in the title page, picture and blurb of the 1773 edition of Rowlandson's narrative stands in stark contrast to the actual contents of the narrative itself. By contrast, 1770's publishers restrained from distorting the initial anti-Catholic message in their marketing strategy. They rather relied on the core anti-Catholicism of the account to whip up anti-British sentiment.

Moreover, the anti-Catholic atmosphere of the time led to internal political disputes among the political elite as Haefeli and Sweeney note regarding the re-publication of both narratives (Rowlandson's and Williams's):

The tensions in Maine that soon led to open warfare between English settlers and the Eastern Abenakis presumably generated a large readership freshly interested in experiencing the vicarious thrill of frontier warfare. However, the reprinting

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between --governor Joseph Dudley and the Mathers or other influential Puritans, will be discussed in a separate chapter dedicated to the authenticity and authorship of some of the Puritan captivity narratives.

<sup>82</sup> I will discuss captivity narrative as political literature in the second section of this study.

of Williams's vehemently anti-Catholic narrative of Jesuit machinations, along with Rowlandson's account of savage heathens and the 1707 attack on Dudley, suggests that those responsible for republishing these texts aimed at specific contemporary targets, such as Sebastian Rasle, the Eastern Abenakis, and Shute's frontier policy. Rather than capitalizing on readers' curiosity about past Indian wars, then, the 1720 printings of Williams's and Rowlandson's captivity narratives more likely played a role in producing a new one. ("Recurrent Seller" 351)

The internal political disputes of the time will be addressed in a subsequent chapter, but first it is important to describe the conjectural evolution of the literary genre of captivity narratives. Rowlandson's narrative in particular seemingly serves as a remarkably exploitable tool. Puritan ministers and politicians brandished in different periods to serve different purposes other than the original themes of Indian captivity. Moreover, Rowlandson's narrative constitutes the archetype of the captivity narrative genre, which did not only mark the birth of the literary genre as such, but also accompanied its evolution as a result of its adaptability and ability to target different audiences in connection with multiple religious (Great Awakening), political (American Revolution), and literary (the birth of the British Novel) contexts through the history of Puritan colony.<sup>83</sup>

Captivity, in its different forms and manifestations, has been captured by text<sup>84</sup> throughout history. This eventually gave birth to a distinctive literary genre which flourished between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America with the Indian captivity narratives. There are actually very few scholars who deny that captivity narrative is a literary genre. Among these scholars, one can name, for instance, Linda Colley, defines captivity narratives as "a mode of writing rather than a genre" (13). Colley's assertion is partly based on the variety in the characteristics of

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<sup>83</sup> Most captivity narratives other than Rowlandson's served the same direct or hidden purposes. These will be discussed in the second section of this study, when discussing the authorship of the captivity narratives selected for my study. I will mainly focus on the narratives relating to the captivities of Hannah Duston, Hannah Swarton and Quentin Stockwell. The narrative relating to the captivity of John Williams with its anti-Catholic slant will also be discussed in more detail. I have already shown that although, as stated by Haefeli and Sweeney, the later editions of Williams's narrative "aimed at specific contemporary targets," that weighed less in the balance than in the case of Rowlandson's narrative.

captivity narratives as they “are substantial accounts usually written in the first person and completely or in part by a one-time captive, but sometimes dictated to others” (13). Colley also alludes to the diverseness of the captivity scenarios:

Captivity narratives commonly describe how a single individual or a group was seized, how the victim/s coped (or not) with the challenges and sufferings that ensued, and how they contrived in the end to escape or were ransomed or released. Such narratives vary widely in length and quality but, at their best, they form the closest approximation we have for the past to the kind of analyses supplied by anthropologists and ethnographers immersed in alien societies today (13).

Although the phenomenon of captivity per se obviously certainly predates the specific experience of the white Christian settlers at the hands of the Indians during the conquest of the New World, it did essentially emerge as a literary genre—or at least was conceptualized as such—at that time. According to Gary L. Ebersole, about two thousand captivity narratives presented as factual accounts were published before 1880 in America (Ebersole 9).

Various scholars have traced the evolution of the captivity genre. Captivity has indeed various facets through the historiography of both the phenomenon of captivity and its literary forms. When dealing with captivity narratives, scholars tend to cross back and forth between actual physical captivity or imprisonment and the various nuances and interpretations of the different aspects of captivity as described in the narratives proper. Besides, once the story of the author’s captivity has been put down in narrative form, issues such as subjectivity contribute in reshaping the captivity narrative genre, and more importantly, in creating and recreating peripheral genres such as fictional captivity stories as well as “social captivity”(for example in prison narratives).<sup>85</sup> When referring therefore to captivity narratives as a literary genre, the chronology and classification should not be based on a linear succession of actual captivity episodes and related publications, but rather on considerations such as the gradual coming into being of a specific literary

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<sup>84</sup> I borrowed the phrase “captured by text” from Gary L. Ebersole’ *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Image of Indian Captivity*.

genre followed by the development of different sub-genres and the eventual appearance of related topics and nuances.

Captivity narratives—and that is particularly true of Rowlandson’s—are interesting to look at from both a literary and a documentary perspective as they address, in their variety (including subgenres and fiction such as slave narratives, social captivity, etc.) a wide range of situations. It is also noteworthy to assess the impact those writings may have had on the contemporary reading public. Although both Rowlandson’s and Williams’s narratives rank among Mott’s inventory of best and or steady sellers, this does not tell us how much those works were actually read. It is important to distinguish between readers and owners. Mott’s list informs of the number of copies sold, but no data exists regarding diffusion among the population (beyond the circle of “owners”).

For an informed estimate of the potential readership of the captivity narratives on Mott’s list, one should consider not only the way in which the books were promoted at the time, but also gauge the existing pool of possible readers among both “elite” and “average” sectors of society. As for “elite readers,” one should refer to prepublication marketing. For instance, while still utilizing Mott’s list, it is interesting to note publisher Samuel Green’s advertisement of Rowlandson’s narrative in the first American edition of the *Pilgrim’s Progress* a year before the publication: “Before long, there will be published [...] the peculiar circumstances of the captivity, & redemption of Mrs. Rowlandson; and of her children. Being pathetically *written, with her own hand*” (quoted in Vail 32, my emphasis). The phrasing closely resembles that in the title of the first American edition of Rowlandson’s narrative. Moreover, “Even in the seventeenth century, a rudimentary type of book advertising existed in Old and New England that might include advance notices in previously published volumes, copy in newsbooks or newspapers, and entries in publishers’ lists like *The Term Catalogues*” (Derounian-Stodola, “The Promotion...” 249).

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<sup>85</sup> See Allen Mark B. and Dahia Messara, eds. *The Captivity Narrative: Enduring Shackles and Emancipating Language of Subjectivity*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

While the advertisement in the *Pilgrim progress*, as in the actual American version title, focuses on authenticity, the following blurb that appeared in *The Term Catalogue* overseas put more emphasis on the sensational aspect of the narrative:

The History of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a Minister's Wife in New England; with her cruel and inhumane Usage amongst the Heathens for eleven Weeks, and her Deliverance from them. Written by her own Hand, and now made publick: with a Sermon annexed, of the possibility of God's forsaking his Children. Quarto. Both printed for T. Parkhurst at the Bible and Three Crowns in the Poultry. (507)

A prominent feature of that passage is that “the description of the Indians as ‘Heathens’ and their treatment of Rowlandson ‘as cruel and inhuman’ heightens the sensationalism” (Derounian-Stodola, “The Promotion...” 249). While the advertisement per se mainly enumerates the key points of the titles of the different versions of the narrative, its use of the word “Heathen” is deliberately aimed at making the text even more palatable to an overseas audience deeply interested in all subjects relating to the Indians and the Wilderness.

At the time the attention-grabbing advertisement came out in *The Term Catalogues* in England (vol. 1 appearing shortly after 1682) New England publishers were not as prone as their Old World counterparts to marketing the sensationalistic aspects of their captivity narratives. Accordingly, all the popular narratives on Mott’s list were advertised and presented to the reading public as educational religious writing rather than entertaining or sensational narratives. So how did the publishers get through to the public? To what extent were captivity narratives in general (and those listed in Mott’s list in particular) accessible to the average Puritan reader? Or were they exclusively destined to the well-educated elite?

Referring to Hall’s work, Zabelle has this to say on the issue of ownership versus readership in the market for captivity narratives:



Rowlandson's narrative is a prime example of a work that could establish and maintain its popularity in the literate and less literate marketplace where oral and printed material converged. The likely American readership of Rowlandson's captivity was therefore large, though its ownership was more restricted, since only the professionals and the wealthy could afford to buy books frequently. (Zabelle, "The Promotion..." 256)

The popularity of Rowlandson's narrative in the less literate sectors of New England society and the distinction Zabelle makes between the "ownership" of the narrative and its "readership" raise the issue of the literacy rate in New England at the time.

This point is important to assess the actual influence the captivity narrative had on average Puritans and how the influential literate elite manipulated this specific literary genre as an educational weapon to pass on religious and political messages and instructions. Before I address this issue and describe the religious/ideological, political, and commercial development of the narrative genre (first as educational instrument for Puritans, then as a means of propaganda for the American Revolution by targeting a boarder audience and, ultimately, as a genre increasingly associated with sensationalism and entertainment), I will provide a few pointers on the question of literacy and education in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century New England.

#### ***1.4.2.1. Captivity Narratives and the Young Audience***

Deborah Keller-Cohen discusses and compares the concept and practice of literacy in colonial and contemporary America. She refers to colonial legislations as follows:

The absence of the term literacy reflected the many complexities surrounding the perception, pedagogy, and practice of reading and writing. If laws provide one indication of how a society conceives of some activity, then colonial legislation suggests reading and writing were not perceived as

elements of a unified concept as they are in contemporary American life. Where local laws made reference to literacy, only reading might be mentioned. (291)

The legislation of the time postulated a solid link between writing and reading for religious purpose. In colonial New England, the first educational measure was issued in 1642, with later amendments containing this extract from 1647:

It being one cheife project of that old deluder, Sathan, to keepe men from the knowledge of the scriptures, as in former times, keeping them in an unknowne tongue, so in these latter times, by perswading them from the use of tongues, so that at least, the true sence and meaning of the originall might bee clouded with false glosses of saint seeming deceivers ; and that learning may not bee buried in the rave of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our indeavors; It is therefore ordered by this courte and authority thereof, That every towneshipp within this jurissdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty howshoulders, shall then forthwith appointe one within their towne, to teach all such children, as shall resorte to him, to write and read, whose wages shall bee paid, either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in generall, by way of supplye, as the major parte of those who order the prudentials of the towne, shall appointe ; provided, that those who send their children, bee not oppressed by paying much more then they can have them taught for, in other townes. And it is further ordered, That where any towne shall increase to the number of one hundred families or howshoulders, they shall sett up a grammar schoole, the masters thereof, being able to instruct youths, so farr as they may bee fitted for the university , and if any towne neglect the performance hereof, above one yeare, then every such towne shall pay five pounds per annum, to the next such schoole, till they shall performe this order. The propositions concerning the meintenance of schollars at Cambridge, made by the comissioners, is confirmed. And it is ordered, That two men shall bee appointed in every towne within this jurissdiction, whoe shall demand what every familie will give, and the same to bee gathered and broutht into some roome, in March; and this to continue yearely, as it shall bee considered by the commissioners. (90)

The focus of the law is clearly in line with the Puritan religious discourse. In other words, it stipulates that widespread education among the youth would ensure the realization of the Puritan religious path of standing by God and defeating the “deluder.” The law calls upon New Englanders to teach children to write and read.

In practice, the methods used suggest that the real aim pursued was more one of indoctrination and brainwashing. In the following chapter, I will show some examples illustrating how children were indoctrinated while they were learning and, above all, how they were initiated to captivity stories.

#### **1.4.2.2. The Indoctrination of Children**

In “‘In Adam’s Fall/ We Sinned All:’ Puritan Writing and the Making of American Interiority,” Sämi Ludwig examines the wide array of indoctrination and brainwashing techniques used by the eldest of the Puritans on the youngest as they imposed their views of a metaphysical conceptualism. This process of indoctrination mainly includes learning based on intensity and memorization through the practice of reading aloud—a technique which “seems to be the key to this kind of indoctrination going from outside to inside. It shows how the technique of speech, of possible conversational interaction, is stunted into a repetitive kind of textual one-way communication that is not without influence on identity” (69). The teaching of memorization-based-reading skill was given priority over writing by Puritans, a fact that Ludwig sees as “a passive reception of the word” as according to him, “Impression comes before self-expression. First you memorize and learn. And then you learn to read what you know already. It is symptomatic for this that children’s education usually started at home, in a so-called *dame school*,” where teaching was mainly based on theology (71). The early catechism curriculum was based on basic books such as hornbooks, primers, catechism manuals, etc. James M. Volo and Dorothy Denneen detail the contents of such curricula:

The curriculum generally was in keeping with that found in England. Religious reading received the greatest emphasis in schools as it did in the home. The standard sequence of reading instructional materials began with the hornbook then moved to

the primer, the Psalter, the New Testament, and finally the complete Bible. (244)<sup>86</sup>

The methodology referred to by Volo and Denneen supports the idea of indoctrination, especially in conjunction with the actual contents of the different schoolbooks of the time (hornbooks, primers, etc.).

The pressure brought to bear on the children to make them learn the Puritan way as shown by Ludwig may be seen in the first lines of *The New England Primer* which use a deliberately alarming tone to instill the fear of the consequences of illiteracy: “He that loves God, his school, and his book, will no doubt do well at last; but he that hates his school and book, will live and die a slave, a fool, and a dunce” (10). The rest of the primer drives home the point of the intrinsic link between learning/literacy on the one hand and basic religious precepts on the other. For example, the alphabet rhyme includes Bible characters such as “In ADAM’S fall We sinned all” for the letter “A,” “JOB feels the rod, Yet blesses God” for the letter “J,” “PETER denies His Lord and cries” for the letter “P,” etc. In addition to indirectly calling upon the children to adhere to the “right path” through such references to characters from the scriptures, other contents predispose the learners to submission to both secular and heavenly authorities, as illustrated by the two following examples: “F”: “The idle FOOL Is whipt at school,” and the later is embodied in the rhyme of letter “Y”: “YOUTH forward slips, Death soonest nips” (See illustration bellow for the rest of the alphabet).

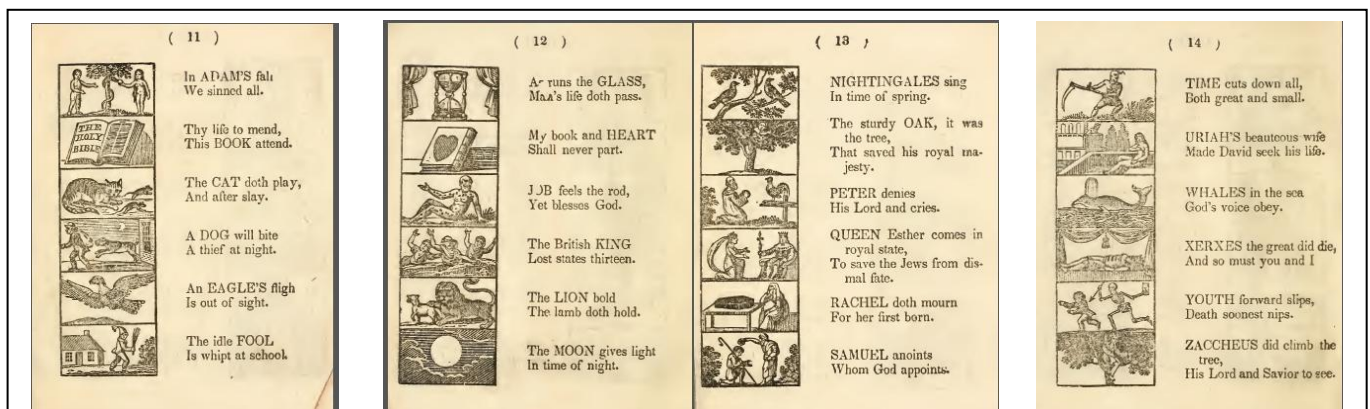


Illustration 6. *The New England Primer* (11,12,13,14,)

This indoctrination method seems to have had a significant impact as illustrated in *A Token for Children: Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of Several Young Children*. The book was only once published in 1781, but it covers the early period of children's reactions to the early New England educational system and methods. As may be gathered from the title, it presents a large number of examples of the influence of the extant teaching techniques on New England children. The preface of the book begins as follows:

You may now hear (my dear Lambs) what other good Children have done, and remember how they wept and prayed by themselves; how earnestly they cried out for an Interest in the Lord Jesus Christ: May YOU not read how dutiful they were to their Parents? how diligent at their Books : how ready to learn the Scriptures and their Catechisms? Can you forget what Questions they were wont to ask? How much they feared a lye, how much they abhorred naughty company, how holy they lived, how dearly they were loved, how joyfully they died? (i)

Again, the themes of fear and obedience pervade the whole process of indoctrination and brainwashing. Considering this how did the children, whose minds had been molded in the Puritan fashion through fear and submission, come to perceive the Indians and the wilderness? Moreover, since the next chapter will be dedicated to the book market, and since captivity narrative were among the best sellers of the time, one may ask: How was Indian captivity presented to children at the time?

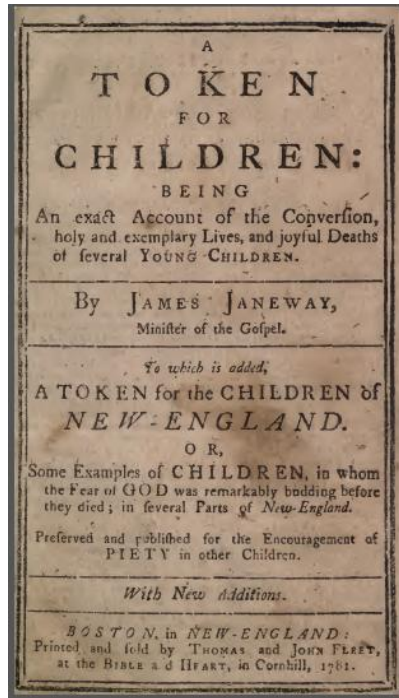


Illustration 7. Title page to *A Token for Children*

Joan Jacobs Brumberg and Miriam Forman-Brunell note that, except for the Hornbooks, primers, and Psalters specifically designed to educate Puritan children, “there were few forms of juvenile literature. Instead, Puritan children largely read the same texts (e.g., the *Bible*, *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan) and heard the same tales and sermons that adults did” (91). I will discuss later on the specific segment of the book market that included these texts, but for now, I shall stop to consider just what the children were taught as regards the wilderness, the Indians and captivity. As I shall demonstrate later in this study, the latter phenomenon indisputably attracted the readers, as many of the best sellers were captivity narratives.

#### **1.4.2.3. Children’s Initiation to Captivity Narratives**

On the specific issue of the children’s view of Indians and their thoughts about the theme of captivity, Brumberg and Forman-Brunell have this observation:

Although some children in outlying farms and settlements may have known Indian captivity firsthand, most would have known of it through oral accounts, sermons, and written works. One frequently conveyed message was that Indian captivity and the deprivations suffered by settlers were due to their having affronted God in some way. Children, like adults, were taught that human nature was inherently sinful. After the Fall, all persons, including children, were sinful by nature; all were 'captives of the devil.' This sinful nature was sometimes referred to as an 'inner captivity,' whereas actual abduction by Indians was called 'outward captivity.' (91)

Before further discussing the way in which the Indian world was presented to Puritan children in the educational system, I want to clarify this distinction between "inner captivity" and "outward captivity". I agree that it is possible to consider the concept of "inner captivity" on its own based on the crucial importance for Puritan theology of the struggle against the devil to shake the chains of "captivity" and reach eternal salvation. I feel, however, that it would be difficult to assess "outward captivity" without juxtaposing to the concept of "inner captivity" in the context of Puritan captivity narratives. In fact, the distinction between these two forms of captivity is blurred in the narratives. For example, "inner captivity" forms an integral and essential part of Mary Rowlandson's narrative.

In addition to warning children of the perils emanating from the influence of the devil and submission to it, the Puritans had no qualms exposing one of the supposed manifestations of evil in the Indians. Brumberg and Forman-Brunell, for instance, write:

Accounts of the horrors of captivity were sometimes used to frighten children and adults into 'being good.' For instance, after recounting the torture and death suffered by some boys and girls at the hands of the Indians, Cotton Mather, a famous Puritan minister, warned all children: 'Oh! See that you become Serious, Pious, Orderly Children, Obedient unto your Parents, Conscious to keep the Lord'[s] Day, and afraid of committing any Wickedness.' The clear threat was that if they did not behave properly, God might punish them by causing the Indians to swoop down on their homes and carry them off into the wilderness. Girls learned that women and girls were the special objects of the horrible violence of 'brutish' and

‘ravenous’ Indians. As a form of moral didacticism, Puritan ministers invited readers and auditors to imagine themselves in the position of captives. (91)

Again, such deterring passages would seem to have been designed primarily for oral use to warn the children. In fact, the above-mentioned argument in which Mather calls upon the children to be “serious,” “pious,” “orderly,” etc. if they wish to avoid a tragic fate at the hands of the “brutish” and “ravenous” Indians does nothing to prevent the reality of kidnappings.

As Brumberg and Forman-Brunell note, Rowlandson’s narrative depicts her children as victims of Indian savageness as she writes: “I had one child dead, another in the wilderness, I knew not where, the third they would not let me come near to” (40): The dead child is her six year old daughter, who was injured by the Indians during the attack on Lancaster. She died during their captivity and was buried in the “wilderness.” Her other daughter Mary and son Joseph were taken captive elsewhere. The narrative depicts Joseph’s hardship of captivity. She insists on the fact that her son went through the ordeal of captivity although he was a pious child willing to read his Bible.

Indians targeted women and children as these proved most valuable in securing ransom or for replacing tribal members who had been killed or captured. Women and children also pose least threat and resistance in captivity. As a result—life spared and in some cases an overall good treatment—some of the captives voluntarily stayed with the Indians. These occasional refusals by former captives to return to the white world were deliberately censored by the Puritan editorial authority. Mostly, these “unredeemed” captives were children, as they were more likely and inclined to adapt to a new environment,<sup>87</sup> as in the case of Eunice Williams.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> As I will show later in this study, even in accounts of the bloodiest scenes, children are usually spared. In Rowlandson’s narrative, for example, although as a narrator she deplores her children’s fate, we see on close analysis that the children are represented as collateral victims of the war rather than deliberate targets.

<sup>88</sup> Interestingly, Eunice was the daughter of Reverend John Williams, whom the Indians kidnapped in 1704 along with his wife, Eunice, and other children after an attack on Deerfield. Williams’s wife



In addition to the specter of the threat of captivity at the hands of the Indians, , the readers were exposed to a variety of folklore and popular legends related to the Indian world and the frontiers, a body of literature eventually promoting the concept of a hero. Paul Neubauer notes: “In folklore, popular legends, ballads and poems, these tales of the successful survivors of frightful atrocities and grueling hardships became more and more the stories of heroines and heroes from the frontier” (72). Some such heroes were returning captives, who had endured the ordeal of captivity in the wilderness. Neubauer writes:

In these stories, songs, and sagas, the contact between the pioneers and the natives was again highlighted in scenes of captivity, the consequent threat of torture and murder, and the wit and dexterity demonstrated in the quick escape by these winsome protagonists. With regard to the structure of literary communication, the function of Captivity Narrative as instruction and illustration remained intact even as the basic motivation for the telling of these folk tales shifted from the individual justification of the narrator herself or himself to the engaging depiction for the sake of the local as well as national audience. (72)

Most, if not all, these stories were delivered orally. Rowlandson’s and John Williams’ captivity narratives which feature on Mott’s bestsellers list, both underwent to the didactic purpose of providing morally expedient texts to be read in church addresses and sermons, although there also existed other literary forms as will be shown later. Consequently, although the stories were not exactly suitable to the requirements specific to children’s literature, the youngest members in the

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died in captivity and the rest of the family was taken to Canada. A couple of years later, John Williams was released from captivity along with all of his children except daughter Eunice (named after her mother) who stayed with Catholic-convert Indians. According to several sources, John Williams made several fruitless attempts to free his daughter. After his release from captivity, John Williams published one of the most prominent captivity narrative of his time *The Redeemed Captive, Returning to the Zion. A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and the Deliverance of M. John Williams, Minister of the Gospel* (Boston, 1707). Williams writes poignantly about his and the governor’s aborted efforts to secure his daughter’s freedom. Except from a few references, there was no full published account of Eunice’s captivity at the time. Both *The Unredeemed Captive* and *The Redeemed Captive* will be discussed later in connection with several topics concerning Puritan captivity narratives (redemption, anti-Catholicism, etc.).

audience did benefit from the teaching and were thus very exposed to texts of this nature.<sup>89</sup>

#### 1.4.2.4. The Didactic Role of Captivity Narratives

By skimming through the various volumes of the anthologies of American literature, a modern reader can learn about the Puritan discourse, but what do we know of the reading public for the impressive Puritan production at the time? Which of these books did people actually read and what reading material was available at the time on the subject of the native population? In addition to the literary practices of the time, namely that people valued learning to read over learning to write and that learning was based on memorizing texts (which mainly occurred in situations where children were asked to read aloud and adults learned through church services and devotional practices), David Hall writes that “People came in contact of a limited number of books. Most persons had the use of, or owned, a Bible, psalmbook, primer, and catechism. Almanacs were widely available. Otherwise, the factors of cost and distribution were barriers to extensive reading” (24). As for the average Puritan and his access to the book market, Hall writes: “Certain books nonetheless circulated widely, and had an extremely long life among the reading public. Such ‘steady sellers’ were staple reading in the culture of traditional literacy” (24).

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<sup>89</sup> Only later on, in the eighteenth century, was an attempt made to adapt the stories to the young age of the target audience while the notion of hero was emphasized: “At the turn of the eighteenth century, stories from the frontier and its adventures became instances of affirmation of the American dream, hope or destiny, exemplary tales from the biographies of real American heroes and their—at least—heroic deeds and increasingly replaced the traditional English children’s literature with its old fairy tales and folk traditions from Europe. Now the tales of Indian captivity, drawing on the established genre of Captivity Narratives, but rewritten and reedited for the use of children particularly, were regarded as decidedly American in content and format, and therefore as a truly American medium to instruct the young in such subjects as history and moral behavior as well as reading and writing” (Neubauer 73). Examples of captivity narratives edited for the young include the adaptation of John Williams’s *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* into *The Deerfield Captive, and Indian Story being a Narrative of Facts for the Instruction of the Young* (1830) as well as the recycling of Hannah Swarton’s captivity story into *The Casco Captive* (1839) (see Neubauer 74).

From Hall's picture of the New Englanders' use of books, two main points can be used as benchmarks in this study of the public's reception of captivity narratives and the shape the predominant elite wants to give to the use of these narratives as a part of the predominant Puritan discourse in general and how this discourse gave a voice to the subject of some of the ensuing writing. Firstly, the learning technique among Puritans which was based on memorization suggest "techniques of indoctrination and brainwashing" (Ludwig 66), which informs about the Puritan propaganda which challenged the reality-based aspect of Puritan literature in general and captivity narratives in particular.

Second, the role of the church service in educating the average Puritans was very important on the promotion of the books which were not in every family's "book shelf" as was the Bible, the Psalms, or the primers (Hall 1). Sermons were not only at the disposal of average families, but they were also delivered at the church service which everybody was expected to attend. Moreover, sermons were usually used as preface, introduction or annex to major publications. It should be recalled, for instance, that the first publication of Rowlandson's captivity narrative was annexed by the last sermon of her Minister husband Joseph Rowlandson.

As with most other genres of Puritan literature, the reading of captivity narratives took place through the prism of the Bible, a holy source for which interpretation was made readily available to help guide fellow Puritans along the path of life. E. Brooks Holifield defines three different readings: the literal, the exemplary, and the typological. The literal reading elicited a particularly difficult passage in the Bible by means of a clearer one; this is also called the historical reading of the text. The exemplary reading consisted in "the interpretation of scriptural examples as patterns for imitation" (29). Puritans took some Old Testament events and characters as examples of a correct and commendable approach to living one's faith. The third and most often used way of reading Scripture was the typological one; it predominated among the Puritans. This reading binds the New Testament to the Old Testament. To illustrate the definition of the typological reading of the Bible, Holifield gives the example of Noah: "Noah,

who saved his household in the ark, typified Christ, who saved his people through the church” (30). Moreover, the Puritans did not only use typology in this original meaning of linking passages of the New Testament and Old Testament, but they went as far as to point at alleged parallels between current events and those mentioned in both the New and the Old Testaments.

Accordingly many examples of typologically-based references are found in most of Puritan writings of the time. The most frequent typological reference of all was that of Moses. The New England Puritans likened themselves to the persecuted people of Israel who left Egypt for the Promised Land. Likewise, they were persecuted in England and therefore moved to the New World, their equivalent of the biblical Promised Land. The typological reading includes the following terminological pattern: “Typology involves identification both of a type or figura, a figure, concept, ceremony, or event as an Old Testament precursor, and an anti-type, a New Testament historical figure or event that follows and fulfills the promise of the type” (29). So within this pattern, the Puritans who immigrated to New England were the anti-types of Moses and his people, who immigrated to the Promised Land.

Similarly, through the prism of Puritan typology, captivity narratives often carry an analogy to the Babylonian captivity of the Old Testament. Richard Slotkin argues that Israel in Babylon constitutes the archetype of the Puritan captivity narratives:

The captive’s ultimate redemption by the grace of Christ and the efforts of the Puritan magistrates is likened to the regeneration of the soul in conversion. The ordeal is at once threatful of pain and evil and promising of ultimate salvation. Through the captive’s proxy, the promise of a similar salvation could be offered to the faithful among the reading public, while the captive’s torments remained to harrow the hearts of those not yet awakened to their fallen nature. This is the pattern suggested by Underhill in his account of the captive maids, whose condition he likens to that of ‘captive Israel’ and whose adventure is presented as a parable of the colonists’ collective salvation-through-affliction. (95)

Not only is the phenomenon of captivity as a whole compared to the Babylonian exile, but a couple of narratives include specific references to Psalm 137, which relates to the Biblical episode in question:

Then my heart began to fail: and I fell aweeping, which was the first time to my remembrance, that I wept before them. Although I had met with so much affliction, and my heart was many times ready to break, yet could I not shed one tear in their sight; but rather had been all this while in a maze, and like one astonished. But now I may say as Psalm 137.1, 'By the Rivers of Babylon, there we sat down: yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.' (46)

Similarly, Elizabeth Hanson<sup>90</sup> offers a typological reading of the following scene:

At the side of one of these runs or rivers the Indians would have my eldest daughter Sarah to sing them a song. Then was brought into her remembrance that passage in the 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm, 'By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion; we hanged our harps on the willows in the midst thereof, for there they that carried us away captives required of us a song, and they that watched us required of us mirth.' (233)

There is certainly a neat “typological” correlation between the Old Testament’s Babylonian captives and the ordeal of the captives. Authors of captivity narrative, however, make use of that same Biblical passage in different ways: Rowlandson, for instance, alludes to Psalm 137 to justify a moment of weakness when she cries in front of her abductors. Hanson, for her part, relates a scene that is even closer to her scriptural *type*.

Captivity narratives definitely served as common Puritan *exemplum*. They were integrated into Puritan sermons in anecdotal or short narrative form to

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<sup>90</sup> Although Elizabeth Hanson is a Quaker, most scholars situate her captivity narrative among Puritan narratives. Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark explain: “Puritans and Quakers differed bitterly on many issues, yet both sects drew heavily on England’s protestant heritage, and accordingly they had much more in common than they recognized at the time. In New England, moreover, most Quakers grew up in a predominantly Puritan environment—both theologically and socially. Thus Elizabeth Hanson’s narrative, while characteristically Puritan in its pietistic rhetoric and general theme, reflects also the Quaker emphasis on God’s communication with mankind through an ‘inner light;’ Quakers were therefore somewhat more individualistic than Puritans, at least in New England.” (229)

corroborate the arguments of the religious elite community gatherings or church services. Neubauer writes:

These didactic implications of Captivity Narratives were taken up in the next several decades by authors and publishers such as Cotton Mather and used as a central means of education and indoctrination. Thus Mather, himself extremely interested in educational topics and theological doctrines, collected a whole series of tales from abductees in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* of 1702 in order to demonstrate the ways of God with and to those chosen Puritans. These religious tracts were used in church as well as in school, and formed a stock sample of frontier narratives for religious instruction in Puritan families. (72)

Increase Mather, who prefaced Rowlandson's narrative, wrote and delivered several sermons as a prominent minister. His son Cotton Mather, who himself wrote a couple of captivity narratives on behalf of former captives among the Indians, has a couple of sermons to his credit, many of which include the captivity topic.

In addition to providing illustrative material to teach "proper" religious attitudes among average Puritans, captivity narratives also helped with the so-called Puritan Jeremiads.<sup>91</sup> From being a sermon subgenre, Jeremiads gradually blossomed into a major literary form as it set out to document the major historical developments in New England. Sacvan Bercovitch writes:

The American Jeremiad was born in an effort to impose metaphor upon reality. It was nourished by an imagination at once defiant of history and profoundly attuned to the historical forces that were shaping the community. And in this dual capacity it blossomed with every major crisis of seventeenth-century New England: doctrinal controversy, the Indian wars, the witchcraft trials, the character negotiations. From the start the Puritan Jeremiahs had drawn their inspiration from

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<sup>91</sup> Jeremiad is a type of sermon which Emory Elliott presents as follows: "Taking their texts from Jeremiah and Isaiah, these orations followed—and reinscribed—a rhetorical formula that included recalling the courage and piety of the founders, lamenting recent and present ills, and crying out for a return to the original conduct and zeal. In current scholarship, the term 'jeremiad' has expanded to include not only sermons but also other texts that rehearse the familiar tropes of the formula such as captivity narratives, letters, covenant renewals, as well as some histories and biographies" (102).

insecurity; by the 1670s, crisis had become their source of strength. (62)

Captivity narratives, be it as published works in their own right or anecdotal material for inclusion in sermons, nicely fit into the mold of the jeremiad literary form as their basic pattern espoused the three main features of the genre. Puritan narratives abound in typological biblical references alternating with lamentations on the ordeal of captivity. And at the end of the story, the release of the captive incarnates Salvation. Elliott speaks in this connection of “a return to the original conduct and zeal.”<sup>92</sup>

The didactic role of by the new genre of captivity narrative, which essentially came into being with the publication of Rowlandson’s narrative, exists on two levels. First, the phenomenon of captivity itself provided an ideological backdrop and offered fables and metaphors needed to propagate a feeling of insecurity among the faithful of all generations in an effort to impose the principle of salvation through covenants. Second, the teachings of the published narratives had several aspects in common with those of church sermons. In addition to sharing characteristics with the Jeremiads, they were brandished as exemplary illustrations of their message (“*exemplum*”) by the ministers in church. Some of the published narratives were advertised during the church service while unpublished stories were integrated into the sermons. Conversely, in certain instances, some important sermons were appended to captivity narratives to

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<sup>92</sup> Moreover, the Puritan captivity narrative genre as a whole is also closely connected to Jeremiads through its cultivation of the biblical archetype. Bercovitch goes back to the fundamentals of their Puritan protestant faith as he asserts that Babylonian captivity—the subject of all Jeremiah’s prophecies (especially Jeremiahs 31 and 50) constituted an exegetical problem in the very origins of Reformed thought.<sup>92</sup> But even more important is what the Puritan settlers adhered to and how they perceived the scriptural archetype in Indian captivity narratives: “The Great Migration owes its unique character to its inheritance of both these strains in its English background. The settlers, in William Haller’s word, felt they had inherited ‘the mantle of Israel, lost by England’s Stuart kings’; they also felt they were an exclusive band of saints, called by God into a church covenant that separated them from the mass of humanity. In short, they were children of an improbable mixed marriage—Congregationalists on a historic mission for mankind. They took with them when they left a sacred and a worldly view of their errand, both a conviction that they were elect and an expectation of the great things they were to do on earth. On the one hand, they conceived of their flight, with the Plymouth Pilgrims, in spiritual and inward terms, as a means of self-improvement. On the other hand, they saw themselves leaving a real Babylon, in another (and final) act of the

promote them among the public, as was the case with the first publication of Rowlandson's narrative.

The historical approach at the beginning of this section focuses on cordial coexistence between the Puritan settlers and the Indians—a memory that has tended to evaporate from Puritan collective consciousness partly as a result of a deliberate re-writing of history. This is partly because of hostility between the European settlers and Native Americans in the rest of the New World (Spaniards and the Black Legend, English settlers versus Powhatan in Virginia, etc.) long predate the arrival of the Mayflower Pilgrims. Renewed hostility also closely follows the short peaceful period with the first conflict between the settlers and the Indians known as the Pequot War in 1637. William Bradford's literary masterpiece, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, describes the inhabitants of the New England in a surprisingly positive tone, a description in sharp contrast to the more customary image of the wild beasts and savages that had already informed the Old World peoples through earlier published travel narratives and other instances of colonial literature. These earlier texts then gave way to episodes of mutual aid and the signing of peace treaties.<sup>93</sup>

In his chronologically organized narrative, John Winthrop, for his part, describes a more mature and independent colony that begins to show signs of distrust towards the Indians. This development is reflected in terminology with the lexical field of “cooperation” and “gift-giving” to the vocabulary of “conspiracy” and “war.”

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drama of human history. Unlike their Plymouth brethren, they were determined from the beginning not to withdraw from the world but to reform it” (38).

<sup>93</sup> Bradford's text is said to have given birth to the Thanksgiving Myth. Bradford refers to a harvest feast as follows: “All the summer there was no want. And now as winter approached, there began to come in. store of fowl, with which this place did abound. Besides water-fowl, there was a great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, and also stored a supply of venison. They also laid in a peck of meal a week to a person, or, now since harvest, Indian corn in the same proportion. This made many afterwards write their friends in England such glowing accounts of the plenty they enjoyed; and they were not exaggerated, but true reports” (40). This passage is annotated by the editor who states that “The Governor sent out a party to hunt, that so they might, after a special manner, rejoice together after they had gathered the fruit of their labors. This was the first celebration of the national festival of New England, the autumnal Thanksgiving” (40).



Because of his background as a missionary, John Eliot's portrayal of the Indians is characterized by a shift in terminology from practical colonial considerations to religious connotations. While both Bradford and Winthrop focus on the relationship between the Indians and the settlers from the viewpoint of confronting the daily challenges of life in the wilderness, Eliot approaches the same relationship from a religious perspective; therefore, while Bradford—like John Smith in his early narratives—presents the Indians as animals, John Eliot, for his part, introduces the notion of devilish worship in his portrayal of the Indians whom he divides in two groups: the good Indians (the converts) and the bad (the reluctant Indians). Interestingly enough, Eliot largely relies on the Indian voice to fulfill his missionary work: in his *New England First Fruits*, he describes Indian converts arguing against the fellow tribe members' "devilish" worship practices and advancing the merits of their newly adopted religious path, Christianity.

Like Eliot, Roger Williams approached Indian culture through his efforts to learn and document native languages. He therefore deserves to be regarded as one of the original statesmen that helped bridge the gulf between Europeans and Indians and who served as a spokesman of sorts on behalf of the latter. His ethnographic works shed light on culture and habits as well as language, thereby making it possible to form an idea of how the natives saw the settlers. In fact, his writings largely point in the direction of a supposed State of Nature the Indians unconsciously inhabit. This attitude notably manifests itself in a passage that says that the Indians see the Whites "coming to their [i.e., the Indians'] lands." (65) Moreover, together with Thomas Morton, Williams helps raise the Indian voice through his dissenting attitude towards the Puritans. By so doing he discredits the mainstream Puritan demonization of the Indians, an attitude that will earn him severe criticism from later generation Puritans, notably the Mathers.

The last chapter of the section emphasizes the position of captivity narratives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dealing with both the popularity of the first published narratives and the significance of the didactic role played by published and unpublished captivity stories alike. On the one hand, the

ministerial elite used the phenomenon represented by repeated episodes of captivity of fellow Puritans by the Indians to support the teachings of their Puritan doctrine. On the other hand, the pattern of the published narratives embraced existing literary genres, such as the Jeremiad and constituted an integral part of the Puritan typological teaching.

## **2. Authority, Authorship, and Authenticity in Captivity Narratives**

Having provided an assessment of the historical and literary context surrounding late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century captivity narratives, I shall dedicate my next section to an examination of the captivity narratives themselves. I will first focus on the autobiographical testimonial aspect of the narratives and the implications for the search of the Indian voice. In so doing, I shall consider, among other things, issues of subjectivity and propaganda, all of which have a bearing on the level of authenticity that can be attributed to the representation of the Indian voice, as the latter must be “filtered out,” as it were, through a multiplicity of layers.

Before further examining the multiple voices and the discourses in captivity narratives, and in order to filter out the Indian voice, one should consider the authenticity issue in the narratives. Hence the first question to be addressed in this section is that of the degree of authenticity in personal life experience writing, specifically captivity narratives. Of consideration is to what extent the specific genre of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century captivity narrative belongs to the realm of autobiographical theories. At the same time the authenticity issue in related narratives shall be discussed in order to separate true events from only loosely reality-based and/or altogether fictional episodes.

## **2.1. Captivity Narrative as Auto/Biographical Genre**

Captivity narratives consist in testimonial accounts dedicated to personal captivity experiences of either the author of the narrative, the narrator, or a third person imprisoned by the Indians. Therefore authenticity in captivity narrative, as in any other autobiographical text, primarily depends on the context of the narrative, the motivations of the author of the text, and the approval of the editorial authority of the time. Nevertheless, caution is needed when using some auto/biography theories to assess the particular genre in question (17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>- century captivity narrative), since some of the recent theories of autobiography may prove

anachronistic. I, therefore, will devote part of the present chapter to an examination of different aspects of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>- century personal writing and embed the present corpus of captivity narratives in the relevant literary historical context.

The challenge here is to distinguish the specific brand of captivity narratives from the primary material habitually considered auto/biography, i.e. personal narratives such as journals, diaries, travel narratives, conversion narratives, etc. Felicity A. Nussbaum contextualizes autobiography as follows:

That both the hidden or secretive and the public and available were aspects of reality was a dangerous presentiment of the eighteenth century as manifested in diary and journal, and it has been the traditional reading of the history of early nineteenth-century autobiography that has buried that irrational and dangerous notion underground by taming the radical, making it ‘useful’ in the achievement of self, and turning the unshaped ungainly self of the journal and diary into an autobiographical form that most resembled the nineteenth-century realistic novel. (11)

Most 17<sup>th</sup>-century Puritan literature consisted of, to name a few, diaries, journals, sermons, and conversion narratives. The key Puritan literature titles serving as sources to later generation scholars typically come with the words “diary,” “journal,” or even “autobiography.” These include: *The Journal of John Winthrop*, *Autobiography of Thomas Shepard*, *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth*, and *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson redefine autobiography by making a distinction between “autobiographical writing and other closely related kinds of life writing” (1). Like Nussbaum, Smith and Watson show that, although “autobiography” only appeared and was recognized as a literary genre in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its practice was common much earlier. They mainly distinguish between life writing, life narrative, and autobiography. These three elements fit into Philippe Lejeune’s general definition of the genre: “We call autobiography the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own

personality” (qtd. in Smith 1). Each such narrative, however, has characteristic features of its own and belongs, on that account, to a slightly different category. According to Smith and Watson, *life writing* “is a general term of writing of diverse kinds that takes a life as its subject” and includes all “biographical, novelistic, historical, or an explicit self-reference to the writer” (3). Most of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan works, including diaries, journals, and autobiographies would seem to fit this description and can, accordingly, be included.

Smith and Watson define the concept of life writing as a “somewhat narrower term that includes many kinds of self-referential writing, including autobiography” (3). They add that *autobiography* for its part “is a particular practice of life narrative that emerged in the Enlightenment and has become canonical in the West” (3). Although at this point Smith and Watson seem to agree with Nussbaum’s assessment of the autobiographical genre, they remain cautious in terms of the theoretical response to autobiography and the historical forms taken by life narratives:

[Autobiography’s] theorists have installed this master narrative of the ‘sovereign self’ as an institution of literature and culture, and identified, in the course of the twentieth century, a canon of representative life narratives. But implicit in this canonization is the assignment of lesser value to many other kinds of life narratives produced at the same time and, indeed, a refusal to recognize them as ‘true’ autobiography. Thus, a growing number of postmodern and postcolonial theorists contend that the term *autobiography* is inadequate to describe the extensive historical range and the diverse genres and practices of life narratives and life narrators in the West and elsewhere around the globe. (4, original italics)

This theoretical survey urges caution in the use of the term autobiography in its general meaning. While most auto/biography theories trace the evolution of the autobiography genre from general personal life narratives such as diaries and journals to realistic novels, the categorization of certain specific personal experience-based self-narratives such as travel narratives, conversion narratives, and in the case of this study, captivity narratives, remains ambiguous, particularly

with respect to their focus on topical issues. As opposed to the types of life writing including journals and diaries, other forms, such as travel narratives, conversion narratives, and above all captivity narratives, while undeniably self-referential, also serve another purpose, that of introducing the reader to a broader subject. These larger scopes include discovering a new world (travel narratives), pointing out God's guidance (conversion narrative), or portraying life in the wilderness among the "savages" (captivity narratives).

Despite all postmodern theoretical disagreements over the categorization of life writing, there exists a minimum consensus as to what specifically characterizes the autobiographical act of self-representation. These theoretical considerations do not therefore primarily serve the purpose of using autobiography theory-related concepts to allocate the present corpus of captivity narratives to a particular literary genre but to discuss the literary and historical subtext inherent in the said narratives, since the Indian voice tends to be transmitted only indirectly through the filter of the Puritan discourse in a set of subjective accounts.

The autobiographical act in captivity narratives differs from one narrative to another, depending on religious, political and social factors prevailing at the time of publication. As posited earlier, the autobiographical act rightly raises questions on two significant issues: authorship and authenticity, but just what is meant by authorship and authenticity in captivity narratives? Although both concepts are inevitably intertwined, the specific historical context in which the narratives came into being—marked by the literary hegemony of the Puritan elite—suggests that it is worth distinguishing between the two. While the related incidents and the written form in which they were couched are alleged to have been experienced—as well as narrated and/or formulated—by the protagonists themselves, the influence of the publisher and/or editor cannot be ignored.

As for authorship I have demonstrated in the previous chapter that the captivity narrative genre featured prominently in the multidisciplinary writings of some of the most influential ministers, including Increase and Cotton Mather. Not

only did they write on behalf of former captives, but they also played a significant role in supporting and publishing narratives attributed to the former captives involved. The collaborative aspect thus translates into the weaving together of multiple voices. In addition to those of the author, editor and publisher, there is the voice of other possible “collaborators” in the form of influential friends or relations; thus, when dealing with narratives in the corpus of this study, especially those by or about women, particularly Puritan women, in addition to the actual physical and moral experience of the captives of the wilderness among the Indians, there are also issues of gender, power, reputation, social status, and authorship to consider.

It follows that when considering the issue of multiple voices, particular attention should be paid to an assessment of the relative weight to be apportioned to the possible supporting editorial authority behind the narrative voice. Although such a voice may also be detected in narratives written by men, in those narratives authored by women, the (male) ministerial contribution to their “voice” is more apparent. This manifests itself in the patriarchal discourse that suffuses these narratives, regardless of the woman’s (captive’s) apparent role in the narrative *per se*.<sup>94</sup> When resorting to the agency of a third party to (help them) write and publish their stories, the former captives in effect bowed to the expectations of the Puritan male elite and monopoly-holders of the publishing world of the time.

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<sup>94</sup> By the woman’s apparent role in the narratives, I mean the role attributed to her in the published work. In some cases, for instance in Mary Rowlandson’s narrative, the woman is recognized as both author and narrator of her own captivity experience (as can be seen from the use of the first person “I”). Elsewhere, notably in Hannah Swarton’s narrative, the former captives appeared as narrators, but the actual writing of their experiences was entrusted to a third party. In the third category—the likes of Hannah Duston—the narratives were written on behalf of the victim, with or without her consent. The narratives in that category accordingly make use of the third person. These three types of narratives will be discussed in the next chapters.



## **2.2. The Gender Issue in Captivity Narratives**

This chapter, which introduces the main topics articulated by the narrative voice, will look at the subject through the prism of gender. The underlying current of this examination is the patriarchal system that prevailed in Puritan society and conditioned the terms under which women could hope to make a name for themselves as writers, three of whom are the renowned Mary Rowlandson, Hannah Swarton and Hannah Duston in the late seventeenth century. At the close of the chapter I will compare the female narrative voice to the male narrative voice in a selection of captivity narratives penned by both Puritan and non-Puritan captives.

### **2.2.1. *Puritan Patriarchal Conceptions***

The core of the patriarchal organization in the seventeenth-century English colonies was carried over from the mother country, as Kathleen M. Brown remarks:

During the sixteenth century, most inhabitants of England would have agreed that the differences between men and women were integral to nature's divinely sanctioned plan and a cornerstone of social order. Even when social commentators disagreed about the moral significance of these differences, they articulated a vision of an orderly society in which women deferred to male authority. Despite difficulties in expressing the distinction between men and women and assigning unambiguous moral values to them, religious, political, and cultural authorities invoked this gender ideal as a powerful metaphor for other social relationships in which power was unevenly distributed. (1)

Justification for bypassing women in the allocation of positions of authority in politics and society at large was rooted in religion and the ensuing negative stereotypes about representatives of the weaker sex. Puritan justification for the superiority of men over women derived from Scripture and was presented as a manifestation of God's will, as the following extract from *Genesis* goes to show:

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (*Genesis* 3:16). Accordingly, God prevented women from wielding any form of power. Such positions were deemed incompatible with their propensity to sin.<sup>95</sup>

Male authority was, therefore, first incarnated in the organization of the household, itself a small-scale model of the commonwealth.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly women’s subordination to their husbands within the household paralleled that of their expected role within the community. This explains why even famous women of the time, especially in and around the literary circles, were introduced not in their own names, but as extensions of their respective husbands. Two prominent examples are Anne Bradstreet and Mary Rowlandson.

Although I already dedicated a whole chapter of this study to the case of Anne Hutchinson and several chapters to Rowlandson, I want to take this

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<sup>95</sup>Because of the sinful nature attributed to women in early Puritan New England, court records of the time show that women, far more than men, found themselves at the receiving end of trials for witchcraft, slander, fornication and suchlike. Susan Juster writes: “Like another prototypically female crime, fornication, slander was believed to originate in women’s inability to contain their naturally hot and moist temperament” (70). It was strongly believed that the cause of their evil nature lay in women’s bodies and dangerous sexuality. In *Damned Women*, Elisabeth Reis points in the same direction when she uses archive data to create statistics regarding the gender of those accused of witchcraft. Even though “[w]omen and men were considered equally reprehensible in the natural state” (3), she notes that the former were held more likely to succumb to devilish temptations: “The representation of the soul in terms of worldly notions of gender and the understanding of women in terms of the characteristics of the feminine soul led by circular reasoning to the conclusion that women were more likely than men to submit to Satan. A women’s feminine soul, jeopardized in a woman’s feminine body, was frail, submissive, and passive qualities that most New Englanders thought would allow her to become either a wife to Christ or a drudge to Satan” (94).

<sup>96</sup> Alan Taylor writes the following about this little commonwealth: “As in the mother country, New English men monopolized legal authority, landownership, and political rights. As patriarchs, they expected to govern their families as so many ‘little commonwealths’—the essential components of the social order. The minister John Cotton asserted that God meant civilized people ‘to live in Societies, first of Family, Secondly Church, and Thirdly, Common-wealth.’ Because the seventeenth-century English understood all three to interlock in mutual support, disorderly families threatened to dissolve society into violent anarchy. Understanding every commonwealth, small and large, as needing an ultimate ruler, *the English expected husbands to govern their families as petty monarchs*. By the law of ‘coverture,’ *wives were subsumed within the name and the legal identity of their husbands*. Only widows who had not remarried could own property, enter contracts, and resort to the court in property dispute” (173, my emphasis).

opportunity to demonstrate how the identity of their respective husbands or fathers played a role—infamous (Hutchinson) and positive (Rowlandson)—in defining their respective position in Puritan society. In Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, the husband is ever present, but he remains in the background as a mere point of reference and reminder of the captive’s life with family and acquaintances before her abduction. Her memories alternate between nostalgia and her deep-rooted conviction that her husband would do all in his power to redeem her. But except for one instance when Rowlandson writes that he sent her some tobacco, the husband largely remains an abstract protagonist whose role is limited to the narrator’s restrictive representation. Joseph Rowlandson is afforded less of a role than would have been expected of the head of a household. When the narrative was presented to the public at large, however, the publisher and Increase Mather converted the roles of the two protagonists and reassigned the subordinate role to the woman.

The publisher’s contribution to establish legitimacy for Rowlandson’s narrative (in its first release in 1682) consists in appending the late husband’s last sermon. This helped preserve Mrs. Rowlandson’s social status as a devoted wife whose voice in the narratives carries echoes of her defunct husband. Increase Mather, for his part, introduces the former captive as a “worthy and precious gentlewoman, the dear consort of the said Reverend Mr. Rowlandson” (134). And more importantly, he also offers the husband’s perspective on the Indian attack that led to Mrs. Rowlandson’s captivity:

The most solemn and remarkable part of this tragedy, may that justly be reputed, which fell upon the family of that reverend servant of God, Mr. Joseph Rowlandson, the faithful pastor of Christ in that place, who being gone down to the council of the Massachusetts to seek aid for the defense of the place, at his return found the town in flames, or smoke, his own house being set on fire by the enemy, through the disadvantage of a defective fortification, and all in it consumed: his precious yokefellow, and dear children, wounded and captivated (as the issue evidenced, and the following narrative declares) by these cruel and barbarous savages. (133)

In this passage, Increase Mather rebalances the respective roles of the husband and the wife, the former being given more prominence than in the actual narrative of which he is but a secondary character.

In a sense, Increase Mather lends additional male and ministerial “legitimacy” to a narrative written by a woman, noting for example: “No serious spirit then (especially knowing anything of this gentlewoman’s piety) can imagine but that the vows of God are upon her. Excuse her then if she comes thus into public, to pay those vows, come and hear what she has to say” (136). Mather’s choice of words is not only about asking the readers to endure Rowlandson’s “exhibitionism” in sharing her personal experience with, as it were, such outrageous indecency, but also aims at setting the tone of the narrative to promote Puritan piety.

Conversely, Hutchinson’s infamous notoriety at the time contributed to ruining her husband’s reputation, who became the laughing stock of the literary elite. Winthrop, for instance, describes William Hutchinson as “a man of a very mild temper and weak parts, and wholly guided by his wife, who had been the beginner of all the former troubles in the country, and still continued to breed disturbance” (vol. 1, 299). In *Dames and Daughters of Colonial Days*, Geraldine Brooks describes William Hutchinson’s attitudes during his wife’s trial and excommunication as follows:

They [her family] seemed to have been able to put up with whatever peculiarities may have been hers [Hutchinson’s]. Perhaps her husband was, as Winthrop asserted, a man of ‘weak parts,’ but even weak men have been known to complain upon occasion. This Mr. Hutchinson never did. He shared his wife’s excommunication and banishment without a murmur against her, so far as we can find. He spoke of her to certain messengers from the Boston church as ‘a dear saint and servant of God.’ Indeed, he must have been a man of some force and ability, for he died a magistrate of the Rhode Island colony, to which he and his family had departed. It is a relief to come upon that one ‘dear saint’ of William Hutchinson’s, after such clerical terms of abuse as ‘breeder of heresies,’ ‘American Jezebel,’ and ‘instrument of Satan.’ It also speaks well for the domestic felicity of the Hutchinson family. (26)

Unlike Rowlandson who entered the public sphere with the honors of being affiliated to her husband, Hutchinson was ostracized and silenced for her alleged heretical exhibitionism. Her husband was unable to save her from being sentenced and she pulled him under in her downward spiral.

In the worldview of the patriarchal elite, husbands were supposed to guarantee male power and supremacy at home and in the community at large. This translated first and foremost into women's total subjection to their husbands and entailed a series of practical and moral duties, as emphasized in this passage from Virginia Gazette (May 20, 1737):

In short, as Women are born for Virtue, that you may perform the Duty of a Wife to the Purpose, you must strive to humour the Partner of your Bosom in every Thing, and love him above the Creation; you must be *patient, prudently* manage your House, well skill'd in Huswifery, and careful in bringing up children; hospitable to Strangers, civil to Neighbours, love honest Company, and abhor the Levity of Youth. *Whoever strictly adheres to these rules, will equally promote the Honour of Mariage, and the Glory of the Fair Sex.* (Qtd in Brown 335, my emphasis)

Yet these values, dictated to women and resulting from the ideology of patriarchal morality that informed the Puritan standards of the time, were just the tip of the iceberg. Behind the scene, in the more intimate aspects of married life, the representative of the "fair sex" would occasionally succeed in overturning the established power.

Indeed, from the Puritans' point of view, sexuality within the boundaries of marriage had a significant and positive role in managing a good household and serving the good of all (society). It was also a significant source of anxiety for Puritan men, but not just because of the stereotypical image of the female body and its "seducing" power. Men, especially, were anxious to avoid the stigma of being thought of as "impotent," a concept which carried much broader implications back then than it does today. In "Deficient Husbands: Manhood, Sexual Incapacity, and Male Marital Sexuality in Seventeenth-Century New England," Thomas A. Foster writes:

Seventeenth-century definitions of the word “impotence” highlight the relationship between male sexual dysfunctioning and more general male character flaws. All the various definitions of impotence point to notions of weakness, deficiency, or powerlessness. Seventeenth-century meanings touching on various aspects of power include ‘want of strength or power to perform anything; utter inability or weakness; helplessness,’ and ‘wholly lacking sexual power.’ The word also had specific character associations. Impotence could mean ‘not master of oneself; unable to restrain oneself’ and was ‘frequently used to denote moral weakness, inability to follow virtuous courses or to resist temptation.’ These definitions taken together indicate that impotence meant more than simply sexual incapacity. *Manhood incorporated strength, power, mastery, and morality, whereas impotence signified the absence of these qualities and, thereby, the erosion of manliness.* (733, my emphasis)

In the sexual sphere, otherwise subordinate women could at times question the dogma of male supremacy, particularly so in childless couples, as the concept of sexuality by definition implied the pursuit of procreation.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to the absence of procreation which could constitute legally solid evidence of male impotence, men could also be guilty of failing to procure pleasure for their wives as the seventeenth-century Puritan conception of sexuality did embrace sexual pleasure, which “could reinforce the bonds upon which the stability of the Puritan’s male-headed households rested” (Foster 724). When petitioning for divorce, women, therefore, did not hesitate to brandish their husband’s sexual shortcomings, thereby often winning the court’s support to their plea to regain their freedom and obtain permission to get married again.<sup>98</sup> Conversely, “impotent men could not marry again and therefore could not assume the conventional prerogatives of a male head of household” (737). The explicit right to sexual pleasure which was granted to seventeenth-century Puritan women

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<sup>97</sup> See section three (chapter three) of this study.

<sup>98</sup> Regarding divorce cases in seventeenth-century Puritan New England, Foster provides the following statistics: “My figures may actually underestimate the percentage of divorce cases involving male sexual incapacity. The original records from the Massachusetts Court of Assistants are missing from 1644 to 1673. My estimate is based on Cornelia Hughes Dayton’s calculation of 42 divorce petitions filed by wives in New Haven and Connecticut in the period 1639-1710. Of these, 4 cases involved impotence charges. For Massachusetts, Lyle Koehler estimated 39 petitions from wives for divorce in Massachusetts and Plymouth. Of those 10 involved charges of impotence. These estimates yield a total of 81 petitions from wives, of which 14 involve male sexual incapacity” (727).

should prompt reconsideration of the stereotypical use of the term “puritanical” to refer to prudish behavior.

Apart from divorcees, most legally recognized Puritan women were widows whose main prerogative was the right of estate:

The law explicitly recognized their part in the accumulation of a family’s estate, by the procedures it established for the treatment of widows. It was a basic principle of inheritance in this period—on both sides of the Atlantic—that a widow should have the use or profits of one-third of the land owned by her husband at the time of his death and full title to one-third of his movable property. But at least in Plymouth, and perhaps in other colonies as well, this expressed more than the widow’s need for an adequate living allowance. (Demos 85)

Even when a widow remarried, she was entitled to retain the inherited possessions under her own control based on a prenuptial agreement with the new husband. Wives could also enjoy shared responsibility with their husbands in certain types of business activity, among which Demos cites the management of inns and taverns, writing: “All such establishments were licensed by the General Court; hence their history can be followed, to a limited degree, in the official Colony Record” (89). Demos knows (based on existing records) of liquor licenses directly awarded to a woman. As there was no mention of any husbands in those records, Demos assumes that many or most of the women in question were in fact widows (90).

From this brief presentation of the Puritan conception of gender, one may deduce that gender-based roles played a key role not only in society at large but were reflected in every aspect of life in Puritan households. While visible power undeniably lay in the hands of men, women played a substantial role in the home and in the bedroom. At the community level, women’s rights were in one way or another guaranteed by courts, especially in cases of divorce or widowhood. Whenever a married woman did something noteworthy, whatever judgment—positive or negative—was formed of her actions would reflect on her husband (who was deemed ultimately responsible for his spouse’s initiatives), but divorced or

widowed women tended to be viewed as fully fledged individuals, free of the pressure of an invisible (but nonetheless existing) societal-imposed “chaperon.”

The above survey will serve as background to the following chapter dedicated to an analysis of the narrative voice in captivity narratives about and/or by women. In this chapter, I will ascertain to what extent the supposed authors of female gender internalized and reproduced the gender-specific expectations and values of Puritan society. Interestingly enough, it so happens that there were no divorcees or widowed wives among the captives whose stories are told in the texts of my corpus. In fact, during captivity, the abducted women typically found themselves separated from their husbands, and therefore had to confront the experience as individuals. As such, they paradoxically “enjoyed” a temporary release from the “shackles” of marriage and regained a new social identity.<sup>99</sup> Yet how does this identity come through in the narratives dealing with their captivity?

### **2.2.2.      *The Male Authority Behind the Narrative Voice***

By telling, writing, or publishing their narratives, these women were subject to the expectations directed at them by representatives of the elite who helped describe the experience of their ordeal as hostages of the Indians. The publication of their narratives thus created a dependency which, as it were, “imprisoned” them a second time, although the relationship between the former captives and their male co-writers or publishers was obviously much closer than the one the women had with their abductors. In a sense, the women became instruments in the hands of the ministerial and political authorities of the time. Publication required either a male author writing the narrative on behalf of the former female captive, or a male publisher to help edit and lend authority to a text allegedly written by the former female captive.

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<sup>99</sup> This point is also made in the third section of my study on the so-called “white Indians”: for some of the captives this questionable form of freedom indeed constituted a motive to opt to stay with the Indians even when presented with an opportunity to return to their own people.



As with Rowlandson's narrative, which must have been approved by a male "authority" in view of the tribute paid to her late husband, Hannah Swarton's and Hannah Dustan's narratives also show signs of male co-involvement in the authorship process. In "A Narrative of Hannah Dustan's Notable Deliverance from Captivity," Cotton Mather does all the storytelling himself while the former captive remains silent in the text.<sup>100</sup> Mather presents himself as the author of the text while reassuring the reader of his commitment to authenticity with these words: "I must now publish what these poor women assure me," referring to Dustan and her nurse (163). Mather insists on the authenticity of the accounts.<sup>101</sup> The authorship is more complicated in "A Narrative of Hannah Swarton Containing Wonderful Passages relating to Her Captivity and Deliverance."<sup>102</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Mathers were, in one way or another, actively involved in the editorial process of all three narratives. The fact that they published the narratives or allowed their publication indicates that a female work at the time required male support for legitimization; in other words, it needed approval by the powerful male establishment. Thus the questions that should be asked are: What is the counterpart of this approval in the text? Apart from allowing the publication of

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<sup>100</sup> Dustan's story would come to be exploited for it embodied the sensationalism that was sought after in the eighteenth century. In fact the story was rewritten and/or republished several times subsequent to the initial three editions by Cotton Mather. Derounian-Stodola notes: "Historian Thomas Hutchinson's *The History of Massachusetts* (1795) continues in Mather's mold but pairs Dustan with another woman, Thomas's ancestor Anne Hutchinson, to make the story a study of two strong Puritan heroines. Leverett Saltonstall, in his 1816 "Sketch of Haverhill," and Timothy Dwight, in his *Travels in New England and New York* (1821-22), consolidate the Dustan story as local legend and regional history, but Dwight has more difficulty melding Dustan's roles as deviant vigilante and exemplary frontierswoman. These earlier histories all provide sources for three short nineteenth-century prose recastings by John Greenleaf Whittier (1831), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1836), and Henry Thoreau (1849), which convert history into historical romance. The fictionalizations by Whittier, Hawthorne, and Thoreau focus on the essential immorality of Dustan's act and see her, rather than the Indians, as evil, thus completing a chronological circle that began with Mather's fact-based depiction of Dustan as heroic" (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* 56).

<sup>101</sup> For example, in the introduction to Quintin Stockwell's narrative, Increase Mather assures the reader: "A *worthy person* hath sent me the account which one lately belonging to Deerfield (his name is Quintin Stockwell), has drawn up respecting his own captivity and redemption, with the more notable occurrences of Divine Providence attending him in his distress, which I shall, therefore, *here insert in the words by himself expressed*" (Increase Mather, *Remarkable Providences* 27-28, emphasis mine).

<sup>102</sup> According to Vaughan and Clark, no copy of the original account has survived. The only version at the scholars' disposal is that published by Cotton Mather (148). In this study, I will use Mather's second version of the narrative in his *Magnalia*, 1702.

the works and furthering their dissemination, how did the Mathers contribute to the writing process? To what extent do the Mathers actually “speak” for themselves in these works under the guise of their role as well-meaning editor, publisher, preface, etc.? Is the female narrative “voice” able to resound beyond the voice of male authority or is it subdued by publishers like the Mathers?

In order to answer these questions, I shall examine the narrative in general and the narrative voice in particular. Considering that captivity texts consist of testimonial narrations of events that supposedly transpire when individuals were taken captive by Indians, they feature a clash of sorts between the narrative voice proper and the editorial voice, usually embodied by a Puritan minister. Steven Neuwirth, for instance, presents the clash as follows:

Though Rowlandson affirms the Puritan ethos, promotes the culture’s male ideology, adopts male standards to evaluate her conduct, the narrator does not accept, wholesale, men’s claims to superiority. In fact, at discrete moments in her chronicle, men come in for their share of criticism. Granted, Mary usually subscribes to the male perception of women and writes a phallogoc discourse. And yet, now and then, particularly near the end of her narrative, the speaker does seem to adopt a woman’s point of view and seems to speak in woman’s voice. It is as if Mary Rowlandson, female author, grew weary of her male-constructed narrator, grew weary of inscribing the male script and promoting the Puritan ethos. (67)

Neuwirth sees Rowlandson taking the upper hand on the male voice by “documenting a woman’s experience in a woman’s idiom,” characterized by the role of “a social critic and a burgeoning frontier feminist” (67). Although I agree with Neuwirth as to the resonance of the female voice in Rowlandson’s narrative, this is mostly reflected in her attitudes and values rather than in the radical shift in Rowlandson’s focus and narrative tone, a tone that Neuwirth describes as “unorthodox” (68).<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Steven Neuwirth writes on this radical shift in Rowlandson’s narrative: “No longer are we listening to Mary Rowlandson, the submissive, self-effacing Puritan’s spokesperson, the pious narrator bearing witness to God’s sacred truths. Rather, we are invited to read social satire and to watch Mary’s captors make a spectacle of themselves” (68).

I shall, therefore, also consider the predominant narrative “voice” in these narratives and see how it deals with feminine values such as motherhood, femininity, domesticity and reputation. One may ask to what extent, if at all, the women were able to boost their own authoritativeness by publishing or having “their” narratives published. Were the male authorities who played a role in authorizing and/or endorsing publication of the narratives really able to control the contents of the published text? One may assume that he who controls the weighting of the narrative voice also reinforces his own position of moral or ideological authority. Still, the resulting voices (narrative and editorial) sometimes clash within the same single narrative, creating the occasional airing even of controversial views. The discourse is at times so inconsistent that it mandates analysis of who is really controlling the narrative voice, on whose behalf, and for what purpose.

In Rowlandson’s narrative, for instance, one may examine Mather’s rhetorical influence as the preface and a strong supporter of the publications. This examination will mainly consist in assessing the relative weight of the politically dominant establishment versus the female voice in the narrative. At the same time, the role played by Reverend Joseph Rowlandson’s sermon, which was appended to the first version of Rowlandson’s narrative, was very significant. To what extent did the inclusion of the sermon help promote public acceptability of the first text in prose written by a Puritan woman?

Joseph Rowlandson does not mention his wife’s captivity in the sermon. The appendix served as legitimating sign and an authoritative blessing coming from the former captive’s own husband. The appended sermon also supports Increase Mather’s introduction of the former captive as a prominent minister’s wife whose reputation can certainly not be questioned at any level. More importantly, the sermon gives a particular Puritan ideological tone to the narrative by focusing on the burden inflicted by God to test His people.

Rowlandson's narrative clearly presents the Indians as agents of God. She relates her experience in captivity as God's plan for her salvation, wondering, for example: "And here I cannot but take notice of the strange providence of God in preserving the heathens" (44). She later adds that "the Lord preserves them for His Holy ends" (69). Here Rowlandson essentially echoes Increase Mather's passage from his preface to the narrative:

That God is indeed the supreme Lord of the world, ruling the most unruly, weakening the most cruel and savage, granting His people mercy in the sight of the unmerciful, curbing the lusts of the most filthy, holding the hands of the violent, delivering the prey the mighty, and gathering together the outcasts of Israel. (Increase Mather, "Preface" 136)

Mather strongly believes that mankind is under God's watchful eye and that God tests His people's faith by inflicting ordeals up on them. Rowlandson similarly presents sets of providential issues which she experienced during her captivity and reaches conclusions in keeping with Mather's point of view of the effect that "the savages" and their actions play a role in God's plan for His people. Just like Mather who claims that the Lord grants "His people mercy in the sight of the unmerciful" ("Preface" 136), so Rowlandson sees her captivity as a necessary and inevitable path to salvation to which she refers as God's "Holy end." She assumes that the "Holy end" will eventually manifest itself in her release from captivity, an outcome in which she strongly believed: "Even as the psalmist says, to declare the works of the Lord, and His wonderful power in carrying us along, preserving us in the wilderness, while under the enemy's hand, and returning of us in safety again" (46). Rowlandson's choice of this scriptural quotation informs the reader about her attitude towards her Indian oppressors.

Rowlandson's full confidence in the ultimate "happy ending" allows her to patiently await God's intervention and rescue, an attitude in stark contrast to Hannah Dustan's rebellious and bloody escape from captivity. Rowlandson's chosen course of action consists in bearing the ordeals of her captivity until God's intervention to relieve her, in recognition that she has suffered enough in repentance for whatever sins she has committed. Rowlandson waited patiently for

her release and redemption and she would not make any attempt to escape whatsoever; thus, she relates in her narrative that one Indian offered to accompany her home if she decided to run away, but she refused: “I was not willing to run away, but desired to wait God's time, that I might go home quietly, and without fear” (70). This submissive attitude towards God, (by which she unconditionally adheres according to her prefacer/supporter’s point of view) is suggestive of the traditional Puritan female subordination to men, an attitude also manifested in the belief that the appropriate time for her release would materialize in the political ransom/release negotiations between the Puritan authorities and the Indians.

The same conditions are mentioned by Swarton in her narrative, where she writes that “the means of my deliverance were by reason of letters that had passed between the governments of New England and of Canada” (157). Whereas the patriarchal authorities were actively involved in both Rowlandson’s and Swarton’s releases from captivity, they did not play any part in Dustan’s liberation from the wilderness. She chose not to rely on a possible well-meaning intervention by the male political authorities, thereby in effect reducing their role to that of passive onlookers only taking stock of the accomplished fact of her self-obtained liberation from captivity.

If one now concludes that both Rowlandson’s and Swarton’s submissive attitudes<sup>104</sup> in passively awaiting God’s intervention and, additionally, a possible positive outcome of talks between their captors and fellow male congressionalist negotiators, was deemed particularly virtuous and consequently recommended to all self-respecting Puritan women, then what is to be gleaned from Hannah Dustan’s violent escape from captivity? Cotton Mather relates Dustan’s active participation (including the violence) in her own escape as follows:

[A] little before break of day when the whole crew was in a dead sleep (Reader, see if it prove not so) one of these women took up a resolution to imitate the action of Jael upon Sisera [...].

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<sup>104</sup> Submissive attitude is here intended with regard to the captive’s non-action to run away from captivity. Otherwise, the narrative shows that Rowlandson was very active in surviving her affliction. There are also some cases where she is extremely aggressive.

She heartened the nurse and the youth to assist her in this enterprise, and they all furnishing themselves with hatchets for the purpose, they struck such home-blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors that ere they could any of them struggle into any effectual resistance at the feet of those poor prisoners,” They bowed, they fell, they lay down; at their feet they bowed, they fell where they bowed; there they fell down dead” [Judges 5:27] (“Dustan” 164).

Mather’s text offers a convincing contextualization to Dustan’s infamous escape. He softens his presentation of what may have been seen as an outrageous violation of the female propriety of the time (as exemplified in Rowlandson’s text), by typologically comparing Dustan’s action to that of Jael and Sisera in the Old Testament, and emphasizing Dustan’s motherly motivation. He excuses Dustan’s rebellious attitude and her resorting to violence by stressing her preceding traumatic experience as a mother whose child was savagely assassinated by the Indians: “They [the Indians] dashed out the brain of the infant against the tree” (163). Mather adds further that: “[Dustan] thought she was not forbidden by any law to take away the life of the murderers by whom her child had been butchered” (164). Consequently, Dustan’s daring and somehow dubious behavior—dubious, that is, in view of the moral behavior expected of seventeenth-century Puritan women—is accepted and justified by invoking, as it were, some attenuating circumstances. After all, can Dustan, as a grieved mother, really be blamed for wielding an axe on her brutal and savage oppressors, considering that they were the ones (or belonging to the group of those) who had “butchered” her innocent and defenseless infant?

Although Dustan is absent as a narrator in the text relating to her own experience, she is a sympathetic character and her action is justified by the narrator. The captive’s character appears as the focalizer in the text—a focalizer who witnessed the killing of her own child. It follows that the focalization process in the text is led by a mother left with no option other than that of challenging the good and virtuous female standards of her time. Paradoxically, Dustan’s voice more clearly resonates than both Rowlandson’s and Swarton’s since the narrative voice in the text justifies and legitimizes her challenging behavior—a behavior

which the Puritan society would have considered infamous and reprehensible in other circumstances.<sup>105</sup> So contrary to the other two, Dustan does not feature as a narrator; the male author (Mather) who retells her ordeal clearly sympathizes with her and represents her position.

Conversely, the specific female viewpoint is largely absent from Swarton's first-person narration although she speaks in her own voice. Comparing Swarton's narrative with Rowlandson's, in "My Outward Man: the Curious Case of Hannah Swarton," Carroll Lorrayne writes:

If Mary Rowlandson tries in her narrative to recuperate her social 'credit' by publishing her sufferings, the Swarton text never addresses the anxieties Rowlandson displays, especially about returning to Puritan society. This is because Hannah Swarton's 'credit' is identical with her text, both invented by Cotton Mather. He simultaneously constructs a reliable, reputable witness and her narrative, one 'instrument' in the conflated Matherian sense of agent and document. The fiction of her authorship succeeds because the actual Hannah Swarton is a social nonentity and her experiences produce a tale of humiliation and deliverance that dramatizes the lessons of the sermon. (53)

The relative prominence given to any identifiably female point of view in the narratives under consideration does not necessarily hinge on the gender of the narrator.

Although she abstained from violence, Rowlandson is no less outspoken when it comes to dealing with the grief she felt about the loss of her infant and the dispersal of her family. The form of the revenge she took may be read in her exhibiting pointed indifference and even open satisfaction after her mistress lost her baby:

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<sup>105</sup> Mather is faced with the challenge of justifying a violent act on the part of the former captive while also having to deal with a traumatic criminal precedent in Dustan's family. Carrol Lorrayne, for instance writes: "For those in the congregation who recall the trial of 1693, the line reverberates with the fate of Duston's sister Elizabeth Emerson, who was executed for killing her illegitimate infant. Mather's personal connection to Emerson is noteworthy because he not only preached the sermon on her execution day, but he later published that sermon with 'a pathetic Instrument' 'obtained from the young Woman.' Although one was punished and the other praised, the significant characteristic shared by the sisters is a capacity for violence, indeed, murder" (56).

My mistress's papoose was sick, and it died that night, and *there was one benefit in it* that there was more room. [...]. I confess I could not much condole with them. Many sorrowful days I had in this place, often getting alone 'like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove, mine eyes fail with looking upward. Oh, Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me' Isa.38:14. (55-56, emphasis mine)

Rowlandson expresses a resentful attitude that comes across sarcastically in reducing the loss of her mistress's infant to a material interest of making more room for herself. Although she does not explicitly admit it, she seemingly believes in some kind of providential revenge making her mistress suffer the same ordeal of a child's loss that Rowlandson herself had suffered. Once again, although Rowlandson openly describes her grief as a mother and the satisfaction she felt when the "savages" who caused her suffering were eventually made to face similar ordeals, her revengeful maternal narrative voice still remains within the scope of providential logic, an approach well appreciated by the prefacer who chose to emphasize it in the interest of his own editorial purposes.

Although Hannah Swarton's family was killed or dispersed as well,<sup>106</sup> the motherly aspect is completely absent from her captivity narrative. Swarton's reaction to her son's death was totally different from Dustan's and Rowlandson's. Whereas Rowlandson described her grief and sorrow, and Dustan justified the violent attack against her captors, Swarton, for her part, remained strong, unshakable, and demonstrated that, if anything, her faith even increased in response to the tragedy. Her grief as a wife and mother turned into a hope for her loved ones' salvation: "I hoped, though the enemy had barbarously killed his body, yet that the Lord had pardoned his sins and that his soul was safe" (Mather, "Swarton" 151). Swarton's narrative voice completely neglects her motherly mourning and stresses instead the Puritan religious values of eternal salvation and the dangers posed by exposure to the Catholic religion. The narrative voice is

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<sup>106</sup>Swarton's husband and one of her children were killed by the Indians; two other children could never be found.



largely subordinated to the author's (Mather's) own agenda of warning his readers against the perceived papist threat.<sup>107</sup>

### **2.3. Political and Religious Conflicts—The Rise of Anti-Catholic Sentiment**

Swarton's narrative serves as an appropriate transition from a specific approach based on the issue of motherhood, which plays an important role in assessing the degree of authenticity of women's captivity narratives, to a broader topic, present in many captivity narratives, namely that of anti-Catholicism that serves a consistent motive in most Puritan (mainly men's) narratives of the time. While the motherhood issue may be considered a filter through which some aspects of the Indian voice find their way into women's captivity narratives, the presence of anti-Catholic discourse in most narratives in the present selection of narratives sets the tone of the political and religious subtext. The underlying message provides the ideological prism through which the whole narrative was intended to be read, and similarly controls the Indian voice.

#### **2.3.1. *Female Narrative Subject to Anti-Catholic Propaganda***

Before embarking on a discussion of the pro-Catholic pronouncements attributed to the Indians in the second part of this study, I shall first examine how the issue of Catholicism is presented in the different narratives and how the above-mentioned authority behind the narrative voice deliberately emphasizes the anti-Catholic discourse, first in the already discussed narratives of Rowlandson and Swarton,

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<sup>107</sup> The potential spreading of French Catholicism was a current issue at the time of King William's War, and the ministerial elite were very vocal about it.

and later on in a larger corpus of narratives including those relating to lesser known Puritan women and some narratives relating to male captives.

By controlling and manipulating Swarton's narrative voice in order to accentuate the propagandistic anti-Catholic arguments, Cotton Mather, who was a fervent advocate of the Christianization of the Indians,<sup>108</sup> deplors his fellow Puritan Congregationalists' inaction or neglect in spreading the "Puritan" gospel. In confrontation with her papist captors, Swarton enlists her Indian mistress: "[She] would say that had the English been as careful to instruct her in our religion as the French were to instruct her in theirs, she might have been of our religion" (150).<sup>109</sup> This passage places direct blame on a perceived lack of deliberate and decisive action by some of the Puritan community to Christianize the Indians and emphasizes the lead taken by French Catholics in winning over a significant number of Indians to their own faith. These remarks can therefore be seen as a political settling of scores in the top echelons of the political Puritan elite.

Swarton's narrative voice does not only focus on issues of interest to the political and religious elite of the time at the expense of the moral and psychological aspects of her captivity, but also shows great expertise in Biblical commentary. Her description of the workings of her faith in actively resisting Catholicism is so elaborate and well supported by scriptural quotations that one must assume a significant degree of ministerial tampering with the ex-captive's narration. This may be seen in the following passage concerning the respective pros and cons of Catholicism and Protestantism in a debate involving some French colonists and praying Indians. The argument is over whether Man's relation to God is mediated by angels (Catholic position) or by Christ alone (Protestant position):

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<sup>108</sup> Cotton Mather pays tribute to John Eliot and his missions among Indians in his *Magnalia* (556).

<sup>109</sup> In *Bonifacius*, Mather deplors that some Indians were converted, as it were, to the "wrong" denomination (i.e., Catholicism) of the Christian faith. He suggests in the appendix that "saving" these Indians is a lost cause now that the French have succeeded in indoctrinating them: "At present, we can do nothing for those bloody savages in the Eastern parts, who have been taught by the French priest, that the Virgin Mary was a French lady, and that our great saviour was a Frenchman, and that the English murdered Him, and that He rose from the dead, and is taken up to the heavens, but that all that would recommend themselves to His favor, must revenge His quarrel on the English people" (156).

For their praying to angels they brought the history of the angel that was sent to the Virgin Mary in the first of Luke. I answered them from Rev. 19:10 and 22:9. They brought Exod. 17:11 of Israel's prevailing while Moses held up his hands. I told them we must come to God only by Christ, John 6:37, 44. For purgatory they brought Matthew 5:25. I told them to agree with God while here on earth was to agree with our adversary in the way, and if we did not, we should be cast into hell and should not come until we paid the utmost farthing, which could never be paid. But it's bootless for me, a poor woman, to acquaint the world with what arguments I used if I could now remember them, and many of them are slipped out of my memory. (Mather, "Swarton" 154)

The debate is worthy of a minister in that it consists in defending one's arguments by citing scriptural references as evidence to show which of the two religious paths is more adequate. Although one may assume that Swarton perfectly mastered Scripture, one would expect her, in her role as an implied narrator who underwent the ordeal of captivity, to connect her scriptural argument with her personal experience as a captive relying on Providence to secure her release from her Indian abductors. Instead she uses the Bible as a weapon against another target (French Catholics). The logical purpose, which is expected to express itself through the narrative voice, is blurred by a superimposed message most probably stemming from the author/publisher Cotton Mather.

In most of the captivity accounts related by Cotton Mather in *Magnalia*, the captives are taken to Canada. Such is the case of Sarah Gerish, abducted by the Indians in 1689, who come to live with a Catholic family in Quebec: "But then the lady intendant sent her to the nunnery, where she was comfortably provided for; and it was the design, as was said, for to have brought her up in the Romish religion [...]" (Cotton Mather, "Gerish" 70). The most striking similarity in Swarton's and Gerish's narratives is the double captivity experience they went through, first at the hands of the Indians then among the "Romish" Canadian. The former is presented as a physical captivity, the latter as a moral form of captivity. The physical hardships endured in Indian captivity gives way to a more significant form of captivity of the soul, as it were. This aspect is seen both in Gerish and in the following passage of Swarton's narrative:

[I] found the French very kind to me, giving me beef and pork and bread which I had been without near nine months before so that now I found a great change to diet. [...]. I signified as well as I could to make the French woman understand that I desired to stay by her fire that night. Whereupon she laid a good bed on the floor and good coverings for me, and there I lodged comfortably. (152)

There is here an obvious distinction and opposition between physical and moral hardship. The reader is taken from a depiction of the actual physical detention of the former captives at the hands of the “savage” with all the implied ordeals to a description of more subtle forms of imprisonment for the soul at the mercy of the “wrong” Christians, i.e., the Catholics. At this point of the captivity, physical suffering is traded for material temptations that are able to lead the soul astray.

Moreover, the motif of comfort accompanying this indirect form of captivity makes even more sense when comparing Gerish’s and Swarton’s on the one hand, and Rowlandson’s, on the other. Although the threat emanating from Catholics was less eminent during King Philip’s War (1675-1676) than during and after King Williams’ War (1689-1697), Rowlandson briefly refers to the possibility for Indian captives to be sold to the French:

He [my son] told me also, that awhile before, his master (together with other Indians) were going to the French for powder; but by the way the Mohawks met with them, and killed four of their company, which made the rest turn back again, *for it might have been worse with him, had he been sold to the French, than it proved to be in his remaining with the Indians.* (54, my emphasis)

Although she fails to corroborate her assertion with supporting facts, Rowlandson may be referring to the peril of Catholicism. She anticipates the potential danger of losing the Puritan faith to Catholicism as a result of proselytizing by the French, a threat causing apprehension among the Puritan religious elite, as can be seen in many published captivity narratives.

Rowlandson’s failure to justify her assessment that the ordeal of being forced to mingle with the French was even worse than captivity among the Indians means that she surpasses Gerish and Swarton in her rejection of the French

although the Catholic threat plays a lesser role in her narrative. Swarton and Gerish admit to at least initially enjoying the return to more comfortable and pleasing physical circumstances and living conditions, although they also report efforts by the French to convert them to Catholicism. Rowlandson, on the other hand, only admits to comfort of a spiritual nature, of reading the Bible: “I repaired under these thoughts to my Bible (*my great comfort in that time*) and that Scripture came to my hand, ‘Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee’ (Psalm 55.22)” (49). She repeats this point later in her narrative:

Being got out of her sight, I had time and liberty again to look into my Bible; which was my guide by day, and my pillow by night Now that comfortable Scripture presented itself to me, ‘For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee (Isaiah 54.7). Thus the Lord carried me along from one time to another, and made good to me this precious promise, and many others. (55)

Offering further proof of such consolation, Rowlandson repeatedly quotes from her copy of the Bible in her narrative. In “Telling it Slant: The Testimony of Mary Short,” Janice Knight, for instance, writes that Rowlandson “turns to the Bible both as a totemic object and as a narrative voice, making Scripture speak for her when she cannot speak herself” (54). Rowlandson’s text therefore is in stark opposition to both Swarton’s and Gerrish’s. The two later are confronted to the dilemma of enjoying physical comfort and suffering from the spiritual “poison” of the perceived threat of being tempted away from their own faith under Jesuit pressure. Rowlandson, however, offers a self-diagnosis in her own narrative that contrasts physical ordeal and spiritual comfort.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to its therapeutic dimension in Rowlandson’s narrative, Scripture also plays a significant role in the narrative structure of the text as Biblical references are often used congregationally and personally. Unlike Swarton, who uses the Bible as a theological weapon to win her religious arguments against the Catholics, Rowlandson’s narrative structure suggests that the arguments she

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<sup>110</sup> The role of Scripture to help overcome the traumatic ordeal of captivity will be discussed in a later chapter of this study.

derives from Scripture are of a different nature: one that lends her support in her struggle against her inner self. Outwardly she faces the ordeal of captivity in its physical and sensorial manifestations, while spiritual issues tear on her inner being as she struggles with cultural and religious ideals regarding redemption and salvation. This “conversation” between her outer experience and her inner self takes place in two different ways. Andrew Newman writes: “The relationship between Rowlandson’s literate knowledge and her experience, however, was not simply one-way: if she viewed her experience through Scripture, she also read Scripture in light of her experience” (34). Her prose thus shifts from testimonies and observations to her own psychological condition, and then to spiritual reassurance in her interpretation of her condition.

As far as the form of the narrative is concerned, Derounian-Stodola notes a split in Rowlandson’s narrative voice:

To use my own terms, empirical narration (the ‘colloquial’ style) defines the author’s role as participant, while rhetorical narration (the ‘biblical’ style) defines her role as interpreter and commentator. The split in Rowlandson’s narrative between the participant and the commentator voices is very clear. I believe, however, that the narrative’s duality arises not merely from this contrast between participant and observer, but additionally from a clash of codes between Rowlandson’s psychological and religious interpretations of her experience. (“Puritan Orthodoxy...” 83)

Given the subordinate status of women at the time, most scholars would argue that the scriptural voice is attributable to a third party authority. Many scholars suggest that in most captivity narratives, ministerial editors have been instrumental in weaving the scriptural component into the structure of the publication. Seeking comfort in God in times of hardship is not specific to the ministerial elite, but the well-structured spiritual arguments point to the implicit presence of a well-educated authority behind the narrative voice.

Although the existence of a ministerial agency behind the narrative voice is often taken for granted by captivity narrative scholars, especially in narratives by

or about women,<sup>111</sup> this may not be true regarding Rowlandson's narrative. Unlike Swarton's narratives for which unanimity exists as to the presence of a ministerial voice, in Rowlandson's narrative, the case cannot be made with nearly as much force, if only given her family background. One may admit however that, for all her well-rounded education in theology, Rowlandson is not alone "holding the pen," as it were. The manner in which she handles her narrative and intersperses it with religious material is perfectly in line with the Puritan ideology of the time, so that one may say that a "ministerial voice" pierces through the narrative voice. Besides, the voice of orthodoxy is also present in the preface and in her late husband's last sermon, which was appended to the first publication of Rowlandson's narrative. Yet the question remains to what extent the intervention of the ministerial narrative voice undermines that of the actual former captives, especially when one compares Rowlandson's work to those of the other two main Puritan woman captives, Dustan and Swarton.

As far as authorship and authority behind the narrative voice are concerned, the unquestionably present clerical voice (whether attributed to the Mathers or to other anonymous religious figures) does not conceal or silence Rowlandson's narrative voice nearly as much as it does Swarton's. In other words, Swarton's agency is undermined, as strong family-centered and specifically female values must give way to theological discourse. In Rowlandson's case, on the other hand, the woman's/mother's voice alternates with a strong ministerial discourse distilled through scriptural text and the narrator's interpretation thereof in different captivity contexts. From a structural point of view, one may consider Rowlandson's narrative through the prism of the concepts of empirical and rhetorical voices as defined by Derouinian. The contents expressed through these voices alternatively emphasize the female or the theological point of view. The former is in fact the most distinct narrative female voice in any captivity narrative of the time. The latter may be attributed to the indirect ministerial contribution, as

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<sup>111</sup> I will show further on in this study that also some of the captivity narratives contributed by men were modified for the sake of religious and political orthodoxy.

the holder and transmitter of the Puritan mindset and doctrine provides the framework and the general context to the powerful female voice.

To summarize, I have juxtaposed three different approaches to captivity in three different portrayals by three different former captives, all of whom were Puritan women. These variations may result, in part, from the different times at which the three narratives came into being (there was a time gap of fifteen years between the publication of Rowlandson's narrative prefaced by Increase Mather and Swarton's and Dustan's narratives published by Cotton Mather). Another objective factor is quite simply that these were three different women from three different backgrounds. Still, it is interesting to note that in all three cases, the Mathers indirectly lent their authority to the depiction of three different and, at times, even contradictory female perspectives. The noticeable shift in the tenets of the three narratives suggests differences in the political context and priorities at the respective times of publication.

The captives' roles in the narratives, along with the exclusively traditional values attributed to them (such as motherhood, femininity, submissiveness, and reputation) are only a convenient pretext/subtext serving the purpose of representing the political positions of the respective publishers. While the motherly voice clearly rings true and does probably reflect the core of the captives' own conviction, one should not automatically assume that a shift in female attitudes did indeed take place somewhere between Rowlandson and Dustan and that at least two of the captives effectively began to challenge Puritan patriarchal standards. Rather than assume that there was indeed a shift away from total submissiveness and dependence on men towards partial self-determination or even violent rebellion, I believe that the editorial policy of the Puritans essentially sought to keep alive the image of women as mothers and their predestined role of procreation in accordance with God's command to "increase and multiply."

At the same time, there were serious political and religious debates, such as the Catholic threat during the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the issue of



motherhood and the family-related topics in captivity narratives, all of which tend to fade away in favor of a propagandistic denunciation of policies and religious ideologies and practices in disagreement with the conventional Puritanism of the time. Such internal tussles appear more significantly in men's captivity narratives.

### **2.3.2. *Men's Captivity Narratives—The Rise of Secular Issues***

So now that I have examined some specifically female themes with respect to the notion of authenticity and authority behind the narrative voice, I shall consider how these concepts manifest themselves in captivity narratives by men and about men, and see to what extent gender plays a significant role in influencing the way in which the authors approached the task of writing the narratives.

As women did not have much of a public voice at the time, the male elite had a free hand in interfering with and reshaping the texts attributed to woman captives. Yet I have managed to distinguish in these texts between the male Puritan political and theological discourse in general and specific female issues, such as family and motherhood, which clearly resonate in the above-mentioned women captivity narratives. Are men's captivity narratives less dependent on the influence of the religious and political figures of the time? Are there gender specific male features that differ from those found in women's narratives? To answer these questions, I will analyze three texts dealing with the captivities of Quentin Stockwell, John Gyles and John Williams. Being exclusively Puritan texts, they will serve as a standard of comparison to confirm the existence of a gender-specific element that plays an important role in Puritan discourse in general and in captivity narratives in particular.

When considering captivity narratives by men, one may often notice a general pattern in the introduction very similar to that found in women's captivity narratives regarding the authorship of the text. As with women's narratives, three

forms of the male variety may be listed: anecdotal passages concerning men's captivity that can be found in major works as Mather's *Magnalia*; narratives that are allegedly written by the former captive himself but which scholars suspect were influenced and supported by one or the other of the influential Puritan clans (as in the case of John William's captivity narrative and his links to the Mather family); and finally, narratives written or at least first published by one of the Mathers as Quentin Stockwell's captivity narrative published by Increase Mather.

Paradoxically, the events in Stockwell's narrative are described in a very factual, simplistic manner that, overall exhibits a distinct lack of Puritan piety. In contrast to the narratives relating the captivity of Puritan women, there is no reference to Providence or God's intervention despite the fact that on several occasions the captive narrowly escaped imminent death at the last minute. Yet at no point does he thank God for surviving the many deadly ordeals he experienced. Instead, he relates lucky coincidences which spared his life, as the following passage shows:

Being in this swamp that was miry, I slumped in and fell down; whereupon one of the enemy stepped to me with his hatchet lift up to knock me on the head, supposing that I had been wounded and so unfit for any other travel. I (as it happened) had a pistol by me which, though uncharged, I presented to the Indian who presently stepped back and told me if I would yield I should have no hurt. (80)

In contrast, although physical proximity is almost non-existent between the captors and the former female captives in the women's narratives, Rowlandson and Swarton give thanks to God and Providence when they get out of a dangerous situation. Rowlandson for instance, credits God for her survival: "Oh, I may see the wonderful power of God, that my Spirit did not utterly sink under my affliction: still the Lord upheld me with His gracious and merciful spirit, and we were both alive to see the light of the next morning" (37).

Similarly, Swarton mentions moments of her physical weakness which jeopardizes her life during her captivity: "[...] so that many times I thought I could go no further but must lie down and, if they would kill me, let them kill me. Yet

then the Lord did so renew my strength that I went on still further as my master would have me and held out with them” (149). Stockwell’s narrative was in such contrast to the religiosity of his female contemporaries’ accounts that the publisher, Increase Mather, inserted an interventionist addendum to highlight the narrative’s religious dimension. He starts this comment as follows: “But by being thus sold he was in God’s good time set at liberty and returned to his friends in New England again. Thus far is this poor captive’s relation concerning the changes of Providence which passed over him” (89). There is therefore a significant rhetorical gap between Stockwell’s secular tone in relating his experience of captivity and the markedly Puritan orientation that has so far manifested itself in the present selection of narratives. Increase Mather’s addendum is revealing in two ways: first, Mather’s intervention shows that he did not write the narrative himself and secondly that, although the addendum does testify to a strong will on his part to “standardize” the storyline, he published the narrative as he received it, thereby proving his commitment to authenticity.

Equally absent from the narrative is the criticism directed at Catholicism that one finds in the women’s narratives. Just like Swarton, Stockwell stresses the kindness of the French whom he came across during his captivity. But contrary to Swarton, who thought that she was being tricked into a conversion, Stockwell does not imply that the kindness and material comfort he received from his abductors is intended as a means to make him swap allegiance and become a Catholic.

Another motif framing the religious dimension in many captivity narratives is that of escape, which appears through the motif of predestination in the narrative.<sup>112</sup> Although she complains about the physical pain she endured during her imprisonment, Rowlandson fails to seize the opportunity to flee when it presents itself to her and decides instead “to wait God's time.” She even insists on the pious necessity of awaiting God’s intervention to free the captives from the

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<sup>112</sup> The concept of predestination here is the idea that any event was known to God before it actually happened; thus He alone knows the outcome and the Puritans believe they must trust in His wisdom regardless of the outcome.

ordeal of the wilderness when she dissuades another captive from running away and compels her to put her trust in God:

The woman, viz. goodwife Joslin, told me she should never see me again, and that she could find in her heart to run away. I wished her not to run away by any means, for we were near thirty miles from any English town, and she very big with child, and had but one week to reckon, and another child in her arms, two years old, and bad rivers there were to go over, and we were feeble, with our poor and coarse entertainment. I had my Bible with me, I pulled it out, and asked her whether she would read. We opened the Bible and lighted on Psalm 27, in which Psalm we especially took notice of that, ver. ult., 'Wait on the Lord, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart, wait I say on the Lord.' (41)

I have earlier explained how motherly grief pushed Dustan to kill her captors and escape, an attitude contrasting with Rowlandson's apparent submissiveness toward her misfortune. Dustan's successful escape was also attributed to predestination. The Puritan readership believed that the favorable outcome in Dustan's case had been planned by Providence as it allowed punishing the "barbarous heathen" and rescuing the grieved mother. The theme of escape is frequently encountered in the narratives, but whether it actually takes place (as in Dustan's violent action) or remains in the background in favor of a patient wait-and-see attitude, both outcomes are condoned and seen as propagandistically expedient from the Puritan point of view. In both cases, the co-text and context of the narrative allow the reader to see implicit ministerial consent.

Stockwell's attitude in this respect differs quite significantly from both Dustan's and Rowlandson's. He writes:

The Indians being weary with that dance, lay down to sleep and slept soundly. The English were all loose; then I went out and brought in wood and mended the fire and made a noise on purpose, but none awakened. I thought if any of the English would wake we might kill them all sleeping. I removed out of the way all the guns and hatchets, but my heart failing me, I put all things where they were again. (83)

This passage indicates that Stockwell had the same opportunity (and the same thoughts) as Dustan but he failed to act on it. His non-action is difficult to interpret within the Puritan setting in that it does not fit the former male captives' bravery that I will address later in this chapter. Nor does it fit in with the religious submissive values at work in narratives such as Rowlandson's which were very important to the Puritan elite of the time.

Stockwell exudes secular values rather than religious ones. He did not act like Dustan because, as he writes, his heart failed him and not because of any fear of God. In the same way, when another chance to escape presents itself, he writes: "I [...] made no attempt to escape [...], because the enemy was near and the beast was slow and dull" (81). Stockwell thus fails to avail himself of an opportunity to portray himself as a pious man (or a brave one for that matter) since his motive for not acting is the fear of the enemy. In so doing he renounces the temptation of portraying himself as a hero,<sup>113</sup> a status which the Puritan elite would attribute to Hannah Dustan a couple of years later.

I will return to the motif of heroism as significant recovery component in a subsequent section on trauma in captivity narratives. For now, I will show to what extent heroism appears as more of a male rather than a female characteristic. The degree of heroism in captivity narratives is commensurate with the degree of religiosity, which in turn is closely related to the authorship of the narrative. I have shown earlier how Cotton Mather praised Dustan's "heroic" rebellious action and expressed satisfaction at the way the authorities reacted to her behavior:

But cutting off the scalps of the ten wretches, they came off and received fifty pounds from the General Assembly of the

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<sup>113</sup> Here, I use the term "hero" in its general and concrete meaning. In the context of captivity narrative, it usually manifests itself in acts of male bravery by both Puritan and non-Puritan captives, such as resistance to torture, pleading on behalf of weaker fellow captives, enduring moral and physical hardship, etc. Later on, scholars have further refined the concept as the specific characteristics of heroism evolve throughout the history, or rather mythology, of the American frontier. Richard Slotkin, describes the evolution of the image of a Frontier hero: "It was symptomatic of the shift (in New England attitudes, at least) that the captivity narratives no longer preempted the literary marketplace, as they had from 1680 to 1716. After 1725, even the revivalistic preachers turned to narratives of battle for their material, employing accounts of victories and defeats as they had employed the captivities: as a scourge to the back of sinful New England" (181).

province as a recompense of their action, besides which they received many presents of congratulation from their more private friends. But none gave them a greater taste of bounty than Colonel [Francis] Nicholson, the governor of Maryland, who, hearing of their action, sent them a very generous token of his favor. (164)

This example lends support to the assertion that it a Puritan figure of authority gave the narrative the “proper” religious bent in not only defining what was considered to be heroic at the time, but also and more importantly, by allowing a woman to transcend gender values. It also goes without saying that the same authority condemned or legitimated the former captives’ attitude during their captivity. Such a role (authority function) is completely absent in Stockwell’s narrative, with the exception of Increase Mather’s addendum.

Based on the discussion of Rowlandson’s, Swarton’s and Dustan’s narratives (the most prominent Puritan female captives) and Stockwell’s narrative as the one Puritan man whose narrative chronologically coincides with the other three female narratives, it appears that male authority behind the narratives is materialized in the religious dimension of the text relating each single event to Providence. I have shown how Puritan piety comes to the fore in women’s narratives. I have also pointed out that Stockwell’s narrative is more secular and simplistic. Yet although he abstains from intervening in the narrative itself, Increase Mather, the publisher of Stockwell’s book, does reveal his priorities through the addendum. The central reference to religious themes thereby constitutes the common denominator in all narratives whether the publisher’s imprint is seen more openly (as in the women’s narrative) or in a separate addendum (as in Stockwell’s case).

In order to explore other instances of male captivity narrative characteristics, I want to consider two well-known Puritan narratives devoted to the captivity of John Gyles, *Memoirs of Odd Adventures, Strange Deliverances, etc. in the Captivity of John Gyles, Esq., Commander of the Garrison on St. George’s River* (Boston, 1736) and John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive, Returning to the Zion. A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and the Deliverance of M. John Williams, Minister of the Gospel*

(Boston, 1707). Both of these narratives differ from the topical focus of Stockwell and tend to share some Puritanical themes with the women's narratives. Although the first part of Gyles' narrative relates the events as witnessed by a fourteen year old boy, it is not exempt from theological references (absent in Stockwell's) and exhibits a spiritual orientation rather similar to Rowlandson's. John Williams' denunciation of the Catholic pressures he experienced during his captivity also shows parallels to Swarton's captivity account, as he also delivers theological arguments against the "papist" religion.

John Gyles starts his narration by explaining his motivation for writing about his captivity:

These private memoirs were collected from my minutes at the earnest request of my second consort for the use of our family, that we might have a memento ever ready at hand to excite in ourselves gratitude and thankfulness to God and in our offspring a due sense of their dependence of the Sovereign of the universe from the precariousness and vicissitudes of all sublunary enjoyments. In this state and for this end, they have laid by me for some years. [They] at length falling into the hands of some for whose judgment I had a value, I was pressed for a copy to the public. And others, desiring of me to extract particulars from thence which the multiplicity and urgency of my affairs would not admit, I have now determined to suffer their publication. (94)

As Rowlandson does in the title of her narrative and as her prefacer points out as well, Gyles describes his motivation to publish his narrative for the general interest of the Puritan community. Ultimately, it is to demonstrate the greatness of God and the fate He grants His elect.

Gyles, however, differs from Rowlandson in his attention to detail and his descriptions of Indian life, customs, eating habits, etc. I mentioned in the Introduction that Puritan captivity narratives tended to be ethno-centric narratives focusing on the captive's frame of mind and psychological experience. In this respect Gyles' narrative is clearly an exception as he devotes entire sections of his narrative to accounts of Indian rituals, cruelty, fables, etc. Gyles even devotes a

chapter to “A description of Several Creatures Commonly Taken by the Indians on St. John’s River”—a chapter to which Alden Vaughan reacts as follows:

Gyles’ extensive treatment of New England fauna is unusual in a captivity narrative and is perhaps partly explained by the long lapse between Gyles’ release and the writing of his story. Moreover, his employment as a hunter during his years among the French and his subsequent career as an interpreter made him a true frontiersman in contrast to other Puritan captives. (note 35, 116)

The scholarly introduction to the narrative argues that the Puritan elite’s influence on Gyles’ narrative was more a matter of political pressure resulting from the narrator’s post-captivity mission as interpreter and negotiator among Indians and French for the Puritan authorities rather than the result of a theological influence exerted by the likes of the Mathers. In other words, the emphasis on the part of the authority behind the former captive’s narrative voice is a distinctly political one.

The particularity of Gyles’ interest in Indian life and habits does not only translate into political considerations reflecting the former captive’s career after his release, but interestingly enough, steers the narrative away from the religious ethnocentrism of most Puritan captivity narratives, particularly Rowlandson’s. Moreover, although Gyles was sold to the French, he abstains from literary attacks against the “papist” religion, in contrast to other contemporary captives who recorded their own narratives. His only criticism of Catholicism stems from his childhood and what his mother told him about the French and their religion: “When my mother heard the talk of my being sold to a Jesuit, she said to me, ‘Oh my dear child! If it were God’s will, I had rather follow you to your grave, or never see you more in this world than you should be sold to a Jesuit, for a Jesuit will ruin you, body and soul’” (99). When eventually sold to the French near the end of his captivity, he writes: “The word *sold*, and that to a people of that persuasion which my dear mother so detested, and in her last words manifested so great fears of my falling into! The thoughts of these almost broke my heart” (125). Gyles’ innocent, if not careless, attitude toward Catholicism is in stark contrast to the anti-Catholic strain in the captivity narrative by John Williams three decades earlier.



Williams' *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* is an anti-Catholic pamphlet. Whereas most of the captives describe their abduction as a case of being taken away from their home into the wilderness, Williams is worried by the prospect of being taken to "a popish country" (173). Later on in his narrative, he argues that his concerns about the Catholic threat were justified considering the pressure that was put on him to attend Mass both by his "praying Indian" abductors and their French allies.

As in Swarton's narrative, Williams provides two perspectives of the French, noting that they treat the English captive very courteously and provide them with food and shelter, while, at the same time, they represented a real threat because of their bid to impose on him and other Puritan captives their "wrong" religion by taking away their Bibles and forbidding them to pray together: "One of these Jesuits met me at the fort and asked me to go into the church and give God thanks for preserving my life; I told him I would do that in some other place. When the bell rang for evening prayers, he that took me bid me go, but I refused" (183). Similar pressures are reported in Hannah Swarton's narrative when she is taken in by a French family:

Here was a great and comfortable change as to my outward man in my freedom from my former hardships and hardhearted oppressors. But here began a greater snare and trouble to my soul and danger to my inward man. For the Lady, my mistress, the nuns, the priest, the friars, and the rest set upon me with all the strength of argument they could from scripture, as they interpreted it, to persuade me to turn papist. (153)

In addition to the expected surrender to Catholicism in exchange for material comfort, the French, Williams writes, used the "savageness" of their Indian allies to convert the Puritan minister:

The next morning the bell rang for Mass. My master bid me to go to the church. I refused. He threatened me and went away in a rage. At noon the Jesuits sent for me to dine with them, for I eat at their table all the time I was at the fort. And after dinner they told me the Indians would not allow of any of their captives staying in their wigwams whilst they were at church

and were resolved by force and violence to bring us all to church if we would not go without. (184)

Once again, the Puritan attitude towards the French may be defined by racial affinity and anti-Catholicism. Williams's passage elicits the French insistence on turning the Puritan captives away from their religion, which may be understood as both moral and spiritual violence toward the captives. The physical violence, however, is exclusively attributed to the Indian "savages" despite the fact that it serves the French interest.

Although anti-Catholicism is very present in both Swarton's and Williams' narratives, strangely enough, the average Puritan woman (Swarton) puts more theology and draws more on Scriptures in passages dealing with the debates she had with the "praying Indians" and the French Catholics than the Puritan minister John Williams, whose accounts come across much more secular. Generally speaking, one may assert that anti-Catholicism in captivity narratives is partly attributable to the inclusion of a clerical viewpoint in the narrative. For example, the anti-Catholic slant in Swarton's narrative was largely attributable to the influence of Cotton Mather as the publisher of the narrative. Within this perspective, Williams' narrative seems to be more authentic despite the fact that the former captive was himself a Puritan minister, a fact that implies the existence of a ministerial hidden agenda which may be compared to that of the Mathers.

The stronger feel of authenticity in Williams's narrative stems from the author's consistency—he does not depart from the basic storyline (the context of captivity) even when addressing theological issues. His resistance to attempts to coerce him into the Catholic camp has nothing of the theology-based arguments put forward by Swarton. Instead he uses the inner resources of Puritan faith in his determination not to succumb to the threats of either the French or the Indians. While Swarton's passage regarding Catholicism reminds one of a ministerial sermon and an interruption of the captivity narrative primary ordeal, Williams's narrative techniques remain focused on the captivity narrative themes evidenced in the author's and former captive's resistance to the moral, spiritual and physical

violence to which he is subjected. Although the ministerial tone is present in both narratives, the way it is presented and built into the narrative as a whole differs, with Williams showing more restraint and control in his treatment of religious issues.

Consequently the ministerial imprint in Swarton must be seen mainly as that of the publisher Cotton Mather whereas such manifestations in Williams's script are clearly attributable to the former captive himself. Besides, Williams's narrative may also be understood within the complex political context at the time of its publication. With the exception of Stockwell's narrative, the Puritan religious set-up of captivity episodes which one identifies in Williams' narrative is very similar to what one finds in some of the other narratives influenced by the Mathers, notably Rowlandson's and Swarton's.

I was able to identify distinct similarities between John Williams and the Mathers in the chapter devoted to the Mathers' literary hegemony. Williams' political orientation, however, seemingly differs from that of the Mathers especially in regard to general political orientations and affiliations on the local political stage. This is reflected, for instance, in their respective positions on the person of the then governor of Massachusetts, Joseph Dudley. Although Williams' narrative per se does not make direct political statements, its dedication is full of praise for Joseph Dudley. Concurrently, Cotton Mather published *The Deplorable State of New-England* (1707) denouncing the corruption of the very same governor. The contents of Mather's work are summarized in the full title of its first publication:

A memorial of the present deplorable states of New-England, with the many disadvantages it lyes under, by the male-administration of their present Governour, Joseph Dudley, Esq. and his son Paul, &c. Together with the several affidavits of people of worth, relating to several of the said Governour's mercenary and illegal proceedings, but particularly his private treacherous correspondence with Her Majesty's enemies the French and Indians. To which is added, a faithful, but melancholy account of several barbarities lately committed upon Her Majesty's subjects, by the said French and Indians, in the East and West parts of New-England. Faithfully digested from the several original letters, papers, and MSS.

The title of Mather's work clearly contrasts with the following passage taken from a short dedication preceding Williams's captivity narrative, also published in 1707:

And I cannot, Sir, but think it most agreeable to my duty to God our supreme redeemer, to mention your Excellency's name with honor since heaven honored you as the prime instrument in returning our captivity. Sure I am [that] the laws of justice and gratitude, which are the laws of God, do challenge from us the most public acknowledgment of your uncommon sympathy with us, your children, in our bonds expressed in all endearing methods of parental care and tenderness. All your people are cherished under your wings, happy in your government, and are obliged to bless God for you. And among your people those that are immediately exposed to the outrages of the enemy have peculiarly felt refreshment from the benign influence of your wise and tender conduct and are under the most sensible engagements to acknowledge your Excellency, under God, as the breath of their nostrils. (170)

The juxtaposition of these two opposing passages shows the lack of Mather's influence on William's text, at least from the political point of view. The common ground between the narratives (William's and the women's) consists solely in the Puritan religious piety which pervades all of them, a truly "ministerial" imprint. While the religious element in Rowlandson's text may be attributed to her upbringing in a privileged Puritan family, her marriage to a Puritan minister, and her husband's friendship with the Mathers, Swarton's high-level scriptural narrative style bears witness to the intervention of her publisher Cotton Mather. In the case of John Williams, one may see no such "Matherian" pressure. While offering his testimony with a ministerial tone obviously similar to the Mathers', Williams shows no hesitation whatsoever in publicly contradicting the highly influential Cotton Mather. This political difference presents a stark contrast to the evident amicability shared by the two men a year earlier, when Mather published Williams's *Good fetch'd out of evil*, praising Williams in the introduction as "the Worthy Minister of that Pious and Holy Elect" (3). Considering all this, to what extent did the varying contemporary political conflicts influence Puritan discursive treatment of the captivity motif?

Demonstrably, Increase Mather was involved in Rowlandson's narrative by virtue of his dual role as prefacer and friend of her husband. Critics, however, often fail to identify any specific name and often only cite the general influence of the male intellectual establishment. Accordingly, there are conflicting views among critics regarding the degree of alleged male influence in Rowlandson's text as well as about the identity of those men who are believed to have played a role in the creation of the narratives. Two Rowlandson scholars, Teresa Toulouse and Anne Kusener Nelsen, for instance, strangely place Rowlandson in two rival clans. Toulouse interprets Rowlandson's text as a pro-Matherian approach to the political situation of the time:

Given her connection to the Mather group, the support for her text should be read as part of a strategy that involved not simply a well-worn interpretation of the Indian War, now six years past, but a reading of that war in relation to current unstable contexts as well. (931-32)

Nelsen conversely argues that Rowlandson was a helpful informant of William Hubbard:

Hubbard had been the first to give the Rowlandsons authoritative news that their son Joseph had been redeemed, and he also appears to have been on friendly terms with Thomas Shepard of Charlestown, with whom the Rowlandsons stayed for some time after Mrs. Rowlandson's redemption. Hubbard appears to have obtained more information from Mrs. Rowlandson than did any of the other narrators. (627)

Knowing that Hubbard was Increase Mather's fervent political opponent, it is paradoxical to see critics associate the same text with different male authorities of the time. Thus Toulouse and Nelsen see Rowlandson's text as an instrument in the manipulative hands of two separate influential Puritan ministers. I do not wish to side with one position or the other (Toulouse's over Nelsen's or vice-versa) in positioning Rowlandson's political partisanship. Instead, I would insist that, based on both Rowlandson's and William's obscure political affiliations, the Puritan political scene of the time was a source of further inconsistencies which limit the

contextualization of the present corpus of narratives not only regarding authority and the authorship but also in the topical analyses of each narrative.

The influence of the religious and political elite on the publication and the very content of the narratives is undeniably a very complex issue often fraught with inconsistencies since, as I have asserted, many interrelated factors must be brought to consideration. The consideration of gender issues has helped identify the role of men in using the narratives (and thereby also get closer to the real life experience of the former woman captives) and to understand how they could make indirect comments in keeping with the predominant Puritan ideology they (the publishers, editors, etc.) personified. The picture needs, however, to be nuanced. I have argued that the treatment of some gender-specific themes such as motherhood occasionally destabilizes the male dominance in the discourse to the point of creating inconsistencies. This happens, for example, when representatives of the male elite are forced to find justifications for completely opposite behaviors on the part of the female captives. The one captive's submissive attitude in accepting her fate is valued as submitting to God's will while another's violent rebellion (which by the same token could have been interpreted as an escape from God's deliberate plan to test the captive's faith) is justified on account of the poor hostage's status as a bereaved mother.

Another important conclusion with regard to the influence of the Puritan elite on the narratives is that it is necessary to distinguish between religion and politics. While captivity narratives clearly converge on religiosity irrespective of the identities of those involved (author, publisher, editor), this does not preclude the presence in the text of more or less subtle references to political disagreements within the Puritan elite. However disguised these references may be, diligent attention to the contents of the various appendixes, dedications, prefaces, or any other writings surrounding the captivity narrative per se can help the modern reader decipher the political differences that prevailed in the Puritan community. Conversely, despite knowing the precise political affiliation of the actors of the

captivity narrative genre, the modern reader might encounter some inconsistencies that make contextualization of the texts even harder.

## **2.4. Authenticity and the Language of Subjectivity**

So far, I have explored the aspect of authenticity linked to notions of authorship and authority, particularly the likes of the Mathers, who wrote or published captivity narratives on behalf of former captives. I shall now turn my attention to the epistemologically fraught question of narrative consistency and take an interest in the narratological presentation of the former captive's daily experiences in captivity by interrogating the narratives' purported veracity and the fidelity of their chronicling.

The autobiographical act in captivity narratives suggests the existence of multiple forms of subjectivity; therefore when addressing the issue of truthfulness, it is necessary to clarify whether one considers "truth" with respect to the events as they actually occurred or with respect to what the narrator has established as "truth" in the narrative. In "Truth and Authenticity in Narrative," Lubomír Doležel defines the latter as follows: "The concept of truth and the criteria of truth in fictional narratives are subordinated to the concept of authentication. Fictional truth is strictly 'truth in/of' the constructed narrative world and its criterion is agreement or disagreement with authenticated narrative facts" (15). In the present chapter, I will take a close look at both concepts of truth. I shall start with the former by assessing the factual dimension of the narrated events. I therefore shall assess narrative credibility through a double analytical lens which takes into consideration both the personal conditions and the psychological state of the author. To this effect, I will rely on Smith's constitutive processes of autobiographical subjectivity in order to discuss the various deliberate or accidental misinterpretations resulting from unconscious bias and other

involuntary elements among which can be listed: presuppositions, propaganda, and trauma.

#### **2.4.1.      *Presupposition and Propaganda***

Presupposition, for example, can be seen at the very beginning of Rowlandson's narrative when she writes: "Now is the dreadful hour come that I *have often heard of* (in time of war, as it was the case of others), but now mine eyes see it" (34, emphasis mine). In this passage, Rowlandson admits earlier exposure to second-hand allegations of cruel behavior and actions on the part of the Indians. Although she positions herself from now on as an eye-witness, her introductory words fuel suspicions that similar presuppositions are being used elsewhere in the narrative, an assumption which seriously challenges the representation of an exclusively testimonial nature of the narrative: the reader may assume that the narrator's attitude is influenced to some extent by a number of secondary sources. To be certain, pre-existing testimonies, rumors, and even propaganda about Indians and their behavior all served in the sculpting of Rowlandson's narrative.

Presupposition is very common in most of the Puritan narratives that I have considered thus far. The narrative lexicological evolution, as seen in Rowlandson, supplies the reader with secondhand information about the abductors before launching into the details of their own captivity experiences. John Williams, for instance, had been warned that his abductors entertained close links with the Jesuits, which gave him reason to fear that they might attempt to convert him to Catholicism ("turn him into a papist"). Stockwell, for his part, witnessed a quarrel between members of different Indian groups to decide which of them should own him and when the fight was over, and he was told that he had "fallen into the hands of the very worst of all the company" (81). Such passages in the opening chapters of the narratives set the tone of the underlying theme of Indian cruelty towards the captives throughout the narrative. While the fears often tend to materialize in the



men's captivity narratives,<sup>114</sup> one may question their validity, at least to some extent, with regard to Rowlandson's portrayal of her experience.

Similar features can be detected in other narratives. In John Gyles's narrative, presupposition lies in his representation of the Papist as a child: "I was very young and had heard much of the Papists torturing the Protestants" (99). I have previously demonstrated that Gyles' attitude toward the Jesuits throughout his narrative is influenced by his childhood memory of his mother's disdain for them.<sup>115</sup> Such attitudes are even more obvious in the narratives published by the Mathers, who provide the same ministerial condemnation of the "savages" in either the introductions to their narratives or in the general contextualization and orientation of the texts.

John Williams put a Puritan slant on his narrative by describing his captivity memories as follows:

To preserve the memory of these, it has been thought advisable to publish a short account of some of those signal appearances of divine power and goodness for hoping it may serve to excite the praise, faith, and hope of all that love God, and may peculiarly serve to cherish a grateful spirit, and to render the impression of God's mighty works indelible on my heart, and on those that with me have seen the wonders of the Lord and tasted of His salvation. (170)

Here again, the act of memory seems to be made to serve ideological ends: in the case at hand, Williams' key motivation in publishing his narrative is to bolster the existing Puritan conception of captivity among the Indians. The Indians are sometimes presented as the incarnation of the Devil and sometimes as the agents of God. As God is omnipotent, the Devil is automatically relegated to a function/instrument of God's plan. Thus even if the Indians stand for the Devil, they are still part of Divine power. This ambivalence is one of the many characteristics of Puritan captivity narratives and reveals above all the Puritans'

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<sup>114</sup> Williams was confronted with the Jesuits' religious pressures; Stockwell and Gyles experienced and witnessed violent rituals and torture scenes.

<sup>115</sup> See Gyles p. 36.

hidden agenda—the wish to use captivity narratives as a propagandistic tool targeted at the masses.

The term “propaganda” is used here in both its historical and its modern sense. First and foremost, the driving force behind publishing such memoirs was the wish to share the captivity experience with a very large audience. The goal pursued by Puritan authors and publishers was to spread the narratives beyond the limited circle of family and friend and address a larger group of readers as announced on Rowlandson’s title page “Commended by her, to all that desire to know the lords doings to, and dealings with her. Especially to her dear children and relations” (167). Within the same Puritan framework, Gyles writes in the Introduction to his captivity narrative:

These private memoirs were collected from my minutes at the earnest request of my second consort for the use of our family, that we might have a memento ever ready at hand to excite in ourselves gratitude and thankfulness to God [...]. In this state and for this end, they have led by me for some years. [They] at length falling into *the hands of some for those whose judgment I had a value, I was pressed for a copy for the Public*. And others, desiring of me to extract particulars from thence which the multiplicity and urgency of my affairs would not admit, I have now determined to suffer their publication. (94, emphasis mine)

Outside pressure on the former captive to relate his or her experience to the public is clearly demonstrated in Gyles’ passage. It takes a different form in the narratives published by the Mathers. In addition to the general aim of reaching the public, Increase and Cotton deliberately enriched the narratives they published with a wealth of contextual information for specific apparent or hidden agendas.

Thus most of the narratives published by the Mathers are included in the broader framework of more significant texts dealing with a multitude of issues. And because the captivity narrative episodes serve as illustration to support ideological comments, it is easier to make out the motives of the publisher than those of the actual person whose story is told, i.e., the former captive. In Rowlandson’s, Williams’, and Gyles’ narratives, the modern reader has to make a

conscious effort to find clues referring to outside pressure and propaganda—first in the initial meaning of propagating the narrative by sharing the captivity experience with as large a public as possible and then in its second meaning, that of using the narratives as a vehicle to transport a hidden ideological message.<sup>116</sup> In the narratives published by the Mathers, by contrast, it is essentially the surrounding co-text and discourse that constitute the core of the propaganda, regardless of the narrative’s content.

This kind of propaganda seems to have been exclusively addressed to Puritans in that non-Puritans, especially the French Catholics, did not seem as eager to publicize their captivity narratives. Most of the *Jesuit Relations*, for example, which contain a couple of captivity narratives, were written in Latin and were therefore only accessible to the educated elite. In a letter to his religious hierarchy, Father Jogues, for instance, clearly states his intention to limit the audience of his captivity narratives:

Wishing, as I do, to write to your reverence, I hesitate first in which language to address you, for, after such long disuse, almost equally forgetful of both, I find equal difficulty in each. Two reasons, however, induce me to employ the less common idiom. I shall be better able to use the words of Holy Scripture, which have been, at all times, my greatest consolation [...]. *I also wish this letter to be less open to all.* (95, emphasis mine)

Jogues is of course referring to Latin, choosing to restrict the circulation of his writing—including the passages about his captivity experience—to distribution within his own religious group, the Society of Jesus. Surprisingly, the religious message in Jogues’s narrative is very similar to that of Puritans, especially in its description of captivity as a test of faith imposed by God:

The Superior, conscious of the dangers I was exposed to on this journey, which was, however, absolutely necessary for God’s glory, so assigned the task to me, that I might decline it if I

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<sup>116</sup> We consider “propaganda” here in its second meaning as defined by Robert Jackall in *Propaganda*: “Propaganda is the product of intellectual work that is itself highly organized; it aims at persuading large masses of people about the virtues of some organization, cause, or person. And its success or failure depends on how well it captures, expresses, and then rechannels specific existing sentiments” (2).

chose; 'I did not, however, resist; I did not go back;' (Isa. I.5) but willingly and cheerfully accepted this mission imposed upon me by obedience and charity. (96)

Although Jogues's narrative contains as many religious references as any Puritan captivity narrative, and although Jogues's religious interpretation of captivity as a manifestation of God's will is similar to the Puritans', his narrative is presented as a series of personal martyrdoms. From that one may suggest that Jogues and the Catholics in general did not share the Puritans' will to propagate their captivity experience and turn it into a community issue.

Vaughan observes the same attitude in another non-Puritan captivity narrative, by the Quaker Elizabeth Hanson:

Mary Rowlandson and most of the orthodox Puritan captives sought to awaken the whole community, even all New England, with their messages of God's redeeming mercy; Elizabeth Hanson, however, aimed her lessons more directly at the individual reader. (230)

This makes the practice of propaganda specific to Puritans. As far as authenticity is concerned, the Puritans' hidden agenda in going public is one of the elements which undermine the "truthfulness" of the narrative, since adjustments were made to insert the texts into a broader context fit for an ideological interpretation of captivity among the "savages" illustrating the psychological and religious struggle of the Puritan captive.

In other words, the propagandistic interpretation of captivity as shown in the previous chapters (the male elite's interference in women's narratives to spread the Puritan ideological message, the elite's support of publication of the narratives, and the repeated publication of select captive narratives<sup>117</sup> etc.) constitutes a voluntary distortion or embellishment of truth in order to force the story into the mold of the Puritan standards of the time. The former captive's memories are

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<sup>117</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapters, although we have no clues about the first edition of Hannah Swarton's narrative, it was published several times by Cotton Mather; the first version is in his *Decennium Luctuosum*, 1699 and the later one was reprinted in his *Magnalia*, 1702. It was later on also reprinted by Christopher C. Dean (see Vail 188).

filtered through the imperatives set by religious, social, and political expediency within the prevailing Puritan ideology. Various factors, therefore, including the psychological condition of the captives, might have affected the captive's ability to register and memorize facts concerning his/her ordeal during and after captivity. This also accounts for the large number of inconsistencies that I attempt to outline in this study, which have often been attributed to the traumatic experience of captivity.

#### ***2.4.2. Pathological Issues in Captivity Narrative— Trauma and Memory***

Captivity narratives were written retrospectively—often many years passed between the experience and the publication of the narrative. The detailed description of the captives' daily lives includes references to reading since most of the hostages sooner or later gained access to a copy of the Bible, but there is no allusion to writing or note-taking in the narratives. The captives therefore relied on their memory alone to write their own story or to entrust a third person with that task. To what extent can one honestly speak of "truth" when the reconstruction thereof relies on the exercise of necessarily biased memory?

Smith writes: "Remembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present. [...]. Thus, narrated memory is an interpretation of a past that can never be recovered" (16). Then she quotes Daniel L. Schacter: "[M]emories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves" (16). According to these definitions, one may assume that personal narratives such as captivity narratives do not only provide accurate interpretations of the facts but also distort them to some extent. In this chapter, I will emphasize the relationship between trauma and memory as a significant measure of the degree of authenticity of the captivity narratives.

Captivity constitutes one of the most traumatic events an individual may experience. Whether they related their experience themselves or used a third party author, the former captives brought their captivity narratives into existence through a memory process comparable to the one described by Smith as follows:

People suffering the agonies of traumatic memory are haunted by memories that obsessively interrupt a present moment and insist on their presence. These memories may come to the surface of consciousness in fits and fragments, again and again, despite the passing of years [...]. This haunting of memory is entangled with profound crises in people's lives. Crises of a personal sort, such as a sexual assault, or of a political sort, such as state-sponsored torture or imprisonment during war, may be speakable only in the halting fragments of traumatic or obsessive memory. (21)

Most of the Puritan captives were taken hostage by the Indians during the wars that had flared up between the settlers and the Indians. Individual traumas, however, vary from person to person and each captivity case is unique to the individual psyche. Generally speaking, the representation of trauma in captivity narratives shifts from detailed descriptions of physical torture and mutilation suffered mainly by male captives to psychological and emotional disturbances, primarily in the captivity narratives of women. I am therefore first going to identify the narratological symptoms of trauma such as confusion and inconsistencies stemming from isolation, violence, physical torture, etc. I will then examine the curative process experienced by the former captive author, narrator, or just witness.

Most of post-World War II and Holocaust theories of trauma insist on the representation of the psychological ordeal and the limits of language in describing horrific and traumatic situations:

Trauma, from the Greek meaning 'wound,' refers to the self-altering, even self-shattering, experience of violence, injury, and harm. Crucial to the experience of trauma are the difficulties that arise in trying to articulate it. These difficulties are often formulated as crises in speaking and listening: If I don't speak, how can I transform the pain? If I do speak, what are the risks? Indeed, the relation between trauma and

representation, and especially language, is at the center of claims about trauma as a category. The consensus position argues that trauma is beyond language in some crucial way that language not only fails in the face of trauma, but is mocked by it and confronted with its own insufficiency. (Gilmore 233)

About three centuries earlier, Mary Rowlandson also referred to the limit of language in describing the pain she suffered at being abducted from her town:

But now, the next morning, I must turn my back upon the town, and travel with them into the vast and desolate wilderness, I knew not whither. It is not my tongue, or pen, can express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit that I had at this departure. (37)

Rowlandson's text fails, however, to corroborate recent trauma theories in that the language used by the former captive narrator seemingly exaggerates the actual experience. Leaving aside the loss of her child and the separation from her family at the origin of the motherly grief, which undoubtedly constituted a highly tangible traumatic experience, the remainder of her misadventures seem less harsh than she makes it out to be in her narrative.

Rowlandson uses a wealth of qualifiers to describe her abductors: "bloody heathen," "merciless heathen," "savageness and brutishness of this barbarous enemy," "barbarous heathens," "cruel heathen." Although the language may be justified in view of the attack against Lancaster, it may be exaggerated when considering the way Rowlandson was treated by the Indians during her captivity as a whole. Much of the ordeal Rowlandson describes has more to do with the wilderness and the strangeness of the Indian way of life to a white woman than with the "brutishness" of the Indians which Rowlandson emphasizes throughout her narrative. She mainly complains about the long treks through the wilderness and about Indian cooking to which, according to her narrative, she eventually became accustomed.

One of the worst physical confrontations with her abductors is described in the following passage:

As I was sitting once in the wigwam here, Philip's maid came in with the child in her arms, and asked me to give her a piece of my apron, to make a flap for it. I told her I would not. Then my mistress bade me give it, but still I said no. The maid told me if I would not give her a piece, she would tear a piece off it. I told her I would tear her coat then. With that my mistress rises up, and takes up a stick big enough to have killed me, and struck at me with it. But I stepped out, and she struck the stick into the mat of the wigwam. But while she was pulling of it out I ran to the maid and gave her all my apron, and so that storm went over. (53)

The scene reads more like a hot-blooded fit of temper than an actual torture scene of the kind depicted in another captivity narratives. Rowlandson's depiction of the Indian's cruelty and brutality largely remains on the level of generalizations. Although she applies a wealth of metaphors and designations to qualify her abductors and does describe the Indians "rejoicing and triumphing" over the killing of English soldiers, Rowlandson refrains from providing excessively graphic renderings of alleged Indian inhumanity. This is contrary to what one may find in other Puritan and non-Puritan narratives describing scenes of humiliation and mutilation.<sup>118</sup> Rowlandson's choice here may be explained by her desire to preserve herself from humiliation. Breitwieser, for instance, observes: "But whatever satisfaction such conventional representation affords her is tainted by a cost, because the condemnations she levels against the Indians would tend to include her as well" (134). While referring (in general terms) to her abductors as "savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil," Rowlandson does bestow them with some measure of moral decency when it suits her need to preserve her own reputation. Thus she indirectly claims herself worthy to return to her society.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> One may think of Jogues' description of the Indians stripping their enemies naked and cutting of their fingers.

<sup>119</sup> Here, I principally have in mind the following passage at the end of her narratives: "I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and in company, sleeping all sorts together, and yet not one of them ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action" (70). In this particular and arguably problematic passage, Rowlandson insists that the cruelty of her captors has certain steadfast fixed limits. I will come back to this passage from Rowlandson's narrative in the chapter dedicated to the representation of sexuality in Captivity Narratives in the third section of this study.



Another explanation could be that Rowlandson was not subjected to real physical violence because she was/might have been held as a potential ransom captive, as Zabelle seems to believe: “[B]ecause she was a minister’s wife likely to bring a large ransom, she probably observed more violence than she actually experienced” (96). While she did not experience torture or physical abuse, she did experience a measure of trauma—even though not directly hurt herself, she was a witness to the fate of less fortunate captives. Rowlandson could therefore be seen as having suffered what one may call “empathizing trauma”—a phenomenon which Leigh Gilmore, when discussing the authenticity of Rigoberta Manchù’s autobiography, describes as follows:

By expanding her sense of what happened in her life to include things that did not happen to her *as if* they had, and by not acknowledging this imagined transformation, she leaves her autobiography vulnerable to charges of lying because autobiography is a form about which one can pass such a judgment. Yet, at the same time, she elevates her *testimonio* into an expansive sympathetic endeavor in which knowing about violence done to others allows her to imagine herself as the one to whom violence is done, and in which hearing about violence makes her into a witness who then represents herself as having seen the violence. (231)

Another example of violence done to others is described by Rowlandson:

Amongst them also was that poor woman before mentioned, who came to a sad end, as some of the company told me in my travel: she having much grief upon her spirit about her miserable condition, being so near her time, she would be often asking the Indians to let her go home; they not being willing to that, and yet vexed with her importunity, gathered a great company together about her and stripped her naked, and set her in the midst of them, and when they had sung and danced about her (in their hellish manner) as long as they pleased they knocked her on head, and the child in her arms with her. When they had done that they made a fire and put them both into it, and told the other children that were with them that if they attempted to go home, they would serve them in like manner. The children said she did not shed one tear, but prayed all the while. (42)

It is noteworthy that this event was reported to her by third parties, including children. Once again, Rowlandson’s testimony remains superficial. She is not a

direct witness to this particular series of events, and her story at this point comes close to a case of presupposition and conventional description of the “savages” assumed behavior. Based on the “wordiness” and the wealth of unverified details in her description of the ritual and of the victim’s feelings in the passage, one may notice a case of “overstating” in Rowlandson’s depiction of the Indians. This contrasts with one of the telltale symptoms of real trauma—the inexpressibility of grief by means of conventional use of language. I wish by no means to claim that Rowlandson’s captivity experience was painless. Naturally, the loss of family members and her removal into the wilderness must have traumatized her. This much we may take for granted; however, rather than stressing what would have been perfectly justified blame for those objectively traumatic actions, she demonizes her captors by means of overstatements, third party accounts, and presupposition-laden invective.

At the same time, Rowlandson’s substitution of her own experienced traumas with the experiences of others, either those reported to her during her captivity or those she had heard of before her abduction, may be accounted for by invoking recent theoretical considerations of the idea of the unspeakable. This can refer either to conscious or unconscious repression of traumatizing experiences. In *Trauma and Recovery* Judith Herman introduces the term along the following lines:

The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word unspeakable. [...]. The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner which undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy. (1)

In Rowlandson, this set of psychic operations is manifested in the way she copes with the death of her daughter Sarah. Having described at the beginning of the narrative that her child had been injured by an Indian bullet during the attack on

Lancaster, she only mourns her daughter's death some time later, without reminding the reader of the role played by the Indians in this loss. That she does express her grief by focusing on atrocities that are only indirectly related to her has been previously observed.

As for the violence done to other captives, Gyles appears to have directly witnessed a couple of actual tortures. Thus contrary to Rowlandson, his trauma as a witness assumes much more credibility:

This was occasioned by two families of Cape Sable Indians who, having lost some friends by a number of English fishermen, came some hundreds of miles to revenge themselves on the poor captives! They soon came to me and tossed me about till I was almost breathless and then threw me into the ring to my fellow captive and took him out again and repeated their barbarities to him. And then I was hauled out again by three Indians by the hair of my head and held down by it till one beat me on the back and shoulders so long that my breath was almost beat out of my body. And then others put a tomahawk into my hand and ordered me get up and dance and sing Indian, which I performed with the greatest reluctance and in the act seemed resolute to purchase my death by killing two or three of those monsters of cruelty, thinking it impossible to survive their bloody treatment. (106)

In Gyles' case, trauma by affiliation is credible not only because he actually experienced real violence and humiliation as a direct victim of the described torture ritual, but also because of the unpredictable outcome thereof. As opposed to Rowlandson, whose trauma consists in a combination of rumors of atrocities and actual events, Gyles combines experienced atrocities with witnessed scenes. Moreover, the victims in Gyles' passage seem to have been picked at random, which could not but aggravate the anxiety the captive must have experienced and the suffering he underwent even when he was not a direct protagonist/victim as is often the case in the narrative.

In other cases, the captives are bound by the need to take account of one another's situation, as solo attempts to break free might endanger the other's survival. A good example of this can be found in the narrative by another Puritan captive, Quentin Stockwell:

I was left with this Indian who fell sick so that I was fain to carry his gun and hatchet and had opportunity and had thought to have dispatched him and run away, but did not for that the English captives had promised the contrary to one another, because if one should run away that would provoke the Indians and endanger the rest that could not run away. (83)

Contrary to Rowlandson's case, Stockwell's behavior in captivity is not egocentric. His fate is bound to that of his fellow captives, for whom he shows genuine concern and solidarity, therefore avoiding any actions as might jeopardize their lives. By the same logic he is concerned when one of the captives attempts to escape: "And when the news of his escape came, we were all presently called in and bound" (83). The real drama of such circumstances leads to the examination of these scenes as genuinely traumatic experiences while one sees some measure of exaggeration in Rowlandson's narrative.

Just like Rowlandson, Williams insists on the destruction of his family and describes his grief at the loss of his wife as follows:

I asked each of the prisoners as they passed by me after her, and heard that in passing through the above said river, she fell down and was plunged over head and ears in the water; after which she traveled not far, for at the foot of this mountain the cruel and bloodthirsty savages who took her, slew her with his hatchet at one stroke, the tidings of which were very awful; and yet such was the hardheartedness of the adversary that my tears were reckoned to me as a reproach. (176)

Although Williams seems to have been deeply affected by his wife's murder, he did not witness it directly. Like Rowlandson, he relies on a third party testimony to relate what happened to his family members. Similarly, Williams reports many dead captives but describes that his "Negro man" was the "the only dead person [he] either saw at the town or on the way" (174). As in Rowlandson's narrative, there is a noticeable discrepancy between the language used in the narrative and the actual facts.

More important, the spiritual suffering in Williams' narrative becomes more agonizingly concrete when he arrives in Catholic ("papist") Montreal. Like Swarton, Williams emphasizes the contrast between the physical relief and the

spiritual suffering he experiences because of the Jesuit pressures for conversion. This pressure often enveloped the Indians. One can read that the Jesuits warn and even threaten Williams: “And after dinner they told me the Indians would not allow of any of their captives staying in their wigwams whilst they were at church and were resolved by force and violence to bring us all to church if we would not go without” (184). Moreover, in addition to Jesuit religious pressures, like Rowlandson, Williams seems to have suffered more from his family’s dispersion and the long marches in the snowy wilderness than from the kind of Indian cruelty and lack of humanity portrayed in some of the other narratives. The specific nature of trauma, as described in both Rowlandson’s and Williams’s narratives sets these narratives apart from those of other Puritan and non-Puritan captives who experienced different kinds of suffering.

That most of the male former captives experienced harsh physical torture in addition to moral torment proved an experience stronger and deeper than what Rowlandson had to cope with. John Gyles, for instance, describes his father’s death, which he witnessed as a child: “He parted with a cheerful voice but looked very pale by reason of his great loss of blood which boiled out of his shoes. The Indians led him aside. I heard the blows of the hatchet, but neither shriek nor groan” (97). Later on in the narrative, he writes about the consequences of the tragic scene he came to witness: “My mother asked me of my father; I told her that he was killed but could say no more for grief” (98). Gyles thus refers to an obvious physical symptom of trauma consisting in his inability to speak. The context of the passage in which the young man must break the news of his father’s execution to his mother enhances the feel of credibility in the reader’s eyes—a level of credibility much greater than that present in Rowlandson’s superficial description of traumatic states.

But for all the tragic circumstances surrounding such a traumatic event experienced at an early age, Gyles’ writing is at times naïve and almost childish when he addresses his captivity:

At home I had ever seen strangers treated with utmost civility, and, being a stranger, I expected some kind treatment here. But [I] soon found myself deceived, [...] an old grimace-squaw took me by the hand and led me to the ring where the other squaws seized me by the hair of my head and by my hands and feet like so many furies .... (100)

Trauma process in Gyles's case differs significantly from that in Rowlandson's case. While Rowlandson immediately anticipates the worst based on hearsay about the Indians' alleged "brutishness," Gyles, even after having witnessed his own father's execution, remains naïve and does not forecast any inhuman actions on the part of his abductors. Unlike Gyles, who becomes more and more conscious of the Indians' inhumanity, Rowlandson gradually reveals Indian's humanity through an adaptation process (as I will show below).

Gyles became aware of the level of violence exercised by the Indians toward their captives when he witnessed one of their rituals:

And presently one of them was seized by each hand and foot by four Indians who swung him up and let his back with force fall on the hard ground, till they had danced (as they call it) round the whole wigwam which was thirty or forth feet in length. But when they torture a boy, they take him up between two. This is one of their customs of torturing captives. Another is to take up a person by middle with his head downwards and jolt him round till one would think his bowels would shake out of his mouth. Sometimes they will take a captive by the hair of the head and stoop him forward and strike him on the back and shoulder till the blood gush out of his mouth and nose. Sometimes an old shriveled squaw will take up a shovel of hot embers and throw them into a captive's bosom, and if he cry out, the other Indian will laugh and shout and say 'what a brave action our old grandmother has done!' sometimes they torture them with whips, etc. (102)

From this general description of torture rituals, Gyles's narrative moves on more specific cases depicting his own experience of torture. It is interesting to compare the scenes above in Gyles to the petty quarrel about the apron which appears in an earlier mentioned extract from Rowlandson's narrative, one of the most "violent" scenes in her captivity report.

Although Rowlandson's factual description of Indian inhumanity seems very thin compared to Gyles's, her anthology of negative qualifiers such as "savage," "bloody heathen," "barbarous creatures," "merciless enemies," (to mention but a few) is one of the most extensive in this corpus of captivity narratives. Still Rowlandson's captivity lexicology has more to do with Puritan rhetorical consensus than with an accurate description of facts. In this respect, John Williams's narrative is rhetorically very close to Rowlandson's, and both are in stark contrast to Gyles's and (Catholic Father) Jogues's narratives.

Detailed description of Indian life is one of the characteristic features of the *Jesuit Relations* as opposed to the often "ethnocentric" Puritan narratives:

The Jesuit Relations are especially valuable to historians and ethnologists because the authors of the journals that formed the basis of the Relations were well-educated men and trained observers. They were explorers as well as priests, journalists as well as missionaries. Consequently, the folklore, the religion, the mythology, the manners and morals, and even the speech of the Indians have been well preserved in their accounts. (VanDerBeets 3)

As part of the description of Indians and his captivity among them, Jogues presents very detailed traumatic experiences. As a narrator, he does not content himself with over generalizations of Indian cruelty inflicted on the unfortunate captives as is often the case in Puritan narratives, but he provides detailed descriptions of torture rituals, physical violence, and moral humiliations inflicted on him personally as well as on his fellow captives.

Jogues's narrative relates the most spectacular and violent physical abuses to be found in the available corpus. He describes torture rituals designed to humiliate and mutilate the victims. The first torture scene he describes is targeted at another captive, but as a narrator, he mentally puts himself in the victim's position.

It is painful to think, even, of all his terrible sufferings. Their hate was enkindled against all the French, but especially against him, as they knew that one of their bravest had fallen by

his hand in the fight. He was accordingly first stripped naked, all his nails torn out, his very fingers gnawed, and a broadsword driven through his right hand .... (98)

While Puritan descriptions of violence done to fellow captives appear to be somewhat less graphic, Jogues spares no details. He also relates his efforts to aid and rescue the victim. While Rowlandson seems at times to make up stories to strengthen her arguments against the “savages” (thereby relating stories allegedly reported to her by other captives and even children), Jogues vividly describes scenes he has eye-witnessed or endured himself:

When I beheld him, thus bound and naked, I could not contain myself, but, leaving my keepers, I rushed through the midst of the savages who had brought him, embraced him most tenderly, I exhorted him to offer all this to God for himself, and those at whose hands he suffered. They at first looked on in wonder at my proceedings; then, as if recollecting themselves, and gathering all their rage, they fell upon me, and, with their fists, thongs, and a club, beat me until I fell senseless. (98)

This passage demonstrates that Father Jogues concretely shares the suffering of his fellow captive by deliberately approaching the unfortunate man to try and bring consolation. Contrary to Puritan captives in general and Rowlandson in particular, Jogues’s captivity experience is not limited to a distant denunciation of Indian tortures and to the overuse of negative words (“bloody heathen,” “merciless savage,” etc.) to qualify his abductors. He is less harsh in qualifying the Indians, although he witnessed and experienced worse physical and moral mistreatments.

Father Jogues is obviously even more vocal about his moral suffering as this relates directly to his faith and his mission. The narrator seems to take less offense at the mutilation scenes than at the obstacles he encountered as a missionary. For instance, in *Narrative of a Captivity among the Mohawk Indians*, Jogues laments his failure to baptize captive Indians (abducted from another tribe) before their death:

At these tidings my heart was rent with most keen and bitter grief, that I had not seen, consoled or baptized these poor victims [...]. I did not indeed expect more comfort or less pain at the village, where I suffered a continual martyrdom,



compelled to witness before my eyes the horrible cruelties they perpetrate, but my heart could not bear that one should die without my affording him baptism. (48)

Father Jogues's clear set of priorities means that the "missionary" in him contrives to keep the "man's" suffering under control. Faith in God and the strong belief that He watches over the Christian captive is the common curative means on which most of the captives rely to survive the endured trauma. Although some of the survival techniques related in the various narratives in this corpus are to some extent similar, the curative process per se is specific to each of the captives.

### **2.4.3.      *Trauma Survival***

The referencing of men's captivity narratives above permits me to now elicit certain key gender differences in the presentation of captivity traumas. While family-related suffering and motherly grief (seem to) prevail in both Rowlandson's and Dustan's narrative, physical torture and mutilation scenes mark most of the men's captivity narratives. The main exception encountered thus far consists in Swarton's bypassing the motif of motherhood in favor of an anti-Catholic campaign. Although anti-Catholicism was largely exploited by the editorial authorities in captivity narratives, some of the captives' resistance to this wrong and detested form of Christianity helped them survive the various forms of experienced trauma.

Faith in God is by far the most curative factor for trauma in most of the Puritan and non-Puritan captivity narratives. Whenever their faith is at stake, the captives express more open psychological grief than when faced with any other kind of physical or psychological attack, as Father Jogues's narrative well exemplifies. By the same token faith gives them the requisite spiritual comfort to alleviate the ordeal of captivity.

Rowlandson holds on largely thanks to her belief in God's protection: "God was with me in a wonderful manner, carrying me along, and bearing up my spirit, that it did not quite fail" (37). She manages to keep up her spirit with a copy of a Bible she received from an Indian: "I cannot but take notice of the wonderful mercy of God to me in those afflictions, in sending me a Bible" (41). The Bible was indeed a means of coping with the traumas induced by captivity in Rowlandson's narrative. Although she quotes the scriptures even before receiving that Bible, she considers the Good Book a token through which God sends courage and relief to her and to her companions in adversity. Rowlandson shares her Bible with the desperate goodwife Joslin, who wishes to run away:

I had my Bible with me, I pulled it out, and asked her whether she would read. We opened the Bible and lighted on Psalm 27, in which Psalm we especially took notice of that, ver. ult., 'Wait on the Lord, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart, wait I say on the Lord.' (42)

Later in the narrative, she shares her Bible with her son, whom she encountered in the wilderness:

I gave him my Bible, and he lighted upon that comfortable Scripture 'I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened me sore yet he hath not given me over to death' (Psalm 118.17-18). 'Look here, mother,' says he, 'did you read this?' And here I may take occasion to mention one principal ground of my setting forth these lines: even as the psalmist says, to declare the works of the Lord, and His wonderful power in carrying us along, preserving us in the wilderness, while under the enemy's hand, and returning of us in safety again. (46)

Rowlandson seems to have found in her Bible precious guidance and hope. Her ordeal takes a back seat as her thoughts turn to consolation contained in the Scripture's predictions. The mere thought of eventually surviving the wilderness and becoming free again helps and comforts her during her ordeal.

The same hope also helps Gyles refrain from foolhardy violence that might have cost his life if he had attempted to avenge the humiliating ritual he was subjected to: "And then I seemed more resolute than before to destroy some of

them, but a strange and strong impulse that I should return to my own place and people suppressed it as often as such a motion rose in my breast” (107). Gyles’s self-control and “leaving it to God” represents trauma recovery from two different angles: First, the belief in the strength of his faith constitutes the main instrument to remedy trauma; second, he substitutes his unconfessed fear of a physical confrontation with his abductors. Although Gyles was abducted when he was a child, the Puritan imprint is largely present in his narrative, a presence to which the teachings of his mother obviously contributed.

For Gyles, the Bible was made tangible and became an all-important reference, through the agency of his parents’ teachings and advice. Fate had it that he witnessed his father’s last words to him before the father died at the hands of the Indians:

My father replied that he was a dying man, and wanted no favor of [the Indians], but to pray with his children. This being granted him, he recommended us to the protection and blessing of God Almighty; then gave us the best advice, and took his leave for this life, hoping in God that we should meet in a better. (97)

A praying man is the last memory young Gyles has of his Puritan father when he parts with him as a child. As to his mother, he recollects her deep contempt of the Jesuits to whom he refers as the “people of that persuasion which my dear mother *so much detested*, and in her last words manifested so great fears of my falling into!” (125, emphasis mine). This attitude explains while Gyles feels so strongly about being sold to the Jesuits and even recollects it as the most painful experience of his captivity. Paradoxically the same Gyles finds in Father Simon (a French priest among the Indians) a protecting father figure.

Not only does the priest save Gyles’s life when the Indians consider killing him, but he even attempts to comfort him when he mourns the “tragedy” of being sold to the French. Although Father Simon is a Catholic, he is portrayed by the narrator as a protector—an attitude quite opposed to that of Gyles’s mother who was quoted as saying that she would rather see him dead than sold to the Jesuits.

In other words, Gyles's mother indirectly planted the seeds of a fear so deeply rooted that the mere prospect of any contact with the "detested" Jesuits powerfully contributed to create a full-blown trauma: "I could say no more, went into the woods alone, and wept till I could scarce see or stand!" (125). Gyles's most serious form of trauma during his captivity is very different from the various physical and spiritual manifestations of trauma seen thus far. It neither stems from his abductors nor from the Jesuits.

That the agent of trauma recovery is Father Simon calls into question the extreme value judgment that Gyles received from his mother. In practice, the reality of the trauma endured by Gyles is not caused by the Jesuits nor by any form of Indian inhumanity; rather, it takes its inception from the fears instilled by his own mother. After saving his life, Father Simon also tries to give emotional support to the newly sold captive:

When I had given vent to my passion, I rubbed my eyes, endeavoring to hide my grief, but father Simon, perceiving my eyes were swollen, called me aside and bid me not to grieve, for the gentleman, to whom I was sold was of a good humor, that he had formerly bought two captives, both of the Indians who both went home to Boston. *This, in some measure, revived me.* (125, emphasis mine)

Father Simon thus plays down the seriousness of captivity among the French by suggesting that it will end with the prisoner being returned to Puritan Boston, a development quite different from his mother's dire predictions. By so doing Father Simon helps relieve Gyles from a trauma rooted in his mother's prejudices, a trauma the seed of which she—however indirectly and involuntary—had sown in him as a child.

Finding a source of trauma recovery in the enemy and his culture is a frequent theme in many captivity narratives, particularly in Rowlandson's. Although as a narrator Rowlandson tries hard to emphasize the inhumanity of her abductors, inconsistencies suggesting otherwise abound in the narrative. One such inconsistency is the fact that she receives a copy of the Bible from an Indian, a most valuable and comforting gift she manages to keep until the end of her

captivity. Even the “mistress,” whom Rowlandson depicts as the worst protagonist in her narrative, cannot take that Bible away from her:

My mistress, before we went, was gone to the burial of a papoose, and returning, she found me sitting and reading in my Bible; she snatched it hastily out of my hand, and threw it out of doors. I ran out and caught it up, and put it into my pocket, and never let her see it afterward. (50)

The scene is rather similar to the incident of the fight involving Rowlandson, her mistress and another Indian woman over an apron. Here the mistress taking away Rowlandson’s Bible appears as a marginal quarrel in a relationship fraught with hostility rather than a serious attack on her use of the Bible. In other words, Rowlandson received the comforting gift from an Indian, and none of the Indians subsequently made any serious attempts to prevent her from reading the Bible.

Like Rowlandson, most other Puritan captives report they were allowed to have a Bible, indicating that the Indian abductors did not mind the captives praying and reading scripture. John Williams writes: “My master gave me a piece of a Bible; never disturbed me in reading the Scriptures, or in praying to God” (180). But possession of Bibles becomes a problem when the former captives come into contact with the French, as is shown in the following extract by Williams:

Many of my neighbors, also, found that mercy in their journey, to have Bibles, psalm-books, catechisms, and good books put into their hands, with liberty to use them; and yet, after their arrival at Canada, all possible endeavors were used to deprive them of them. Some say their Bibles were demanded by the French priests, and never redelivered to them, to their great grief and sorrow. (180)

Surprisingly enough and rather paradoxically the persecution at the hands of French Catholics and praying Indians helped to alleviate their trauma rather than seriously affect the Puritan believers:

Religious worshiping of saints cannot be defended from, but is forbidden in, the Scriptures; and for fear of losing their disciples, the Romanists keep away from them the Bible, and oblige them to believe as they say they must believe. As though there was no use to be made of our reason above our souls; and

yet the Beroeans were counted noble, for searching the Scriptures to see whether the things preached by St. Paul were so or not. They dare not allow you liberty to speak with your father or others, for fear their errors should be discovered to you. (214)

The Jesuit's attitudes in effect tended to reassure the Puritan captives by enhancing their belief. In this respect, Williams accentuates his individual ability to resist Jesuit pressures while also bemoaning the fate of less resistant fellow Puritans who allowed themselves to be converted to the "wrong" religion:

There is other news that will seem more strange to you: that two Englishwomen, who in their lifetime were dreadfully set against the Catholic religion did on their deathbed embrace it. The one Abigail Tarbet, the other of them Esther Jones, both of them known to you. Abigail Turbet sent for Mr. Meriel the Sabbath before she died. She said (many a time upon several following days) that she committed her soul into his hands, and was ready to do whatever he pleased. She desired him to go to the chapel St. Anne, and there to say a holy mass for her that she might have her sins pardoned and the will of the Lord accomplished upon her. Her cousin, Mrs. Badston, now Stilson, asked her whether she would be willing to do as she said. She answered, 'Yes.' And upon the Tuesday she was taken into the Catholic Church in the presence of John Laland and Madam Grizalem, an Englishwoman, and Mrs. Stilson also, with many French people besides. (205)

The Jesuits' effectiveness in converting some of the Puritans to Catholicism enhances the credibility of narrators like Williams who did not succumb to the often violent methods of coercion. Successful resistance to Catholicism in the face of pressure by the Jesuits elevated those who remained faithful to their Puritan faith to a heroic position.

Heroism in many forms was even a key element in efficient trauma recovery. I have earlier argued that the captives had at times deliberately refrained from assertive action out of solidarity for their fellow hostages and the concern that risky moves such as an attempted escape might draw the abductors' ire on the remaining captives and endanger their lives. In such situations what on the surface might have been construed as fear of retaliation could in fact pass as a paradoxical form of passive and self-restrained heroism out of solidarity.

In this brand of heroism, any form of solidarity is ultimately apt to provide personal gratification and comfort to those who practice it, thereby contributing to the trauma survival process. A specific form of this type of heroism is the renunciation of escape where it might have had a chance to succeed individually but would have entailed possible retaliation on those staying behind. Compassion for other captives that correlates with the witnessing of acts of torture notably comes to the fore in Stockwell's narrative. He even went so far as to plead with the French for their pardon of an Indian they intended to hang. The motive for intervention was to avoid retaliation on his former English captives, who still resided with the Indians:

I spake to the [French] captain by an interpreter and told him I desired him to set the Indian free and told him what he had done for me. He told me he was a rogue and should be hanged. Then I spake more privetly, alleging this reason: *because all the English captives were not come in, if he were hanged, it might fare the worse with them.* (88, emphasis mine)

Stockwell derives psychological satisfaction from an intervention he himself justifies as aiding the preservation of fellow countrymen and, perhaps even more importantly, securing for himself the support of the thankful Indian survivor. In that he was successful, for the Indian declared he would be his friend and protect him.

On this note of friendship in captivity narratives, I want to move from this predominantly male form of trauma recovery, i.e., passive heroism to another approach, namely that of adaptation to life in the wilderness as described in Rowlandson's narrative. The process of "going native" is evidenced by the gap that opens up between the situation and attitudes at the beginning of the narrative and the changes that manifest themselves during the experience. As I have demonstrated earlier, the mere extraction of the white captive from her original environment to the wilderness at the introduction of the narrative constitutes a veritable psychological shock not only because of the considerable bloodshed that typically accompanied such attacks on Puritan settlement but also because of fears breeding on what the abductee had heard of the alleged barbarism of the Indians.

Rowlandson's description of her abductors evolves throughout the narrative. She begins by describing the Indian assault on Lancaster. Her emotion-charged description of the "savages" is informed by preconceived notions she readily shares with the reader to pave the way for expectations of worse things to come. The prior "knowledge" of such "savageness" is willingly presented to prepare the readers for the "inevitable" consequences she must sooner or later experience. In other words, the beginning of the narrative sets the scene, complete with the predicament of the captive and her determination to stand up against the "savages" and oppose their actions and way of life. But the prevailing insight gradually changes as the narrative follows the unfolding of Rowlandson's ordeal, leading, in a first step, to her acceptance that the whole situation is a manifestation of God's will to which she must submit and that she must embrace as her fate:

I had often before this said that if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be killed by them than taken alive, but when it came to the trial my mind changed; their glittering weapons so daunted my spirit, that I chose rather to go along with those (as I may say) ravenous beasts, than that moment to end my days; and that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous captivity, I shall particularly speak of the several removes we had up and down the wilderness. (35)

Here one discovers Rowlandson's disassociation from her earlier conceptions. She also points to the direction she intends to go and how she thinks of dealing with her situation, ultimately turning it to her advantage. Rowlandson's resilience might be seen as part of a rite of initiation on the way to "going native." This is later confirmed when she confesses her acceptance of situations she would never have been able to overcome in the past:

I cannot but take notice how at another time I could not bear to be in the room where any dead person was, but now the case is changed; I must and could lie down by my dead babe, side by side all the night after. I have thought since of the wonderful goodness of God to me in preserving me in the use of my reason and senses in that distressed time, that I did not use wicked and violent means to end my own miserable life. (39)



Again, Rowlandson confesses that, however dramatic, the situation proved more bearable than she could have imagined based on what she had learned from others. Such an admission means that Rowlandson unconsciously begins to depart from her initial negative and horrific description of her abductors.

The only unquestionable element of grief in Rowlandson's narrative is her suffering as a mother whose family was scattered across the wilderness:

I had one child dead, another in the wilderness, I knew not where, the third they would not let me come near to [...]. I could not sit still in this condition, but kept walking from one place to another. And as I was going along, my heart was even overwhelmed with the thoughts of my condition, and that I should have children, and a nation which I knew not, ruled over them. (40)

Paradoxically, Rowlandson does not primarily emphasize her motherly suffering. Although she describes the heartache caused by the disappearance of her child taken into the wilderness, she fails to remind the reader that her abductors had caused her child's death.<sup>120</sup> Although she implies that the conditions of captivity in the wilderness had worsened her baby's illness, she also does justice to the Indians' behavior when her child was about to die, an attitude in clear contradiction with the image of the "the brutish savages" that suffused her narrative from the beginning. Though she alleges that the Indians repeatedly threatened to harm the baby (38), it seems the threat was not meant to be taken at face value, so shortly before the child died. The Indians reportedly acted as follows: "[M]y child being even ready to depart this sorrowful world, they bade me carry it out to another wigwam (I suppose because they would not be troubled with such spectacles)" (39). Rowlandson's abductors seem more sensitive and human than Dustan's who "dashed out the brain of the [captive's] infant against a tree" (163). Overall, Rowlandson's narrative exaggerates the negative so much and at the same time with such weak evidence that the reader paradoxically begins to consider the Indians in a somewhat more favorable light.

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<sup>120</sup>The Indians wounded the child in the attack on Lancaster.

Rowlandson also lowers her guard a bit when it comes to the Indian's cooking habits to which she becomes accustomed after her initial disgust subsides:

The first week of my being among them I hardly ate anything; the second week I found my stomach grow very faint for want of something; and yet it was very hard to get down their filthy trash; but the third week, though I could think how formerly my stomach would turn against this or that, and I could starve and die before I could eat such things, yet they were sweet and savory to my taste. (44)

At first Rowlandson eats Indian food for lack of choice and to remain alive. After a while she even admits to finding the food “savory,” an attitude that surprises the Indians themselves, as when she asks for a helping of horse liver:

I asked him to give me a piece. ‘What,’ says he, ‘can you eat horse liver?’ I told him, I would try, if he would give a piece, which he did, and I laid it on the coals to roast. But before it was half ready they got half of it away from me, so that I was fain to take the rest and eat it as it was, with the blood about my mouth, and yet a savory bit it was to me: ‘For to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.’ (45)

The *going native* process eventually goes beyond her adjustment to different eating habits, as Rowlandson gradually develops a degree of friendship according to her narrative. Rowlandson calls her master “the best friend that I had of an Indian” (51). This marks a significant change from the early sections of the narratives, where the Indians were consistently referred to as “bloody heathens,” “merciless heathens,” “ravenous beasts,” “barbarous creatures,” to name but a few. There are therefore signs of tolerance towards the Indians resulting from a prolonged stay among them.

This process of adaptation and going native seems to have helped the captive survive her ordeal in the wilderness. One of the byproducts of this process can be seen in the following extract, where the narrator relates a meeting with King Philip himself:<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> King Philip, also known as Sagamore is the Sahem of the Narragansett tribe after which the 1676 conflict between the whites and the Indians is named.

After many weary steps we came to Wachusett, where he was: and glad I was to see him. He asked me, when I washed me? I told him not this month. Then he fetched me some water himself, and bid me wash, and gave me the glass to see how I looked; and bid his squaw give me something to eat. (60)

This is one of the most famous scenes to which one may attribute two opposite interpretations, based on non-verbal communication and pragmatics.<sup>122</sup> What to make of the king's gesture—a symbolic indication that the captive had somehow become “one of them” or a sign of exclusion in which the mirror is designed to show the captive that she looks “different” and does not belong there? For the moment, my contention is that both interpretations of the mirror scene can be seen as conducive to the curative process. The former interpretation suggests that the captive has successfully adapted to the Indian way of life. This eases the ordeal of living in the wilderness among somewhat less “savage Indians.” The later interpretation, i.e., exclusion, could suggest that King Philip is hinting at the possibility that the captive might be released, a comforting thought which would help her survive captivity.

I have already made the case that the experience of trauma among Puritan captives somewhat differs depending on gender, with men more subject to physical abuse while women tend to suffer more from the consequences of having to adapt to the hardships of life in the wilderness and the loss or abandonment of children. Occasional quarrels with Indian women usually failed to degenerate into real violence and may seem rather childish, as shown in the description of one such incident related in Rowlandson's narrative. As for psychological pain, it is rather difficult to distinguish between specific forms thereof according to gender, although motherly grief is a recurring theme in Rowlandson and plays a key role in Dustan's narrative. Surprisingly, I have found that torments over the Catholic threat often supersede the motherly suffering in Swarton's narrative. The Catholic threat constituted a common source of trauma among captives, notably among the men. Similarly, to overcome different forms of trauma in captivity, both men and

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<sup>122</sup> On pragmatics and a more detailed examination of non-verbal communication see in the last section of this study.

women cling to their Puritan faith with the same strength and determination. One gender-specific feature seemingly exists in that *going native* is more common among women, as demonstrated in the case of Rowlandson, and *heroism* a form of response more characteristic of the male Puritan captives.

It is also useful to compare how captives differ in their attempts to overcome trauma. In dealing with trauma and easing his own recovery, Father Jogues makes use of the same means employed by his Puritan counterparts. For instance, solidarity between the captives, also mentioned in Stockwell's narrative, is a fundamental element in Jogues's narrative which, in a sense, presents his very captivity as an act of solidarity. Whereas the Puritan captives were kidnapped from their homes, Jogues's captivity resulted from his missionary work—when traveling to Huron territories, he and his fellow missionaries fell into an Indian ambush. Jogues even suggests to some extent that he chose captivity although he had a chance to escape:

Then a Frenchman named René Goupil, who was fighting with the bravest, was taken with some of the Hurons. When I saw this, I neither could, nor cared to fly. Where, indeed, could I escape, barefooted as I was? Conceal myself amid the reeds and tall grass, I could indeed, and thus escape; but could I leave a countryman, and the unchristened Hurons already taken or soon to be? As the enemy, in hot pursuit of the fugitives, had passed on, leaving me standing on the battle-field, I called out to one of those who remained to guard the prisoners, and bade him make me a fellow captive to his French captive, that, as I had been his companion on the way, so would I be in his dangers and death. Scarce giving credit to what he heard, and fearful for himself, he advanced and led me to the other prisoners. (97)

Jogues presents his captivity as an act of solidarity and part of his missionary work. In a sense, he chose to become a martyr, a fate the Jesuits considered highly desirable and necessary to contribute to the success of their mission.

Another chance to escape presents itself later after he has experienced physical abuses and witnessed torture rituals practiced on his fellow captives:

Indeed, we had during the journey always foreseen that it would be a sad and bitter day for us. It would have been easy for René and myself to escape that day and the flames, for, being unbound and often at a distance from our guards, we might, in the darkness of night, have struck off from the road, and even though we should never reach our countrymen, we would at least meet a less cruel death in the woods. He constantly refused to do this, and I was resolved to suffer all that could befall me, rather than forsake, in death, Frenchmen and Christian Hurons, depriving them of the consolation which a priest can afford. (100)

Once more, the “mission” comes before any chance of recovering comfort and safety. Moreover, the captive is seemingly willing to put up with constant misfortune and ready to die as a martyr.

Considering the theories of trauma management, Father Jogues’s narrative seemingly suggests that the physical and moral torture he and his fellow captives experience, paradoxically constitute both trauma and relief from trauma. Although the repeated physical mutilation (mainly the cutting off of fingers) must have been extremely traumatizing, as a missionary, Father Jogues hopes that such actions result in highly honorable martyrdom. The semi-deliberate nature of his decision and the torture to which he exposed himself demonstrate that Father Jogues can count on the strength of his faith and the belief in the value of his missionary work, both of which allow him to survive the trauma: “... for I was greatly grieved whenever, during my absence, an adult died without instruction or a child without baptism” (118).

Violence and death are omnipresent in the narrative. Many times Father Jogues believes he is going to die and then escapes death at the last minute:

*I thought I should soon die there; and so, partly because I could not, partly because I cared not, I did not arise. How long they spent their fury on me, he knows for whose love and sake I suffered all, and for whom it is delightful and glorious to suffer. [...]. One of these savages, breathing nought but blood and cruelty, came up to me, scarce able to stand on my feet, and, seizing my nose with one hand, prepared to cut it off with a large knife which he held in the other. What could I do? Believing that I was soon to be burnt at the stake, unmoved, I awaited the stroke, groaning to my God in heart; when he*

stayed, as if by a supernatural power, he drew back his hand in the very act of cutting. (99, emphasis mine).

And later, Jogues writes: “After three weeks, we were just recovering from our illness when they sought to push us to death” (107). He goes on: “As I re-entered our hut, two young men were waiting to take me to their village to put me to death. [... an Indian] seized a hatchet and was rushing on me to kill me, when he was stopped by an old man of our family” (110). Once again his missionary’s faith allows him, even when coming within a hair’s breadth of death, to overcome the most extreme situation. What the rational reader might consider as a very lucky outcome, the narrator, for his part, attributes to divine intervention: “Thus did the Almighty teach me ‘to cast all my solicitude on him,’ knowing that he hath care of me, and that I should not fear the face of a man when the Almighty was the protector of my life, without his permission not a hair could fall from my head” (110). This is indicative of the positive attitude allowing the captive to survive.

Similarly, Hannah Swarton’s mindset presents a hierarchy of values which subordinates physical conditions to spiritual comfort. In spite of the sharp difference between these two, the spiritual attitude is the same. Jogues minimizes his psychological and physical suffering by keeping his goals as a missionary in mind, and Swarton, reacting with contempt to the material comfort provided by the French, fears that such gifts will jeopardize her Puritan faith by making her appreciate the “papist” creed: “Here began a greater snare and trouble to my soul and danger to my inward man” (153). Although one may legitimately question that the priority given to anti-Catholicism in Swarton’s narrative accords greater significance to the Catholic threat than to the scattering of her family, her faith in the Puritan faith must nonetheless have proven efficient in overcoming the captivity ordeal.

Just as in Swarton’s narrative, the reader faces a variety of topical interpretations considering the issue of the truthfulness of related events as well as the concomitant matter of authenticity of the trauma as narrated. The degree of the spiritual ordeal’s severity may be questioned in some instances (e.g., when pure

anti-Catholicism gains the upper hand over sensational physical torture or upsetting family-related tragedies); nevertheless, fundamentally the captive's spirituality, even by the means of adhering to the conventional denunciation and condemnation of Catholicism, was a solid trauma recovery element. Rowlandson bears the ordeal of her abduction by the means of her unflinching faith in fulfilling God's will through any circumstances, no matter how torturous or terrifying her experience will be. In the same way, other Puritan captives who were directly or indirectly confronted with Catholicism seem to have found relief in putting up an active and fierce resistance to the incessant proselytizing overtures of their converted abductors and their Jesuit allies. In other words, while one may take for granted the authenticity of some spiritual responses to the traumatic ordeal of captivity as a whole, one may also draw some conclusions regarding breaches characteristic of the former captives' narratological approach to the scenes of trauma which they experienced. These conclusions are mainly based on the large gap between the key Puritan narrative of Rowlandson and the Catholic one of father Jogues.

While the treatment/representation of trauma differs somewhat in Rowlandson's and Jogues's narratives, both texts conform to the respective overall ideological premises of the author, though both are colored by certain salient differences in the religious backgrounds. Whereas Rowlandson compensates for her "lack" of firsthand description of actually witnessed torture scenes—as pictured in some male Puritan narratives and amply detailed in Father Jogues's writings—with essentially rhetorical means, Father Jogues—with his crude scenes of mutilation and moral torture—contains his rhetoric and presents his ordeal as a curative process from trauma rather than as a traumatic experience.

However traumatic her experience of captivity must have been, in relating her experience, Rowlandson seems to narratologically "create" trauma, rather than actually having endured it. Moreover, her description of an admittedly involuntary but highly successful assimilatory process of *going native* ends up eluding the very trauma she tries to set in context at the beginning of the narrative. Jogues—within

the context of his personal religious convictions which exalt martyrdom—voluntarily endangers his own life in order to appear along more typically masculine lines as an active hero, rather than a passive victim. Nonetheless, despite going through a torture experience, he deliberately covers up the traumatic nature of the event in his narrative. In the narrated versions of both Rowlandson's and Jogues's captivities, the traumas they describe compound the already large number of inconsistencies; this is particularly the case in Rowlandson's narrative, given the author's paramount concern to align herself with the canons of Puritan rhetoric and ideology.

While there is certainly a discernible gap between the Puritan ideological framework of Rowlandson's approach and that of the Catholic Father Jogues, the assessment of the remaining Puritan narratives in this selection is far from being less eclectic. It is in fact quite impossible to refer to a unified Puritan response to the same issue at the same period. Although it is hard to isolate a dominant, overarching Puritan ideological category for each of the captivity narratives surveyed above, each text of captivity seems to generate an exception which confirms the rule. Such is seemingly the case with the specific issue of portraying trauma, or with the rest of the various topical issues related to autobiographical writing—at least with regards to authenticity and subjectivity, the reader's interpretative approach is often proven eclectic. This eclecticism reflects a very Puritan approach to the various social, religious, and political issues of the time, also demonstrated in the variegated style characterizing the works of both Increase and Cotton Mather.

While acknowledging the often variable Puritan discourse through the agency of the captivity narrative genre, my next focus will be the Indian voice as one component among the multiple voices shaping this eclectic discourse. To this effect, I am going to consider to what extent the words, gestures, and attitudes which the white authors of the narratives attribute to the Indians can actually be taken as a legitimate extension of the variegated and poly-vocal aspect of the Puritan discourse. Will the Indian voice be proven as eclectic as the already



discussed Puritan discourse? And what to make with the issue of the authenticity of these Indian voices when the authenticity of all the authors, the narrators, and the narratives per se, can be vividly challenged?

### **3.Indian Agency in Captivity Narratives**

Nearly all of what we know about the fighting—whether ‘brief histories’ or ‘narratives of troubles’—comes from the colonists themselves, and, as the Massachusetts seal (‘Come Over and Help Us’) so poignantly illustrates, more than a bit of skepticism must be brought to words the colonists quite literally put into the mouths of their Algonquian neighbors. Yet those neighbors were neither as silent as the colonists hoped nor as “inarticulate” as most historians have assumed. (Jill Lepore xxi)

While the previous sections of this study identified an existing polyphony of social, religious and editorial sub-voices, the present section will specifically focus on the Indian component. The purpose of this chapter is not to do justice to a silenced people. Although I may occasionally touch on the subject of the scars of early colonization in connection with my examination of early New England colonial accounts (in particular in the form of captivity narratives), the main object of my last chapter is to discuss how the authors of this corpus (mainly 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Puritans) portrayed their Indian abductors. In addition to what may be considered “direct description,” the former captives also reported the Indians’ own words based on the oral exchanges that took place between them as a result of prolonged forced cohabitation and shared intimacy. In looking at their writings, I will be asking to what extent the existence of a genuine Indian agency in narratives written by whites can be inferred. After all one should take into account factors that are not conducive to earn impartial representation of the “other side,” such as the extreme circumstances of captivity as well as the prevailing prejudices in that kind of coerced relationship.

In the first chapter of this section, I will begin with a close examination of the way in which the narrators of Puritan captivity stories describe the Indian way of life, their habits, and behaviors. With this purpose in mind, I will focus on direct depictions provided by the former captives. Scholars often agree that Puritan captives tended to be fairly “ethnocentric” in their portrayal of the Indians. Part of the reason for this was that they were more interested in their own inner

psychological processes as seen and depicted through the prism of their Puritan doctrine. But are there any exceptions? And more importantly, what to make of the few instances of direct description one finds in the most “ethnocentric” samples of the genre, for instance in Rowlandson’s narrative?

I will pay particular attention to the existence of disturbing facts which may be interpreted beyond the supposed intention in the narratives even when the authors try to avoid the issue or indulge in exaggerated self-justification. In particular, I want to speak of the “unspeakable,” by which I mean “blanks” in the story-telling or “narrative silence.” The silence, as I will attempt to demonstrate, paradoxically renders audible that which is deliberately left out as the authors/narrators pile up a wealth of “other considerations” (descriptions, facts, etc.) to (consciously or unconsciously) obliterate some aspects they would rather leave aside.

In my corpus, instances of *silence* are not found only at the narrative level. As elaborated above, there existed the preliminary filter of editorial work by members of the publishing world with predominantly Puritan worldviews. They tended to publish those narratives that allowed no questions as to the allegiance of the former captive, hence the reluctant approach towards narratives that did not fit in with their worldview, particularly if the former captives were suspected of harboring some sympathy towards the Indians (notably in cases where the Indian abductors “adopted” their white captives). Part of the Indian voice, therefore, can be deduced from the censorship experienced by what scholars commonly call the “White Indians.” When I became aware of the problem, I examined some of these untold stories, notably that of Eunice Williams, daughter of John Williams, who refused to leave the Indians even when presented with a chance to return to “civilization.”

The last chapter will be dedicated to traces of the Indian voice in captivity narratives. By contrast, this chapter will mainly address how the authors of the narratives use the native characters to showcase their own views and emphasize

the key topics of the genre. In other words, I shall mainly examine the abstract notion of the “captivity” of the Indian voice in captivity narratives written by white authors.

### **3.1. Direct descriptions of the Indians in Puritan captivity narratives**

I have made several references throughout this study to the argument, broadly accepted among scholars, that Puritan captivity narratives, particularly Rowlandson’s, tend to exhibit a strong ethnocentric slant. At this stage of my study, it is import to examine this issue and determine to what extent Rowlandson’s narrative really is “ethnocentric,” and whether the same applies to the other Puritan captivity narratives. Rowlandson’s narrative and Gyles’s, for instance, are in stark contrast concerning the space they dedicate to a direct description of the Indians. John Williams’s narratives are similar to Rowlandson’s in this respect, albeit for different motifs. While Rowlandson’s “ethnocentrism” is motivated by the narrator’s focus on propagating the core principles of Puritan faith in her text, Williams, for his part, is mainly motivated by his staunch anti-Catholicism. Again other Puritan captivity narratives, notably those by Stockwell, Swarton and Duston, offer even less direct descriptions of their abductors, possibly because the publications in question were rather short. I will start my comparison of the narrator’s depiction of Indian life and habits in Puritan narratives with John Gyles’s narrative.

#### **3.1.1. *John Gyles’s Captivity Narrative***

Gyles describes the Indians in detail and from different viewpoints. The perspectives are those of a child, a grown-up and an ethnographer. At the start of

his long narrative, Gyles describes captivity from a child's perspective. This includes descriptions of torture rituals as addressed in the chapter on trauma and memory in section two of this study. These descriptions have obviously little to do with any manner of ethnographic interest. It is primarily prompted by a child's fear of such cruelty; a cruelty which the narrator claims is part of Indian customs. Gyles also introduces the reader to another Indian custom regarding the treatment of captives: "When the winter came on, we went up the river till the ice came down and run thick in the river and then, according to the Indian custom, laid up our canoes till the spring" (103). This bears witness to a certain level of egocentrism as the author steers the story back to himself and describes how this specific custom affected him as he adds: "I met with no abuse from them in this winter's hunting though I was put to great hardships in carrying burdens and for want of food, for they underwent the same difficulty and would often encourage me" (103). Another such description features in the section devoted to "a Barbarous Old Squaw:"

[She] ever endeavored to outdo all others in cruelty to captives. Wherever she came into a wigwam where any poor, naked, starved captives were sitting near the fire, if they were grown persons, she would privately take up shovel of hot coal and throw them into their bosom, or young ones she would take by the hand or leg and drag them through the fire, etc."(113).

The portrayal of this Indian woman by Gyles echoes Rowlandson's depiction of her violent "mistress" and reminds the reader of a similar scene in Rowlandson's narrative: "A squaw moved [the stick] down again, at which I looked up, and she threw a handful of ashes in mine eyes. I thought I should have been quite blinded, and have never seen more" (52).

Second, and most importantly, Gyles's detailed description of the Indians and their way of life in the second half of the narrative may be explained by his position after his long captivity. Gyles served for many years as an interpreter and negotiator among the French and Indians in Massachusetts. In addition to an unusual section in his narrative on New England fauna, Gyles also provides details about Indian life and habits even where those had no direct bearing on the

conditions of his captivity.<sup>123</sup> The main descriptive chapters are : “Of Their Powwowing” (114), “An Instance of the Devil’s Frighting the Indians” (115), “Two Indian Fables” (115), “A Description of Several Creatures Commonly Taken by the Indians on St. John’s River” (116), “Of Their Feasting before They Go out to War” (120), “Of Their Mourning for the Dead, and Feast after it” (120), “A Further Account of Their Marriages” (121), “A Digression Containing an Account of a Rape Committed by a Demon” (121), “Of Common Feasts” (122) and “There Extraordinary Ways of Getting Fire and Boiling Their Food” (123).

These ethnographic and social descriptions of the Indians often echo observations made in Roger Williams’s *Key into the Language of America*. This gives an opportunity to refer back to Williams’s text. As I showed in the first section, the ethnographic approach in Williams’s work can to some extent even be seen as authentic and neutral as the author is able to distance himself and address the facts he reports without judgmental comments. The comparison with Williams’s text emphasizes the exceptional ethnographic aspect in Gyles’s captivity narrative. The following are excerpts from Williams’s text devoted to marriage among the Indians. I will then compare them with Gyles’s text on the same issue:

Their number is not stinted, yet the chiefe Nation in the Countrey, the Narrigansets (generally) have but one wife. Two causes they generally alledge for their many wives. First desire of Riches, because the Women bring in all the increase of the Field, &c. the Husband onely fisheth, hunteth &c. Secondly, their long sequestering themselves from their wives after conception, until the child be weaned, which with some is long after a yeare old, generally they keep their children long at the breast.

[...] Generally the Husband gives these payments for a Dowrie, (as it was in Israell) to the Father or Mother, or guardian of the Maide. To this purpose if the Man be poore, his Friends and Neighbours doe pummenuminteauguash, that is contribute Money toward the Dowrie.

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<sup>123</sup> Vaughan and Clark write about Gyles’s post captivity life as follows: “He also held lieutenant’s and captain’s commissions for duty on the Main frontier. In 1717, when Judge Samuel Sewall, Boston’s distinguished jurist and diarist, journeyed to the Kennebec River to help negotiate a treaty with the Eastern Indians, he reported that he ‘dispatched Capt. Gyles with a Letter to the Govr in a Birch Canoe.’ Gyles continued to hold diplomatic and military positions until shortly before his death in late 1754 or early 1755” (93).

[...] *Generall Observation of their Marriage*. God hath planted in the Hearts of the Wildest of the sonnes of Men, and High and Honourable esteeme of the Marriage bed, insomuch that they universally submit unto it, and hold the Violation of that Bed, Abominable, and accordingly reape the Fruit thereof in the abundance of posterity (124-27).<sup>124</sup>

John Gyles for his part writes:

#### A Further Account of Their Marriages

If a young fellow determines to marry, his relations and the Jesuit advise him to a girl, and the young fellow goes into the wigwam where she is and looks on her. And if he likes her, he tosseth a chip or stick into her lap which she takes and with a reserved side look views the person who sent it, yet handleth the chip with admiration as though she wondered from whence it came. If she likes him, she throws the chip to him with a modest smile, and then nothing is wanting but a ceremony with the Jesuit to consummate the marriage. But if the young squaw dislike the fellow, she with a surly countenance throws the chip aside, and he comes no more there. If parents have a daughter marriageable<sup>125</sup> they seek a husband for her who is a good hunter. And if he have a gun and ammunition, a canoe, spear and hatchet, a *monoodah*, and crooked knife, a looking-glass and paint, a pipe, tobacco and knot-bowl to toss a kind of dice in, he is accounted a gentleman of a plentiful fortune. (By they lose much time, playing whole days and nights together, and sometimes their hole estate, though this is accounted a great vice by the old men.) Whatever the new-married man procures the first year belongs to his wife's parents. (If the pair have a child with a year and nine months, they are thought to be very forward, libidinous persons.) (121)

Rather than the actual contents of both passages in terms of information about Indian marital lore, what is interesting is the way in which the former captive changes focus and adopts the approach of an ethnographer. It is not really surprising to see Williams provide an objective description of the natives for the various reasons I listed in the first section of this study (his ethnographic and pro-

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<sup>124</sup> The description is interrupted with glossary of Indian vocabulary between each descriptive paragraph.

<sup>125</sup> In a footnote, Gyles defines the phrase "marriageable girl" as "a virgin who has been educated to make monoodahs [=Indian bag] and birch dishes, to lace snowshoes, and make Indian shoes, to string wampum belts, sew birch canoes, and boil the kettle is esteemed as a lady of fine accomplishments" (121).



Indian leanings, his criticism of the Puritans as a dissident), but it is rather exceptional to find it in a former captive.

Interestingly, though, while much of his portrayal is objective/neutral enough, Gyles's treatment of the facts of marriage among Indians (when compared with William's) does carry some features and tendencies that seemingly stem from captivity experience. While Williams's description focuses on the different aspect of Indian matrimonial life in terms of Indian general cultural values and social principles, Gyles, for his part, is primarily focused on the ritualistic aspects of Indian marital life and habits. Gyles's perspective is definitely accompanied by a touch of the primary curiosity a young captive may display even in such passages where his presence as a narrator is barely noticeable. This aspect of Gyles's narrative behavior becomes even more obvious in the following quote: "There was an old squaw who was kind to captives and never joined with them [the Indians] in their powwowing to whom I manifested an earnest desire to see their management" (114). Bearing in mind that the term *powwowing* is defined by the Puritans as a practice of conjuring the devil,<sup>126</sup> it is surprising to notice such excitement and curiosity on the part of a true Puritan, who nonetheless outspokenly admits to his interest in witnessing such an event. In fact, Gyles's request in the above quote is quite out of line with Puritan attitudes that would normally be more inclined to criticize and condemn such "devilish" practices—an approach on which Rowlandson strongly relies when directly describing the Indians.

### **3.1.2. Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative**

The following is Rowlandson's take on the Indian practice of powwowing:

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<sup>126</sup> Eliot defines Powwow as follows: "Pawwows are Witches or Sorcerers that cure by the help of the devil" (*Clear Sunshine of the Gospel* 5). Gyles himself writes about *powwowing* as follows: "The Indians are very often surprised with the appearance of ghosts and demons and sometimes encouraged by the devil, for they go to him for success in hunting, etc." (114).

Another Praying Indian, when they went to Sudbury fight, went with them, and his squaw also with him, with her papoose at her back. Before they went to that fight they got a company together to pow-wow. The manner was as followeth: there was one that kneeled upon a deerskin, with the company round him in a ring who kneeled, and striking upon the ground with their hands, and with sticks, and muttering or humming with their mouths. Besides him who kneeled in the ring, there also stood one with a gun in his hand. Then he on the deerskin made a speech, and all manifested assent to it; and so they did many times together. Then they bade him with the gun go out of the ring, which he did. But when he was out, they called him in again; but he seemed to make a stand; then they called the more earnestly, till he returned again. Then they all sang. Then they gave him two guns, in either hand one. And so he on the deerskin began again; and at the end of every sentence in his speaking, they all assented, humming or muttering with their mouths, and striking upon the ground with their hands. Then they bade him with the two guns go out of the ring again; which he did, a little way. Then they called him in again, but he made a stand. So they called him with greater earnestness; but he stood reeling and wavering as if he knew not whither he should stand or fall, or which way to go. Then they called him with exceeding great vehemency, all of them, one and another. After a little while he turned in, staggering as he went, with his arms stretched out, in either hand a gun. As soon as he came in they all sang and rejoiced exceedingly a while. And then he upon the deerskin, made another speech unto which they all assented in a rejoicing manner. And so they ended their business, and forthwith went to Sudbury fight. (63)

Rowlandson provides a detailed description of the scene. At first, her description may seem similar to that of Gyles (distant and objective), but at the end of her description, she allows herself to express subjective comments:

When they went, they acted as if the devil had told them that they should gain the victory; and now they acted as if the devil had told them they should have a fall. Whither it were so or no, I cannot tell, but so it proved, for quickly they began to fall, and so held on that summer, till they came to utter ruin. They came home on a Sabbath day, and the Powaw that kneeled upon the deer-skin came home (I may say, without abuse) as black as the devil. (64)

Here also, Rowlandson remains faithful to her double narrative voice (one describing the events, and the other commenting on them). Accordingly, the commenting voice does not only reflect on the captive's personal experience, but is

also influenced by her preconceptions of the Indians and their habits. I have shown in the second section of this study that most of Rowlandson's passages describing the Indian way of life always relate in one way or another to her own personal experience. For instance, she voices her initial contempt of Indian food before eventually growing used to it.

There is however, an exceptional instance of uncommented description of her "master's" and "mistress's" physical appearance and their dress code:

My master and mistress being two. He was dressed in his Holland shirt, with great laces sewed at the tail of it; he had his silver buttons, his white stockings, his garters were hung round with shillings, and he had girdles of wampum upon his head and shoulders. *She had a kersey coat, and covered with girdles of wampum from the loins upward. Her arms from her elbows to her hands were covered with bracelets; there were handfuls of necklaces about her neck,* and several sorts of jewels in her ears. She had fine red stockings, and white shoes, her hair powdered and face painted red, that was always before black.  
(66)

The fact that Rowlandson refrains from any comment here, especially with respect to her "mistress," has been interpreted by some scholars as a deliberate rebuttal and denial of Weetamoo's power. Tiffany Potter writes that "Weetamoo's bodily display of wealth is a demonstration of her political status, one engendered in Algonquian culture. In Rowlandson's reporting, however, that literal embodiment of wealth and power is reinscribed as merely a feminized ritual of vain toilette" (161). This narrative technique of deliberately omitting information from the narrative, be it information directly related to her inner self, her direct experience as a captive or the depiction of her abductor is in fact a trademark of Rowlandson's narrative. The narrative proves to be more informative than the narrator had actually meant it to be. The following chapter will show how one can read through the numerous instances of inconsistencies in Rowlandson's narrative and actually reach the Indian voice.

I have shown in the previous section how the promoters of captivity narratives insist on alleged authenticity of their publications, claiming that the

texts are directly attributable to the former captive either as a primary oral source or as the person who penned his or her own narrative. Phrases such as “written by her own hand” or “A worthy person hath sent me the account,” upon publication redundantly claimed the implicit authenticity of the material and emphasized the testimonial aspect of the narrative. Later on, scholars have looked into the issue of authenticity and authorship, with particular attention paid within the genre to Rowlandson’s narrative. One such scholar, Kathryn Derounian-Stodola, holds the fairly representative view that while late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century narratives are mainly fictional, seventeenth-century captivity narratives are to be considered as “authentic religious accounts” (*Women’s Indian...*,xii). A close analysis of long Puritan captivity narratives,<sup>127</sup> in particular Rowlandson’s, suggests otherwise. As is often the case in autobiographical writing, a significant number of narrative inconsistencies strongly challenge the credibility of the events described, casting doubt on the accuracy of the details or even inducing a critical reader to question whether some of the incidents reported even happened at all. Therefore, I am going to devote the next chapter to indirect and even involuntary depictions of the Indians in Puritan captivity narratives.

### **3.2. Narrative Inconsistencies in Captivity Narrative**

In order to examine the issue of narrative inconsistencies in captivity narratives, I will once again focus on Mary Rowlandson’s account. My choice here is based not only on the fact that Rowlandson’s text is full of such discrepancies, but also, and more importantly, on the publisher as well as the preface’s insistence on the authenticity of the narrative, which makes these inconsistencies even more obvious. The publisher, furthermore, imposes religious and social pressure on the former captive. Such pressures have, therefore, narrative consequences in the

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<sup>127</sup> Among the longest narratives are Mary Rowlandson’s, which relate eleven weeks of captivity, John Williams’s account—almost three years of captivity—and the captivity memoirs of John Gyles who was detained the longest as he spent almost six years among the Indians and three years among the French.

account itself. Thus, in the preface Rowlandson's narrative, Increase Mather writes the following:

This narrative was penned by this Gentlewoman her self, to be to her a Memorandum of Gods dealing with her, that she might never forget, but remember the same, and the several circumstances there, all the daies of her life. A pious scope which deserves both commendation and imitation. (134)<sup>128</sup>

Terms such as “Gentlewoman,” or “pious” suggest the existence of social standards and convention. When examining Rowlandson's narrative in the previous section of this study, I outlined a number of inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which I attributed either to voluntary alteration of the truth mainly dictated by social convention to preserve the integrity of the captive, or to a lesser extent, to amnesia as a consequence of the trauma endured during the terrific ordeal of captivity in the Wilderness. In the previous chapter, I have shown how preconceived ideas about the wilderness and its native inhabitants were instrumental in “coloring” Rowlandson's narrative by means of exaggerated formulations and qualifiers to describe the Indians—a rhetorical tool the narrator seldom (or, if at all, only cursorily) justifies. In the present chapter, I shall be focusing on the narrator's deliberate omissions. In addition to considerations of “propriety” and respect of social conventions, such omissions should be considered in the way the abductors are portrayed and in the words attributed to them.

In her descriptive passages, Rowlandson goes to great lengths to express her feelings whilst exhibiting an exemplary and dignified Puritan attitude in reaction to her ordeal. In this respect Derounian-Stodola cites a distinction between the narrator's voice that details the plot (the “colloquial” style) and another voice that interprets and comments on the events (the “rhetorical” style).<sup>129</sup> Measured against such a wealth of “ethnocentric” or even “egocentric” elements, passages dealing

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<sup>128</sup> The preface to Rowlandson's narrative is signed PER AMICUM (By a friend). Many scholars attribute the preface to the well-known Puritan minister Increase Mather. Spelling and italics as in the original: “The Preface to the Reader.” *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. Ed. Derounian-Stodola (7).

<sup>129</sup> Derounian-Stodola. *The Indian Captivity Narrative*, 101.

with the abductors' cultural habits seem at best marginal, as Mitchell Robert Breitwieser notes:

The simple overwhelming presence of the Algonquian captors was not of itself sufficient to compel Rowlandson to perceive them as persons, as cultural subjects, rather than as retributive or malign force. [...]. The presence of the Algonquians is a necessary but not sufficient condition for what happens in the composition of the narrative: only with the incapacitation of typology by grief does a human Indian figure come into view at the margin of perception. (132)

Although I agree with Breitwieser's and other critics' insistence on the self-centered narrative technique in portraying the Indians, it should, nevertheless, be stressed that Rowlandson places great emphasis on the dialogues she allegedly conducted with her abductors. Throughout her narrative, there are accounts or at least echoes of the alleged Indian voice in a series of reported conversations she claims to have had with her captors. Respecting Breitwieser's contention that in Rowlandson's narrative, the Indians are always "*figured* rather than *seen*" (133), I would add that this figuration does not only draw from what Rowlandson actually witnessed during her captivity but is also to a significant extent inferred from what she claims to have *heard the* Indians say or from the contents of the alleged conversations she had with them.

Rowlandson's narrative thus does not only depict her physical and moral predicament as a white captive, but it also conjures the more abstract and less frequent representation, or misrepresentation, of the Indian voice—a voice held, as it were, in another form of "captivity," that of its biased rendering in the writings of the former victim. So how does the Indian "voice" literally come across in Rowlandson's narrative? What kind of discourse does Rowlandson as a testimonial author attribute to her former abductors? To what extent does Rowlandson distort the truth not only in her description of the events, but even more so in the words she puts in the Indians' mouths?

To answer these questions, one may first consider how the "Indian voice" is represented or misrepresented. In approaching it, should one only address the

dialogues between the protagonists, or also deal with other forms of non-verbal communication present in Rowlandson's text, by resorting to an approach known as pragmatics? In *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, Paul Watzlawick defines pragmatics as follows:

The data of pragmatics are not only words, their configurations, and meanings, which are the data of syntactics and semantics, but their nonverbal concomitants and body language as well. Even more, we would add to personal behavioral actions the communicational clues inherent in the context in which communication occurs. Thus, from this perspective of pragmatics, all behavior, not only speech, is communication, and all communication—even the communicational clues in an impersonal context—affects behavior. (22)

Such an approach should logically be central in discussing intercultural communication in narrative scenes of interaction between English-speaking white captives and their Indian abductors since one may assume the existence of limitations in terms of both linguistic and cultural competence in both sets of protagonists. In Rowlandson's text, however, except for few references to behavioral interaction such as the glass scene with King Philip, most of the communication frameworks involving the narrator (Rowlandson) and her Indian abductors are based on verbal interaction between her and them. In view of a considerable body of references to and quoted examples of this dialogue, I shall begin by analyzing this aspect of "reported speech" before examining some significant scenes of behavioral and non-verbal communication, first in Rowlandson's narrative, then in other Puritan and Non-Puritan narratives.

### **3.2.1. *Reported Speech in Rowlandson's Narrative***

Repeatedly, Rowlandson introduces the other protagonists', especially her captors' words with the following verbs: *Ask*, *tell*, *say*, and *bid*. Using a word processor, I counted the following frequency of occurrence of these verbs in Rowlandson's texts:

Ask, asked → 54 times  
Tell, told → 80 times  
Say, said → 95 times  
Bid, bade → 31 times

This total of 260 occurrences in the text makes the first to twentieth “Removes” in essence “dialogical”<sup>130</sup> and raises the first main inconsistency encountered in Rowlandson’s text, which may have a significant impact on the analysis of the dialogues and the rest of the descriptive passages. The main problem would seem to be that of the actual language used in Rowlandson’s verbal communication with the Indians, especially since the testimonial style of the whole narrative comes in the form of dialogues between the Puritan English-speaking protagonist/narrator and her Indian abductors. As noted in the introduction, Rowlandson never alludes to any difficulties of a linguistic nature in her verbal communication with the Indians. Interestingly enough, but for a few exceptions, this narrative attitude is rather typical of and specific to Rowlandson, especially when compared with narratives by other former captives who were not Puritans, like the Catholic Father Isaac Jogues.<sup>131</sup> In Rowlandson’s text, the omission of any reference to translation difficulties is more conspicuous in view of the prominence the language barrier is given by earlier Puritan writers, such as John Eliot. The latter dedicated various works to overcoming that very obstacle for the purpose of promoting communication with and education of the natives.

The omission of any information about language issue begs for an introduction of the concept of the *said* and the *unsaid* in the autobiographical

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<sup>130</sup> The introduction (the Indian attack of the colonial town) and the conclusion (which provides a final assessment of the former hostage’s captivity experience) do not contain any major conversational passages.

<sup>131</sup> Although its structure is much less dialogical than Rowlandson’s, Jogues’ narrative does contain specific references to language-related problems of communication: “When I saw that my life was at last in some sort spared, I applied myself to the study of the language, and, as our cabin was the council hall, not only of the village, but of almost all that country, I began to instruct the oldest on the articles of our faith” (31). And later: “I reluctantly remained at home; for the village enabled me to make greater progress in the language” (36). I am not suggesting that such quotes necessarily make for a lesser degree of “fictionality” in Jogues’ narrative compared to Rowlandson’s as the choice of bringing up the language issue could be attributed to the author’s motivation to “educate” the natives as part of his commitment to the spirit of his missionary status. At any rate, the fact that he is paying attention to the language issue does make Jogues’ narrative appear somewhat more testimonial and realistic than Rowlandson’s.



narrative genre. It follows that the application of a pragmatics-based analysis of Rowlandson's text should not confine itself to an examination of the communication as rendered between the former captive and her abductor but should also include the broader issue of selectiveness in the choice of what gets reported and what does not—deliberately or unconsciously—in the complex communication system involving Rowlandson as the narrator and the Indians. Moreover, concerning the Indian voice, Rowlandson's narrative choices in effect constitute the filter through which it is rendered. Depending on the circumstances, the filter in question may amplify the Indian voice or silence it altogether.

The “amplified” Indian voice manifests itself in the dialogues in which the narrator allows her Indian abductors to “speak,” supposedly in their own words, whether adequately quoted or not. What might be considered as generous (letting the Indians speak for themselves) does however come with a number of strings attached which the narrator can pull in whatever direction she chooses and is also accompanied by obvious forms of negativity, a concept which Budick Sanford and Iser Wolfgang define as follows:

The modern coinage *negativity*, or some equivalent means of eschewing indicative terminology, becomes inevitable when we consider the implications, omissions, or cancellations that are necessarily part of any writing or speaking. These lacunae indicate that practically all formulations (written or spoken) contain a tacit dimension, so that each manifest text has a kind of latent double. Thus, unlike negation, which must be distinguished from negativity, this inherent doubling in language defies verbalization. It forms the unwritten and unwritable—unsaid and unsayable—base of the utterance. (xii)

The omissions and the “unsaid” in Rowlandson's narrative do not stem from a supposed “unsayable” or “unwritable” nature of the contents of the narration (the facts, scenes, and the dialogues narrated) but, as I shall show later, from the restraining effect of some Puritan conventions. Although Rowlandson writes: “It is not my tongue, or pen, can express the sorrows of my heart...” (37), one should guard against an abusive application of the concept of negativity in a poststructuralist sense. This approach exclusively addresses the limitations of

language in describing that which lies “beyond being” such as God.<sup>132</sup> One should therefore think instead in terms of deliberate or unconscious omissions for the sake of moral, social and religious propriety; hence in Rowlandson’s case, the omissions resulting from the limits of language are less common than those caused by self-censorship.

That the first obvious omission in all of Rowlandson’s text is the issue of a language barrier suggests two different interpretations closely related to the issue of authenticity of the dialogues referred to above. One may assume that most New England Indians spoke English just like the famous Squanto,<sup>133</sup> or even go as far as assuming that John Eliot’s works and Roger Williams’ *Key into the Language of America* had indeed garnered some success in lowering the communication threshold between the Puritans and the Indians. Conceivable as it may be, the explanation does call for some reservations which the reader should bear in mind when considering the authenticity of the dialogues. Moreover, my analysis of other captivity narratives such as Gyles will demonstrate that the language limitations definitely constituted undeniable issues at the time of Rowlandson’s captivity and even later.

Another explanation could lie in the author’s use of these scenes as part of her narrative process. She created a dramatized, as it were, fictionalized version of her testimonial. This would strongly challenge the proclaimed authenticity of Rowlandson’s narrative with respect to the reported Indian speech and even cast doubt on the credibility of her captivity experience as a whole. If this explanation

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<sup>132</sup> It is beyond the ambition of this study to relate this metaphysical aspect of postculturalism to the Puritan religion though. Gabriel Motzkin explains Derrida’s point as follows: “The reason God cannot be a direct referent in speech is that He is transcendent to any world, since any world must be a created world. Language, however, can only take place within a world. Therefore we can turn toward that which is beyond being, for example in prayer, but we cannot say anything about it” (95).

<sup>133</sup> Squanto helped the members of the pilgrim colony to sign treaties with Native people. He served as a guide and interpreter. See William, Bradford. *Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647*, 1997, (108).

holds true, one needs to approach Rowlandson's narrative not only as a document but also as a work of fiction, wholly or partly.<sup>134</sup>

Other aspects of the narrative also call for serious reservations in terms of the text's proclaimed testimonial nature. I have addressed the authenticity issue in the previous section of this study, notably when taking into account the narrator's preconceptions and exposure to second-hand reports and allegations that must have influenced the way in which Rowlandson approached the question of captivity and Indian cruelty. In view of such considerations, the reader might be inclined to question the testimonial nature of the narrative or even suspect Rowlandson of deliberately resorting to what could be termed the "fictional path" and perhaps even "fabricating" the dialogues; thus, it appears that the author/narrator Rowlandson took the liberty of describing scenes that she did not experience first-hand, but recreated on the basis of testimonies or rumors, thereby availing herself of the privilege, as an author, to plant hints, to suggest without elaborating—to "say too much or not enough." In the chapter on trauma, I have shown that Rowlandson sometimes exaggerates the use of negative qualifiers not borne out by facts. In the following section, I shall show that she applies the same technique to omit uncomfortable truths.

### **3.2.2. Omissions in Rowlandson's Narrative**

One may therefore argue that the *unsaid* or the *omitted* speaks through inadvertent admissions of tempering with the rules of objective reporting, or as Budick and Iser argue: "What allows the unsayable to speak is the undoing of the spoken through negativity. Since the spoken is doubled by what remains silent, undoing the spoken gives voice to the inherent silence which itself helps stabilize what the spoken is meant to mean" (xvii). In other words, the author betrays

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<sup>134</sup> Here, one should cautiously consider the limit between a documentary work and a work of fiction. According to Gérard Genette, "Pure fiction is a narrative devoid of all reference to a

herself by saying too much. Rowlandson's subtle references to what she has heard about the Indians and their attacks on Christian towns combined with the apparent fluency of her conversations with the Indians suggest that the dialogues are to some extent nourished with preconceived notions of the way in which Indians are supposed to behave or of what they are assumed to say in certain circumstances. Rowlandson's admissions make the unconscious or deliberate blanks more conspicuous.

Similarly, Rowlandson makes these gaps even more obvious when she insists on reporting events she did not witness herself, such as a detailed description based on third party testimonies of the execution of another female captive. I have noted that except for admitting that the scene was reported to her (some of the sources being children), the descriptive style of the passage remains unchanged from the passages concerning her own experiences with the Indians or from the scenes she claims to have witnessed directly. In contrast to missing details regarding Indian rituals in parts of the narrative supposedly based on direct experience, here one accounts of such rituals in a description put together from third-party sourced information.

Moreover, the spiritual dimension of Rowlandson's style—an aspect which has been the object of in-depth investigation by many captivity narrative scholars<sup>135</sup> and forms the cornerstone of the mythology of Puritan captivity narratives—contrasts with the lack of information concerning the Indians' spiritual life. Except for the use, commonplace in Puritan literature, of the generally used qualifier "heathen" to refer to the Indians, Rowlandson's narrative refrains from any detailed description of the Indians' own beliefs, or rituals, nor does it stress their status. Although there are some general references to group singing and dancing—"Oh the roaring, and singing and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell" (36)—, Rowlandson is silent on the subject of Indian religious practices. This, for instance,

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historical framework" (81). This study will not strip the text of all its documentary value but rather focus on the narrative embellishment of some reality-based scenes.

contrasts with Father Jogues' narrative that records the existence of a cult to a demon called "Aireskoi." Whereas Jogues emphasizes the spiritual debauchery of his captors (as expressed through their demonic prayers), Rowlandson's style when describing Indian life—particularly when she "reproduces" their alleged statements, is largely stripped of religiosity and becomes more down-to-earth, describing practical issues such as bargaining over domestic work for food swaps or enquiring about the fate of the beloved members of her family taken captive elsewhere.

Rowlandson's omissions, which seem to imply that the Indians have no religion, appear to be in contradiction with the narrative strategy employed otherwise. This strategy consists of, according to Derounian-Stodola, "a clash of codes between Rowlandson's psychological and religious interpretations of her experience" ("Puritan Orthodoxy..." 83). The narrative is therefore perhaps a manifestation of the supposed divine purpose of captivity in response to the status quo of an everlasting opposition of the Puritans (God's elect) and the Indians (the devil's forces). Rowlandson's approach is made quite clear in the "Eighth Remove:"

And here I may take occasion to mention one principal ground of my setting forth these lines: even as the Psalmist sayes, To declare the Works of the Lord, preserving us in the Wilderness, while under the Enemies hand, and returning of us in safety again, And His goodness in bringing to my hand so many suitable Scriptures in my distress. (46)

Seemingly adhering to well-established Puritan ideology, Rowlandson portrays herself as a woman who "stands passively under the strokes of evil, awaiting rescue by the grace of God" (Slotkin 94) and describes the Indians as devil worshipers: "When they went, they acted as if the devil had told them that they should gain the victory; and now they acted as if the devil had told them they should have a fall" (64). Thus she also contradicts herself when she claims that her abductors bowed to no supreme authority whatsoever, not even that of the devil: "I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil [...]" (70). Hence Rowlandson's strategy consists in presenting

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<sup>135</sup> See for instance Richard VanDerBeet (xxii); Richard Slotkin (94-115); Michelle Burnham (62).

Indians as deprived of any moral inhibitions in their forms of behavior or expression.<sup>136</sup>

However, Rowlandson's depiction of the Indians' cruelty and brutality largely remains on the level of generalizations. Although she applies a wealth of metaphors and designations to qualify her abductors ("barbarous creatures," "merciless and cruel heathen," "savageness and brutishness of this barbarous enemy," etc.), and does describe the odd gruesome scene such as the execution of another captive or that of the Indians "rejoicing and triumphing" over the killing of English soldiers, Rowlandson refrains from providing excessively graphic renderings of Indians inhumanity of the kind to be found in some non-Puritan narratives which do not hesitate to vividly describe Indian methods of humiliation and mutilation.<sup>137</sup> Breitwieser's explanation of Rowlandson's narrative choice is as follows: "But whatever satisfaction such conventional representation affords her is tainted by a cost, because the condemnations she levels against the Indians would tend to include her as well" (134). Thus while referring (in general terms) to her abductors as "savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil," Rowlandson is careful to bestow them with some measure of moral decency when it suits her need to preserve her reputation.

In the previous section, I noted that Increase Mather not only praised Reverend Joseph Rowlandson's family and hailed their piety, but also openly came out in support of the Rowlandsons' decision to go public with Mary Rowlandson's captivity experience. In addition to endorsing the author's entrance into the public and private literary circles of the time, he took care of preserving her reputation as a person, writing: "I hope by this time none will cast any reflection upon this gentle-woman, on the score of this publication of her affliction and deliverance"

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<sup>136</sup> This is specific to Rowlandson's narrative. In Hannah Swarton's narrative, for instance, the main dialogue between the former captive/narrator and the Indians consists in a high level scriptural debates over the pros and cons of Catholicism and Protestantism. John William's famous narrative also gives a Catholic voice to his Indian abductors. Thus these texts effectively turn these texts to some extent into "Jesuit" captivity narratives.

<sup>137</sup> We may think of Jogues' description of the Indians stripping their enemies naked and cutting of their fingers.

(“The Preface to the Reader” 135). Apart from stressing her religiosity and piety, Mather also places great emphasis on the former captive’s “chastity.”

### **3.3. The Taboo: Sexuality in Early New England**

Before addressing the subject of chastity in Puritan captivity narratives, one should consider sexuality in the early settlements and particularly in New England. New Englanders had a different approach to sexuality than the settlers in other American colonies. The Whites’ representation of sexuality—be it within the same racial group or interracial (between Whites and Natives)—must be understood in order to decode taboos and omissions in writings and testimonials by former captives, both as authors and/or narrators. In this chapter, therefore, I will first address early representation of sexuality in colonial writings—including the specific question of cross-ethnic sex between white men and native women—is addressed and how it evolved in New England literature. Then, I will return to my main selection of captivity narratives to shed further light on sexuality as a silenced taboo. In so doing, I will also take into account the legal and moral context at the time of publication of the narratives.

#### **3.3.1. *Early Representation of Sexuality in Colonial Writings***

Sexual taboos were naturally a function of the way in which the Whites reflected upon this delicate matter throughout the early settlement period. Sayres writes:

Therefore, representations of America and Native Americans written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries entered into a discourse that was highly eroticized. Even when explorers and missionaries tried to represent literally their eyewitness observations of native sexual or marriage customs, they were

always responding to their own preconceptions, and frequently were writing of behavior in which they had been involved. (35)

Like other aspects of indigenous culture, sexuality among Natives and their attitude thereto were described by the Whites, and only their accounts are available:

This is the difficulty of studying Amerindian life in early contact and colonial times. For the social customs where archeology offers no evidence, for the outlook of tribes which barely survive today, we are dependent on accounts by Europeans who didn't understand the cultures they described. These accounts are often laden with ethnocentrism, or project Europeans' cultural obsessions onto the Amerindian Other [...]. Nowhere is this more true than in descriptions of sexuality. Not because it was a taboo subject that explorers and colonists could not describe in frank or objective terms, but because nowhere, not even in war and trade, was the observer's relationship to the behavior he described more fraught with semiconscious desires and fears. It is easy to identify tropes referring to Arcadia or the Amazons, or phallocentrism as in Raleigh, but it is more difficult to determine what accurate ethnological information if any, lies behind the prejudices, and to do so one must take into account the particular position of each observer. (37)

In view of the circumstances evidenced here, my analysis of the evolution of the Whites' attitudes regarding the taboo topic of sexuality in early America will, for lack of first-hand Indian material on the subject, dissect the white writer's take on sexuality in general and on Native sexual practices in particular. This will help decipher the implied sexual attitudes in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Puritan captivity narratives and at least partly lift the veil on what is kept silent by virtue of the prevailing taboos of the time. Again, it follows from Sayre's statement that the issue of white attitudes towards native sexuality should be examined over a long period ranging from the time of the early Spanish conquerors to seventeenth-century New England.

One instinctively tends to associate coerced sex with the consequences of armed conflict and historical conquests. Regarding the conquest of the New World, Stephanie Wood introduces the concept of "Columbian Legacy" to describe the colonists' sexual behavior toward the Natives at the time of Christopher Columbus:



We know from the experience at the first settlement Columbus left behind on Hispaniola, La Navidad, that the European men were coercing sexual relations with the local women. As one European of the period, Guillermo Coma, put it, 'Bad feeling arouse and broke out into warfare because of the licentious conduct of our men towards the Indian women, for each Spaniard had five women to minister to his pleasure,' and 'the husbands and relatives of the women, unable to take this, banded together to avenge this insult and eliminate this outrage.' Columbus found the fort destroyed and all the men he had left behind dead when he returned on his second voyage. (12)

In addition to attributing the native males' violent reaction to a sense of pride and a perceived need to defend/avenge "their" women's honor (an attitude comparable to that of many European husbands, brothers, or fathers), Wood also notes that the natives might have taken a different standpoint on sexuality, as shown in the following passage:

Notwithstanding the fantasy of sexual paradise that European writers were forging, and the suggestions of coercion and resistance that sometimes temper it, we must also allow the possibility that indigenous cultures did have different perspective on sex. According to Ramón Guitierrez, among the precontact Pueblo peoples of what is now New Mexico, the women, especially, found sexual intercourse an activity of considerable 'cultural import' and 'essential for the peaceful continuation of life.' He says these 'libidinous' women were 'empowered through their sexuality,' which was 'theirs to give and withhold.' They did extend it to outsiders, but often expected 'blankets, meat, salt, and hides' in return, or some 'bond of obligation.' Thus, when the Spanish 'soldiers satisfied their lust with Indian women but gave nothing in return, the Indian men declared war.' (13)

Here, native women are equated with prostitutes and their consorts with procurers rather than as legitimate husbands, fathers, or brothers. By the same logic, native males are said to have been prone to declare war on the Spaniards for "unrewarded" sex. In times of peace, however, there are reports of native men offering "their" women as gifts to the conquistadores.

Manuscripts written by 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish conquerors of America offer an elementary standard of comparison against which to measure similarities and

differences in terms of sexual attitudes with English settlers. They also help cast light on general issues of sexuality and sexual attitudes in a wealth of different contexts.<sup>138</sup> One of the recurrent themes manifest in both Spanish and English literary accounts of the time is the Whites' racial bias and their insistence on virginity in captured Indian women:

That sex was a clear expectation from the men's perspective is reflected in their concern to capture virgins. In the Ajusco manuscript, another one of the exceptional records made by indigenous males about the Spanish conquest of Mexico, we learn, 'It is known how [the Spaniards] take away [the indigenous rulers'] pretty women and also their women [who are] girls, virgins.' In certain passages Bernal Díaz also emphasizes the women's virginity (while simultaneously conveying his racist impression that indigenous women, in general, were not attractive), as when he counts a gift of 'five beautiful Indian maidens, all virgins. They were very handsome for Indian women.' (Wood 17)

Considering that Bradford also describes episodes of peaceful interaction between English settlers and the Natives that contained no sexual dimension, could there have been a noteworthy difference in attitudes between the Spaniards and the English settlers further north?

As for the common points, the most prevalent and representative is the European (Spanish, Portuguese, English, etc.) conception of the American land. The Whites' belief in the racial inferiority of the native is a leitmotiv of the conquest of the Americas. These lands were often represented as empty and virgin territories waiting to be conquered as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam suggest:

Europe's 'civilizing mission' has often interwoven opposed yet linked narratives of Western penetration of inviting virginal landscapes and of resisting libidinal nature. Samuel Eliot Morison, for example, in *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* (1942) recounts the European conquest of America in sexualized language: 'Never again may mortal men hope to recapture the Amazement, the wonder, the delight of those October days in 1492 when the New World gracefully yielded her virginity to the

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<sup>138</sup> By "wealth of different contexts," I mean not only all situations involving consented or forced sexuality between the settlers and the natives in times of war and peace, but also each group's separate conceptions of the other group's sexuality.

conquering Castilians.’ Sir Walter Raleigh, similarly, described ‘a country that hath yet her mayden head, never sakt, turned, nor wrought.’ And Crèvecoeur reported in a letter: ‘Here nature opens her broad lap to receive the perpetual accession of new comers, and to supply them with food.’ The early exaltation of the New World paradise gradually reconstituted around the idealized figure of the pioneer. The exaltation of the garden the classical *locus amoenus* cherished by European writers gave way to the exaltation of the cultivator. With this important addition, the garden metaphor evoked growth, increase, cultivation, and blissful agricultural labor, and implied that the land, prior to western penetration, was empty (just as the native was *tabula rasa*), uncultivated, undomesticated, without a legitimate (that is, settled European) owner. Within this larger topos, subliminally gendered tropes such as ‘conquering the desolation’ and ‘fecundating the wilderness’ acquired heroic resonances of Western fertilization of barren lands. (141)

There are definite similarities between Spanish and English settlers’ perception of the natives and their lands. For example the name of the colony Virginia was not only a reference to the Virgin Queen (Elizabeth I), but also evokes, as Carol Douglas Sparks insinuates, Pocahontas, a key character in the narratives about colonial Virginia who embodies an eroticized metaphor of the New Continent’s “virgin” lands:

Pocahontas was invariably young and beautiful, yet still untouched. An erotic virgin, Pocahontas invited and welcomed the white male adventurer, rejecting her own culture and heritage as inferior. Symbolically, the land she represented surrendered itself to the redeeming touch of the white male colonizer. (139)

In this metaphorical reading of Pocahontas, there is a popular cultural myth according to which native women are perceived as sexual objects “waiting” to be conquered by settlers just like the European conquered the surrounding lands. This connotes phallic power wielded by the Europeans over the local women, at least before the publication of the Puritan captivity narratives.

Before dealing directly with the perception of sexuality in New England and its representation in captivity narratives through the white filter of the Indian voice, I must take into consideration another early representation of intimate interaction between Whites and Natives, albeit one far less familiar to the general

public than the mythical figure of Pocahontas. Gordon Sayre discusses Giovanni da Verrazzano's description in a letter he sent to King Francis I of France ("[the] first European to explore the mid-Atlantic coast from the Carolinas north to Main, in 1524"). According to Sayre's commentary, Verrazzano's portrayal is extraordinary and differs greatly from the common myths:

[Verrazzano's] brief report to King Francis I of France, who employed him to make the trip, presents a romantic, Arcadian image and can be read as a comedic tale of courtship between two eager partners, each anxious for signs of willingness in the other, but unable to communicate by speech and inclined to misinterpret the other's gestures. (36)

Although Verrazzano's account dates back to 1524, i.e., long before the first representations of Pocahontas as a metaphor for the White man's capture of the "virgin" lands, it shows an unusually romanticized form of interaction between a white man and a native woman. In a comment on Verrazzano's description of native women as "shapely and beautiful; very gracious, of attractive manner and pleasant appearance," Sayre writes:

This image is not of a virgin land, innocently awaiting penetration by European man, but of a wealthy, comely, and civil partner who is generous and willing to please. It is more courtly than the more famous lines of the courtier, Raleigh. Three brief encounters in Verrazzano's narrative sketch a courtship process that is also quite different from the John Smith/Pocahontas legend, which has been thoroughly mythologized. (36)

For all its romanticism, even Verrazzano's approach still conveys what Ebersole calls the white male's phallic fantasy, and defines as a "distinctive narrative expression of sexual relations with the exotic and erotic Other." Ebersole adds that "in this widespread fantasy, the white male is represented as being clearly superior to the male Other in all ways, including sexual prowess. The white can run faster, shoot straighter, and fight better than any native, but most importantly, he proves to be sexually irresistible to beautiful female natives" (205).

Fantasies of this nature are rather less frequent in narratives by New Englanders such as Bradford, Winthrop, Eliot, and Roger Williams. Bradford and

Winthrop focus on the settlement of the colony and make only marginal references to interaction with the Natives, let alone issues of sexuality and sexual morals. Eliot concurs with his predecessors in marginalizing the “intimate” sphere in relations with the Natives. Instead, he emphasizes the results of his proselytizing among the Indians. Of the main early New England writers, only Williams and Morton, albeit from very different viewpoints, provide ethnographical descriptions of the Natives and their sexuality. The following chapters discuss Morton’s and Williams’s different approaches in respect to Indian sexuality.

Although their moral values cause New Englanders to avoid allusions to white phallic fantasy as described by Ebersole, it is not altogether absent as a close analysis of Morton’s work reveals. He writes in the prologue to his book that Canaan is “[I]Like a faire virgin, longing to be sped, And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed, Deck'd in rich ornaments t' aduance her state And excellence, being most fortunate, When most enjoy'd, so would our Canaan be If well employ'd by art and industry Whose offspring, now shewes that her fruitfull wombe” (10). The parallel between the female personification of this Canaan land and the Native women becomes even more apparent:

The women of this Country, are not suffered to be used for procreation, untill the ripenesse of their age, at which time they weare a redd cap made of lether in forme like to our flat caps, and this they weare for the space of 12 moneths: for all men to take notice of them that have any minde to a wife ; and then it is the custome of some of their Sachems or Lords of the territories, to have the first say or maidenhead of the females? (very apt they are) to be with childe, and very laborious when they beare children. Yea when they are as great as they can be, yet in that case they neither forbear labour, nor travel, I have seene them in that plight with burthens at their backs enough to load a horse, yet doe they not miscarry, but have a faire delivery, and a quick, their women are very good midwives, and the women very lusty after delivery and in a day or two will travell or trudge about. (23)

Although the phallic fantasy is perhaps conjured in the reader’s mind as he or she compares the two above passages, Morton has admiring words to describe the strength of the hardworking native women, and his portrayal is a far cry from the

superiority complex (of the white male) embodied in Ebersole's description of the fantasy.

Besides, Morton describes the Natives, both men and women, as modest people covering their nakedness. His portrayal challenges the prevailing stereotype of naked savages:

Their women have shooes and stockinges to weare likewise when they please, such as the men have, but the mantle they use to cover their nakednesse with, is much longer then that, which the men use; for as the men have one Deeres skinn, the women have two soed together at the full lenght, and it is so lardge that it trailes after them, like a great Ladies trane, and in time I thinke they may have their Pages to beare them up: and where the men use but one Beares skinn for a Mantle, the women have two soed together ; and if any of their women would at any time shift one, they take that which they intend to make use of, and cast it over them round, before they shifte away the other, for modesty, being unwilling to be scene to discover their nakednesse, and the one being so cast over, over they slip the other from under them in a decent manner, which is to be noted in people uncivilized, therein they seeme to have as much modesty as civilized people, and deserve to be applauded for it. (23)

Because of his propensity to criticize Puritan discourse, it is not altogether surprising that Morton should portray the natives in favorable terms and credit Indian women with "white values" of strength and modesty.

Roger Williams also addresses the issue of Indian nakedness, but from a more objective standpoint. He writes about Indian women's modesty with the professional distance of an ethnographer. Unlike Morton who is clearly subjective in his claim that Indians are as modest as "civilized" people and therefore deserve credit, Williams refrains from offering any manner of value judgment in his observations:

They have a two-fold nakednesse: First, ordinary and constant, when although they have a Beasts skin, or an English mantle on, yet that covers ordinarily but their hinder parts and all the foreparts from top to toe, (except their secret parts, covered with a little Apron, after the patterne of their and our first Parents) I say all else open and naked. [...] their Female they, in

a modest blush cover with a little Apron of an hand breadth from their very birth. Their second nakednesse is when their men often abroad and both men and women within doores, leave off their beasts skin, or English cloth and so (excepting their little apron) are wholly naked; yet but few of the women but will keepe their skin or cloth (though loose) or neare to them ready to gather it up about them. (106)

Williams also offers to a non-judgmental objective style when describing Indian sexuality and marriage. He writes: “Single fornication they count no sin, but after Marriage (which they solemnize by consent of Parents and publique approbation publicly) then they count it heinous for either of them to be false” (124). Although premarital sex is not condemned by the Indians, they praise virginity until marriage especially for girls as they “are distinguished by a bashful falling downe of their haire over their eyes,” and called *Kihtuckquaw*, meaning “A virgin marriageable” (43).

Williams also testifies to the Natives’ regard for marriage as a sacred institution, an attitude very similar to that observed by the Puritans themselves. He cites Indian contempt for adultery and mentions the harsh punishments meted out against adulterers:<sup>139</sup>

In this case the wronged party may put away or keepe the party offending: commonly, if the woman be false, the offended Husband will be solemnly revenged upon the offender, before many witnesses, by many blowes and wounds, and if it be to Death, yet the guilty resists not, nor is his Death revenged. (124)

Unlike most early narratives by Europeans in general and Puritans in particular which equate Indians with animals devoid of morality, Williams’ portrayal of the natives’ sexual mores establishes a clear commonality of attitudes with core Puritan practices and regulations regarding sexuality and respect of the sacred bonds of marriage.

### **3.3.2. *The New England Puritans' Conception of Sexuality***

The following chapter will deal with seventeenth-and eighteenth-century moral and legal concepts of sexuality among Puritans. When complementing those concepts with the preceding coverage of the more general “white” perception of “native” sexuality, the reader will be better equipped to understand and analyze how the narratives by Rowlandson and other survivors of Indian captivity addressed the taboo of sexuality. My point in addressing this particular issue is to examine the choices at the disposal of the Puritan narrator, especially in the case of women, to describe acts of cruelty perpetrated by Indians, but to do it with due restraint and in such a manner as not to compromise their own reputation with risqué details. This represents yet another source of potential narrative inconsistencies in reporting the facts of captivity and may therefore occasionally distort the overall picture in terms of how the former captives describe Indian conduct.<sup>140</sup>

Early Puritans considered premarital sex as an immoral act bordering on the criminal:

Puritan New England took moral offenses very seriously. Any threat to the virtue of its citizens jeopardized the survival of their New Zion, ‘City upon a Hill.’ Key to this survival was the family, consisting of a father, a mother, children, and other dependents. Through the family, order was maintained, values instilled, and property transferred. Any disturbance of family stability posed a threat to the society. Thus, moral transgressions were prosecuted as crimes and included any sexual activity outside of marriage. (87)<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Indian vocabulary related to adultery: “Mammausu, An Adulterer. Nummammogwunewo, He hath wronged my bed. Palle nochisquauaw, He or she hath committed adultery” (Roger Williams 124).

<sup>140</sup> I also look at this issue in the chapter dedicated to trauma in the second section. Here my main focus is on the narrative choice aspect, on how the taboo of sexuality transpires in the text, and to what extent such an approach influences the representation of the image and the “voice” of the Indian protagonists.

<sup>141</sup> Else L. Hambleton describes the extent of extramarital sexual activity in Essex County, Massachusetts, between 1641 and 1685 “Women who bore illegitimate children, their sexual



Harsh laws punished “adultery” or “fornication,” but women are punished or ostracized even harder, as Else L. Hambleton notes:

First, female chastity prior to marriage and female fidelity within marriage were essential to the orderly transmission of property. Second, illegitimacy represented the production of incomplete families. A family headed by a single mother could not be incorporated into a social order predicated on patriarchal authority. (99)<sup>142</sup>

This intransigent moral stance toward women weakened their position as they could easily be charged with accusations of immorality if caught in the midst of any ambiguous situation. Understanding that captivity in the wilderness could raise questions as to the victims’ sexual conduct during their period of subjugation to the “savages”, it is understandable that influential Puritans such as the Mather’s felt compelled to voice their protective arguments and to offer support and defend the reputation of freed captives, such as Rowlandson and Dustan.

Yet before embarking on a detailed analysis of the possibility of miscegenation between the white female captives and their abductors, I must clarify the meaning of the word “master,” which regularly surfaces in the narratives, within the context of the time. Considering that the definition of the word implies a notion of authority and power of the master over his subject (the captive woman), the term in the context of captivity does suggest that the prisoners

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partners, and couples whose first child arrived within eight months of marriage were prosecuted for fornication in the Quarterly Courts of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A quantitative analysis of bastardy and premarital fornication cases indicates that sexual activity outside of marriage was rare. The ratio of fornication cases relative to the population increased in the last thirty years of the seventeenth century. The proportion of unwed mothers and pregnant brides remained even. In Essex County, Massachusetts, between 1641 and 1685, 135 married women and 131 unmarried women were cited for fornication. However, there is a significant difference between these two groups of women. While pregnant brides fall into the same age group as their peers who married prior to the conception of their first child, 62 percent of the women who bore illegitimate children are younger, between the ages of fifteen and twenty” (90).

<sup>142</sup> Hambleton presents a legal case known as the Quarterly Court of Essex County vs. Priscilla Willson and M. Samuel Appleton. It is a highly representative case study involving the sixteen-year-old Priscilla Willson and Samuel Appleton. Both were convicted of fornication after the young girl gave birth to a child. The girl’s reputation was totally ruined despite allegations that she had been sexually abused. In his introduction to the article, Merrill D. Smith writes: “The reality of the situation, that Appleton most probably seduced or raped the much younger Willson, was lost to a canon that condemned premarital sex, but permitted class and gender double standards. Although

were exposed to what Tiffany Potter defines as “the risk of sexualized peril” (156). In interpreting the narratives, one should however also bear in mind that Puritans in the seventeenth century had a conception of the master/slave relationship that differed somewhat from the modern usage.

For all the historical evidence in support of such a notion—the master sexually abusing his slaves—it would seem that because of the rejection of extramarital sex, such an abuse of power would not have been condoned in Puritan circles. It follows that the use of the word “master” does not by any means automatically carry connotations of sexual abuse when penned by a Puritan woman. It is interesting to note, however, that other communities did not share the Puritans’ line on this issue. Smith D. Merrill, for instance, writes:

Unlike Puritan New England, the southern colonies and the Caribbean Islands of the eighteenth century did not control premarital and extramarital sexual activity so strictly. For white men, especially the rich and powerful, there were frequent opportunities for sexual encounters, especially with servants and slaves. This activity, if not condoned, was accepted by most of the white population. (133)

The classical literary representation of the master’s virtually unlimited exercise of power over his servants including sexual abuse should be reconsidered when analyzing Puritan works like the captivity narratives. The reason for such differentiation lies in the separate conception of the slave/master relationship in New England at the time of publication of the primary captivity narratives in this selection, a conception rooted in the early Plymouth colony.

John Demos writes about the master/slave relationship in his description of family life in the Plymouth colony:

In the first place and most simply, they were in the fullest sense integrated into the basic day-to-day functioning of the household. Every servant “lived in,” as we would say today; moreover, his master assumed full responsibility for meeting all of his essential needs. The formal contracts between the parties

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Appleton did have to pay half the court costs, as well as expenses incurred with the birth, his status as a gentleman and his connections to the judges enabled him to maintain his honor” (1).

concerned would usually specify these as ‘meate, drink and apparel & lodging.’ The Colony Records show that failure to fulfill these responsibilities might involve a master in legal proceedings. [...]. The duties of a master might also extend beyond the sphere of material wants, particularly in the case of *young* servants. As noted earlier, educational provisions were sometimes written into the indenture deeds; the master would promise at a minimum to teach his new charge to read and write. Moreover, there was a further responsibility for the spiritual development of the servant. (108)

This description differs radically from Wood’s accounts of the treatment suffered by native women slaves at the hands of the Spaniards: “[The] conquerors did not simply ravish women on the roads or in the fields; they increasingly seized them for long-term domestic service...” (16). Wood adds that the native women would eventually be settled “into a domestic relationship in which they had to perform all kinds of duties, including sexual ones” (16). Puritans, on the other hand, did not only treat their slaves as family members, but they assumed that women from their midst would be treated similarly when held in Indian captivity.

### **3.3.3. *Sexuality in Puritan Captivity Narratives***

Vaughan and Clark corroborate Demos’ description of the master/slave relationship even among Puritans at the time of publication of the main captivity narratives:

Puritan perceptions of how Indians treated captives may be partly explained by the narrators’ norms for family structure and its responsibilities [...]. A Puritan captive of the Indians usually referred to his principal captor as master, which not only implied the captive’s inferior status but also suggested that, in the captive’s eyes, each had reciprocal obligations. (19)

Despite the idealized representation of the master/slave relationship among Puritans and its mental projection onto circumstances in the Wilderness, the Puritans were still concerned about the possible damage to “their” women’s reputation when those were held captive by the “savages.” This awareness of the

problem exists in editorial policy as well as in choices made by the authors or narrators. In Rowlandson's narrative, for example, the preface emphasizes the former captive's "pious" and "modest" behavior and the author herself takes care of establishing her own reputation.<sup>143</sup>

Rowlandson displays great caution in describing her rapport with Indian men. She avoids all references to taboo subjects that could raise questions as to the preservation of her sexual integrity and damage her reputation. She claims that the Indians never made any passes at her although whole sections of her narrative read as an indictment, a "chronicle of native abuses during King Philip's War, from their slaughter of pregnant women to cannibalism" (Neuwirth 64). It would therefore appear, according to Neuwirth's analysis, that the Indians were guilty of just about every conceivable offense with the exception of rape.

In addition to rhetorical support from Increase Mather and Rowlandson's own denials in respect of insinuations that she might have given in to her abductors' assiduity, the author consistently maintains the image of a platonic master/slave relationship. Describing her domestic activities, she stresses her own efficiency and proudly points out that the Indians, even the men, had all reason to be satisfied with the clothes she made. Paradoxically, the more Rowlandson insists on the innocent and chaste nature of her relationships with Indian males, the more she falls prey to narrative inconsistencies that could induce the reader to imagine otherwise. A specific manifestation of such inconsistencies could be referred to as "guilty silence."

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<sup>143</sup> Before the publication of the narrative, Rowlandson's reputation had been stained by allegations that she had been married to an Indian. According to Tiffany Potter, that claim was soon countered in a publication. She writes: "Six years before Rowlandson's own account was published, however, another report of Rowlandson's captivity offered testimony of Rowlandson's sexual virtue in captivity even as it acknowledged the salacious possibilities. Nathaniel Saltonstall's 1676 *New and Further Narrative of the State of New England* admits that there 'was a Report that they had forced Mrs. Rowlandson to marry the one eyed Sachem, but it was soon contradicted; for being a very pious Woman and of great Faith, the Lord wonderfully supported her under this Affliction, so that she appeared and behaved herself amongst them with so much Courage and majestick Gravity, that none durst offer any Violence to her, but on the contrary (in their rude Manner) seemed to show her great Respect'" (Potter 157).

Relying on Budick and Iser's theory of undoing the spoken—the written in our case—to give voice to the silence, arguably Rowlandson resorts to some rhetorical adjustments to preserve her reputation. For instance, to avoid innuendoes arising from repeated scenes similarly suggestive of a close and warm relationship with some Indian men during her captivity, she makes it clear: "Not one of [the Indians] ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action" (70). Rowlandson seems to be aware of the narrative inconsistencies in first generally depicting Indians as "barbarous creatures," then emphasizing the cruelty of Indian women, and at the end showing sympathy to Indian men and even writing about her Indian master as follows: "[He] seemed to me the best friend that I had of an Indian, both in cold and hunger, and quickly so it proved" (51). As the closeness of this relationship might raise suspicions with some readers, it is punctuated with apparent omissions, as in the following extract: "About that time there came an Indian to me and bid me come to his wigwam at night, and he would give me some pork and ground nuts, which I did" (64). Rowlandson fails to give further details on this private visit. The interpretation of the narrative silence following the nocturnal visit inadvertently alerts the attentive reader to the implicit message between the lines.

Suspicions could even be more pointed in view of the following equivocal passage in which Rowlandson goes at great lengths to defuse the reader's suspicions:

Being almost drunk, he would drink to him, and yet presently say he should be hanged. Then he called for me. I trembled to hear him, yet I was fain to go to him, and he drank to me, showing no incivility. He was the first Indian I saw drunk all the while that I was amongst them. At last his squaw ran out, and he after her, round the wigwam, with his money jingling at his knees. But she escaped him. But having an old squaw he ran to her; and so through the Lord's mercy, we were no more troubled that night. (67)

Steven Neuwirth provides different interpretations of this passage according to whether the word "fain" is used in its first dictionary meaning which is "glad, well pleased," or the second meaning "glad or content to take a course [of action] in

default of opportunity for anything better.” With the given context of the narrative, Neuwirth tends to favor the second interpretation,<sup>144</sup> but he nevertheless reaches the conclusion that Rowlandson “is in a liminal place, occupying the middle ground between chastity and sexual adventure” (72).

Budick and Iser’s duality of silence vs. the written would seem to support such an interpretation. Earlier on in her narrative, Rowlandson writes: “I asked them whether I might not lodge in the house that night, to which they answered, ‘What, will you love English men still?’” (36) The association between house (home),<sup>145</sup> night and intimacy could further provide the attentive reader with an interpretative aid to the wigwam scene. The juxtaposition of the scenarios and verbal exchanges allows the deconstruction of the “written” (i.e., the English house scene) that perhaps demonstrates that Rowlandson indirectly and unwittingly gives voice to the *silence* following the wigwam scene. Through this silence, the reader may well “hear” echoes of hinted delicate contents deliberately filtered out for fear of social pressure and due to the associated threat perceived by the author/narrator, of prejudicing her reputation as a member of the parish or of society as a whole.

Rowlandson’s relationships with Indian men may seem even more suspicious when considering the narrator’s description of her rapport with Indian women, including her mistress, which she presents as essentially antagonistic. She writes that her “mistress” would not even give her food on some occasions and, worse of all, that she had snatched her Bible away from her and threw it out. The animosity between the two women escalates into an episode where the white woman stubbornly refuses to obey her Indian mistress who responds with a near

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<sup>144</sup> Neuwirth’s second interpretation of the passage is as follows: “Mary chooses the lesser of two evils. She can step forward and suffer verbal abuse (and risk being raped), or she can refuse to step forward and be chased around the wigwam. But that course of action doesn’t bode well either. First, she has no place to run except out of the wigwam and into the night and the wilderness. Second, she is thirty-nine years old, weak, and exhausted from her three-month ordeal. She is in no condition to run away. Besides, if Rowlandson is caught, and being caught is a likely scenario, she will be raped: witness the fate of Quinnapin’s older, slower squaw” (71).

<sup>145</sup> For further details on Rowlandson’s conception of “home,” see Lisa Logan’s “Mary Rowlandson’s Captivity and the ‘Place’ of the Woman Subject” (256).

beating (54). All acts of disobedience or rebelliousness that Rowlandson ever exhibits in the narrative are targeted at Indian women, particularly at her mistress. Moreover, the antagonistic relationship with female Indians is specific to Rowlandson's narrative.

Other former captive women generally present some instances of female solidarity. Swarton, for example, describes how she and her mistress suffered together from lack of food: "One time my mistress and I were left alone while the rest went to look for eels, and they left us no food from Sabbath-day morning till the next Saturday" (150). She adds that other Indian women provided them with food: "[I]t proved to be some squaws who, understanding our wants, one of them gave me a roasted eel which I ate and it seemed unto me the most savory food I ever tasted before" (150). Similarly, in the captivity narrative of the Quaker Elizabeth Hanson, a squaw is shown interceding on behalf of Elizabeth's son after her master ordered his son to beat the boy. The characteristic feature of Rowlandson's duality in her rapport to the Indians—the opposition between often friendly relationships with men<sup>146</sup> and hostility towards women—may in itself point at the possibility of "inappropriate" relationships.

When looking at the issue of chastity across a larger section of captivity narratives, big differences exist in the way the question is treated. But there is a convergence around a dual attitude: Some former captives or the authors writing on their behalf either clearly bestow Indians with decency or utterly elude the topic. The latter ("elusion") raises questions among the readers since Indians are not normally presented as particularly humane. How come, then, one might ask, would those men capable of the worst atrocities shy away, of all sins, from sexual abuse? For Instance, John Gyles writes: "Though both male and female may be in the water at a time, they have each of them more or less of their clothes on and behave with the utmost chastity and modesty" (111). Interestingly, as a man, Gyles

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<sup>146</sup> While Rowlandson's describes Indians as "barbarous heathen" and "merciless savages" in general as a group, when she relates specific interaction with individuals she often nuances her portrayal. She calls her master "a friend", one Indian offered her a copy of the bible, another gave her nuts, etc.

does not need to protect his reputation but he attributes the virtue of chastity to his abductors while women, such as former captives Dustan and Swarton, make no reference at all to chastity.

Rowlandson's narrative, as was the case in most accounts of captivity written by Puritan and non-Puritan men, describes Indians torturing their captives by stripping them naked. For all the humiliation carried by such an act, nothing suggests that rape or anything sexually improper took place. In fact, before the genre of the captivity narrative became "fictionalized" (in the sense defined by Derounian-Stodola), concupiscence did not feature among the many anathemas leveled at the Indians in spite of the resurgence of anti-Indian propaganda among Puritans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: "It was not the practice of Eastern Indians to violate their captives. Rape appears in only the most outrageously sensational narratives" (Levernier 64). Salacious episodes in captivity narratives started to appear in some, mainly fictional, accounts of captivity, only by the late eighteenth century,<sup>147</sup> and later on in some allegedly reality-based stories by captives of western tribes.

### **3.4. More Silenced Issues in Captivity Narratives**

#### **3.4.1. *Going Native***

The former captives' concern with their reputation was not limited to the notion of chastity. "Going native" was also deemed a taboo topic in Puritan captivity narratives. For instance, I have examined earlier in this study how adapting to her new circumstances helped Rowlandson recover from such traumatic events as the death of her child and the dispersal of her family. Her description of the Indians develops with time and becomes more appreciative. First a "brutish Heathen" (at

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<sup>147</sup> James Levernier and Hennig Cohen assert that "the passage describing the torture of Mrs Smith 'helpless virgin' daughter, said to be 'an event the most tragical ere [sic.] recorded in history,' is taken almost verbatim from an *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family*, published in 1793, frequently reprinted, and believed fictitious" (64).



the beginning of the text), in the end her Master is described as “a friend” while another Indian protagonist offered her a copy of the Bible and Indian dishes, initially condemned as inedible but eventually advanced to being “sweet and savory,” to name but a few examples. But despite such symptoms of growing sympathy for her jailors, Rowlandson explicitly rejects the idea of transculturation and “going native” by resorting to her most potent remedy, the scriptures. Biblical references accompany virtually every single paragraph in her narrative. These references may be seen as a “firewall” against contamination from Indian influences throughout Rowlandson’s text.

Most scholars attribute scriptural quotations in Puritan captivity narratives to ministerial editing, a means of conferring a seal of authority and compliance with Puritan ideology. Michelle Burnham argues that Rowlandson’s experience of liminality might be seen as a disturbance to the Puritan ideology:

Far from reproducing the recognizable patterns of social ritual, her dramatic and traumatic event of liminality oscillates between two systems of belief and ritual in a constant condition of the unexpected. By faithfully recording the resultant interactions and conversations between herself and the Indians, Rowlandson’s captivity narrative reveals the challenge these exchanges and dialogues posed to Puritan ideology. This text’s narrative dichotomy and its ideological contradictions are grounded in the linguistic and cultural exchanges that make up so much of the detail of Rowlandson’s story. (*Captivity and Sentiment* 21)

In other words, the references to scripture in women’s captivity narratives in general, and Rowlandson’s in particular, can be considered as a form of editorial interference on the part of men (Puritan ministers or publishers) in an effort to relieve the former captive from the perceived damage done to her soul by prolonged immersion in her abductors’ world and continued interaction with the Indians. One of the predominant aspects of Puritan captivity narratives is “the Puritan negation of any agreement or compromise with the Indians.” While Rowlandson herself does give her abductors some credit, the ministerial editors of the text refuse “to attribute any good purpose to the Indians” (Vaughan, *Narratives...* xiii). But contrary to accounts—however doctored for suitability—of

the successful return of former captives who had preserved their faith and therefore enjoyed the support of the male Puritan establishment, stories of captives adopting a positive attitude towards native ways (“transculturation”) as a result of exposure to Indian life remained elusive.

Scholars know that it is impossible to estimate the true number of those taken prisoner by the Indians, all the more so as many stories never made it to publication. This is even truer of stories relating the experiences of those captives who decided to stay with the Indians. Ebersole writes:

Captivity was not a negative experience for everyone. For some individuals, captivity opened up hitherto unimagined opportunities and lifestyle choices. Some individuals enjoyed a newfound freedom, unknown in the white world. This was obviously the case with many black slaves, but others, too—indentured servants, battered wives, overworked young boys, and young women—also realized an independence or a new social identity among the Indians that literally opened new worlds to them. To note this fact is not to suggest that captivity was a welcomed event; rather, it is to bring to our attention the remarkable adaptability and practical decision-making abilities of ordinary men and women who were sometimes able to turn events over which they originally had no control to their own advantage. Unfortunately, very few of the captives who went native left written accounts of their lives. (5)

While it is logical that those captives who never returned home could not tell their story in writing, this state of affairs also shows in a telltale fashion that the ministerial elite had no interest in popularizing such fates. This elite was very much involved not only in supporting the publication of narratives by former captives with the “right” attitude towards Puritan faith, but also—or even primarily—in producing narratives about reported stories of former captives they had never met.

As a result from the late seventeenth century on a big gap exists between the sizeable body of narratives praising Puritan ideology and excoriating Indians that flourished and the extreme scarcity of documented accounts, written or published, concerning the life choices of “transcultured” captives. Just as readers of captivity narratives are confronted with silenced facts (the “unsaid”) that

mainstream publishers deemed unfit to commit to paper, “silence” is even more conspicuous when it comes to what never even made it to the printing press in the first place; therefore, in addition to censuring any signs of transculturation in former captives’ published narratives, the ministerial elite also deliberately ignored the reality of those former captives who stayed among the Indians by choice.

Although there was a clear desire among Puritans to avoid the issue of unredeemed captives, the theme could not be altogether obliterated. In fact, some Puritan writers do make elusive references to unredeemed captives and usually express pity for their predicament. For instance, Winthrop writes about Hutchinson’s daughter that “she had forgot her own language, and all her friends,” and attributes her “Indianization” to the young age at which she was captured. This case was among the earliest instances of both captivity in general and the specific phenomenon of unredeemed captivity. Another factor that makes this case stand out was the suggestion that the transculturation experienced by Hutchinson’s child could be seen as a curse and punishment for her mother’s transgression. Be it as it may and before going deeper into a discussion of the fate of more representative Puritan captives, one should keep in mind the common contextual denominator, i.e., the indomitable faith and belief that the English (regardless of their stance on religion and at different periods of colonial history) held in the proclaimed superiority of their “civilized” way of life.

Before examining the reasons for such an attitude, I want to consider the phenomenon itself at the time when it came to be acknowledged as a fact of historical reality some decades after the best-known Puritan captivity narratives were published. Only around the mid eighteenth century did there appear a literary recognition that some white captives had chosen to stay with their former abductors even though they could have returned to their white environment. This fact clashed however with the English settlers’ staunch belief in the superiority of their culture and civilization over that of the native world.

This zeitgeist, which prevails throughout the history of colonization of the New World, made it inconceivable for most to even begin to imagine that anyone could trade a “civilized” lifestyle for life in the wilderness. James Axtell quotes from a colonial source and observes:

No civilized person in possession of his faculties or free from undue restraint would choose to become an Indian. ‘For, easy and unconstrained as the savage life is, certainly it could never be put in competition with the blessing of improved life and the light of religion, by any persons who have had the happiness of enjoying, and the capacity of discerning, them.’ (56)

While most published captivity narratives celebrated the eventual release of the former captives in accordance with the spirit of this superior attitude, Ebersole points out that “there is also considerable evidence that returning to the white world after living with the Indians was easier said than done” (5). The main reason for such difficulties, according to Ebersole, is the community’s inclination to reject the returnees:

Returning captives often faced widespread prejudice and racism in white society. Many never found themselves completely accepted or fully reassimilated. Some returned captives left the white world out of a sense of disappointment, frustration, or disgust and returned to their Indian families and friends. Others found a niche as cultural intermediaries of one sort or another—as Indian traders, interpreters, guides, and assistants to government agents—but they largely remained on the margins of American society. (5)

Ebersole mainly cites known cases from the mid eighteenth century forward. Daniel Cole, whose work focuses on an even later period, concurs: “The circumstances and consequences surrounding these decisions resist easy summary, but their stories all point to the difficulties raised by their hybrid status, betwixt and between whites and Indians” (25). The author refers to this period as one in which the Indian captivity phenomenon turned into “a banal occurrence” or, at least, “a commonplace on the frontier” (6), but it was only then that the theme of the “white Indians” began to emerge on the literary horizon.

While both designations refer to white captives who, willingly or unwillingly, never returned to their people, caution is urged when using such terminology. Except for very few exceptions, “white Indian” is the term scholars generally use to refer to Indianized captives. Although there was an obvious avoidance of the theme in writing by early Puritan writers, the odd reference in the margins of their narratives usually refers to an “unredeemed captive.”

### **3.4.2. *Historical Reality of White Indians in America***

While the Puritan editorial elite avoided stories dealing with unredeemed captivity in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, an increasing number of such narratives began to appear as from the mid-eighteenth century. The present chapter sets out to offer a scholarly survey of narratives dealing with this historical reality, a reality in stark contrast with the presupposed cultural superiority of the English. Those—a distinct majority—who held this view at the time saw this “superiority” as a protection against any transgression by their own people in trading their way of life for the wilderness. The belated admission that this need not always have been the case also serves as an indirect commentary on the earlier attitude in the Puritan community.

Axtell sheds light on the discrepancy between the English conceptions of the superiority of their culture and the historical reality of white captives. He attributes the first recognition of the “disparity between the English dream and the American reality” to Cadwallader Colden in his *History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada* (1747) and quotes him as follows:

No Arguments, no Intreaties, nor Tears of their Friends and Relations, could persuade many of them to leave their new Indian Friends and Acquaintance[s]; several of them that were by the Caressings of their Relations persuaded to come Home, in a little Time grew tired of our Manner of living, and run away again to the Indians, and ended their Days with them. On the other Hand, Indian Children have been care-fully educated among the English, cloathed and taught, yet, I think, there is

not one Instance, that any of these, after they had Liberty to go among their own People, and were come to Age, would remain with the English, but returned to their own Nations, and became as fond of the Indian Manner of Life as those that knew nothing of a civilized Manner of living. What I now tell of Christian Prisoners among Indians [he concluded his history], relates not only to what happened at the Conclusion of this War, but has been found true on many other Occasions. (qtd. in Axtell 57)

The reality described by Cadwallader is in stark contrast to the postulated truism of English superiority. Later on, Benjamin Franklin gives support to Colden's observation, noting:

When an Indian Child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our Customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and makes one Indian Ramble with them, there is no perswading him ever to return. [But] when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners young by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho' ransomed by their Friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a Short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first good Opportunity of escaping again into the Woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them. (qtd. in Axtell 57)<sup>148</sup>

According to Axtell, the first references to the reality of former captives' rejection of their civilized life are accompanied by amazement and perplexity on the part of the reporting authors. In both examples, one may notice the writers' incredulously admitting that their own people could so easily trade their former civilized life for a new existence in the Wilderness alongside their former abductors. They expressed surprise at the fact that adaptation by Indians to the white world did not work nearly as well considering young Indians brought up in "civilization" with all attendant advantages finally prefer to return to their traditional way of life. Colden's and Franklin's testimonies thus constitute early literary challenges to English cultural presumptuousness.

This presumptuousness is not exclusive to the English. It is shared by most Europeans during the conquests. In the late eighteenth century, in his *Letters from*

*an American Farmer* (1782), French Jesuit J. Hector St John de Crèvecoeur justifies the phenomenon of captives disinclined to leave the Indians as follows:

The English captives who foiled their countrymen's civilized assumptions by becoming Indians differed little from the general colonial population when they were captured. They were ordinary men, women, and children of yeoman stock, Protestants by faith, a variety of nationalities by birth, English by law, different from their countrymen only in their willingness to risk personal insecurity for the economic opportunities of the frontier. There was no discernible characteristic that differentiated them from their captive neighbors who eventually rejected Indian life—with one exception. Most of the colonists captured by the Indians and adopted into Indian families were children of both sexes and young women, often the mothers of the captive children. They were, as one captivity narrative observed, the 'weak and defenceless.' (qtd. in Axtell 58)

Taking the truism of European superiority for granted, Crèvecoeur isolates non-returning captives within a sub-social group predisposed to transculturation by virtue of their weak identity. By stressing their underprivileged social status and claiming that most of these reluctant captives belonged to the weaker and easily-manipulated categories (women and children), Crèvecoeur nuances the harsh historical reality of Indian captives trading European civilization for the wilderness.

Based on a broader selection of narratives on White Indians, Axtell attributes the acculturation of the former captives to the Indians' efficient methods and educational mastery. He writes: "The Indians obviously chose their captives carefully so as to maximize the chances of acculturating them to Indian life. To judge by the results, their methods were hard to fault. Even when the English held the upper hand militarily, they were often embarrassed by the Indians' educational power" (61). In all the narratives I have read on the subject (be it those selected for this study or complementary readings), it appears that the Indians distinguished between different categories of captives. The way the Indians treated their captives depended on their initial motives for taking the captives. They often reserved ill-

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<sup>148</sup> Axtell quotes from Colden and Franklin's works, respectively published in 1747 and 1753.

treatments including torture and death to avenge tribe members killed by Europeans. They usually took care, at least physically, of the captives they abducted for ransom and even came to love those they took for adoption.

The adopted captives were essentially given the same treatment the Indians reserved for their own children. Some sources even report that when the Indians had to let some such captives go back to their white families after the signing of a treaty of peace or payment of a ransom, the Indians actually mourned the departure as though they had lost a member of their own tribe; there are even records in which Indians refer to their former captives as their *flesh* and *blood* as in the following passage quoted by Axtell from the papers of Sir William Johnson. When delivering back his captives, a Shawnee Indians declared:

Father—Here is your Flesh, and Blood . . . they have been all tied to us by Adoption, although we now deliver them up to you. We will always look upon them as relations, whenever the Great Spirit is pleased that we may visit them . . . Father—we have taken as much Care of these Prisoners, as if they were [our] own Flesh, and blood; they are become unacquainted with your Customs, and manners, and therefore, Father we request you will use them tender, and kindly, which will be a means of inducing them to live contentedly with you. (61)

Occasionally, the achieved degree of “Indianization” that each captive achieved was such that the colonists faced problematic situations in dealing with the returned captives. Axtell describes a form of reversed captivity as white authorities were ordered to keep a watchful eye over the restored captives out of fear they might use the first opportunity to reunite with their former abductors (62) Even where no such attempts were made, the returnees were apt to exhibit heartbreak and depression caused by separation from their adoptive Indian families. Axtell describes moving separation scenes: “[the Indians] delivered up their beloved captives with the utmost reluctance; shed torrents of tears over them, recommending them to the care and protection of the commanding officer” (63). In view of the superiority complex harbored by the English settlers, the phenomenon of “reversed captivity” represented a close on unbearable reality for the white authors of the time, who generally preferred to attribute such



circumstances to the alleged weakness of the returnees in question, mainly women<sup>149</sup> and children.

While child captives were indisputably more at risk of undergoing the process of “going native,” scholars have found another explanation for the remarkable attractive power of Indian culture. According to Axtell, the main quality displayed by the Indians in adopting their captives is their patience as “they wasted no time in beginning the educational process that would transform their hostile or fearful white captives into affectionate Indian relatives” (66). Axtell also mentions other positive values nurtured by the Indians such as bravery, manhood and civility towards women captives. Another example, posited up by Axtell, of the Indians’ supposed ability to win over the minds and the hearts of their former captives is in the eagerness to trade hard-heeled shoes for Indian footwear more suitable for the forest. The image of the moccasins to which Axtell refers to as the Indians’ “superbly adapted technology” could be seen as a metaphor of (a paradoxical form of) freedom experienced in embracing a new way of life in the wilderness.

Even when taking into consideration the corpus of accounts surveyed by Axtell in his works dedicated to the White Indians, these were little more than a piecemeal collection of scraps of information gathered from marginal notes in records of different genres. It is undisputable that white writers by nineteenth century freely wrote about the phenomenon and no longer shied from addressing uncomfortable realities as their predecessors had done at the time of Rowlandson’s captivity. But as far as the captivity narrative genre was concerned, accounts exclusively dealing with the captivity and post-captivity experience of white Indians still remained relatively rare even by the mid-eighteenth century. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola provides the following explanation:

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<sup>149</sup> These were mainly former captive women who had married Indian men, a phenomenon scarcely heard of at the time of Rowlandson’s captivity. Scholars, such as Axtell, explain, however, that these women were reluctant to go back to their white families. Axtell writes that among these returnees “were some of the English women who had married Indian men and borne them children, and then had been forced by the English victory either to return with their half-breed children to a country of

Precisely because many of these captives chose to disassociate themselves from white culture, most of their captivities went unrecorded. Due to illiteracy or a lack of interest or opportunity, the vast majority of transculturated captives chose to remain silent. Having embraced Indian culture as their own, many of these captives probably had little, if any, desire to communicate with white audiences. (*Indian Captivity Narrative* 73)

True as this might be, the fact that such narratives are so few must be attributable at least as much to reluctance on the part of the publishing houses as it is to any lack of initiative of returning captives. In earlier chapters, I have shown that the publication of most late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Puritan captivity narratives in this selection was largely sponsored and orchestrated by the ministerial/editorial elite of the time. Some of the narratives in question, such as Stockwell's, travelled through intermediaries without the knowledge of the former captive. It is against such a backdrop and in comparison with such attitudes that the "editorial silence" toward stories of "unredeemed captives" becomes eloquent.

The silence would eventually be broken in publications that related cases of captives who chose to stay with their abductors. Such cases, which are surveyed in Axtell's work, are important as they later paved the way to the release of more famous and complete captivity narratives by White Indians, such as John D. Hunter's (the captive himself) *Manners and Customs of Several Indian Tribes* (1823), James E. Seaver's *Life of Mary Jemison* (1824), and Edwin James's *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (1830), to name but a few. The latter two are the most famous captivity narratives to have been penned by White Indians. Derounian-Stodola describes a hostile audience psychologically unprepared to read materials portraying the Indians in a favorable light:

White audiences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear to have had little desire to read accounts of Indian culture that went counter to the negative image of Indians that an expansionistic white society created to dispossess them of their Western properties. (74)

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strangers, full of prejudice against Indians, or to risk escaping under English guns to their husbands and adopted culture" (62).

In this statement one may understand that the white superiority complex still largely held true among white audiences in the early nineteenth century despite the existence of the Axtell-surveyed challenging testimonies published a hundred or so years before.

Despite a common strand of anti-Indian feeling between the two periods, the antagonism had different motives when compared with primarily religious concerns harbored by seventeenth-century Puritan propaganda. The new motive is rooted in the post-revolutionary expansionist policies and related propaganda.<sup>150</sup> Clifton Johnson, for example, notes that throughout the history of interaction between the white colonists and the Indians, a key issue had been that of control over land, with the whites denouncing a hostile climate of “‘affronts offered’ by the savages and disputes about the lines of separation” (4). This struggle continued and even escalated after the American Revolution. Surprising as it may seem in this climate of hostility, the “white Indians” were still able to publish their narratives. What made this possible and what should be read into the challenge this represented in the face of anti-Indian sentiment? How did the publishing houses and their editorial staff succeed in bridging the gap between a hostile audience and White Indians eager to communicate their positive experiences with the despised Indians?

Derounian-Stodola emphasizes the publishers’ efforts to sweeten the pill for a prejudiced audience. Often the line chosen was to publicly distance themselves from the work they were selling to a reticent audience. Concerning Mary Jemison’s captivity for instance, Derounian-Stodola describes Seaver’s authorial and editorial effort to disprove the veracity of Jemison’s account:

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<sup>150</sup> Although conflicts over the Natives’ lands intensified after the American Revolution as a part of the Whites’ expansionist policy, the purchase of lands from the natives had existed from the first European settlements. Clifton Johnson describes one such transaction in Puritan days: “All the land occupied by our New England settlers was bought from the Indians, but the early pioneers never let sentiment interfere with business—they bought as cheaply as they could, independent of the real worth of their purchases. For instance, all the fertile lowlands from Suffield to Northfield were obtained from the natives for a few great coats and some hundred fathoms of wampum. The Indians were like children in the hands of the Puritans when it came to business” (5).

Rather than emphasize the positive nature of Jemison's life among the Indians, he describes her captivity as 'An Account of the Murder of Her Father and His Family; her sufferings; her marriage to two Indians: her troubles with her Children; [and] barbarities of the Indians in the French and Revolutionary Wars. (74)

Apart from the marketing aspect pointed out by Derouinian-Stodola, it is interesting to note Seaver's disclaimer-like insistence on dissociating the publisher's role from the narrator's responsibility for her statements. Seaver makes it clear that the former captive speaks in her own words and that all the descriptions and background information, including details about Jemison's way of dressing and attitudes during the interview he had with her were clearly sourced to the subject of the narrative.

Contrary to the common practice in late seventeenth-century publications authorized by the Puritan elite to intersperse their marketing materials with phrases such as "written by her own hands" or "the Relator had this from the mouth of," as a pledge of authenticity, Seaver's insistence that the account comes from Jemison's mouth appears to be a means of disowning the narrator by taking distance from her positive portrayal of the Indians. This becomes particularly obvious when one may notice how the writer in charge of couching the narrator's words on paper describes her in her Indian clothes:

Her dress, at the time I saw her, was made and worn after the usual Indian fashion. She had on a brown, undressed flannel short-grown, with long sleeves, the skirt reaching the hips, being tied before in two places with deer-skin strings [...]. Her petticoat, or the Indian substitute for that garment, was composed of about a yard and a quarter of blue broadcloth, with the lists on, and sewed together at the ends [...]. Over her shoulders was wrapped a common Indian or Dutch blanket, and on her head she wore an old, brown woolen cloth, somewhat in the shape of a sun-bonnet. (20)

Seaver's description is clearly that of an utterly "Indianized" woman and continues with the charge that "such was the dress this woman was not only contented to wear but delighted in wearing," adding that "she wore it as a matter of choice" and that "her habits are those of the Indians—she sleeps on skins without a bedstead;

sits upon the floor, or on a bench; and when she eats, holds her victuals on her lap, or in her hands” (22). So even though he writes and publishes a seemingly positive narrative that praises the Indians in the mouth of the White Indian narrator, Seaver is not really challenging his reticent audience but rather seems to be offering the sensationalistic story of a “strange” white woman who turned her back on her own people to adopt an Indian way of life pervading most aspects of her daily existence.

According to Derouinian-Stodola’s interpretation of Seaver’s introduction to the narrative, the author “seems almost bored with what Jemison (whose Indian name was Dehgewanus) told him about herself and certainly somewhat disappointed about not having found more to legitimately sensationalize about her life,” as he writes:

The vices of the Indians, she appeared disposed not to aggravate, and seemed to take pride in extolling their virtues. A kind of family pride inclined her to withhold whatever would blot the character of her descendants, and perhaps induced her to keep back many things that would have been interesting.  
(74)

So as not to irritate or further distance a reluctant readership, Seaver clearly disassociates himself from anything positive in Jemison’s portrayal of the Indians by implicitly stripping her of her former white identity and emphasizing that she belongs to the adoptive culture to which she was bound even more through her miscegenated offspring.

### **3.4.3. *The Embarrassing Story of Eunice Williams***

Despite perpetual rejection by the population at large, the editorial attitude towards the specific nature of White Indian experience did undergo a distinct shift in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The propagandistic handling of captivity narratives by Puritans forced the narrators to either silence the reality of some former captives’ reluctance to return to their white families or

to misrepresent a deliberately prolonged stay among the Indians as the effect of supposed coercion on the part of the captors. A case in point was that of Reverend John Williams's daughter, Eunice Williams. Suffice it to say that this case constituted an embarrassment to the Puritan editorial elite of the time.

Although there were other cases of "unredeemed" captives, the story of Eunice William's bears particular prominence because she was the daughter of a minister, himself a redeemed captive and author of one of the bestsellers in the captivity narrative genre at the time. Her case could not go unnoticed whether it was at the time of the Deerfield attack or later as material for retrospective analysis among colonial historians and scholars. Eunice Williams was kidnapped along with her father and the rest of her family by Indians who attacked her village in 1704.

Awareness of the attack was greatly enhanced by the account given in the father's narrative:

The northwestern most village in New England for most of the colonial period, Deerfield has become a symbol of the region's frontier experience, and the story of this place as a point of contact between cultures has been dominated by Williams's account of the 1704 raid. The minister's relation of the attack and his captivity, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*, has been called 'the masterpiece' of the captivity narrative genre. More than any other text, this book etched in the memory of later generations the image of the New England frontier as a zone of constant conflict where English colonists fought off the French and their native allies. (Haefeli and Sweeney, "Revisiting" 3)

No one at the time took it upon himself to write about Eunice Williams, not even the Mathers, otherwise prolific writers and publishers of captivity stories. There was just one brief mention of her in Cotton Mather's diary:

I have a poor Kinswoman, a Daughter of my cousen-german, who has been six or seven years a Captive, in the hands of the French Popish Indians. I am afraid; I have not considered the miserable Condition of that Child, with such a frequency and fervency of Supplication, as I should have done; tho' I have not forgotten it. But I would now with a more importunate

Supplication than ever, continually carry that Child unto the strong Redeemer. (92)

In addition to Mather's prayer for a Puritan child, I also want to quote Samuel Sewall: "Has hopes of Mr. [John] Williams's daughter at Canada; may be as when Samson married a Philistin. I mention'd the Omen of her Name Eunice, *Bene litigans*" (374). To understand the unease caused among Puritans by Eunice's captivity and the elite's reluctance to document the story, one needs to make the connection with the upheaval caused by the Deerfield attack which features prominently in history and literary records. When they do mention the case at all in the margin of their work, the famous Puritan authors are very careful in handling the delicate issue of the captive's reluctance to return home and her choice to stay with the Indians.

John Williams understandably showed the most concern in this respect. In his illustrious captivity narrative, he refers to his unredeemed daughter's fate and argues that her decision to stay with the Indians was endured rather than the result of a free choice. He stresses his claim by reminding the reader that the Jesuits had made it clear in a letter to the governor that "the Macquas would as soon part with their heart as [his] child" (189). After long negotiations between the Puritan authorities and the Jesuit allies of Eunice's Indian abductors, John Williams was allowed to meet his daughter, an encounter about which he writes the following.

When we came thither, he discoursed with the Jesuits after which my child was brought into the chamber where I was. I was told I might speak with her but should be permitted to speak to no other English person there. My child was about seven years old; I discoursed with her near an hour; she could read very well and had not forgotten her catechism. And [she] was very desirous to be redeemed out of the hands of the Macquas and bemoaned her state among them, telling me how they profaned God's Sabbaths and said she thought that a few days before they had been mocking the devil, and that one of the Jesuits stood and looked on them. (189)

Williams in effect flatly refutes any claim that his daughter has become transculturated and blames the Indians for detaining her against her will. Later

references to his daughter's captivity focus on his and the governor's effort to obtain her release.

Nothing is recorded about her personal feelings or any changes in her perceived identity. Williams concedes however that "she was much afraid she should forget her catechism, having none to instruct her" (189). Later on, he vaguely admits that his daughter converted to Catholicism:

The consideration of such crafty designs to ensnare young ones and to turn them from the simplicity of the gospel to Romish superstition was very exercising; sometimes they would tell me my children, sometimes my neighbors were turned to be of their religions. Some made it their work to allure poor souls by flatteries and great promises, some threatened, some offered abusive carriages to such as refused to go to church and be present at Mass; for some they industrious contrived to get them married among them. (197)

What appears to be an inclusionary statement by Williams about English captives in general, is in fact a specific, albeit oblique, reference to his own daughter. It has since been established as a historical fact that Eunice subsequently became a "papist" and married an Indian convert. It can therefore be argued that, in the last part of his narrative, Williams mixes the ministerial narrative voice and the voice of a father (the paternal narrative voice).

This conflation is particularly apparent in the narrator's exhaustive display of the Jesuits' method of forcing the Puritan captives to embrace Catholicism. For instance, he writes in detail how they shift from "flattering promises of rewards" to "threatening."<sup>151</sup> The paternal tone manifests itself when Williams insists on the

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<sup>151</sup> Williams describes the how the Jesuits pressured two dying English women into a last minute conversion at the close of a life dedicated to the Puritan faith: "And when two English women who had always opposed their religion were sick in the hospital, they kept with them night and day till they died, and their friends kept from coming to visit them. After their death they gave out that they died in the Romish faith and were received into their communion. Before their death Masses were said for them, and they [were] buried in the churchyard with all their ceremonies. And after this letters [were] sent into all parts to inform the English that these two women turned to their religion before their death, and that it concerned them to follow their example, for they could not be more obstinate than those women were in their health against the Romish faith and yet on a death bed embraced it. They told the English who lived near that our religion was a dangerous religion to die in" (202). The fate of these two women was broadly publicized and is also mentioned in a letter that



fact that this practice applied not just to his daughter but to other English captives, including some of the children of his own acquaintances. By including references to other converted captives, Williams relieves his grief and some of the dishonor brought upon him by his unredeemed daughter's fate.

The presence of the paternal tone is also unmistakable in the conclusion to his narrative, where he cites his correspondence with his son Samuel. He presents Samuel as a consolation from the suffering caused by his unredeemed daughter as his son, by contrast, survived and resisted the Jesuits' moral pressures and physical torture to convert him. Although he was about to succumb to the Jesuits' pressures,<sup>152</sup> he eventually made his father proud by turning down their tempting offer:

At Mont-Royal especially, all crafty endeavors were used to stay the English. They told my child if he would stay he should have an honorable pension from the king every year and that his master, who was an old man and the richest in Canada, would give him a great deal, telling him if he returned he would be poor, for, said they, your father is poor, [he] has lost all his estate; it was all burned. But he would not be prevailed with to stay; and others were also in like manner urged to stay, but God graciously brake the snare and brought them out. They endeavored in the fall of the year to have prevailed with my son to have gone to France when they saw he would not come to their communion anymore. (225)

The positive casting of Samuel's courage in Williams's narrative contrasts with the conspicuous silence concerning the author's daughter (Eunice). Also, the narrative ignores the whole issue of transculturation (whites adopting native Indian culture) while emphasizing the perceived scandal of forced conversions by the Jesuits with respect to English captives. Only later would historians and scholars shed some light on Eunice's captivity and her decision to stay among the Indians.

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Williams's son sent to his father. It is presented as an illustration of the stratagems used by the Jesuits to force conversion upon English captives.

<sup>152</sup> In a letter to his father, Samuel apologetically admitted to having sinned under Jesuit pressure: "As for what you ask me about my making an abjuration of the Protestant faith for the Romish, I durst not write so plain to you as I would but hope to see and discourse with you. I am sorry for the sin I have committed in changing of religion, for which I am greatly to blame. You may know that Mr. Meriel, the schoolmaster, and others were continually at me about it; at last gave over to it, for which I am very sorry" (219).

Despite the deliberate obliteration of her story at the time, Eunice's fate would come to be described extensively and prominently in the secondary literature. Among scholars who have written about her, Audra Simpson notes on the subject of "captivation:"

Her identifications and recognitions and the celebration of her story do not come without consequences, consequences that have not been considered in the literature on captivity. This is a literature that largely considers captivity to be a case of force, adoption, and/or kinning in an effort to re-historicize the past in deeply connected ways. These important contributions to literary and historical studies have significantly problematized the notion of settler and Indigenous experiences as isolated from each other and have given us a sense, especially in literary studies, of the importance of Indigenous 'savagery' to the construction and maintenance of a 'civilized' colonial self. However, in colonial "situations"—historical moments and processes that are still in play—the captivating savage not only defines but undermines and seduces the colonial self—the notion of the captive white does things to Indian social structure and polity as well. (106)

When set against this backdrop of producing an acceptable rendering of the encounter between the civilized world and the "savages" ("re-historicization"), the literature dedicated to Eunice's story also helped to break the silence kept by her father and consorts in the ministerial elite. This conduct was born out of a mixture of shame and the fear to see their "superior" way of life and their endeavor to "build a city upon the hill" undermined by Indian culture and its attractiveness to some of the English captives.

I want to stress that the literature on Eunice began to appear only after more than a century had elapsed since her actual captivity experience. Among the leading studies are Charles B. de Saileville's *The Fair Captive: The Life and Captivity of Miss Eunice Williams* (1842), Clifton Johnson's *An Unredeemed Captive* (1897), Elizabeth M. Sadoques's *The History and Traditions of Eunice Williams and Her Descendants* (1922), and more recently, John Demos' *Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (1995). The first publication of the story postdates that of the best-known "white Indians" captivity

narratives.<sup>153</sup> Interestingly, another of William's children, Stephen, also failed to have his story published at the time when John Williams's narrative ranked among the best sellers. While pro-Indian leanings account for the censorship experienced by Eunice, what was it in Stephen's case that caused the silencing of his story at the time?

Less famous than his father's, Stephan Williams's narrative focuses considerably on his interaction with the Indians. Unlike his father and his brother Samuel, Stephen was less concerned about the French and the Jesuits, possibly because there were no apparent pressures on him to forcefully embrace Catholicism. Although Haefeli and Sweeney assert that Stephen's "text reveals that he reviewed a copy of his father's *Redeemed Captive* to refresh his memory of some of the experiences they had shared" (*Captives History* 160), Stephen's narrative gives a ten-year-old boy's perspective on his captors. The printed version of the narrative appeared in 1837. It starts with a typically Puritan style description of the Indian attack with ample repetition of the adverb "barbarously." Like in most Puritan writings of the genre, here too, the narrative opens with an account of atrocities, murders and acts of mistreatment committed by the Indians. This is followed by personal complaints. Although Stephen Williams reports no major mistreatment, he recounts the basic inconveniences of captivity such as the cold in the wilderness, imposed work, and the separation from his family.

Apart from this, although he admits to receiving occasional manifestations of sympathy from the Indians, Stephen Williams seizes every opportunity to express his disdain of them and their culture:

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<sup>153</sup> See *Manners and Customs of Several Indian Tribes* (1823) by John D. Hunter, *Life of Mary Jemison* (1824) by James E. Seaver and *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (1830) by Edwin James. Although my main focus is on the publication versus silencing of embarrassing captivity stories, there are also other aspects of the captivity narrative genre worth mentioning outside the specific angle of this chapter. On this let me quote this extract from Pauline Turner Strong: "The capture and social transformation of outsiders was a widespread but varied practice in indigenous North America. Depending upon the society and time period in question, captivity was followed by incorporative practices such as adoption and resocialization as well as a variety of subordinating practices ranging from confinement and involuntary labor to torture and death. Although underrepresented in popular imagery and in scholarly accounts, Native American

When I first arrived here, they were extraordinary kind, took care of my toe that was frozen, would not suffer me to [do] any work, [and] gave me a deer skin to lie on and a bear's skin to cover me withal. But this did not last long, for I was forced to carry such a pack when I traveled that I could not rise up without some help, was forced to cut wood, and carry it sometimes a considerable way on my back. After that manner I lived till their hunting time was over, without any society but these inhuman pagans. (164)

Stephen Williams seems to intentionally interrupt the flow of positive reporting in the narrative to apportion blame, even if only to reproach them for going about their daily tasks in their own different way; in fact, there is no torture involved and, as far as the daily chores of the Indians are concerned, he does not seem to do more than the other members of the tribe. As in some instances in Rowlandson's writing, the author fails to back up his condemnations with hard facts. A point in case is his hyperbolic use of the phrase "inhuman pagans" to refer to members of a hard working tribe.

Stephen's contempt of Indian culture becomes even more obvious when one considers his narrative attitude towards the French. Although the latter were allied to the Indians, and although his father turned his narrative into a French captivity narrative in which he primarily denounces the Jesuit threat, Stephen, for his part, chooses to tolerate religious differences in the face of a shared cultural and ethnic background. Stephen Williams insists on the material comfort he found among the French and the kindness they showed him:

I went with the Frenchman who gave me some victuals, and made me lie down in his couch, which my master's son perceiving told his father who thought he did it to hide me and did design to steal me, upon which he came and fetched me away and would not let me go to the fort any more for which I suffered. While I was here the French dressed my feet that were wounded at which the Indians seemed to be vexed. (166)

Later on in the narrative, Stephen adds that they reached another Frenchman's house, and again he juxtaposes French kindness to Indian impositions: "[The

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captives of Europeans and Euro-Americans were also subjected to a variety of incorporative and subordinating practices" (19).

Frenchman] was kind to me and would have lodged me in his house but the Indians would not allow of it, mistrusting he would convey me away in the night privately” (166). Such remarks clash with the historical reality of the alliance between the French and the Indians. Stephen Williams voices discontent at having been prevented by the Indians, from further enjoying the comfort offered to him by the French. This expression of regret over his forced separation from the company of fellow Europeans effectively overshadows the issue of religious antagonism between French Catholics and English Puritans in the name of “ethnic” solidarity.

It is clear now that Stephen’s text completely departs from his “white Indian” sister’s essentially positive conception of the Indians. Stephen’s scorn is hardly motivated by actual Indian violence and even less is it attributable to the Jesuit influence on his Indian abductors as was the case for his father’s attitude. The question thus remains why the son’s narrative failed to make it to publication. A possible answer could be quite simply to look for reasons in the context of issues immediately following the captivity. Although Stephen’s approach had none of his sister’s “embarrassing” pro-Indian stance and therefore represented no threat to the anti-Indian propaganda of the time, the narrative’s publication could still conceivably have clashed with the Puritan attitude that had evolved from all-out demonization of the Indians during and immediately after King Phillip’s war to a predominantly anti-Catholic sentiment during and after King Williams’s war.

I have thus far identified two main approaches to the issue of “silence”: textual silence and editorial silence. The former was evidenced by inconsistencies in the text caused by presumed risqué episodes with implied sexual connotations or instances of exaggerated adaptation to the Indian lifestyle. Suspected intervention by the editorial elite might be seen at the origin of inconsistencies within the text. The editorial silence for its part manifested itself in a refusal to publish stories of white Indians at a time when the most famous Puritan captivity narratives—those by Mary Rowlandson and John Williams—dominated the Puritan book market and served Puritan propaganda in more ways than one.

Paradoxically, both forms of silence proved to be “eloquent” enough, not only as a part of the Puritan discourse, but also, and more importantly, in helping decipher the non-acknowledged Indian voice.

#### ***3.4.4. The Indian Praising of Silence and the Language Barrier***

Before addressing some instances of the Indian reported speech in captivity narrative, I shall examine the issue of *silence* from the point of view of its significance in accounting for various aspects of Indian culture and in the way in which it is manifested in captivity narratives. At this point, it is very important to distinguish between narrative and editorial silence on the one hand and silence as a “communicative value” (praised silence) on the other, an attitude sometimes preferred by the Indians themselves.

Colin Calloway, for instance, states that the Indians chose not to discuss many aspects of their lives and customs, such as sacred places and practices (vi). Calloway makes a general statement regarding the Indians’ attitude toward silence: “by their silence, native peoples often were able to preserve intact the core of their universe, even as their world turned upside down” (vii). N. Scott Momaday also emphasizes this Indian quality:

In this sense, silence too is powerful. It is the dimension in which ordinary and extraordinary events take their proper places. In the Indian world a word is spoken or a song is sung, not against, but within the silence. In the telling of a story there are silences in which words are anticipated or held on to, heard to echo in the still depths of the imagination. In the oral tradition silence is the sanctuary of sound. Words are wholly alive in the hold of silence; there they are scared. (7)

Concerning New England Indians, Roger Williams describes very polite and organized communication patterns, noting:

Their Manner is upon any tidings to sit round, double or treble or more, as their numbers be; I have seene neere a thousand in a round, where English could not well neere halfe so many have sitten: Every Man hath his pipe of their Tobacco, and *a deepe silence they make*, and attention given to him that speaketh; and many of them will deliver themselves, either in a relation of news, or in a consultation, with very emphaticall speech and great action, commonly an houre, and sometimes two houres together. (62, my emphasis)

Interestingly enough, this form of praised Indian silence is usually absent from Puritan captivity narratives, as most of the former captives tend to describe their interaction with their abductors in the form of dialogues.

There are, however some instances in which the dialogical mode is interrupted in the narrative. Seldom do the former captives report silence in the rendering of those verbal exchanges. One exception can be seen in the following scene described by John Williams: “When he [an Indian] came up, he called me to run; I told him I could go no faster; he passed *by without saying one word more* so that sometimes I scarce saw anything of him for an hour together” (181). In this instance, the silence observed by the Indian can be regarded as an integral part of the exchange, thereby differing from Roger Williams’s depiction of silence as a sign of order, politeness, etc. In the above quote, the specific instance of silence referred to carries a weight of innuendoes and can be interpreted in many ways: the incident can be understood as a measure of tolerance on the part of the Indians as the captive’s refusal to run was not punished, as a rhetorical motivating threat, or, alternatively, as a sign of capitulation on the part of the Indian as the captive disobeys the order without consequence.

In the rest of John Williams’s narrative as well as in many Puritan captivity accounts, the Indian silence appears in another form of narrative interruptions. Contrary to the narrative breaks I discussed earlier (which stemmed from a more or less conscious decision on the part of the Puritan narrator), the interruptions in question appear in the quotations attributed to the Indians. In some narratives, one finds instances in which the narrator shows Indian protagonists deriving material benefits for themselves from selectively renouncing their assumed policy

of silence (i.e., of deliberate withholding of information) vis-à-vis the captive. A striking example of this use of silence as a bargaining asset can be seen in the following extract from Rowlandson's narrative in which the narrator reports an exchange between herself and the Indian *Sachem*, Philip:

When we were lain down, my master went out of the wigwam, and by and by sent in an Indian called James the Printer, who told Mr. Hoar, that my master would let me go home tomorrow, if he would let him have one pint of liquors [...]. Then Philip smelling the business called me to him, and *asked me what I would give him, to tell me some good news, and speak a good word for me*. I told him I could not tell what to give him. I would [give him] anything I had, and asked him what he would have? He said two coats and twenty shillings in money, and half a bushel of seed corn, and some tobacco. I thanked him for his love; but I knew the good news as well as the crafty fox. (67, my emphasis)

In the scene, Philip, who had already engaged in barter exchanges with Rowlandson on earlier occasions, offers to trade the good news of the captive's imminent release for hand-made clothing and tobacco. Rowlandson had traded her domestic skills for food and even derived some personal satisfaction from doing little favors to her kidnappers.<sup>154</sup> The far more existential note assumed by this "trade" in essential information (news of the captive's possible release) also reveals the narrator's attitude as she indirectly attributes certain character features to the Indian protagonist by putting words into his mouth.<sup>155</sup>

Another narrative interruption of this kind has to do with the issue of language limitations, to which some former captives allude. Rowlandson, however, does not mention the problem at all. I have noted that the fact that Rowlandson would not admit to any language difficulties in her verbal exchanges with the Indians could raise doubts as to the level of authenticity of the material. At this stage, I shall examine the language limitation issue as a (paradoxical) communication tool in itself, as it suggests the existence of non-verbal

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<sup>154</sup> Here I refer to the scene where she gives her Master a knife she has acquired from an Indian in a barter deal in exchange for some clothes she had made: "I carried the knife in, and my master asked me to give it him, and I was not a little glad that I had anything that they would accept of, and be pleased with" (48).



communication. To make sense of the latter, one needs to be reminded of the afore-mentioned basic tenets of pragmatics as defined by Watzlawick (22). Such an approach should logically be central in discussing intercultural communication in narrative scenes of interaction between the English-speaking white, especially Puritan captives and their Indian abductors since one must assume the existence of limitations in terms of both linguistic and cultural competence in both sets of protagonists. The most explicit reference to non-verbal communication can be found in the account of Quaker narrator Elizabeth Hanson:

Now, though she could not understand me nor I her, but by signs, we reasoned as well as we could. She therefore makes signs that I must die, advising me by pointing up with her finger in her way, to pray to God, endeavoring by her signs and tears to instruct me in that which was most needful, viz. to prepare for death which now threatened me. The poor old squaw was so very kind and tender that she would not leave me all that night but laid herself down at my feet, designing what she could to assuage her son-in-law's wrath, who had conceived evil against me chiefly, as I understood, because the want of victuals urged him to it. (237, my emphasis)

Hanson establishes a direct link between limitations in verbal communication and body language. In Puritan accounts, allusions of this nature are generally more subtle and nuanced. I will examine non-verbal communication in a selection of anecdotes and scenes from different Puritan accounts.

Starting with Rowlandson, I want to posit that although the narrator herself implies that most of the communication she had with the Indians was based on verbal interaction, the reader cannot but detect many examples of non-verbal communication. Concerns about the captive's physical integrity, safety and survival among the Indians count as the most significant motives of non-verbal communications in captivity narratives, particularly in Rowlandson's. Although accompanied by an alleged oral exchange, the glass scene with King Philip is one of the most metaphorical scenes in Rowlandson's account as the reader may interpret the *Sachem's* gesture in multiple ways. In addition to the interpretation I give in the chapter dealing with trauma survival—one essentially based on the hypothesis

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<sup>155</sup> I will examine further instances of this kind in the final chapter of this section.

that the captive may have experienced symptoms akin to the phenomenon known as “going native”—one may also note in the Indian’s gesture a conscious effort to indirectly secure a better ransom by returning a presentable captive.

Except for Rowlandson, most of the Puritan narrators referred to the language barrier in mentioning issues relating to communication with their former abductors. While not dealing with the problem at length, Quentin Stockwell, for instance, writes: “Though I knew not which was to be burned, yet I perceived some were designed thereunto, *so much I understood of their language*” (82, my emphasis).<sup>156</sup> John Williams, for his part, refers to the language issue only once when he speaks of “savages” taken prisoner in King Philip’s War:

Ruth, who could speak English very well [...], an English maid who was taken the last war, who was dressed up in Indian apparel, *could not speak one word of English*, who said she could neither tell her own name or the name of the place from whence she was taken. These two talked in the Indian dialect with my master ... (185)

Clear as it is, the reference to language in this passage remains marginal within the narrative. Like Rowlandson, he fails to mention any language difficulties he might have faced as a captive when communicating with his abductors, although he does recreate dialogical scenes. Leaving out the language issue from the narratives in reporting communication with the abductors means that Rowlandson and Williams may have their credibility challenged by the reader to a larger extent than those narrators who, however briefly, at least acknowledge the existence of the problem. The issue appears even more serious when approached through the prism of John Gyles’s narrative.

Gyles gives prominence to the language issue in his narrative, perhaps as a result of the experience garnered as negotiator and interpreter for the Massachusetts government in talks with the Indians. He provides information

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<sup>156</sup> As was the case with Rowlandson, Stockwell’s narrative includes passages in semi-dialogical form that render his oral exchanges with the Indians in indirect speech. I will examine some relevant occurrences of the Indian speech as reported by Stockwell in the final chapter of this section.

about his Indian abductor's mastery of English when quoting him as in the following example:

My Indian master went before and left me with an old Indian and two or three squaws. The old man often said (which was all the *English he could speak*), 'By and by, come to a great town and fort,' so that I comforted myself in thinking how finely I should be refreshed, etc., when I came to this great town. (100)

Contrary to other former captives, Gyles accompanies many of his reported exchanges with precise details of the circumstances. "Then a grave Indian came and gave me a short pipe and *said in English*, 'Smoke it'" (102, my emphasis). In another example, the narrator passes direct comments on his interlocutors' level of English: "[T]hey underwent the same difficulty and would often encourage me, *saying in broken English*, 'By-By, great deal moose.' But they could not answer any question that I asked them" (103, my emphasis). Interestingly (and logically) Gyles begins to make fewer references to problems of deficient English as he himself progresses in his mastery of the Indian language.

Gyles even describes his learning curve in acquiring the tongue of his abductors. He admits that his knowledge is far from perfect and that he may in fact at times have misunderstood his Indian interlocutors, as demonstrated in the following scene:

The day before we came to the planting field, we met two young Indian men who seemed to be in a great haste. After they had passed us, I understood that they were going with an express to Canada and that there was an English vessel at the mouth of the river. *I, not perfect in the language nor knowing that English vessels traded with them in time of war*, supposed a peace was concluded on and that the captives would be released and was so transported with the fancy that I slept but little, if at all, that night. (106)

Although in this particular case, Gyles made the wrong deductions due to difficulties in understanding the English language, later in the text, he boasts:

My Indian master and his squaw bid me run for my life into a swamp and hide, and not to discover myself unless they both came to me; for then I might be assured the dance was over. I

was now master of their language, and a word or a wink was enough to excite me to take care of one. I ran to the swamp, and hid in the thickest place I could find. (107)

Gyles's concept of what he calls "their language" is fairly broad. In addition to language proper in its oral version ("word"), it also embraces body language ("wink"). The specific context of captivity informs both registers (oral and body language) and motivates the captive's efforts in establishing communication and/or making sense of the "signals" sent by his abductors (e.g., his interpretation of the presence of English vessels as a sign of imminent release from captivity or of a "wink" seen as a prompt to run from imminent danger).<sup>157</sup>

But even where verbal communication is supposed to have occurred (according to the narrator/former captive), one may recourse to pragmatics to decipher and make sense of the alleged utterances made by the Indians. The reported speech as recorded by the former captive should be interpreted based on clues specific to the actual communication context in which the pronouncements were made.

### **3.5. Indian voice and reported speech**

Before examining a selection of anecdotes and instances of reported Indian speech, I want to recapitulate both the co-text and the context of the speech in question. Interestingly enough, when analyzing the evolution of the Indian agency in Puritan captivity accounts, one notices the same kind of development I noticed with respect to New England Writing in the first section of this study. Similar to what one finds in Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Puritan captivity narratives often open on disparaging/hostile comments regarding the Indians. Such hostility does

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<sup>157</sup> Gyles claims to be trilingual: "[M]y whole employment was trading and hunting, in which I acted faithfully for my master and never knowingly wronged him to the value of one farthing. They spake to me so frequently in Indian that it was some time before I was perfect in the French tongue. Monsieur generally had his goods from the man-of-war which came there annually from France" (126).

not only take the form of a direct description of “brutal savages,” but also includes putting words into the Indians’ mouth. At this early stage of the narrative, the utterances attributed to the Indians tend to be indistinct sounds rather than words. In “A Bibliographical Memoir,”<sup>158</sup> John Williams calls these indistinguishable sounds the “terrific yells of the savage war-whoop” (100). Elsewhere, Puritan captives describe other rituals, often including joyful celebrations, dancing and yelling (e.g., Gyles, 100, 101). Cotton Mather, for his part, describes Indians who are “singing, dancing, roaring, and uttering many signs of joy” (138).

When examining in more detail some of the instances in which former Puritan captives mention these “strange” sounds, one notices that, however non-descript they may seem, said utterances do belong to a process of communication that can be interesting to consider as an evaluation tool when reading captivity narratives. For example, John Gyles describes his father’s death at the hands of the Indians as follows: “The *yelling* of the Indians, the *whistling* of their shot, and the *voice* of my father, whom I heard cry out, ‘What now! What now!’ so terrified me...” (97, my emphasis). In this example, Gyles equates the “yelling” of the Indians to the sound made by an inanimate object (guns). In the same context, however, the narrator distinctly renders his father’s words. There is something similar in Stockwell’s example, where an association is made between Indian sounds and the noise given off by a gun: “[W]e ran away at the outcry the Indians made, shouting and shooting at some other of the English” (80). Further on Stockwell resorts to yet another devaluing metaphor by equating the Indians with animals: “The Indians dispersed and, as they went, made strange noises as wolves and owls and other wild beasts” (81). But the same narratives also include an opposite (as it were, “humanizing”) trend, which usually manifest itself further on in the narration, in a wealth of verbs introducing reported speech, such as say, tell, bid, etc.

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<sup>158</sup> “A Bibliographical Memoir of the Reverend Author” is appended to the 1853 edition of his narrative.

This evolution from “noise” to verbal communication is even more obvious in Rowlandson’s narrative. In the same vein as her fellow Puritan narrators, she also first embraces the dehumanizing trend, writing, for example: “Oh the roaring, and singing and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell” (36). Rowlandson’s narrative attitude evolves as she begins to offer interpretations of said “sounds:”

But before they came to us, oh, the outrageous roaring and whooping that there was! *They signified* how many they had destroyed, which was at that time twenty-three. Those that were with us at home were gathered together as soon as they heard the whooping, and every time that the other went over their number, these at home gave [such] a shout that the very earth rung again. (40, my emphasis)

Rowlandson clearly interprets the Indians’ “noise” into English. Later on in her narrative, she provides more such decoding: “Now the Indians gather their forces to go against Northampton. Over-night one went about yelling and hooting to give notice of the design...” (47). In this example, Rowlandson takes up an interesting point about the specifics of communication among the Indians. Faced with a “strange” and, at first, incomprehensible internal communication code that completely excludes her, the captive gradually begins to make sense of this “code” as she familiarizes herself with the Indians’ manners and is able to extract some meaning from the “strange noises.” At the next stage, Rowlandson is confident enough to, as it were, create a dialogical version of this communication setup, whether it took place between the Indians alone or with her participation.

A characteristic feature of Puritan captivity narratives is that the negative portrayal of the Indians tends to be toned down both in the narrators’ direct depiction of their abductors’ manners and habits and in the attitude with which they go about decoding the ways in which communication took place among the Indians and between the latter and their captives. As I have demonstrated, the evolution witnessed in the rendering by the narrators of the kind of communication at work among and with the Indians points in a direction that can be described as a process of elevation lifting the Indians from a mere objectified

and/or animalistic status to that of real human beings bestowed with the faculty of intelligent self-expression and communication. When looking at the words the narrators place in their mouths, the Indians not only come across as intelligible, but on several occasions, their (reported/recreated) voice even emerges as intelligent.

To reach through to the core of the Indian voice (as worded in the narratives), I shall recall a significant filtering process that includes two kinds of silence I have examined earlier, on the one hand, and explicit reservations expressed by the narrator, on the other hand. In other words, before filtering the Indian words in the narratives for the sake of this analysis, I shall first consider the narrator's own textual filter. The inconsistencies produced by the association of the three elements of the filtering process, when associated with the words uttered by the Indians as reported and documented by the former captives, ultimately allow the reader to decipher the Indian's alleged words and thereby give him a "voice." Usually the narrators do not only report their abductors' words but comment, interpret and (negatively) value the statements attributed to their former abductors. An important factor in this connection is the notion of "truth."

The notion of truth and authenticity, as mentioned in the previous chapters of this study is not limited to the narrator's testimonial claims, but also applies to the narrator's attitude towards his or her abductors (sometimes called "liars"). What is one to make of the narrators' assessment of the degree of truthfulness they attribute to their abductors? What does "truth" mean in this context? According to Lubomír Doležel, "The concept of truth and the criteria of truth in fictional narratives are subordinated to the concept of authentication. Fictional truth is strictly 'truth in/of' the constructed narrative word and its criterion is agreement or disagreement with authenticated narrative facts" (15). The captivity narrators' conception of truth as manifested in the way in which they describe their experiences among the Indians and challenge the veracity of their pronouncements is best examined and assessed in the longer Puritan accounts, notably John Gyles', John Williams's and Mary Rowlandson's.

I will mainly focus on Rowlandson's text to look at how much credit the narrator gives to the statements she herself attributes to her former Indian abductors based on the above remarks I made concerning the way in which Rowlandson presents such "quotes." Not only does she deliberately omit certain facts while retaining others, based on her discretionary interpretations of the level of sincerity she attributes to the Indians she quotes, but she combines this with a narrative technique that Derounian-Stodola describes as a combination of "empirical narration" and "rhetorical narration." From this point of view, one could say that Rowlandson's verbal communication with the Indians belongs to the former ("empirical narration"), while her interpretation of and comments on the Indian words pertain to "rhetorical narration."

As Rowlandson comments on her captivity experience and relates her verbal exchanges with the Indians, she repeatedly questions the credibility of her interlocutors even when the message is of a positive nature. For example, when the "praying Indian" Philip brings her the news of her imminent liberation, she writes: "I asked him if he speak true" (60). In another instance, she asks an Englishman to corroborate information she heard from Indian sources: "For they said they had killed two captains and almost an hundred men. One Englishman they brought along with them: and he said, it was too true, for they had made sad work at Sudbury, as indeed it proved" (64). In another passage, the Indians return from an armed skirmish with the English. She writes: "Yet I could not perceive that it was for their own loss of men. They said they had not lost above five or six; and I missed none, except in one wigwam" (64). The examples above show a general sense of mistrust, which does little to surprise the reader, given what he knows of Rowlandson's general attitude. Yet this systematic mantle of suspicion does not only serve the author's Puritan agenda in allowing her to demonize the Indians, but it sometimes tends to backfire, as the following examples will show.

In a bid to demonstrate the Indians' cruelty and lack of morals, Rowlandson writes:



I had not seen my son a pretty while, and here was an Indian of whom I made inquiry after him, and asked him when he saw him. He answered me that such a time his master roasted him, and that himself did eat a piece of him, as big as his two fingers, and that he was very good meat. But the Lord upheld my Spirit, under this discouragement; and I considered their horrible addictedness to lying, and that there is not one of them that makes the least conscience of speaking of truth. (52)

Paradoxically, Rowlandson's demonstration weakens her initial aim of depicting the Indians as "brutish heathen." In addition to her failure in specifically substantiating the negative qualifiers she attributes to her abductors (as I have shown in the second section), in the above extract, Rowlandson even bestows her abductors with a measure of humanity as, in reiterating her accusations of duplicity; she refuses to believe them capable of cannibalism. In so doing, Rowlandson does more than just reveal an aspect of Indian rhetoric (to be discussed in more detail later on), but, more importantly, she involuntarily brings the reader to question her own authenticity and sincerity as a narrator and momentarily loses the moral high ground of Puritan superiority.

Similarly, albeit with less frequency than in Rowlandson's narrative, other Puritan captives challenge the very pronouncements they attribute to their abductors. Interestingly enough, one also finds in other Puritan accounts cases where oral threats made by the Indians were not carried out. In other words, the Indians are portrayed as "liars" in situations where they make threatening utterances or claim to have destroyed an English town or killed English soldiers. John Gyles, for instance, writes: "He [an Indian] said (*which was not true*) that they had destroyed all Hatfield and that the woods were full of Indians" (80, my emphasis). In fact, the climate of mistrust and suspicion that naturally existed between the captives and their abductors,<sup>159</sup> and the captives' tendency to question

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<sup>159</sup> Quentin Stockwell reports an instance of mistrust of the English expressed as follows by an Indian: "When those Indians came from Wachuset, there came with them squaws and children, about four score, who reported that the English had taken Uncas and all his men and sent them beyond seas. They were much enraged at this and asked us if it were true. We said no; than was Ashpalon angry and said he would no more believe Englishmen" (84). The context of the scene is however unknown and confusing, as the source of information concerning the imprisonment of the Indian *Sachem* Uncas is unknown. Based on the quote, one may suppose that it was an English source.

the Indians' sincerity and truthfulness paradoxically contribute to humanizing the figure of the Indian. In the process, the narrators may not have realized that they were partly undoing the distinctly negative publicity they gave to their abductors in the opening passages of their respective narratives. In other words, on balance, because he is labeled a liar, the Indian appears as less of a barbarian than the narrator intended to picture him.

The following quote illustrates the alleged tendency for Indians to overstate their threats (and ultimately fail to act on them), a contradiction that the narrators pinpointed both explicitly (by calling the Indians "liars") or indirectly, by demonstrating the lack of execution of the threats. In this passage, John Gyles', after describing a cruel torture scene, notes that in his case, the Indians did not execute their threat:

The Indians looked on me with a fierce countenance, signifying that it would be my turn next. They champed cornstalks and threw them in my hat which was in my hand. I smiled on them though my heart ached. I looked on one and another but could not perceive that any eye pitied me. (102)

The scene ends with an Indian giving the captive tobacco after which the narrator even ends up in a French home where he receives "victuals." Passages such as this one abound in Puritan narratives: dreadful torture scenes alternate with last minute escapes from death for the former captive.

Once again, Rowlandson sets the narrative tone in describing such unfulfilled threats, specifically a repeated threat to "knock" her or her children on the head. In one example, Rowlandson writes about the Indians' attitude towards her wounded child:

I sat much alone with a poor wounded child in my lap, which moaned night and day, having nothing to revive the body, or cheer the spirits of her, but instead of that, sometimes one Indian would come and tell me one hour that 'your master will knock your child in the head,' and then a second, and then a third, 'your master will quickly knock your child in the head.'  
(38)

In fact, the wounded child eventually does but the Indians have not carried out the threat of hitting the child. Later in the narrative, Rowlandson seems to have lost all fear of the recurring threats as she essentially trivializes the Indians' empty words of aggressive posturing:

Then I went home to my mistress' wigwam, and they told me I disgraced my master with begging, and if I did so anymore, they would knock me in [the] head. I told them, they had as good knock me in [the] head as starve me to death. (60)

Rowlandson downplays the significance of the repeated threats and even takes the liberty of insolently challenging her "mistress." Once again, the former captive's reaction paradoxically weakens her contention that the Indians are "bloody savages."

In some Puritan narratives, Indians phrase their threats in a very sarcastic manner. Stockwell, for instance, relates the following incident:

The Indians were very angry and cut me another piece [of meat] and gave me raccoon grease to drink, which made me sick and vomit. I told them I had enough so that ever after that they would give me none but still tell me I had raccoon enough. (85)

Another example of sarcasm involves a reference to the God of the English. In the narrative recounting the captivity of Dustan and her fellow prisoners, Mather writes:

Now they could not observe it without some wonder that their Indian master sometimes when he saw them dejected would say unto them, 'What need you trouble yourself? If your God will have you delivered, you shall be so.' And it seems our God would have it so to be. (163)

In this example, Mather succeeds in scoring rhetorical points by suggesting that, however disingenuously intended, the Indian's remark ultimately backfired and indeed proved prophetic, as though the snide had missed its target and involuntarily forecast God's "plan" to allow the captives' escape. In some instances, it is difficult to know if a comment is to be understood as a sarcastic putdown on

the religious beliefs of the English or if the Indians, in some cases, actually believed in the “English God’s” power as can be seen in the following extract from Stockwell:

All the Indians went a-hunting but could get nothing. [Several] days they powwowed but got nothing; then they desired the English to pray and confessed they could do nothing. They would have us pray and see what the Englishman’s God could do. I prayed; so did Sergeant Plimpton in another place. The Indians reverently attended morning and night; next day they got bears. Then they would needs (*sic.*) have us desire a blessing, return thanks at meals. (84)

In accounts thereof in the captivity narratives, Indians refer to the English God in two different forms: hostility and violence (including the occasional bout of actual or threatened torture) or sarcasm (irony) on the one hand, or attempts to derive benefits from God’s alleged powers for themselves (as in the previous example) on the other. The latter attitude could lead to eventual conversion of groups of Indians to Christianity.

To summarize, except where one may speculate on intended meanings to be derived from renderings of Indian speech in their own words (albeit through the prism of complex and uncertain co-text and context evidence), most of the time the narratological process evident in the Puritan narratives, particularly Rowlandson’s, tends to present the Indians in a comparatively positive light. This positive impression, though, certainly does not come into being through the words that are put into the mouths of the former abductors. These quotes and the recreated dialogues are, in fact, suffused with negative and threatening lexical elements. The co-text, however, significantly tones down the projected violence and savageness implied by the formulation and recreation of the dialogues. In other words, the dialogical narrative technique often tones down the impression of predominant violence in the stereotypical openings of the narratives, especially those written by former Puritan captives.

Even more eloquent than the Indians’ reported voice in the recreated dialogues are the narrative and editorial “silences” (the “unsaid” or “left-out”

words, facts and actions that are conspicuously present in their very omission). The narrative silence motivated by uncomfortable or scandalous circumstances (for example, the close proximity with Indians of the opposite sex) or by a stark denial on the part of the Puritans that their own people could not possibly choose to “go native” indirectly help the critical reader form a somewhat less negative image of the Indians despite the negative traits that abound in their portrayal. The “eloquence” of the narrative silence is paradoxically confirmed by the concomitant existence of what I call the “editorial silence,” a form of Puritan censorship (and psychological denial) by virtue of which a de facto ban was put on publishing narratives recounting the story of former captives who refused to return to their community when presented with the opportunity to do so. This form of silence, I believe, reveals the existence of an embarrassing (suppressed/denied) admission that cohabitation with the Indians could also generate positive sentiment among some captives to the point of making them question their allegiance to their community of origin and choose to “go native,” a development that also raises doubts as to the validity of the all-negative attitudes seen in the stereotypical openings of most of the Puritan captivity narratives.

## Conclusion

Throughout this study I have made a point to refrain from taking sides or embarking on a political debate in defense of and/or solidarity with Native Americans in the name of ethnic oppression. Many scholars have played the noble role of trying to give Native Americans their “stolen voice” back. And since the latter have left no written accounts, these scholars have had to rely either on what few oral statements were recorded in English translation, or on pictographs on the walls of caves—most of which were discovered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. I am perfectly aware of the difficulties with which such a study is fraught and of the risks associated with my choice of a title that refers to this very “Indian voice.” But as I dug deeper into my corpus of captivity narratives, I noticed that in spite of the distinct ideological (pro-Puritan) bias of the narrative voice, there was also a wealth of oblique references to the shared proximity between captives and abductors. As I hope to have demonstrated, this experience emerges from the texts through a diversity of explicit or implicit narrative channels.

A striking feature of the narratives in this respect is the recourse by the former captives to reported speech to recreate their alleged verbal interaction with the Indians. The material of these reported verbal exchanges is one of the ingredients of the Indian voice which forms the object of the present study. To interpret this particular aspect of the Indian voice, it is, however, not only necessary to examine and deconstruct the co-text of the exchanges in question, but also to contextualize the narratives that contain them within the broader framework of the colonial history of the early English settlements in North America as well as, more importantly, of the literary historiography of early New England. In this connection, I have considered the evolution of Puritan conceptualization and literary representation of the Indians over a protracted time span ranging from the writings of first-generation Puritan intellectuals, including William Bradford (1590–1657) and John Winthrop (1587–1649), to those of third-generation intellectuals, such as Cotton Mather (1663–1728).

This examination of writings penned by Early New Englanders reveals a distinct evolution in the Puritan concept and representation of the wilderness and its inhabitants as well as in the way in which the authors/narrators of my corpus describe the relationship and interaction between the Puritans and the Indians. In addition to setting the scene for my thesis and providing the necessary background information, this part of my study also paves the way for an analysis and deconstruction of the inner workings of the late 17th and early 18<sup>th</sup> century Puritan captivity narratives. I have noticed a commonality of features, a literary pattern as it were, in the way these writings (both within and outside the scope of my main corpus) deal with the Indians. The full scope of the evolution that this representation (i.e., the evolution of the Puritan view of the Indians) underwent in the course of several generations can be observed as a whole in some representative works of my corpus, in particular those by Rowlandson, Williams, and Gyles.

This evolution, which I describe in my first section, comprises several phases that may be summarized as follows: in the first literary phase, the Indians are represented as a largely unknown entity. During this phase, the Puritan-inspired authors tend to “dehumanize” the Indians, essentially equating them with animals. The first contact of Bradford’s fellow settlers with the Indians constituted the starting point of a process of gradual (and partial) literary humanization of the Natives, a process that relied on non-verbal communication and the use of interpreters. It was followed by the first literary representation of skirmishes between Puritan settlers and the Indians as well as of early Puritan missionary work among the natives. At that time one notices some inconsistency in the overall judgment passed over the natives, with assessments ranging from the “bad,” hostile Indian “savages” to the “good” Indian converts. This ambivalence prevailed until the outbreak of a series of armed conflicts between Puritans and Indians known as King Philip’s War (1675-1676) and King Williams’ War (1689-1697). Many Puritans were captured and kept as hostages during these wars. It is therefore no surprise that the aftermath of the conflict, and the ensuing liberation of the prisoners triggered a wave of memoirs written by or on behalf of the former

captives and created the genre of the captivity narrative. These narratives, in turn, offer a new vehicle for the description of the Indians in spite of the hostility between the two sides: the experience of captivity made for a relatively high degree of (non-chosen, but inevitable) daily familiarity.

When deconstructing the narrative structure in order to grasp the Indian voice, it appears that the evolution of the Puritan representation of the Indians and their agency—i.e., the manifold (direct and indirect, deliberate, implied or even unintentional) manifestations of their existence, actions, and behavior in the text in early Puritan writings may be, to some extent, projected onto the captivity narratives proper. Narratives of that genre usually open up with what amounts to a dehumanization of the Indians. In addition to comparing them to animals, the authors often resort to literary patterns that include “demonization”: the suggested association with the devil was first made in writings by the missionary John Eliot and it still appears later in works by the Mathers. Although Puritan narrators recounting their captivity experiences usually make a point of writing in a negative tone about the Indians throughout their memoirs, they also provide practical information about the captives’ daily life in close proximity of their jailors. By so doing, and due to the resulting familiarity and shared intimacy, they often end up involuntarily bestowing the Indians with a modicum of humanity. The highest point therein is reached when the narrator gives the floor to his/her Indian interlocutors, thereby lifting them into the realm of real language (in the occasional departure from the metaphor of “animalistic sounds”) and making use of the tools of reported speech (see verbs such as “say,” “bid,” “ask,” etc.) and recreated dialogues.

The coexistence of such contradictions in the written word of the captivity narratives—“brutish savages” at the one versus “friendly Indians” at the other end of the “humanization chain”—is just one of a series of inconsistencies and gaps within the texture of the narratives. These apparent contradictions prompt the reader to question and challenge the reality of an all too hermetically sealed ideological system within the genre. In other words, the unquestionably dominant



Puritan discourse is not as monolithic as one may have imagined and one might even to some extent raise questions as to a possible degree of authenticity and reliability of the value judgments, and even facts, voiced or reported by the Puritan narrator. I have dedicated a considerable proportion of this study to an examination of the reasons behind and the consequences of these inconsistencies, contradictions, gaps, etc. After all, discrepancies of that nature are highly characteristic of the Puritan captivity narratives, particularly in the case of Mary Rowlandson.

Scholars often question or deny outright the authenticity of the events described in Puritan captivity narratives. In so doing, the critics mainly invoke a series of reasons ranging from the retrospective nature of the writing, through the questionable reliability of subjective/selective memories, to the consequences of post-captivity trauma. While I agree with most commonly advanced reservations challenging the narrator's reliability in reporting the facts, my main reservations, as I have demonstrated in this study, have to do with the former captive's cognitive background regarding the Indians at a time of war opposing the Puritans to the Indians. The hostile historical context literarily materialized in a series of negative presuppositions regarding the Indians and their behavior as a whole, since the captive's preconceptions have seemingly colored their interpretation/description of their experience of captivity.

Paradoxically, one does also find in the narratives a form of reality-based testimony, albeit somewhat hidden behind the smokescreen of self-censorship. This to some extent redeems the documentary value of some of the captivity narratives and may support Derounian-Stodola's qualification of these writings (among other 17<sup>th</sup> century captivity narratives) as, "authentic religious accounts." Hence my preferred focus was in analyzing the works of former captives, specifically Rowlandson, on the omissions which the author deliberately leaves out or on unconscious contradictions. The suggested intellectual exercise of trying to spot such inconsistencies may in fact even stimulate the reader's creative imagination and offer a productive alternative approach to the interpretation of the

narratives that goes beyond the anachronistically named “political correctness” of the dominant Puritan ideology of the time. Perhaps even more importantly, these gaps paradoxically serve as an additional channel of indirect manifestation of the Indian voice.

Although white Puritan narrators, notably Mary White Rowlandson, were often besotted with by the will to uphold and sponsor the well established Puritan patriarchal discourse and religious values, the narrative inconsistencies, contradictions, and mainly omissions that manifest themselves in their works can shed more light on the complexities of the situations described than the conventional narrative on the surface, which the author set out to communicate in the first place. To examine these gaps, I have used the concepts of narrative silence and editorial silence. Narrative silence is the narrator’s omission of uncomfortable truth and deliberate failure by the author to provide explanations in ambiguous situations that could do harm to his or her reputation as a worthy Puritan. Paradoxically, the narrative silence is sometimes made the more conspicuous by the juxtaposition of “over-detailed” and “elusive” passages. Editorial silence, for its part, means the censorship or control exercised by the publisher notably when it came to preventing the publication of unorthodox captivity stories, in particular those involving former captives who chose not to return to their community of origin even when presented with the opportunity.

Like narrative silence, editorial silence is also the more noticeable by juxtaposition, i.e., when compared with the surge of publications featuring typical anti-Indian elements. The most interesting case of a captivity story that never made it to publication is that of Eunice Williams, the daughter of one of the most prominent authors of captivity narratives, John Williams. Again, Eunice’s case (i.e., the fact that her story was not published) is particularly relevant because the context of her captivity and its aftermath was pushed into the background as a result of various publications of anti-Indian/anti-Catholic captivity accounts penned by her close relatives. One may therefore suggest that the censorship imposed on the stories of “unredeemed Puritan captives” was symptomatic of the

Puritan intellectual elite's discomfort with the phenomenon of "accepted" captivity, a phenomenon akin to the notion of "*going native*." That process of a white captive choosing to adopt the way of life of his or her former kidnappers was strongly denied in classical anti-Indian Puritan captivity narratives. One may see in fact a striking similarity between the censorship of an entire human experience (i.e. the captivity stories of "embarrassing" pro-Indian mavericks) in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth-century Puritan book market and the censorship of individual narrative elements at a smaller scale within published narratives at the same period.

As the Indians tended to value silence in communication, these two concepts—narrative silence and editorial silence—may actually have helped give them a curiously paradoxical and metaphorical mouthpiece of sorts. Because of the way in which they are represented in the context of the narratives, the Indians are apt to implicitly contradict the Puritan narrator's biased portrayal of their native world and of life in captivity for the prisoners. Both narrative and editorial silences may paradoxically be reconstructed as "eloquent silences" in favor of the Indian agency in narratives written by Puritans. This questions the validity of the dominant argument among scholars according to which there is no real Indian voice in narratives written by white people, particularly Puritans.

In addition to its paradoxical manifestation through the above-mentioned "eloquent silences," the Indian agency may also be considered in the dialogues or, more precisely, recreated dialogues present in most Puritan captivity narratives. The Indian voice/agency/presence and even positive image is paradoxically served by the oscillations in the changing storyline of the narrators who often involuntarily contradict themselves as it often turns out that the alleged "savages" fail to act with the expected brutality. Also, it often happens that the Indian's voice is rendered in recreated dialogues or in reported speech. Although the words attributed to them are a recreated words "put into their mouths" by the narrator, their real significance may indirectly be derived and deconstructed from the context. My examination of the quoted/recreated Indian words/utterances reveals two

main motifs suggested by the narrator who implies, based on the adjacent co-text, that the Indians often resort to threats or express sarcasm. But in the end, it often appears that the Indians do not act upon the threats and may not have intended the implied sarcasm as such at all. Predictably given the nature of the situations described in the text and the antagonism between the protagonists, the phrases and words the Puritan narrators put in the mouths of their Indian abductors are messages of fear and threat (e.g., the frequent utterance “Knock their head,”). Although such utterances may seem frightening and full of violent innuendoes as the narrator means to emphasize the “bloody” and “merciless” nature of the “heathen,” the narrative effect of the threatening lexicon tends to soften within the co-text of the uttered messages. Indeed, the outcome of the events and the narrative scenes in which the violent threatening phrases are uttered reveal that the Indians rarely back their threatening rhetoric with action. In fact the denigration tends to backfire as the supposed savages fail to live up to their brutality and the narrator even plays down the abductors’ threats from the start by calling the Indians “liars.” The former Puritan captives thus self-challenge their own reliability as narrators as they themselves do not seem to believe in their own characterization of the Indian savage.

In addition to the narrative co-text that often helps deconstruct the Indian rhetoric, thereby counterbalancing the hegemonic Puritan ideology, in some instances, it is the rhetoric per se that seemingly, and often involuntarily, bestows the Indians with wit and insight and make them look more likeable to the reader. The most obvious rhetorical manifestation of said Indian wit are sarcasm and irony, especially with respect to God and the English religion. Indian rhetoric attempts to challenge the English God, usually by implying that if He existed, He would not have allowed the hostages to have been captured in the first place or that He could intervene even now. For the authors of the narratives, however, such sarcasm is not allowed to plant doubt in the reader’s minds. Instead, the Puritans tried to retake the advantage and exploit these “blasphemous” challenges to God in order to show that Providence was at work all the same since the captive was released in the end.

Another significant element that features prominently in some of the captivity narratives in addition to the Puritan hegemony is the anti-Catholic tone of the narratives published during and after the French and Indian wars. As a result of these special circumstances, these publications may be seen primarily as anti-Catholic narratives even though they address the general theme of Indian captivity. This new development in the evolution of the captivity genre reflects its role as a propagandistic tool at the hands of the Puritan elite, although the latter's efficiency was at best questionable. Although these narratives are far from being soft on the Indians, the latter are not their main focus. And even where the stereotype of the brutal Indian is used as a deterrent by Jesuits hoping to scare Puritan captives into adopting Catholicism, the continued unfolding and resolution of the situation in the narrative usually suggests that the Indians are only being used as metaphorical scarecrows by manipulative French Catholics.

The shift in the captivity genre from an anti-Indian to an anti-Catholic focus could be worth looking into and serve as a starting point for further research projects. In my own study, this aspect only features for the sake of offering an additional perspective into the context and co-text of early 17<sup>th</sup>-century captivity narratives in my search for traces of Indian agency. Going further, this study could also be used as a starting point for new projects in the captivity narrative field that might enlarge the corpus of narratives to later historical phases, especially Indian captivity narratives published around the revolutionary period. For my part, those few examples of captivity narratives from that period that I have taken up are re-published editions of earlier narratives, notably by Mary Rowlandson and John Williams. Yet they may serve to shed some light on any future study on the Indian agency in new narratives published around 1776. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that in anti-Catholic Indian captivity accounts, the Indian protagonist (the abductor) plays only a secondary role and appears less menacing a figure, especially compared with the virulent anti-Indian bias of earlier publications. Future studies could therefore turn towards later, transitional phases of the Indian captivity narrative genre and examine therein the roles attributed to

the Indian protagonists to see if and how the Indian agency continues to evolve over time.

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