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Captivating emotions: Sentiment and the work of rhetorical drag in colonial and early national captivity narrative

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CAPTIVATING EMOTIONS: SENTIMENT AND THE WORK OF
RHETORICAL DRAG IN COLONIAL AND EARLY
NATIONAL CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Gleidson Gouveia
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July 2009

ABSTRACT

Captivity narrative, the American genre initiated early in the seventeenth century, tells the story of Europeans abducted by Native Americans in the New England frontier. These texts, however, do not simply tell the subjects' experiences of confinement among the Indians but reveal important relations of power, religion, and politics that took place in Early America. This work analyzes the captivity narratives of Mary Rowlandson, Mary Swarton, John Williams, Mary Jemison, and John Tanner to understand how their experiences were appropriated by third parties in order to meet religious and political ends of their respective times. Following scholars of captivity narrative such as Lorraine Carroll, this study claims that these captives, with the exception of John Williams, had their voices/experiences impersonated with the objective of forming colonial and national identity formation.

Sentimentality and masculinity are also relevant issues in this study. By writing emotion, the male impersonators managed to cover the very rhetorical drag, as Carroll calls it, they employed when writing *as* the captives. Ultimately, however, it is the emotion employed by the men that will give away the very rhetorical drag they engaged in.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian captivity narrative, the original American genre, has its origin in the migration of Pilgrims and Puritans to New England in the seventeenth century. The Europeans who came to the new world to profess their faith—since in Europe they felt they were not free to do so—brought with them not only their religious beliefs but also their social organization and cultural values. While the Native Americans they encountered in the New World were at first very helpful—it was actually from the Indians that the settlers learned how to cultivate the fields in such inhospitable weather conditions—they later became an obstacle to the development of the colony the settlers aimed at creating. Obviously, for the colony to increase in size, as the settlers were hoping it would, the Indians had to give up their territory so that the whites could take it over. As the Indians evidently refused to do so, conflicts began. When the colonists massacred Native Americans and invaded their lands, the Indians responded by taking captives.

In *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*, Kathryn Z. Derounian-Stodola and James Levenier cite four main reasons for the taking of captives. Revenge was the first of them: angry at the colonists for killing members of their tribes or invading their lands, Indians would retaliate by torturing and killing abducted Europeans. Another reason was ransom. Because anxious relatives would do anything to regain beloved captives, “ransom was a second major motive for Indians to take captives” (4). Indians would also kidnap Europeans to replace tribal members killed in combat. Those captives would therefore be adopted into the tribe, becoming literally a replacement for the Indian who

perished in combat. The last main reason for taking captives was to use them as slaves: “Those who were not immediately killed or adopted were often held as slaves. Becoming a slave did not, however, preclude the possibility of ransom or adoption at a later date” (8).

The Indian captivities that took place from the beginning of colonization in America to the eighteenth century led to the formation of a literary genre that, in the words of Derounian-Stodola and Levenier, was “immensely, even phenomenally, popular” (14). Although not every captive wrote his/her story upon redemption, many of those held captive did write narratives telling their experience. Some captivity narratives indeed became extremely popular, such as Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), which, at the time of its publication, “was second in popularity among American readers only to the Bible, and it quickly established another audience in Europe, where it was published in the same year” (Derounian-Stodola and Levenier 14); *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton, Containing Wonderful Passages, Relating to Her Captivity and Her Deliverance* (1702), represents the early example of a pattern that became common in the eighteenth century: abducted on the New England Frontier, Swarton was taken up to Canada and then sold to French colonists (Sayre, *American Captivities* 177). Or even John Williams’ *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1707), not extensively studied by scholars of captivity narrative today but “estimated to have sold 1,000 copies during the first week after its publication” (14). This huge popularity of captivity narrative generates some questions for scholars of the genre: first

of all, why was the captivity narrative so important and so overwhelmingly popular?¹ Secondly, why has it become so avidly studied by historians and scholars of literature, especially in the past few decades?

The reason for such popularity seems to be related to the awareness of the possibility of Indian captivity to these individuals. In *A Fate Worse Than Death*, Gregory and Susan Michno assert that “from the beginning [of American history], European men, women, and children were captured by the Indians, and the threat of capture was a real danger for generations of Americans on the frontier” (xiii). Likewise, other scholars of Indian captivity narrative have stated that white individuals were aware of the possibility of captivity in the New World: “it was easy to imagine oneself swept away from one’s loved ones and captured by strange Indians whether or not that event was likely to occur. Surely it was this ability to touch every individual imagination that made the captivity narrative such a persistently popular literary form” (Washburn, “Introduction,” xi-xii). The possibility of abduction was, therefore, fairly real for most whites who inhabited the frontier—or contact zone, to use Mary Louise Pratt’s term—in the three hundred years during which Indian captivity took place in America. As James Seaver asserted in his preface to Mary Jemison’s *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1824), “it is presumed that [. . .] there are but few native citizens that have passed the middle age who do not distinctly recollect the hearing of such frightful accounts of Indian barbarities, oft

¹ Derounian-Stodola and Levernier further state that “the public simply could not read enough about Indian captivity. From the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century, captivity narratives about hundreds of captives among every major American Indian tribe were published, distributed, and read in virtually all sections of the country” (14).

repeated, in the nursery and in the family circle, until it almost caused their hair to stand erect, and deprived them of the power of emotion” (12). The experience of Indian captivity was thus unquestionably interwoven into the very fabric of early American life and history. Because basically every individual who lived in America from the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, even if not captured per se, had sympathetically “lived” the experience of captivity in their daily lives, the corpus of Indian captivity narrative enables scholars to access original accounts of life as it was during the formation of America (first as a New England Puritan colony and later as a nation). One could further argue that the captivity narrative is an essential historical piece of evidence for the understanding of the formation not only of the United States as a country but also of its identity as a white nation. Therefore, the captivity narrative works as a tool for establishing both national and racial identity, distinguishing whites from non-whites, especially Native Americans.

It is due to its importance to the understanding of the history of the United States that so much energy has been devoted to scholarship on Indian captivity narrative. But it is indispensable to mention at this point that, although at first sight these captivity narratives give both colonial, early Republic, and contemporaneous readers a chance to seriously partake in the experiences of these men and women and truly learn what they went through as captives of the Indians, I bring to this discussion Lorraine Carroll’s ideas laid out in her book *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History*. Carroll starts the discussion by stating that “captivity narratives are tricky texts” (1). To explain the trickery of these texts Carroll bases her study in

Christopher Castiglia's argument that whereas captivity narratives allow for an "immediate relation of historical events . . . they simultaneously bury their own textual history, submerging their influences, predecessors, and coauthors beneath the foundations of a fictionally autonomous I" (qtd. in Carroll, 1). Carroll thus draws attention to the possibility that a good number of the captivity narratives published in the seventeenth century were actually not written (or at least not completely written) by the captives themselves. That is the case, for instance, for Rowlandson and especially for Swarton's texts. To describe this action of impersonating the captive and writing her story Carroll coins the term "rhetorical drag." She does so "because the [editor's] impersonation exceeds merely the appropriation of the 'I' and depends for its success on ascriptions of gendered language and diverse rhetorical practices" (1). But one ought to ask what is behind the purpose of ventriloquizing the captives; that is, why would men literally impersonate, writing as if they were women? To respond to this question Carroll asserts that in "deploying rhetorical drag to characterize—literally—the female captives, men were engaged in writing history and shaping their own historical moments" (4). Manipulating history, thus, these men, the Puritan minister Increase Mather and his son and disciple Cotton Mather used rhetorical drag so that they could appropriate "the body and the voice of the captive woman and explain how her experience should be understood within the historical vision of the impersonator" (5). In addition, by writing as the captives, the ministers were able to appropriate to their own ends the precious position of observers, "distinct from the more conventionally male space of contestation" (6). Finally, "the men adopted rhetorical drag because they could impute to their own

productions the power of the female captives' empirical knowledge of both the events of captivity and the cultural practices of the people who captured her" without giving up the privileged position their masculinity granted them (7). According to Carroll, then, while Rowlandson's text was edited and coached by Increase Mather, Swarton's narrative was completely written by his son and disciple Cotton Mather. To prove this argument Carroll compares and contrasts *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton* to other works published by Cotton Mather, especially his sermons:

The affiliations between the text and the narrative demonstrate that the Swarton text is a practical application of Mather's theories concerning women's social roles. [. . .] A further comparison, derived from formal analysis of his sermon and its appendix, reveal a direct correlation between Mather's list of humiliations [in *Humiliations Followed With Deliverances*, where Swarton's text first appears] and the experiences that his Swarton describes in the narrative. (11)

The experience of reading these texts completely changes once the reader comes to an understanding that Rowlandson's text was edited and that Swarton's narrative, although narrated in the first person, in truth does not have one line written by her. Obviously these narratives, which at first sight, as I said earlier, present an original perspective on the history of colonial America as it was unfolding in the seventeenth century, after the realization of the presence of rhetorical drag in them, are unveiled as a product of the manipulation of certain men who literally used these women's tales to fulfill their religious and political ends. The supposed originality of the texts, then, is replaced by their fulfillment of the agenda of the impersonator.

Following Carroll's argument regarding rhetorical drag, which is certainly focused on gender issues of seventeenth and eighteenth century texts, I look at a couple of captivity narratives written in the nineteenth century, when the United States of

America was working to establish white national identity, to argue that these texts have also been impersonated. Not only in Carroll's gendered sense, though, but also racially, through what I call "rhetorical racial drag."² A careful reading of these narratives reveals their protagonists as hybrid individuals, that is, whites who decided to remain among the Indians and become one of them. The editors, however, managed to portray such subjects as frustrated and unhappy white persons deprived of civilization and afflicted by Indian savagery and barbarity.

Along with rhetorical gender and racial drag I argue in this thesis that the writing of emotion was essential, even necessary, for the successful accomplishment of a convincingly impersonated text. I make the case that for the rhetorical drag projects to work out for the impersonator, both emotion and drag had to work interdependently; one would not function without the other. To prove this argument I look, for instance, at the narratives telling the captivity experiences of Rowlandson and Swarton to argue that there is a good chance readers would be more able to detect the dissonant voices in these texts were they not emotionally moved by these tales, which would completely jeopardize the project the ministers had in mind. On the other hand, an overtly emotional text, written by a woman without the rhetorical drag of a man, could raise questions in the minds of readers mainly for two reasons. First, as a pious Puritan, the captive was not supposed to mourn too much for her fate, as one's destiny was supposedly God's will. When mourning for her daughter Sarah, Rowlandson actually crosses the border of how much time and effort she should have dedicated to mourning in her narrative. But as

² I thank Dr. Anne Myles, this thesis' committee chair, for suggesting the term "rhetorical racial drag."

Mitchell Breitwieser argues, she was still able to demonstrate that she accepts God's will, as when she remarks: "Oh that we could believe that there is nothing too hard for God!" (356). Were Rowlandson's narrative not edited by Increase Mather, the emotional expression of mourning could have been even more extensive, communicating to readers that she would not accept God's plan. Second, the display of too much sentimentality could also transmit the message that captivity was a form of divine punishment God was applying to those not following the covenant.

When discussing sentimentality in captivity narrative I ground my analysis in two major critical works: Michelle Burnham's *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861* and Julie Ellison's *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion*. Exploring sentimentality in captivity narrative, especially the ones written by women, Burnham asks the following question in the introduction of her book: "Why does captivity, particularly the captivity of women, so often inspire the sentimental response of tears?" She further comments that "the representation of captivity has invariably, it seems, been accompanied by tears—and perhaps more by the tears of spectators than by those of the captives themselves" (1). Writing sentimentality when producing these captivity narratives thus works to seal the "gap between [the reader's] identification with the captive's virtuous and passive suffering and an identification with her transgressive and active agency" (49). While Burnham focuses her analysis in the sentimentality of women captives, Ellison, focusing on male sentimentality, argues that the Age of Sensibility does not simply consist of the gloomy literature of the emotional British man of the later eighteenth century, as mainstream histories would have it, but it

actually begins much earlier, with the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81.³ Parting from Ellison's argument, I argue that Increase Mather and his son Cotton Mather are among the first men to write sentimentality in order to mask the transgression of female captives.

Indeed an interest in masculinity issues in captivity narrative was actually what drove me to pursue this project and write this thesis. At first, a graduate seminar in captivity narrative introduced me to most of the theory I apply in the following chapters, such as rhetorical drag and sentimentality. Further readings on the subject of Indian captivity narrative made me aware that much has been said about Rowlandson, Swarton, Jemison, and several other female captives, but that the study of male captives (such as John Williams and John Tanner) has been largely neglected by scholars of captivity narrative. In contrast to the voluminous literature on female captivity texts, only eight articles can be found in the MLA International Bibliography database on Williams' *The Redeemed Captive*, and Gordon Sayre states that "an MLA Bibliography search on Tanner turns up only an essay on Aleksandr Pushkin's review of the book" ("Abridging Between Two Worlds," 496). These facts led me to question the reason for the lack of attention paid to masculinity issues in the study of captivity narrative, especially given the fact that the tales of women have been so broadly discussed. More importantly, though, I asked myself why it would be significant to start analyzing captivity narratives

³ A period of intense political strife during 1679-81 generated by the attempt to bar Charles II's catholic brother James, duke of York, from the succession. Widespread apprehension that James would inaugurate a catholic 'absolutist' monarchy was aroused in 1678 by Titus Oates's revelations of a Popish plot. In the three parliaments called between 1679 and 1681 discontented 'Whig' groups exploited their majority in the Commons, but were each time defeated when the king used his prerogative to close proceedings.

by men, perhaps in comparison to those of women. I believe that the study of masculinity in captivity narrative illuminates various aspects of the history of identity formation in the United States, and it will certainly help one understand, on the one hand, what these men really believed in and stood for and, on the other, how (as well as to what extent) masculinity issues influenced the development of nationality and race in the United States of America. All of the men analyzed in this study, such as the Mathers, John Williams, James Seaver, and Edwin James, were either religious/political leaders or men of some sort of authority in different parts of the history of early America. With the exception of John Tanner, all these men influenced opinions with their preaching and/or writing, and access to their work most certainly brings important insights to understanding various forms (colonial, national, racial) of identity formation in America.

The following thesis is divided into two main sets of texts organized in four chapters. In the first set, composed of chapters one and two, I discuss the use of rhetorical gender drag and emotion in the construction of white colonial Puritan identity in the late seventeenth/ early eighteenth century; in the second set, chapters three and four, I argue that rhetorical racial drag and sentimentality work to form national identity in the post-Revolutionary period, with captivity narrative working to mask and transform racial identity with the objective of constructing American identity in contrast to Native American and other forms of racial identification.

The first chapter examines Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton* in order to understand how sentimentality is used by respectively Increase Mather and Cotton Mather to make rhetorical drag possible

and plausible to readers of those texts, as well as how the two ministers managed to meet their political and religious ends by editing or literally impersonating the captives, manipulating their experiences so that their stories were beneficial to the ministers and their political and religious ends. Whereas the editing Rowlandson's text went through focused on regaining her place when she returned to her community, as Lisa Logan argues, Swarton's impersonation focused first on creating white identity (when she was captured by the Indians and forced to remain among them) and later it focused on creating Puritan identity (when she was forced to become a Catholic by the French in Canada). By using such stories in their sermons, the Mathers managed to use the experience of captivity to convey their goals of keeping Puritans under their ministerial eyes and of forming colonial identity for Europeans in New England. The chapter also makes it clear that the employment of rhetorical drag was a risky business for the Puritan ministers, for were the impersonation they engaged in discovered, not only would be their project ruined but their careers as shepherds could also have been jeopardized.

Chapter 2 extends the analyses and looks at *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1702) to discuss the fact that John Williams, the Puritan minister at Deerfield held captive by the Indians, writes emotion, as Cotton Mather did when impersonating Swarton, in order to convince Puritans of the truth of the Puritan religion and the falseness of Catholicism. The suspicion that his son Stephen was converted into the Catholic faith during captivity drove Williams to a desperate state, for what could be worse for a Puritan minister than to have his son converted to the "Popish" religion? Trying to convince his son of the wrongness of his decisions, Williams writes several

very sentimental letters to Stephen in which he expresses how sorrowful he is for the fall of his son and in which he desperately attempts to convince Stephen of his mistake.

Looking closely at this letters, I argue that Williams uses sentimentality to promote, that is, to create colonial Puritan identity through the writing of captivity narrative.

A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (1824), in Chapter 3, tells the story of a white woman who was captured by the Indians at age fifteen but later decided to remain among the Seneca as one of them. Jemison was interviewed by James Seaver, a medical doctor who wrote her story as if she was writing it herself, that is, in the first person. What is really critical in this book is the fact that, although Jemison chose to become a Seneca woman and was thus a hybrid individual, she is portrayed by Seaver as a white woman oppressed by the savagery of the Indians: a white person whose happiness would be regained only if she had returned to the white community she once was forced to leave. Seaver thus also employs a form of rhetorical drag when writing for Jemison. As his objective with such impersonation was the creation of national identity by depriving Jemison of her hybridity, I will call this form of impersonation “rhetorical racial drag.” The misdescription of Jemison’s image does not take place without the aid of sentimentality: Seaver writes emotion into *A Narrative* so that readers will suffer with Jemison when they read her story and, when doing so, look at her not as the Indian woman she chose to become but as a white woman oppressed by captivity.

Following the rhetorical racial drag that shapes Jemison’s text, in Chapter 4 I argue that John Tanner is also a subject of rhetorical racial drag when the book telling his life, *The Falcon*, is written in the first person and republished as his own work. *The*

Falcon is in fact the republication of *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner, (U.S. Interpreter at the Saut de Ste. Marie) During Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (1830), a book which is supposed to have been written by Tanner himself (a man who had forgotten most of his English after residing with the Shawnee Indians) and edited by the medical doctor Edwin James. Interestingly, the 1994 edition of the book put together by the Penguin Nature Library under the title *The Falcon* almost entirely erases the presence of James, the editor, except for a few footnotes that still remain in the text, only to puzzle the reader. Thus, Tanner's narrative also undergoes rhetorical racial drag. But in contrast to the impersonation experienced by Jemison, Tanner's story is racially manipulated so that the imposition of civilization on him and, by extension, on all Native Americans, can be legitimized. Tanner, a man who decided to remain among the Ojibwas, is then depicted as a wretched individual, a man whose happiness lies only in the reestablishment of his whiteness. It is indeed the enactment of this emotional story of a suffering man oppressed by the savagery of the Indians that will ultimately be used to carry on the project of white national formation Edwin James had in mind.

I hope that this study of five captivity narratives and the analysis of rhetorical drag, racial drag, sentimentality, and masculinity will add to the understanding of early America relations of power, gender, discourse, and identity formation, as well as how these matters worked together to define the United States as a country, its history, and its people.

CHAPTER 1
 INVITING THE READER TO CRY: THE MATHERS
 AND THE APPROPRIATION OF THE VOICE OF MARY ROWLANDSON
 AND HANNAH SWARTON

I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together, but now it is other ways with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open, but His who ever waketh, my thoughts are upon things past, upon the awful dispensation of the Lord toward us; upon His wonderful power and might, in carrying of us through so many difficulties, in returning us in safety, and suffering none to hurt us. I remember in the night season, how the other day I was in the midst of thousands of enemies, and nothing but death before me. [. . .] Oh, the wonderful power of God that mine eyes have seen, affording matter enough for my thoughts to run in, that when others are sleeping mine are weeping. (175)

Thus ends *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), the narrative written by the captive herself, Mary Rowlandson, abducted by the Narragansett Indians in 1676 at Lancaster, Massachusetts. The ending of the narrative Rowlandson wrote upon redemption illustrates the impact captivity had on her life, and how changed she was by the experience of captivity. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* is now known as the seminal text in the American captivity narrative genre and, as most seminal texts, was followed by many others.⁴ *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton, Containing Wonderful Passages, Relating to Her Captivity and Her Deliverance* (1697) is, for instance, one example of a text following the one written by Rowlandson.

⁴ Sayre affirms that “during the two decades after Mary Rowlandson’s narrative was published to such success, captivity stories became part of popular discourse in Puritan New England. The number of captives increased, and although not every returned captive wrote his or her own narrative, their stories passed into conversations, histories, and especially sermons” (177).

In *American Captivity Narratives* Gordon M. Sayre states that the captivity narrative genre developed during a period of increasing conflicts between the French and the English colonies, as well as their respective Indian allies. King Philip's War was the first of these conflicts, initiated because "the French objected to England's Glorious Revolution of 1689, which replaced the Catholic-leaning King James II with the strongly Protestant William of Orange" (177).⁵ Following this combat was Queen Anne's War,

⁵ Metacomet, or King Philip, as the English knew him, was the son of the Wampanoag chief Massasoit, who aided the Pilgrims when they first arrived in New England. At that time, even though many towns were built in Native American territory during Massasoit's kingdom, relations were fairly peaceful. However, as the colonists' populations grew incredibly larger, Indians were squeezed out of their original territory, which initiates more serious problems for the Indians.⁵ Thus, Massasoit's ability to keep a peaceful relationship with the colonists lasted for as long as he lived. Upon his death, Wamsutta, Metacomet's brother and rightful successor after Massasoit passed away, suspiciously died in 1662, after returning from a meeting with the Massachusetts Bay Colony officials. Wamsutta's death led to Metacomet assuming as the king of the Wampanoag Indians. The supposition that Wamsutta had been poisoned by the colonists, however, alarmed the tribe. In the meantime, another figure contributes to what would culminate in King Philip's War: the Puritan missionary John Elliot, who was working to convert Indians into Christianity. The "praying Indians," as the English would refer to the Christianized Native Americans, left their Indian tribes and established themselves in praying towns, where they could preserve their Native American culture yet living as Christians. As a tool for the conversion of these Indians John Elliot, the author of several books, translated the Bible into the Natick language and published it in 1663. He also attempted to convert Metacomet, but failed to do so. He did not fail, however, to convert John Sassamon, who became an important Indian minister. Assigned by Elliot, Sassamon used the Bible to teach Metacomet to read and write and, evidently, to convert him into a Christian. But Sassamon betrayed Metacomet by telling the colonists the Indians were planning on beginning a war. Possibly without Metacomet's consent, Sassamon was killed by three Indians, who were condemned and hanged by the colonists. The happening very much insulted the Wampanoag's sovereignty, who assaulted homes and killed at a little Massachusetts town of Swansea. The colonists then responded by destroying Mount Hope on June twenty-eighth, 1675. On September ninth of the same year the New England Confederation declared war on Native Americans. The war continued for about one year, when Metacomet was killed by John Alderman on the twelfth of August, 1676. King Philip's War was deemed by historians one of the bloodiest and costliest wars in the history of America: more than half of New England's

which took place from 1702 to 1713 and was linked to the War of the Spanish Succession in Europe, which resulted in the English taking over Nova Scotia and Newfoundland from the French. It was during this war that Hannah Swarton became a captive and, upon being ransomed, “wrote” her captivity narrative.

Although Rowlandson and Swarton’s texts have different agendas (proof of chastity for the first and regret and conversion for the latter), these women were both sponsored or, as Lorraine Carroll claims in *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History*, impersonated by the Puritan ministers. But why did they decide to either sponsor or appropriate the tales of the captives? What was behind this intention, that is, why not write these stories in the third person and avoid the issue of women coming before the public in their own voice? In order to answer these questions, this chapter analyzes how the Mathers, in sponsoring or “dragging” for the captives, use the conventions of sentimentality to provoke readers to cry and, in so doing, provide their community with proof of the wrath of God, but also of the wonders those who abide by the Puritan covenant experience. Extending the work of Lorraine Carroll, who claims that the women had their voice and experience appropriated, and Michelle Burnham, who states that the Mathers relied on sentimentality to use the narratives to convert readers, I argue that rhetorical drag and sentimentality in fact depend on each other. In this sense, rhetorical drag might not have achieved success without emotion, and conversely the use

towns were assaulted and about three thousand and six hundred people (six hundred colonists, three thousand Native Americans) died. For a detailed discussion on King Philip’s war see *King Philip’s War: the history and legacy of America’s forgotten conflict* by Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougas.

of emotion could have actually worked against the ministers had the narratives not been either edited or appropriated. This would have ultimately resulted in the failure of the construction of a white Puritan identity as envisioned by the Mathers.

In *Rhetorical Drag*, Carroll argues that “captivity narratives are tricky texts” (1). They are tricky, she continues, because the ministers “appropriate the body and the voice of the captive woman and explain how her experience should be understood within the historical vision of the impersonator” (5). In appropriating Rowlandson’s and Swarton’s stories, the Mathers edited and wrote the narratives for the captives, but made it in such a way that readers and scholars of captivity narrative were led to believe, for centuries, that the narratives were actually written by the captives themselves. In questioning why they decided to write *as* the woman captive, Carroll claims that “the men adopted rhetorical drag because, through this mode, they could impute to their own productions the power of the female captives’ empirical knowledge of both the events of captivity and the cultural practices of the people who captured her [sic]” (7). Once ransomed and returned to their families and communities, these women became powerful informants on life on the other side of the border that divided the Puritan world from the wilderness. Both Rowlandson and Swarton were bearers of a vantage point most men did not have: they had personally experienced the wilderness, and, in living with the Indians, were reliable witness of life among the heathens. But life on the other side of the border also brought trouble to the captives. Once they had departed from their communities to live, as Swarton states, “where there was no church or minister of the gospel” (188), these women transgressed the gender line that divides what men and women could or could not

do. In addition, they also had to deal with speculations of having been raped, for the Puritans mistakenly believed that the Indians would sexually violate their captives or, worse, there were rumors that Rowlandson willingly engaged in sexual activity with the Indians. Therefore, especially in the case of Rowlandson, as argued by Lisa Logan, her text “attempts to recuperate her position as a valued member of the community” as well as “resist[ing] readings that violate her and struggles to claim authority and significance for her experience” (259).

It is also important to notice here that the captives did not cross the gender line only when they were taken into captivity, but also when they returned from it and “wrote” their tales, for Puritan women were not supposed to publicly speak, much less publish. However, as earlier discussed, because their experiences were so powerful—especially so that the Mathers could use them to achieve their religious and political ends—they had to come up with ways to both allow them to leave the sphere of the home and to legitimize such act.⁶ In the 1702 publication *Decennium Luctuosum*, Cotton Mather states: “I know not, reader, whether you will be moved to tears by this narrative; I know I could not write it without weeping,” which clearly refers to Swarton’s narrative, a text published in this book of sermons as an example of both the wrath and the benevolence of God. What is really interesting in the sentence quoted above is the fact that Mather not only publicly announces that the story made him cry but he openly invites readers to weep with him for the story they are about to hear, for it will be so

⁶ As a matter of fact, Increase Mather is quite direct in these terms in his preface to *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*: “Excuse her [Rowlandson] then if she come thus into public, to pay those vows, come and hear what she hath to say” (136).

strong to the senses that “he could not write it without weeping.” Was it, then, that one of the ways they found to legitimize the publication of a book or a narrative by a woman was through inviting readers to cry for the sufferings of the captives? Is this the reason for writing sentimentality into these texts? By the same token, why does Mather cry when faced with the story? And why does he want readers to cry for it just as he did? How does the emotional reaction from both minister and readers aid in shaping the formation of a Puritan identity? And finally, could a seventeenth century text that had the power to drive readers to cry accomplish things that another text not as sentimental could not?

Trying to interpret this situation under our current society’s values may help to clarify these questions: it seems fair to affirm that a reader will probably cry when faced with a situation s/he feels somehow connected to; that is, readers will cry for a story because they are aware that what happens to the character in the narrative may happen to them as well. Some examples of stories that might drive contemporary readers to cry are the ones that depict a mother who loses her child; a person who bears a terminal disease; a family breakdown, etc. If we take this notion back to the seventeenth and early eighteenth century and apply it to captivity narrative,⁷ sentimentality would then have the power to move to tears readers who, in certain ways, felt connected to the captives and knew that what happened to Rowlandson and Swarton could just as well happen to them.

⁷ In *Good Wives*, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich states: “Before the war’s [King Philip’s War] end fifty-two of the ninety towns in the region had been attacked and twelve destroyed” (173). She also claims that “[s]ettlement patterns varied, but most folks had neighbors. It was dangerous to live alone”(51). Evidently most of New England readers who came in contact with captivity narratives knew that there was a good possibility their villages and houses could be attacked by the Indians, that their families could be killed, and that they could be taken into captivity.

As Michelle Burnham asserts, “if we are moved by scenes of confinement and homelessness, it is because we imagine ourselves in the place of the suffering captives” (2). The Mathers most certainly knew that tales of captivity had the power to emotionally move readers, that is, to make them cry and, by doing so, establish a connection between readers and captives. This explains both the appropriation of the tales and the heavy presence of sentimentality in them.

Also important to notice when discussing sentimentality and the effort Cotton Mather puts forth to bring readers to cry is Burnham’s discussion of the role of tears in the captivity narratives:

These popular texts [. . .] function as escape literature because their heroines so often indulge in transgressive behavior or enact forms of resistance agency, not in spite of their captivity but precisely as a result of it. The tears that so often accompany accounts of female captivity both mark and mask that agency; sentimental discourse at once conceals the movement across such boundaries and legitimize the transgressive female agency produced by it. (3-4)

Burnham goes on to affirm that when writers such as Cotton Mather “invite their readers to cry, they allow them the disavowed pleasure of indulging in unlegislated escape” (3-4). It seems fair to draw an early conclusion, then, that the sentimentality and the tears that accompany the rhetorical drag performed by the Mathers have the ultimate objectives both of legitimizing the rhetorical drag and of concealing the transgression the female captives performed either during captivity or after being ransomed, when they allegedly published their tales. In addition, tears also seem to work towards creating a blurred image of the transgression. Thus, the Mathers took advantage of the power of emotion to blur reality, that is, to make readers unable—because emotionally affected—to see reality as they would if not touched by a tale that drives them to cry for the sufferings the

subjects of the captivity tale are exposed to. But again, why not simply narrate the captivity tale in the third person and avoid all the issues related to it, such as having to find ways to cover up the transgression of the women who came in public to speak?

Burnham brings up one more interesting instance in Increase Mather's discourse that leads us to understand how he worked with sentimentality to manipulate readers of captivity narrative to emotionally respond to such readings. Burnham draws attention to one of Increase Mather's claims in the preface of Rowlandson's narrative: "Reader, if thou gettest no good by such a Declaration as this, the fault must needs be thine own. Read, therefore, Peruse, Ponder, and from hence lay by something from the experience of another against thine own turn comes, that so thou also through patience and consolation of the Scripture mayest have hope" (137). According to Burnham, Mather implies that if Rowlandson herself undergoes conversion through captivity, her readers would probably be converted by reading her story (11-12). By the same token, it is important to notice the significance of the fact that Cotton Mather throws to the reader the responsibility of getting God's message from the text and asserts that, if this fails to happen, the problem is definitely not in the captive or in the text itself but rather in the reader. In attempting to erase any room for accusation of having crossed a cultural/gendered border, Mather implies that publication by women offered dangers not only to the integrity of the community but also to the status of the ransomed captives themselves. This is one of the reasons it is necessary to keep sympathetic tears always in the eyes of the reader: these tears will come to work as a "cover for the physical and imaginative violation of borders

of difference” (Burnham 4), impending critical reading and, hence, erasing space for critique.

In order to better understand how the violation of the gender border takes place, it is imperative to closely look at each of the two captives and the contexts in which their stories took place. A gentlewoman, Rowlandson was the wife of a Puritan minister and the daughter of Lancaster’s wealthiest man. She was a literate woman who lived in a house and had servants at her disposition, including an Indian.⁸ When taken into captivity by the Narragansetts during King Philip’s War, Rowlandson was forced to leave both her home and her husband behind, and to follow the Indians into the wilderness taking with her nothing but a wounded daughter, who ended up passing away a few days later. She lived among the Indians for about three months and during this time was forced to march further and further into the wilderness. In order to remain alive, Rowlandson had to learn how to live as one of them—which meant giving up some of her Englishness and accepting some of their Indianness—until she was finally ransomed and reunited with her husband and her two remaining children.

Unlike Rowlandson, Swarton was not a ‘gentlewoman,’ but rather a common one, whose husband was, like her, also unknown and of insignificant importance in their community. Taken captive during King William’s War (1689-1697), Swarton’s

⁸ “English people were forbidden to live with the Indians, but Indians were sometimes employed as servants or apprentices in New England homes or business, and there is evidence to suggest that the Rowlandson household contained at one point an Indian servant” (Burnham 15). Burnham also says that this Indian servant was one of the victims of the slaughter committed by Hannah Duston upon her capture. Cotton Mather probably did not know of this fact, for it would be a good way to claim God’s punishment toward the diabolic salvages.

experience of captivity reflected a common pattern through much of the eighteenth century: she was abducted on the frontier of New England, taken north to Canada and then sold to the French, who were Catholics—or papists, as she prefers to refer to them (Sayre, 178). The agenda of Swarton’s narrative becomes clear when she affirms that “I dreaded going to Canada for fear lest I should be overcome by them to yield to their religion which I had vowed unto God that I would not do” (189). In addition to fearing conversion into Catholicism, Swarton’s text also carries the message that her captivity was her own fault: “I desired to see all my sins and to repent of them all with all my heart and of that sin which had been especially a burden to me, namely, that I left the public worship and ordinances of God to live in a remote place without the public ministry, depriving ourselves and our children of so great a benefit for our souls, and all this for worldly advantages” (192).

That both women transgressed the Puritan mode of life becomes evident to the community from the moment they take the step to publish their accounts, for “a good wife earned the dignity of anonymity” (Ulrich 3), and not that of public notoriety. By the same token, when reflecting on the place of Rowlandson—and one can here as well read the place of Swarton—Logan affirms: “Rowlandson’s work engages the intersecting and overlapping position—physical, ideological, social, discursive—that she occupies: Puritan, woman, captive, writer, wife, mother, neighbor. It’s about finding a place from which to speak, claiming a position of authority from which to represent self and experience, and, in doing so, offering up one’s speaking and textual self as a site of

public scrutiny” (256).⁹ Of course, that fact of becoming a “site of public scrutiny” was problematic for a seventeenth-century New England woman, for the rules that governed the Puritan society reserved the public place and the role of speaking in public to the man and not to the woman. In addition, as Carroll claims, in truth the female captives gender-cross from the moment they go into captivity and become submissive not to their husbands anymore but to the Indians. This very act infringed one of the most important principles of Puritanism when it comes to the social place of women: “[s]ubmission to God and submission to one’s husband were part of the same religious duty. [. . .] Obedience was not only a religious duty but a legal requirement” (Ulrich 6-7).¹⁰

Leaving the premises of the home—and the careful eye of the husband—was but only the first instance of transgression. Once taken into captivity, these women inhabited a liminal position between what belongs to the white versus what belongs to the Indian. On the other side of the frontier, Rowlandson and Swarton experienced the contact zone, a notion that is essential for understanding how the transgression of these women took place. Mary Louise Pratt defines ‘contact zone’ as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion,

⁹ Logan adds that “Rowlandson’s text is an inquiry into the position(s) of woman as subject in/of/to discourse; and ‘captivity’ is both the occasion for her writing and a telling metaphor to reveal the position(s) she inhabits as a woman author and a gendered and political subject” (256).

¹⁰ Ulrich quotes, from William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, a classic statement concerning the subordination of wives which women were forced into by law: “By marriage, the husband and the wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything” (7)

radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (7). Both Rowlandson and Swarton manage to survive in this zone of contact only because they have the ability to learn to live in Indian manner. It is exactly this ability to blend in with the Native American culture that will ultimately complicate the cultural and gendered transgression performed by the captives.

When Rowlandson and Swarton decide to do what it takes to survive captivity instead of choosing to give up and die as other captives did, they obviously had to give up some of their Englishness to adapt to Indian customs of life. The Indians and their customs, however, were considered to be savage by the Puritans. In order not to starve to death, both Rowlandson and Swarton had to undergo a Native American mode of life, which meant, among other things, eating their food in the way Indians did:

There came an Indian to them at that time, with a basket 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 gave me 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. (*Sovereignty*, 148)

By the same token, Swarton narrates that “one of them gave me a roasted eel which I ate and it seemed unto me the most savory food I ever tasted before” (187). In learning the skills necessary to survive on the other side of the frontier, these women became, in the eyes of the readers of their captivities, as Indians and, hence, savages. This most definitely was a strong cultural and racial transgression.

There is one more way in which transgression takes place in these captivity narratives that is important for the understanding of the Mathers’ choice of appropriation/impersonation and the use of sentimentality: captivity clearly meant oppression for the captive, who would from then on (until redemption) live as a prisoner

of war of the Indians.¹¹ On the other hand, though, captivity also meant freedom: “narratives and novels of captivity demonstrate that crossing transcultural borders exposes the captive to physical hardship and psychological trauma. But they also reveal that such crossing exposes the captive and her readers to the alternative cultural paradigms of her captors” (Burnham 3). In captivity, the Puritan woman was exposed to a society organized in a very different fashion than that of the whites in New England: among the Narragansetts who captured Rowlandson, women were, in many circumstances, in the center of community life: Quinnapin’s wife Weetamoo, for example, accumulates wealth and is clearly a woman of power. As a matter of fact, Weetamoo becomes Rowlandson’s mistress, a fact which more than anything in her captivity she has trouble dealing with.¹² This exposure to a new concept of society, in a sense, also constitutes a form of transgression, for Rowlandson would return to her community having experienced a different type of life, and although forced to remain among the heathens, she did partake with them by choice, in many circumstances, so that she could survive.¹³ It was, then, Rowlandson’s extensive ability to adapt in this

¹¹ Castiglia says that sentimental captivity tales allowed women writers to articulate for themselves and their readers otherwise unimaginable feminist alternatives. (Burnham 5).

¹² It is true that as a Puritan wife Rowlandson is familiar with submissiveness, for in colonial New England “a woman became a wife by virtue of her dependence, her solemnly vowed commitment to her husband” (Unrich 37). Submission to a woman, especially a woman who was not her mother or a matriarchal figure in her family, was something entirely new for Rowlandson. She openly dislikes Weetamoo. When one of her papooses passes away, for instance, she reacts by saying that “at least now there is more room in the wigwam” (158). Rowlandson could cope with the fact that she was under the power of an Indian man, but she seems unable to accept that she has to serve an Indian woman.

¹³ “Historical evidence does show, however, that Algonquin tribes were, if not matriarchal, certainly far less patriarchal than Puritan New England. While land in

liminal/hybrid position she was put in while in captivity that made her able to survive and even succeed as a negotiator of her own freedom.¹⁴ But her survival and the regaining of her freedom could not only have cost her social life but an eternal spiritual imprisonment, since her fellow Puritans could interpret her efforts to gain liberty (such as taking part in their mode of life) as sinful, which ultimately meant the condemnation of her soul.¹⁵

Like Rowlandson, Swarton also crossed many lines when taken into captivity. In contrast to Rowlandson, though, during captivity Swarton had to interact with two different groups: the Indians, who first captured her, and the Catholics, who were in charge of her when she arrived in Canada. While among the Indians, like Rowlandson, she had to learn to live as the “savages” did so that she would not be killed: “no English were in our company but one John York and myself who were both almost starved for want and yet told that if we could not hold up for travel with them they would kill us.

Anglo-American families was owned by families and was usually under the control of the Indian women who farmed it and inherited rights to it” (Burnham 30).

¹⁴ Ulrich comments on the fact that Rowlandson was a very skilled housewife, who could, for example, knit and sew very well. Rowlandson often made clothes or knit stockings for the Indians, for which she often got either money or food in exchange, as she recognizes in the “Eighth Remove:” “During my abode in this place, Philip spake to me to make a shirt for is boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling. I offered the money to my master, but he bade me keep it; and with it I bought a piece of horse flesh. Afterwards he asked me to make a cap for his boy, for which he invited me to dinner. I went, and he gave me a pancake, about as big as two fingers. It was made of parched wheat, beaten, and fried in bear's grease, but I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life. There was a squaw who spake to me to make a shirt for her sannup, for which she gave me a piece of bear. Another asked me to knit a pair of stockings, for which she gave me a quart of peas. I boiled my peas and bear together, and invited my master and mistress to dinner; but the proud gossip, because I served them both in one dish, would eat nothing, except one bit that he gave her upon the point of his knife” (150).

¹⁵ “Rowlandson threatens to unhinge the basis of a male-controlled economy and symbolic order. Mary Rowlandson’s captivity is both an inscription of Puritan patriarchal law and an escape from it” (Burnham 33).

And accordingly, John York growing weak by his wants, they killed him and threatened me with the like” (187). In order not to be killed, therefore, she also had to give up some of her Englishness and become a savage. The worst of the transgression, however, is yet to happen: when Swarton is delivered to the Catholic in Canada, she was forced to attend the mass and to pray with the Catholics. Although she did not “turn papist,” she does recognize her misdoing, coming to the understanding that she should not be part of a religion which contrasted in its belief and theology to that of hers: “I though I was out of my way to be present at the idolatrous worship, and I resolved never to come unto it again” (191). Swarton’s transgression, thus, is even stronger than that of Rowlandson, for it takes place in several different spheres: gender, when she leaves her husband to go into captivity; race, when she decides to behave as the Indians do; and finally faith, when she partook with the Canadian of their religion, which is the worst transgression of all of them.

This idea of transgression, however, is complicated by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s description of deputy husbands. When discussing the role of the wife in Early America, Ulrich affirms that “[s]ome wives were servile, some were shrews, others were respected companions who shared the authority of their spouses in the management of family affairs” (38). To further explain the extent to which colonial American women took part in the business of their husbands, Ulrich states:

Ambitious men in early America were often involved in many things at once—farming and running a gristmill, for example, or cutting timber and fishing. Because wives remained close to the house, they were often at the communications center of these diverse operations, given responsibility for conveying directions, pacifying creditors, and perhaps even making some decisions about the disposition of labor. On a day-to-day basis this might be a

rather simple matter: remembering to send a servant to repair a breach in the dam after he finished in the field, for example, or knowing when to relinquish an ox to a neighbor. But during a prolonged absence of her husband a woman might become involved in more weighty matters. (39)

It is important to notice that these women who shared power and business with their husbands were, contrary to what is held true by many scholars, not exceptions but rather common in seventeenth-century New England. It is exactly for this reason that the notion of deputy husbands comes as a challenge to the idea of transgression posed by scholars such as Carroll and Burnham, for women in New England were not necessarily confined to affairs linked to household care or child raising. They could have been, as made clear by Ulrich, directly involved in business as well. In this sense, one might argue that the extent to which Rowlandson and Swarton transgressed was less than Carroll and Burnham suggest. I explain: had Mary Rowlandson and Hannah Swarton had their husbands present with them in captivity, they would most likely not have engaged in dealing with the Indians as well as working towards their own ransom (as Rowlandson did when she exchanged clothes she sewed for money, for instance); that would have been a role primarily played by the husbands. However, as their spouses were not with them, they had to act as deputy husbands, that is, they had to play the role their husbands would have played, getting involved in matters during captivity just as they would get involved in the economy of the family were the spouse to be absent.

Of course, the notion of the deputy husband does not eradicate the problem related to transgression. What it means is that one may question the extension of the transgression, then, but not the existence of it. It is certain that the women infringed rules of Puritan society: although they could act for their husbands in their absence, they were

not expected to come out and make the story of their lives available to everyone through publication. Rhetorical drag, hence, became a form of masking the crossing of the gender line by the captive woman. A two-edged sword, rhetorical drag worked to both regain the place of the captive as a chaste woman once she was ransomed and back in her community—as is the case of Rowlandson—and as a preaching tool for the minister. As discussed earlier, in adopting rhetorical drag, the men occupy the place of the woman without either acknowledging doing so or giving up any of the privileges they had as a male subject and minister. Along with rhetorical drag, the Mathers made use of sentimentality to complete the act of covering up the transgression of the captive woman. As Burnham claims, “sentimentality works to seal the gap between an identification with the captive’s virtuous and passive suffering and an identification with her transgressive agency” (49). The ministers apparently realized, then, that rhetorical drag alone would not be sufficient to convince readers that the crossing Rowlandson and Swarton performed was excusable. They needed something else: directing the members of the Puritan church to feel emotionally touched by the story of the captives and, by sentimentally bonding with them, read their texts with little resistance and criticism when it comes to moments of gender transgression. Hence, looking closely at respectively Rowlandson’s and Swarton’s narratives in order to locate and discuss several passages in which emotion “mark and mask” this agency (that is, transgression) becomes a fundamental task.

The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, not surprisingly, displays emotion even before Rowlandson starts writing her narrative. In the second paragraph of “The Preface

to the Reader,” Increase Mather makes sure readers understand the sorrowful state of the people in Lancaster at the time of the Indian raid: “[a] small town, remote from aid of others, and not being garrisoned as it might was not able to make effectual resistance” (133) and, despite the inhabitants attempts to control the fire, most of the buildings burned to the ground. In addition, many of the people were slain while others captivated. “The most solemn and remarkable part of this tragedy,” continues Mather,

fell upon the family of the 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 set on fire by the enemy, [. . .] and all in it consumed: his precious yokefellow, and dear children, wounded and captivated [. . .] by these cruel and barbarous savages. *A sad catastrophe!* (133, emphasis added)

Mather has, then, set the tone for the narrative: the reader is going to be exposed to the sufferings of a captive and her family among the heathens. He is clear to state, however, that such afflictions have started even before captivity itself takes place, for Lancaster was “turned into ashes” and its people, if not taken captives, were “slain.” After reading the preface, the reader is then prepared on what to expect: an emotional text that will most certainly move readers to cry for the captive and her sufferings.

Following Mather, Rowlandson correspondingly starts her texts portraying a very strong sentimental picture of the Indian invasion in Lancaster. She begins her story by saying that “on the tenth of February,” when the Indians came to town, “hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven” (137). Rowlandson then goes on to narrate the carnage committed by the Indians, in which she does not refrain from precisely describing the bloodthirsty nature of the raid:

“one was knocked on the head, the other escaped: another there was who running along was shot and wounded, and fell down; he begged of them his life [. . .] but they would not hearken to him but knocked him in the head, and stripped him naked, and split open his bowels” (137). In this combat zone where the colonizer becomes the victim of the colonized, “bullets seemed to fly like hail,” quickly wounding whoever crossed the path of the “bloody heathens [. . .], ready to knock us on the head, if we stirred out” (138). To finish the description of how Rowlandson and her family and friends were “butchered by those merciless heathens” while “mothers and children were desperately crying out for themselves, and one another, Lord, What shall we do?” (138), she describes one last English victim of the Indians and gives a picture of the town after its destruction: “there was one who was chopped into the head with a hatchet, and stripped naked, and yet was crawling up and down. It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of sheep torn by wolves” (139). After Mather’s preface and Rowlandson’s introduction, the reader now is very well prepared for what to expect from this captivity narrative. Actually, one can certainly claim that readers are, by this point, already very emotionally moved by the story of this woman.

The Indian raid, nonetheless, is only the beginning of Rowlandson’s afflictions as a captive. Throughout her text, sentimentality will stand out more than any other aspect. An example among many is how emotionally difficult it is for her to see all of her children so barbarously treated by the Indians. To make matters even worse, one of her child goes into captivity wounded: “one of the Indians carried my poor wounded baby upon a horse, it went moaning all along, I shall die, I shall die. I went on foot after it,

with sorrow that cannot be expressed” (141). Not being able to do anything to help her daughter, Rowlandson witnesses her child’s death:

I sat much alone with the 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 in one hour, that your master will knock your child in the head. [. . .] About two hours in the night, my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life. (142-143)

Rowlandson affirms that her child passes away nine days from the first wounding, and that she wasn’t able to provide her daughter with refreshment of any sort except for “a little cold water” (143). In the manner Rowlandson describes the death of her most loved child, it is easy to assume that such story would most likely move seventeenth-century New England parents to tears, who could easily see themselves in her shoes, for going into captivity was a strong possibility for most of those who inhabited New England at the time.

A Narrative of Hannah Swarton, like Rowlandson’s tale, also abounds in sentimentality. Although it does not offer as many bloody images as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* does, Swarton likewise starts her text talking about the death of her husband and one of her sons: “my husband being slain and four children taken with me. The eldest of my sons they killed about two months after I was taken, and the rest scattered from me” (186). Full of emotion is, correspondingly, the description of how she was continually “starved for want” (187), thus suffering much with hunger. In addition to hunger, Swarton suffered with the travelings and the cold. She asserts, in the midst of desperation, that she “was now bereaved of husband, children, friends, neighbors, house, estate, bread, clothes, or lodging suitable, and my very life did hang daily in doubt, being

continually in danger of being killed by the Indians, or pined to death with famine, or tired to death with hard traveling, or pinched with cold till I died in the winter season” (188). Although the images of physical hardship suffered by Swarton are sufficient to take readers to an emotional state, it is rather what happens to her halfway through the captivity that, on the one hand, distinguishes the use of emotion in her text to that of Rowlandson and, on the other, makes sure the sentimentality inserted into the text works to meet the religious, as well as political, ends of the impersonation Cotton Mather performs when writing for her.

Once taken up to Canada, Swarton, aided by the French Catholics, manages to escape Indian captivity. Residing among the French, she at first feels she must honor them, for they are very kind and good to her (sharing their house as well as providing her with good food and clothes). However, she later realizes they were actually a danger to the good keeping of her Puritan faith: “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” (190). The French did not welcome Swarton solely out of goodness; they in truth had in mind persuading her “to turn papist” (190). This second stage of “captivity among the papists” (193), as Swarton puts it, is much more harmful than the first, when she was among the Indians, for while the latter could kill only her body, the French could kill her soul. Swarton then starts a desperate fight against the French to prove her faith, constantly bringing up Biblical passages to validate it and at the same time to confront her enemies. She doesn’t shy away, even when threatened to be sent to France, where she would be

burned for not turning to them (190), but instead engages in an aggressive Biblical debate in which she has the right passage to respond to any accusation from the Catholics regarding the falseness of her religion. However, Swarton finally gives in and goes “to see and be present at their worship sometimes but never to receive their sacrament” (191). Even though she does not partake in their sacrament, Swarton feels she has betrayed her faith, which causes much affliction to her spirit: “yet upon their persuasions I went to see and be present at their worship sometimes but never to receive their sacrament. [. . .] I thought I was out of my way to be present at the idolatrous worship, and I resolved never to come unto it again” (191). It is precisely the realization of such a slip in faith that drives Swarton and, by extension, her readers as well, to a strong emotional state.

The Mathers took a lot of risk when they decided to write in the voices of Rowlandson and Swarton. If their impersonation was uncovered by the late seventeenth-century Puritans they shepherded, their credibility as religious leaders would most certainly be undermined; even not taken seriously by some of the Puritans. The Mathers surely were conscious they were running such risks, but the stories of captivity of these two women were so meaningful to the accomplishment of their political and religious ends that they apparently understood it was worth it putting their own trustworthiness in jeopardy. The Mathers certainly acted as sentimental writers when editing Rowlandson’s text and impersonating Swarton and, as it is anticipated from such writers, they hoped for a process of transformation from both self and the readers. Suffering—especially the one in which tears are involved—was a basic type of emotion felt by everyone and a way of

establishing identification even where experiences were quite different. Such suffering, as a matter of fact, was seen as a sign of one's superior sensibility and a source of pleasure. Sentimental texts are thus very aggressive because the writer has the expectation to derive status and power from the display of suffering, often claiming to be reliving the pain as he writes and denying that there is any pleasure or power derived from the writing. This is why a sentimental writer is often seen as a masochist. This is especially significant as we think of what the Mathers had to gain in impersonating Swarton and Rowlandson. It also answers the question concerning the reason for the Mathers's decision to impersonate instead of use the third person to narrate the story: for a powerful man of high status to assume this masochistic position (for example, if Cotton Mather were to say he personally suffered while hearing and transmitting Swarton's story) meant undermining his direct authority in claiming this indirect kind of authority. He would have to admit he was powerless to protect Swarton and her family or to keep them closer to the Puritan settlement. He would have to admit that his authority over the Puritan settlements was waning as they dispersed for greater prosperity.

Obviously, the Mathers were very careful and took all the precautions necessary so that the rhetorical drag they engaged in would pass unnoticed. By employing emotion when editing for the captives the Mathers managed to get away with it, that is, they managed to disguise rhetorical drag by employing sentimentality. The masking of impersonation, though, was not the only objective behind the use of emotion: when inviting readers to cry for the suffering captives, the Mathers manipulated readers,

weakening their ability to critically think and, therefore, to criticize the captives for having trespassed the gendered border.

The Mathers were also careful—and very astute—to employ rhetorical drag and sentimentality in consonance with each other. Whereas rhetorical drag is fulfilled by emotion, emotion becomes useful only because rhetorical drag is being employed. Without utilizing emotion, the entire project could have fallen apart, for the dragging performed would likely have been discovered. Without rhetorical drag, the uncontrolled use of emotion by the captives could imperil the ministers' project of identity formation, drawing instead attention to other matters, such as that Rowlandson and Swarton's captivities were the result of God's punishing them for their sins.¹⁶ It was, therefore, only by putting emotion and rhetorical drag to work together that Increase and Cotton Mather achieved the end they had in mind: utilize the Indian captivity experience of these two white Puritan women to develop colonial white identity.

By promoting and writing these captivity narratives, the Mathers were able to use Rowlandson's and Swarton's experience of Indian captivity to further their

¹⁶ As a matter of fact, excessive sentimentality already made of Rowlandson's text a crossing one, even though it was edited by Mather. In *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning* Mitchel Breitwieser argues that Rowlandson was instructed by Mather to deliberate on whatever had significance. When writing her narrative, however, "Rowlandson comes across significances that have teleologies leading, primarily, to mourning rather than to faith as it was constructed by Mather and the other members of his cadre" (8). Breitwieser affirms that this alternate teleology was itself a product of Puritans in order to sublimate mourning, blocking and redirecting its vigor to different social purposes. The risk of such act is that the sublimated thing might, instead of accept transference to the surrogate, remain in itself. In the case of mourning, this would represent a contradiction to the philosophy of Puritanism, since God is behind the decision of who dies and who lives, and it is the obligation of the bereaved mother to accept such fate.

political/religious agendas. The publication of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton* are, therefore, devices the ministers appropriated so that they could, at the same time, utilize such devices for the purposes they found most important and profitable to the well-keeping of the Puritan faith while having the entire situation of captivity narrative under their control. For the Mathers, the appropriation of these narratives also contributed to consolidate and extend their power, for it gave them the privilege to ascribe to themselves and their own agendas powerful knowledge acquired by the female captives: knowledge, which as Carroll reminds us, the ministers expropriate and use to accomplish their ends without giving up any of their privileges as male subjects.

CHAPTER 2

THE REDEEMED CAPTIVE RETURNING TO ZION:

SENTIMENTAL MASCULINITY AND COLONIAL

PURITAN IDENTITY FORMATION

In “The Nineteenth Remove” of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, Mary Rowlandson talks about her master’s three squaws. The description of these Indians deserves close observation, for it appears to be one of the indications of Rowlandson’s understanding of racial difference:

My master had three squaws, living sometimes with one, and sometimes with another one, this old squaw, at whose wigwam I was, and with whom my master had been those three weeks. Another was Weetamoo, with whom I had lived and served all this while. A severe and proud dame she was, *bestowing every day in dressing herself neat as much time as any of the gentry of the land*: powdering her hair, and painting her face, going with necklaces, with jewels in her ears, and bracelets upon her hands. (163, emphasis added)

As Rowlandson sees it, only English women (and wealthy ones) are allowed to spend time taking care of their appearance. It bothers her that an Indian is “proud” and has the privilege, as she once did, of “dressing herself neat.” As Rowlandson makes clear in her description, Weetamoo is not among the “gentry of the land,” and, therefore, should not dress as one of them. Interestingly enough, though, just before the description of the three squaws, King Philip, Rowlandson’s master, asked her when she last washed herself, to which she responded: “I told him not this month, then he fetched me some water himself, and bid me wash, and gave me a glass to see how I looked” (163). To Rowlandson, nothing could be more offensive and unacceptable (for opposed to common sense) than

such a situation—that is, an elite woman such as herself living as a savage while a savage enjoys the privileges of a white woman. To make matters even worse, Rowlandson became a slave to Weetamoo who, as Tiffany Potter comments, was “known to Mather if not to Rowlandson herself as one of the most powerful North American Indian woman of the colonial era” (154). But even though Weetamoo overtly holds a lot of power, Rowlandson refuses to acknowledge her status, continually describing Weetamoo “as a failure by which [she] can affirm her own privileged status and identity, even in her entirely disempowered state” (Potter 159). That a high-status English woman became a slave to a savage was obviously not right in Rowlandson’s perspective, and she could not accept it. On the interesting relationship between master and slave Rowlandson developed with Weetamoo, Potter comments that “even as she acknowledges the slave status of other white female captives, Rowlandson will not see it in herself. Instead she positions herself in the manner determined by her own culture: inferior only to certain men, superior to the non-Christian woman sachem whom she serves circumstantially” (159). Weetamoo’s powerful status is rejected because, to Rowlandson, a woman who was not a Christian and who did not conform to the Eurocentric idea of domestic femininity would never either achieve success or become respectful.

The description of Weetamoo is but one example of Rowlandson’s understanding of racial difference during her captivity. As a matter of fact, her text abounds with moments when racial distinction becomes the most striking element. Another example of such difference can be read whenever she brings up the presence of superior spiritual forces, be they the devil or God. In analyzing her discourse, it becomes obvious in several

instances in which these forces appear that whereas God favors the English, the devil belongs to the heathens: “God would have found out a way for the English to have passed this river” (147); “[the Indians] acted as if the devil had told them that they should gain the victory” (165); “and we may see the wonderful power of God [. . .] that they did not knock us in the head” (167).¹⁷ Because Rowlandson cannot accept a social organization different than that of her Puritan society, she understands anything which does not conform to Puritanism as diabolical.

Thus, Rowlandson’s perception of racial difference indicates much about the way in which the colonizer came to an understanding of his or her identity as a white colonial subject by distinguishing himself or herself from the Indians. In *Cartographies of Desire*, Rebecca Blevins Faery asserts that

stories of whites captured by Indians, especially those involving women, helped in significant ways to produce the difference, at first cultural but eventually racial, in which the stories of contending red men and white men were grounded and which became the rationale for European conquest and the emergence of a nation founded on white male supremacy. These stories, then, were a significant element in the construction of discourses of racial difference and racial categories of “red,” “white,” and “black” that have been so central a part of American social history from the colonial era to the present day. (10)

A type of foundational fiction, texts such as *Sovereignty and Goodness of God* work as “agents of cultural formation, bearers of a set of national, social, and economic interests” (Faery 9). It is by racially distinguishing herself from the Indians that Rowlandson helps to establish a white colonial identity; that is, she establishes an identity line that divides

¹⁷ In light of this fact R. B. Faery affirms: “The Puritans were civilized because the Indians were savages, they were human because the Indians were beastlike, they were God’s people because Indians were diabolical” (26).

what it means to be white from what it means to be non-white, which in other words can be read as Indian, heathen, or savage.

Another text that engages in a comparable discourse of white colonial identity is John Williams's captivity narrative *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1706). Like Rowlandson's, Williams's text struggles to convey the idea of a white colonial identity. More importantly, however, it also works hard to establish a specifically Puritan identity for, as is the case in Hannah Swarton's story, Williams is a captive of the Indians who is taken up to Canada and forced to "turn Papist." Furthermore, a third element puts the captivity narratives of Rowlandson, Swarton, and Williams together: the deployment of sentimentality. In Chapter 1 I proposed that sentimentality works to cover up the gender transgression performed by Swarton and Rowlandson. The issue that needs to be addressed in this chapter, therefore, is the reason for writing sentimentality in a male-authored text like *The Redeemed Captive*. What, if anything, is Williams working to convey when he writes sentiment into his text?

But before such a question can be answered, it is imperative to ask a more basic one: who was John Williams and what is the story that he tells in *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*? Acknowledged as "the masterpiece" of the captivity narrative genre, *The Redeemed Captive* is Williams's account of his experience as a captive of Indians.¹⁸ A minister at Deerfield, Massachusetts, the then northernmost white settlement in New England, Williams, his wife and five children were among the one hundred and twelve villagers taken captives during an Indian raid on February 29, 1704. After slaying fifty

¹⁸ Miller, Perry. *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*. Cambridge, Harvard UP: 1953.

people, the Indians forced the remaining individuals (now captives) to march three hundred miles through the snow to Canada. Those who were too weak to keep up with the trip—such as Eunice, Williams's wife, who had given birth weeks before the raid—were killed and left behind. Eight weeks later they arrived in New France where Williams and three of his children were ransomed, but not yet ready to go, for this would require some more negotiation. Once in Canada, Williams was confronted by the Jesuits, who attempt to convert him to Catholicism. In fact, much of the narrative details his attempts to prove the falseness of the Catholic religion and the extent to which Williams struggled to convince his children to remain true to their Puritan beliefs. The intensity of his struggle is seen in the fierce theological discussions he had with the priests and by the extensive emotional letters he exchanged with his son Stephen. Within two years of the date they were first abducted by the Indians, Williams and four of his children were ransomed and returned to Deerfield. Only one remained, much to Williams's affliction, among the Indians: his daughter Eunice, who became a practicing Catholic and married a Mohawk with whom she had two children.

Once resettled in Deerfield, in 1707 Williams began to write the memories of his captivity. In a few weeks he composed a narrative of about 25,000 words, covering the period from the Indian raid to his return home. Once finished, the narrative was published, a month or two later, under the title *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion: A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and the Deliverance of Mr. John Williams, Minister of the Gospel, in Deerfield, Who, in the Desolation, which Befell that Plantation, by an Incursion of the French and Indians, was by Then carried*

away, with his Family and his Neighborhood unto Canada. The book, issued six times during the remainder of the eighteenth century, “became in time a revered part of the literary canon of Puritanism, and it remains to this day the fullest source by far on the Canadian side of the post Deerfield captivities” (Demos, 51).

In reading *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* one will easily encounter several moments when sentimentality is central. As in *Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, for example, the very beginning of Williams’s text is very emotional. When the Indians attack Deerfield and break into his house, Williams says that some of them “were so cruel and barbarous as to take and carry to the door two of my children and murder them, and also a negro woman” (12). Sentimentality, certainly, is not only present at the beginning of the text, but throughout it. Williams’s emotions can be read in almost every moment of the narrative. To cite a few instances, sentiment takes place when, from the top of a mountain, Williams looks back and sees “the smoke of the fires in the town, and [beholds] the awful desolation of Deerfield” (14). Also, when his wife, weak for having “lain in but a few weeks before” (11) and not able to travel any further, was murdered by the “cruel and bloodthirsty savage who took her slew her with his hatchet at one stroke, the tidings of which were very awful” (16). When he finds out that she was killed by the Indians, Williams emotionally states:

And yet such was the hard-heartedness of the adversary, that my tears were reckoned to me as a reproach. My loss and the loss of my children was great; our hearts were so filled with sorrow, that nothing but the comfortable hopes of her being taken away, in mercy to herself, from the evils we were to see, and suffer under, (and joined to the assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, to rest in peace, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, and the good pleasure of God thus to exercise us,) could have kept us from sinking under, at that time. (16)

This passage once again brings Williams's text close to the narratives of Rowlandson and Swarton; similarly to the Mathers when editing or impersonating these women, Williams invites readers to cry with him for the misery of his wife's fate, dramatically killed by the savages. The grief and sorrow experienced by him are thus shared with his readers, in an emotional account intended to move people to tears. As a matter of fact, those are but a few examples of sentimental moments in the tale narrated by Williams. How, then, is one supposed to read the display of emotion in this narrative? And how did Williams's early eighteenth-century readers receive this clear and open demonstration of sentimentality in the text? What was Williams, ultimately, intending to communicate with a text that is so sentimental?

Michelle Burnham's take on sentiment in captivity narrative texts may illuminate the understanding of emotion in *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*. As discussed earlier, Burnham argues that sentimentality is used to mark and mask the transgressive behavior or resistant agency that captives engage in when abducted by the Indians (3). Although Burnham is specifically addressing captivity narratives by women, in my view her ideas concerning sentimentality and narrative may be applied to the tale of a male captive as well. Can one make the argument that sentimentality in Williams's text is also working to mask transgression? If it does, what could be John Williams's transgression? What could he be trying to hide from the readers of his narrative?

Regarding the issue of sentimentality in the text, it is also important to take into consideration Julie Ellison's study of sentimentality in *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion*, for her insight is very important in order to answer questions

concerning the relationship between Williams's text and masculine sentimentality. In analyzing the development of male emotion, Ellison claims that the relationship between politics, sensibility, and masculinity can be traced "throughout the 'long eighteenth century,' starting unconventionally with the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 and ending in 1815 with the Tripolitan War, the first war involving the United States" (16). She asserts that the current notion of the Age of Sensibility consists of the "melancholy literature of the British man of feeling in the later eighteenth century" (16). But as it turns out, sensibility actually begins many years earlier and lasts much longer. Indeed, masculine sentimentality starts before the later eighteenth century, as it can obviously be read in Williams's account of his experience as a captive. To Ellison, the late eighteenth-century Age of Sensibility is, in reality, "sensibility's second act" (18). I would argue that sensibility's first act, specifically in the study of captivity narrative, comes from the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, with religious leaders such as the Mathers and John Williams figuring as the first to openly write sentiment in their texts. Ellison asserts:

Despite a growing number of good studies of manhood and masculinity that build on the fundamental transvaluation of sentimentality by feminists, the relationship between masculine and feminine sensibility has not been well understood. The dominant discourse of sensibility has never been decisively identified as a masculine political invention, nor have the consequences of this fact been explored. The strategies of female authors only make sense in the context of the early cultural prestige of masculine tenderheartedness. The literature of sensibility responds to the organization of masculine experience in an expansionist parliamentary culture. (9)

Ellison draws attention to a correct understanding of the "relationship between masculine and feminine sensibility" and to the fact that the masculine discourse on sensibility has

never been understood as a tool for masculine political intervention. It is exactly such a call that drives my analysis of Williams's writing of emotion in *The Redeemed Captive*. In the analysis of men of privilege (as is the case of the minister John Williams, for instance), Ellison states that "the category of race in the eighteenth century signified ethnicity, nationality, and tribe, as well as the ideology of color. [. . .] Race becomes a figure for emotion; emotion makes racial distinctions. *But most of all, race makes empire a setting for men in crisis*" (17, emphasis added). Ellison's insight is so important to this project because it illuminates the manner by which men in power used emotion to establish racial distinction. The issue that imperatively needs to be addressed, thereby, is the place of writing of sentimentality as a tool for masculine political intervention in issues of race and national/ colonial identity, and what, in this sense, Williams really intended with the use of emotion.

In contrast to *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and *A Narrative of Hannah Swarton*, Williams's text does not present any gendered transgression which he would have to figure out a way to cover it up. Williams was a minister, which in itself allowed him to come out and publicly speak; likewise, he was a man, which allowed him to remain by himself in captivity without gender-crossing any borders whatsoever; finally, he was a religious authority among his villagers before going into captivity, and doing so did not challenge his status of a minister of the Gospel. Since there were no gender issues to be covered up or legitimized, Williams directly aimed his efforts at creating white colonial identity. Here it is important to point out that whereas the Mathers were more focused on creating white colonial identity by distinguishing white individuals from

Indians, John Williams struggles to convey white colonial Puritan identity by distinguishing himself and his religion beliefs from those of the Catholics.

To understand Williams's work and his intention to form Puritan identity we have to make sure we understand whiteness as a category. In order to do so, it is essential to comprehend not only how it was first formed in early America but when exactly such formation took place. According to Faery, whiteness is a category that developed during colonization, when the colonizer put himself in a liminal position, the contact zone, where he perceived himself as different than the ones he met in the Newfoundland. In light of this fact, Faery argues that the understanding of racial difference in the United States today, thus, "as a discursive practice—and a social and political reality—arouse as a product of colonialism, especially in the encounters between English colonizers and their racialized 'others' in the New World" (10). Going further into the issue, she argues:

The Indian captivity tale, that uniquely American genre, appeared and evolved more or less simultaneously with the discourses that constituted the uniquely American version of racial difference. [. . .] The captivity story was a crucial vehicle for Anglo-Americans to become white, as well as for the construction of a "dark" and supposedly inferior category that finally included both Indians and Africans, an 'other' whom whites had to displace, discipline, and control in order to achieve their colonial aims. (12)

The formation of whiteness can definitely be read in Williams's narrative, especially in the first part, when he and his family are captured by the Indians and forced to march to Canada. This is made evident by the way he uses words such as "savage," "heathen," "devil," and, of course, "Indians." The focus of Williams's narrative, however, is neither the time spent among the Indians nor his dealings with them but actually the interaction with the Catholic French, especially the Jesuit priests who struggled to convince him and

his entire family and congregation to turn to their religion. In writing his captivity narrative, Williams devotes serious and sustained effort to defend his faith and identity as a New England Puritan. His text, therefore, is his attempt to prove the falseness of the Catholic religion and the truth of Puritanism. His intention, in writing his experience by portraying the Catholics as worse and more devilish than the Indians, is to construct an identity to distinguish him and his people from their Catholic neighbors in the north.¹⁹

Establishing a Puritan identity for Williams is so important that he spends more than one quarter of the narrative trying to convey the evil and sinfulness of the Catholics, and how they would do what it takes to convert Puritans to their religion. Indeed, the Jesuits worked insistently to convert Williams to Catholicism, as it can be noted from this passage in the narrative:

Here, again, a gentleman in the presence of the old bishop and a priest, offered me his house and whole living, with assurance of honor, wealth, and employment, if I would embrace their ways. I told them I had an indignation of soul against such offers, on such terms, as parting with what was more valuable than all the world; alleging "What is a man profited if he gain the world, and lose his own soul? [. . .] I was sometimes told I might have all my children if I would comply, and must never expect to have them on any other terms" (46).

Threats and promises, therefore, were used abundantly to convince Williams to give up his faith for that of the Catholics to which, as a loyal Puritan minister, he is ready to resist and fight. They certainly not only wished to convert Williams because he was an important Puritan figure, but also because in converting a minister they would certainly

¹⁹ On the evilness of the Catholics, Williams narrates: "Many of my neighbors, also, found that mercy in their journey, to have Bibles, psalm-books, catechism, 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" (24).

convert many others, presumably all of those for whom Williams served as a shepherd. In addition, Williams would doubtlessly be a good and loyal Catholic, for he was a highly successful individual among the Puritans. Williams, therefore, was a big challenge, but if turned would become a trophy for the Jesuits.

The trickery of the Catholics in *The Redeemed Captive* is also made evident in the description of how they played a game between Williams and his family, friends and neighbors: “sometimes they would tell my children, sometimes my neighbors, were turned to be of their religion. Some made it their work to allude poor souls by flatteries and great promises, some threatened, some offered abusive carriage to such as refused to go to church and be present at mass. [. . .] I understood they would tell the English that I was turned, that they might gain them to change their religion” (48). The game played by the Jesuits, thus, consisted of telling Williams that his children and villagers had turned to the Popish religion and, at the same time, telling the Puritan captives that Williams had been converted to Catholicism. By lying, the Jesuits attempted to convert Williams and thus, as I have pointed, convert his children and followers altogether with him. But they also aimed at converting Williams by converting his followers: was Williams to believe that all of those who were made prisoners with him had turned to the religion of the Jesuits, he would certainly feel much more powerless by being the only one to resist.

Although the Jesuits do not achieve their goal of converting Williams and most, if not all, of his disciples, they apparently do convert one of his children, his son Stephen. And it is precisely Stephen’s betrayal of his father’s religion and his turning into Catholicism that leads Williams to write sentimentality prominently in his captivity tale.

A few days after writing to his son, he receives a letter in response in which Stephen affirms: “according to your good counsel, I do almost every day read something of the Bible, and so strengthen my faith” (60). Stephen also tells his father that two Englishwomen, Abigail Turbet and Esther Jones, “who in their lifetime were dreadfully set against the Catholic religion, did on their deathbed embrace it. Stephen never affirms in the letter that he has “turned Papist,” but the bizarre story of the two Englishwomen who accept the Popish religion in the last hours of their lives has a strong impact on Williams, for it seems he fears his son believes in such story. His concern comes especially from the fact that, although “[he] presently knew it to be of Mr. Meriel’s [the priest’s] composing,” the messenger that brought it to him “brought word that my son had embraced their religion” (63). Following this episode is an exchange of letters between father and son, including a fourteen-page letter Williams sends to Stephen in a desperate attempt to convince him of the mistakes he has been doing in committing to the fallacy of the Catholic religion.

Looking closer at the exchange of these sentimental letters between father and son helps answer some of the questions posed earlier in this chapter. Although Williams does not perform any transgression for which he would have to use sentimentality to cover up, his son Stephen definitely does when he becomes a Catholic, thereby betraying the very colonial identity the father was attempting to shore up. Williams writes emotion, therefore, not to cover his transgressions but those of his son. Stephen’s transgression was not the crossing of a gender border, as it was the case for Rowlandson and Swarton, but a religious one, for he exchanged his Puritan faith for Catholicism. Williams had,

therefore, to find a way to cover, to mask his son's transgression when writing his book. The solution was to write emotion in his text. Williams thus holds on firmly to sentimentality in writing his tale and especially in communicating with his son through letters to develop a Puritan identity. In order to better understand the formation of identity through emotion, it is imperative to look closely at those letters exchanged by father and son.

Upon receiving the first letter from Stephen and hearing from the messenger that he is now a practicing Catholic, Williams writes back:

Yours of January 23rd I received, and with it had the tidings that you had made an abjuration of the Protestant faith for the Romish, —news that *I heard with the most distressing and sorrowful spirit. O, I pity you, I mourn over you day and night! O, I pity your weakness*, that through the craftiness of man you are turned from simplicity of the Gospel! I persuade myself you have done this through ignorance. (65, emphasis added)

The letter reveals how deeply affected Williams is by the apparent choice his son has made. Not only is his spirit “distressed and sorrowful,” he feels as if his son had died, for he affirms to be mourning for him day and night. Interestingly, Williams mentions grief several times in this part of the book. Before he writes the letter, he affirms: “the news [of his son's conversion] was ready to overwhelm me with grief and sorrow. I made my complain to God, and mourned before him; sorrow and anguish took hold upon me” (64). Also, right after Williams transcribes this letter written to his son, he affirms: “what I mournfully wrote, I followed with my poor cries to God in heaven to make effectual, to cause in him a consideration of what he had done” (65). The mourning experienced by Williams, accordingly, seems to indicate that to him his son, although still physically alive, lost his spirit to evil when he renounced the religion of his father to embrace that of

the French. Along with his spirit, Stephen lost his true identity of a Puritan whose father migrated to New England seeking to freely practice his faith. The letter therefore seems to represent the beginning of Williams's effort to establish Puritan identity and to help his son in identifying himself as a Puritan, and not as a Catholic. Williams continues the letter by stating: "God knows that the catechism in which I instructed you is according to his word; and so will be found in the day of judgment. O, consider and bethink yourself what you have done! And whether you ask me or not, my poor child, I cannot but pray for you, that you may be recovered out of the snare you are taken in" (65). For Williams, there is no room for questioning: his son has doubtless made a big mistake when not following his father's instructions, which were according to the word of God. Finally, in a last display of how he is emotionally affected by his son's decision, Williams's "heart aches within [him], but [he] will wait upon the Lord" until He "can yet again recover [Stephen] from [his] fall" (66).

As Williams received no response for this letter (which added to his already anxious state), he proceeded to write a second one that, as he claims, "was made effectual for his [son's] good, and the good of others, who had fallen to Popery; and for the establishing and strengthening of others to resist the essays of the Adversary to truth" (67). This claim evidences the fact that the first objective of Williams's letters was indeed to regain the Puritan faith and identity of his son, but that the letters would also work towards "the good of others," making those who turned to Catholicism (and also those who are considering conversion) understand the wrongness of their actions.

In the second letter, which is much more extensive than the first, Williams starts by close-reading his son's first letter, going over the story of the two Englishwomen who accepted Catholicism in their deathbeds. Williams rebuts by arguing that "it seems rational to believe that [Abigail Turbet] had not the use of her reason: it is an expression to be abhorred by all who have any true sense of religion" (67). From this moment on, Williams makes use of the Bible to prove how wrong the "Papists" are. The reliability upon the Bible reminds the reader of how Mary Rowlandson uses the Sacred Book to justify almost anything that happens to her during captivity. In addition, Williams's use of the Bible takes one back to the captivity narrative of Hannah Swarton, who engages in fierce theological discussions with the French Catholics in Canada, in which she constantly uses the Bible to counter-attack the argument of the Catholics concerning her religion.²⁰ His first attempt at using the Bible to prove the falseness of the "Romish" religion takes place, thus, when he engages in a theological discussion of the conversion of these two women. To Williams, Mr. Meriel, the Jesuit priest, acted against the Bible when he accepted Mr. Abigail to "commit her soul into his hand, and was ready to do whatever he pleased" for, to Williams, Mr. Meriel was not a God or a Christ (67). No less than fifteen Biblical passages are then brought up by Williams to confirm his point that

²⁰ "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 Revelations 19.10 and 22.9 They brought Exodus 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 out adversary in the way, and if we did not, we should be cast into hell and should not come out until we paid the utmost farthing, which could never be paid" (191).

there shall be no intermediary through man and God regarding salvation except for Jesus Christ, as in Acts IV: 12: “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (67). Williams also spends a considerable amount of time citing the Bible to refute Catholic notions of the intermediate power of the saints, the presence of Purgatory, the Pope as the only vicar of Christ in the world, the miracle of transubstantiation, and the necessity of praying for someone’s soul after death. Finally, towards the end of the letter, Williams again makes use of emotion in a last and desperate attempt to convince his son of his greatest mistake. Asking his son Stephen if he thinks their religion to be “right, when they are afraid to let you have an English Bible [. . .] for fear they would give you such convictions of truth that they cannot remove?” (78), Williams lately affirms:

These things have I written as in my heart I believe. I long for your recovery, and will not cease to pray for it. I am now a man of a sorrowful spirit, and look upon your fall as the most aggravating circumstance of my afflictions; and am persuaded that no pains will be wanting to prevent me from seeing or speaking with you. [. . .] I long to see and speak with you. (79).

The excerpt from Williams’ letter evidences not only the fact that he is holding fast to his faith as a Puritan subject but also that he has not given up hope that his son will ultimately realize the mistake he has committed, repent and thus turn from sin. It is evident that Williams is afflicted for the state of his son—for few things could be worse for a Puritan minister than to have his own child turned to Catholicism. But it is also indisputable that he is frustrated and evidently feels somewhat guilty for the fall of his son, which is “the most aggravating circumstance of [his] afflictions” and which makes

one believe that he is probably asking himself what could have gone wrong, in the raising of his child, for Stephen to decide to abandon his religion in such a manner.²¹

I hope it has become clear, by this point in the discussion, that Williams attempts to build a Puritan identity by differentiating Puritans from others. Obviously, others here means Indians and Catholics, the two groups that Puritans interacted with in New England. The Indians, because believed to be heathens, uncivilized savages and, ultimately, not fully human beings, were not much of a threat to the colonial identity the Puritans were working to prove true. There was, though, a necessity from the part of the Puritans to make sure they were very different (“different,” of course, being a benign euphemism for “superior”) from the Indians, and that is why the Puritans seek to racially distinguish themselves—the whites—from those who were non-whites, that is, Native Americans and, afterwards, blacks.²² Faery is not wrong in her claim that “whiteness as a category of identity did not exist any more than did darkness until political expediencies called forth both terms; whites in America also had to become white: the interracial drama acted out on the American continent has not only created a new black man, it has created a new white man, too” (11), for whiteness vs. darkness is exactly what captivity

²¹ John Demos affirms that even though the briefly induction for Stephen to “turn,” “occasioned grief and sorrow that I want words to utter,’ with great effort and God’s help he has apparently succeeded in reversing the boy’s ‘abjuration’” (57).

²² “Racial difference as we know it in the United States today, then, as a discursive practice—and as a social and political reality—arose as a product of colonialism, especially in the encounters between English colonizers and their racialized others in the New World. Racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another” (Faery 10). For a fuller discussion on how the Puritans came up with racial categories to legitimize their whiteness and superiority and the Indians darkness and inferiority see Rebecca Blevins Faery *Cartographies of Desire: Race and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation*.

narratives such as Williams work to convey. To that degree, Williams's text does not only create a white identity but, by doing so, develops a dark identity for those who are neither white nor European. The racial difference, then, is well sustained: whites are Godlike, pure, good-natured, and superior while non-whites were devilish, dirty, evil-natured, and inferior.

It was certainly important for the Puritans to prove themselves different, as well as superior, when compared to the Indians. What became the real challenge, however, was the process of distinguishing themselves from the Catholic French. Whereas the Indians were not really a threat to the identity of the Puritans, the Popish were seen as a real danger—not only to Puritan identity *per se*, it is important to recognize, but especially to the spirit and salvation of the Puritans. In this sense, while distinguishing themselves from the Indians was a fairly easy task for the Puritans, developing identity by distinguishing themselves from the equally white, “civilized” Catholics proved to be a major difficulty. But they had to face it, or the white colonial identity sought by the Puritans would be incomplete and poorly formed. *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* is, then, an example of the struggle to demarcate colonial identity by setting Puritans apart from Indians and particularly from the Catholics; although not without writing sentimentality into the text. It is important to recognize, then, that the construction of such identity, as depicted in this text, consists of an amalgamation of various pluralistic, yet interrelated, characteristics: white, non-Indian, non-Catholic, correct, pure, following God and the Bible, superior to both Indians and, most of all, Catholics. As it is well known, the Puritans came to the New World to seek freedom, to finally inhabit a place

where they could procure their faith. Apparently, they had achieved it once they arrived in the New World. Indian captivity, however, interrupted the process and, to this extent, became a two-edged sword: it made the procurement of the Puritan faith hard—since captivity was an obstruction to the freedom of religious pursuit—but it also provided Puritans that were taken captives with a tool that would work in their benefit when trying to develop their identity: the captivity narrative. John Williams’s narrative, as a case in point, is the perfect example of a text that displays the captivity of New England subjects in a mode which conveys Puritan beliefs and constructs, precisely by the depiction of these New England individuals, their own individuality. Williams wrote sentiment, thus, making use of what Faery calls a “masculine political invention.” Such an invention, that is, Puritan identity, only became a possibility because Williams invited readers to suffer with him for the fall of his son. By writing emotion, then, Williams established on the one hand racial distinction and on the other identity for his Puritan followers.

One more question seems to remain as we get to the end of this discussion on Williams’s captivity narrative: is there anything to be said in a more general sense about fathers and sons in *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*? It seems to me that this narrative presents an interesting contrast to how emotion circulates for Mary Rowlandson around the mother-daughter bond, as we have seen in Chapter 1. The father-son sentimental masculine bond in Williams’s tale may certainly relate to future Puritan generations (think, for instance, of Increase and Cotton Mather) as well as worries about declension in later generations. In contrast to Cotton Mather, Stephen Williams not only doesn’t follow the steps of his father but he betrays him and his faith by converting to

Catholicism. This is ultimately why John Williams depends on masculine sentimentality when he writes his story: it both covers Stephen's transgressions and is an instrument to bring him back to the Puritan world he should never have left.

Indeed, William's does succeed in bringing his son back to Deerfield once he is redeemed. He is also successful in the development of Puritan colonial identity through the publication of the *The Redeemed Captive*. There is just one situation that challenges the formation of the identity desired by Williams in the story of his captivity: the fate of his daughter Eunice, who after married to an Indian and converted to Catholicism was now called Margaret Williams, her second baptismal name (Demos 101). Although briefly mentioned by her father in his narrative,²³ her story was well known by Williams's contemporary New Englanders. One concludes, thus, that although Williams succeeded in building up colonial identity, he failed when it comes to the keeping of the Puritan identity of one of his own: his daughter is now lost forever. This fact interestingly links John Williams to Mary Rowlandson: Williams can rhetorically redeem his son, but not his daughter; Rowlandson is also redeemed and regains her place in society, but ends still mourning for her daughter left buried and lost in the wilderness.

In the next two chapters, I will consider two narratives that deal with the subject of the Puritains' greatest fear: those, like Eunice, who remained unredeemed captives" and ultimately crossed the borders of race and culture to live as "white Indians:" Mary

²³ Williams laments, while he is still a captive and has a chance to meet Eunice that "she is there still; and has forgotten to speak English. O that all who peruse this history would join in their fervent requests to Go, with whom all things are possible, that this poor child, and so many others of our children who have been cast upon God from the womb, and are now outcasts ready to perish, might be gathered from their dispersions, and receive sanctifying grace from God!" (37).

Jemison and John Tanner, whose life stories are respectively told in *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* and *The Falcon*.

CHAPTER 3

OMITTING MARY JEMISON'S INDIANNESS IN THE FORMATION OF
NATIONAL IDENTITY: RACIAL DRAG IN CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

Eunice Williams was obviously not the only white captive who decided to remain among the Native Americans and become one of them. *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, the 1824 book by James E. Seaver, precisely proves this point. Unfortunately, Williams' daughter did not leave a written narrative of her life among the Indians, which gives scholars of early American literature few options other than speculating how her life could have been once she decided to become Indian.²⁴ This was not the case for Jemison. Abducted by a Shawnee raiding party, Jemison lived as an assimilated Seneca woman for more than seven decades until she decided to tell her story to Seaver, who edited, wrote, and published it. Yet, even though there is a narrative written in the first person telling the story of Jemison's life, it does not necessarily mean that her text leaves no room for critical speculation on Jemison and her liminal identity as a white captive/ Indian woman.

For the majority of general nineteenth-century readers of *A Narrative*, the book appeared to be the product of a partnership between Jemison, the subject, who did not have the means to write the story herself, and Seaver, the editor, who was responsible for interviewing the subject and writing the story told by her. However, in the introduction of

²⁴ For an extensive discussion on Eunice Williams see *The Unredeemed Captive*, by John Demos. Demos openly acknowledges that his work is mostly based on speculation, for there is not sufficient historical evidence (or a written account, in that matter) for one to make precise claims regarding the fate of William's daughter.

a reprint of the book, June Namias comments that facts were added to the story by Seaver. Also comprising the scope of Seaver's addition to *A Narrative*, continues Namias, is information in the form of an appendix on Iroquois and Seneca life, as well as the American Revolution in Western New York (4). In addition to that, Seaver himself asserts that the content of one of the chapters of the narrative—Chapter Eleven—was not told in interview by Jemison, but by an alleged cousin of her—by whom she affirms to have been deceived earlier on in the narrative. It is exactly these additions that complicate Jemison's text, creating room for the speculations mentioned above. The additions also lead one to conclude that Seaver, like Increase and Cotton Mather when they edited Rowlandson and Swarton's narratives, incontestably had an agenda in impersonating for Jemison.²⁵ Obviously, the editor of such a narrative hardly ever may claim not to have an agenda, for he is the one not only asking the questions but also deciding on what will or will not compose the final body of the text that will be published. It is, therefore, the further intrusions beyond mere editorial presence Seaver makes into Jemison's *A Narrative* and the manipulation of emotion in her story so that she can be portrayed as white rather than a Native American that I will analyze in order to establish the concept I will call rhetorical racial drag.

At the age of ninety, Jemison walked four miles from the vicinities of Gardeau, where she lived, to a small cabin in central New York. For three days she stayed there to

²⁵ The rhetorical drag performed by Seaver is certainly very different than the one Cotton Mather uses. But as Lorraine Carroll defines, "rhetorical drag both appropriates the body and voice of the captive woman and explain how her experiences should be understood within the historical vision of the impersonator" (5). I make the claim, in this chapter, that Seaver is also an impersonator, and that he makes use of Jemison's very important and unique experience and voice to convey his ends.

tell the story of her life to Seaver. According to him, at the time she told her story Jemison was “blue eyed with a pale complexion, with hair grey and slightly curly and a face an expressive one with high cheek bones. [. . .] Her clothes, like her life, her demeanor, and her speech, were a blend of cultures: buckskin moccasins, an Indian blanket, a brown flannel gown, a petticoat, and a bonnet” (qtd. in Namias, 3). From the narrative Seaver writes, we know that Jemison was taken captive at the age of fifteen by the Shawnee and French during the Seven Years’ war. At breakfast time, reveals Jemison, the people in her house were alarmed by “the discharge of a number of guns, that seemed to be near” (67). Shortly after the first gun shots, the Indians held her father up and made her mother prisoner, a few other people, and Jemison herself prisoners. Right after the surprising raid, the Indians and French “set out with their prisoners in great haste, for fear of detection, and soon entered the woods” (67). So off into the wilderness they went, traveling for an entire day, facing the hardships of captivity, which included walking constantly without being given food or water. At a certain point, still in the beginning of captivity, Jemison says that “an Indian took off my shoes and stockings and put a pair of moccasins on my feet,” which her mother understood as a sign that they would spare Mary Jemison’s life, but not that of the other captives (69). The thought of Jemison being taken captive without the hopes of ever being redeemed is very sorrowful to her mother, to the point where she exclaims: “O that death had snatched you from my embraces in your infancy, the pain of parting then would have been pleasing to what it now is; and I should have seen the end of your troubles!” (69). After that Jemison, together with another little boy whose shoes were also replaced by moccasins, were taken

by an Indian to “some distance into the bushes, or woods, and there lay down with us to spend the night” (69). Jemison suspects her family had been killed when she woke up the following morning, but the confirmation came only when she saw the scalps the Indians had taken and recognized them as belonging to her family members: “those scalps I knew at the time must have been taken from our family by the color of the hair. My mother’s hair was red; and I could easily distinguish my father’s and the children’s from each other” (71). The following day Jemison is given to “two pleasant looking squaws of the Seneca tribe” (75) by whom she is adopted in order to replace the loss of a brother of those Indians, killed in combat. Jemison is then renamed “Dickewamis,” or “falling between two voices” in the Seneca language.²⁶

What follows in the narrative, then, is Jemison’s life among the Seneca. The book relates her marriage to two Indian men—both of whom she outlived—and the sons she had with them as well as her daily life as a “white Indian.” Interestingly enough, though, in reading *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* one is impressed by how frustrated and unhappy this woman appears, and how she seems to emphasize the hardships she faced during the more than seventy years she lived as an Indian. The climax of such frustration is unveiled in the last chapter of the book, when Jemison states:

²⁶ Namias comments that “for those [captives] who made it through the ordeal, a new family was often waiting. To assuage their loss of a brother, husband, or son, they could choose among male or female captives to adopt. Either sex was considered a desirable substitute for a lost relative” (*White Captives* 4). She also asserts, by the same token, that “the elderly and those less able might be killed in a raid or on a forced march [such as John William’s wife], but northeastern Indians knew enough about what we call acculturation to understand that a child could more readily learn and accept a new language and culture than could an adult, and they favored children for adoption”(4).

When I review my life, the privations that I have suffered, the hardships I have endured, the vicissitudes I have passed, and the completed revolution that I have experienced in my manner of living; when I consider my reduction from a civilized to a savage state, and the various steps by which that process has been affected, and that my life has been prolonged, and my health and reason spared, it seems a miracle that I am unable to account for, and is a tragical medley that I hope will never be repeated. (157)

The melancholic state Jemison is in at the end of her narrative is the final confirmation of how desolated she is over her fate. She hopes the tragedy that has happened to her “will never be repeated,” a strong claim signifying that she could have hardly faced anything worse than captivity and life as a heathen.

In a first reading of the story, Jemison’s claim that surviving the process of being “reduced” from a civilized to a savage as a miracle strikes the reader as inconsistent and illogical. In the end, wasn’t it Jemison herself who decided to become Native American? Confusing, too, is her claim, in this same last chapter, that “the bare loss of liberty is but a mere trifle when compared with the circumstances that necessarily attend, and are inseparably connected with it” (157). “It is the recollection of what we once were,” continues Jemison, “of the friends, home, and pleasures we have left or lost ; the anticipation of misery, the appearance of wretchedness, the anxiety for freedom that constitute the nauseous dregs of the bitter cup of slavery.” I am sensible,” she says, “that no one can pass from a state of freedom to that of slavery, and in the last situation rest perfectly contented” (157-8). It appears that Jemison really struggles to make sure white Americans (for those would be the main ones reading the narrative) understand how unfortunate she was for being forced into a state of captivity. This struggle on her part is but another inconsistency within the text, for she was literally a “captive” for no more

than four years, after which she decided to marry an Indian and become one of them. In this sense it is really interesting to note that Jemison, who is eighty-five years old by the time she tells her story to Seaver and who has lived with the Indians for about seventy years, places so much emphasis on her captivity that lasted for about five percent of her entire time with the Indians.

Such confusion, generated by dissonant voices, made me go back to the text and read it again, this time with a careful eye looking for moments of incongruity regarding the portrayal of Jemison as a white woman who found happiness among the Indians and decided to *become* one of them versus that of a white woman abducted by the savages and *forced to remain* among them, resulting in a life of hardships, unhappiness, and frustration. Interestingly, this second reading made the strong dialogism of the narrative voice even more evident than it was in the first reading. This very realization made me conclude that Seaver, like the Mathers, employed rhetorical drag. Although claiming Seaver rhetorically impersonated Jemison is plausibly arguable, Namias claims it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to say which passages are Seaver's and which ones are Jemison's (which is exactly what makes the rhetorical drag such an effective tool for Seaver as an impersonator). In order to understand Seaver's final goal, therefore, we may certainly question what the purpose was behind his engagement in rhetorical drag as well as what he was working to convey when he impersonated Jemison and appropriated her story. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind Seaver's manipulation of Jemison's voice, especially given the fact that he never acknowledges having done so. Certainly, this very act creates room for speculation. Namias asserts:

Another problem with Seaver's narrative is its language. Clearly a product of his class and his age, Seaver frequently modified Jemison's words to conform to a sentimental style popular in his day. The published account can hardly have been taken from her word for word. The usage is often flowery, and the sensibility and vocabulary more that of a middle-class woman from Philadelphia than a frontier woman unable to read English, who lived most of her life speaking Seneca. ("Introduction" 37)

Indeed, the quality of the prose intrigues the reader of Jemison's account. As Namias points out, how could a woman who spent most of her life speaking Seneca be able to produce very elaborate sentences in English such as "the theory of Indian warfare" (96) or "I had now buried my three sons, who had been snatched from me by the hands of violence when I least expected it" (149). If Seaver affirms in his introduction that the narrative is "carefully taken from [Jemison's] own words," and that "no circumstance has been intentionally exaggerated by the paintings of fancy, nor by fine flashes of rhetoric" (xi), how do we understand the several modifications he makes in her text? And, most importantly, why did he not acknowledge that he was adapting the text to "conform to a style popular in his day," making it easier for readers to follow Jemison's story?

As seen in Chapter 1, both Increase and Cotton Mather use rhetorical drag to write/edit the texts that present the captivity experiences of Mary Rowlandson and Hannah Swarton, two white women who were abducted by the Indians, remained among them for a while, and then returned to their Puritan communities. While Increase Mather is the editor of Rowlandson's text, for she writes it herself (obviously under his supervision), Cotton Mather is Swarton's impersonator and, as Carroll proves in *Rhetorical Drag*, completely writes her captivity narrative. Thus, if Increase Mather employs one type of rhetorical drag (editing) and his son and disciple Cotton Mather

employs another (impersonating), Seaver comes up with a third form of drag. To understand this third kind one must look at the type of “captive” he was impersonating: like the Mathers, Seaver also interviews a white woman who was once an Indian captive. However, contrary to them, Seaver is faced with a woman who, despite remaining with the Indians as a captive for a few years, ends up choosing not only to never return to her white community but decides to become an Indian. Seaver writes Jemison’s story in the first person after interviewing her. The story is, he alleges, the accurate transcription of her own words; but actually, Seaver obviously portrays Jemison as a frustrated white woman, as a white individual who achieved neither success nor happiness for the unfortunate nature of her fate. This can clearly be read in Jemison’s reaction to the news she receives about the murdering of one of her sons by his own brother:

I returned soon after, and found my son lifeless at the door, on the spot where he was killed! No one can judge of my feelings on seeing this mournful spectacle; and what gratefully added to my distress is that he had fallen by the murderous hand of his brother! I felt my situation unsupportable. *Having passed through various scenes of trouble of the most cruel and trying kind, I had hoped to spend my few remaining days in quietude, and to die in peace, surrounded by my family.* This fatal event, however, seemed to be a stream of woe poured into my cup of afflictions, filling it even to overflowing, and blasting all my prospects. (125, emphasis added)

Evidently, few things in life could be more tragic for a mother than to have one of her children assassinated by his brother. However, a closer look at Jemison’s discourse reveals that there is something other than grief being put on the table in this passage. Jemison was the woman who opted to remain with the Seneca and lived happily among them—as gestured by her several times, such as when she affirms that her life was easy and her work much lighter than if she were to be among the whites, or when we consider

her testimony on how her husband Hiokatoo was a warm-hearted and very just man. In this passage she states, however that, late in life, she had expected to enjoy her remaining years in quietude and peacefully die, for she had gone through “various scenes of trouble of the most cruel and trying kind.” The emphasis Jemison gives on the disgraces of her own life once again appear to be very contradictory for a woman who made the decision to become a Seneca, and leads one to believe that it is another representation of Seaver’s rhetorical racial drag, attempting to portray her as a white captive woman so that he could use her experience to further his political ends. Seaver, therefore, completely fails to acknowledge Jemison’s hybrid state, much less that she is more Indian than white, which is definitely how she saw herself. Again, one must ask: why does he choose to do it and yet claims that the book contains but “her own words”?²⁷

As we have seen, all of the impersonators discussed in this work had an objective in mind when dragging for the women: the Mathers, for instance, aimed at regaining the place of the captive once restored to her community (Rowlandson) and making the point to the Puritans that captivity meant God was disappointed at his children for not following His covenant (Swarton). Seaver, for his part, attempts to contribute to the formation of white national identity through the construction of Jemison as a defenseless white woman who suffered for an entire life under the power of the Indians. In order to understand Seaver’s appropriation of Mary Jemison’s voice and experience to meet the

²⁷ To make matters even worse regarding rhetorical drag, Seaver adds an entire chapter that was not told by Jemison, but by an alleged cousin of her whom she openly dislikes and did not acknowledge as her relative.

nationalistic ends of his time, I look at the (mis)use of sentimentality in order to depict Jemison as a white American woman when racially ventriloquizing for her.²⁸

First of all, however, one has to question what, if anything, do sentimentality and emotion in captivity narrative have to do with the formation of white national identity of the United States as a new country? Marianne Noble asserts that “sentimentalism [in the nineteenth century] was a tool of political agency.” Noble uses *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as an example to make the point that Harriet Beecher Stowe’s sentimental epistemology “relied upon a conviction that non-slaves could know what the pain of slavery felt like.”

“Stowe,” states Noble, “thrusts into readers’ preexisting wounds, forcing them to ‘feel for’ slaves by reexperiencing their own painful separations and other forms of sufferings. This wounding forces a new mode of cognition upon readers, who are to understand slavery through their memories of sorrow rather than through reason, and thereby apprehend the ‘plain right thing’ that logic conceals” (130). Following Noble, I argue that Seaver invites readers to cry through the employment of sentimentality and that, by doing

²⁸ Namias insists that the book is the end product of a collaboration between Seaver and Jemison and that we “cannot know completely which passages are Seaver’s and which are Jemison’s” (“Introduction,” 42). What we do know, however, is that Jemison was a Seneca woman because she chose to become one and that, just as the majority of individuals in the white world, she experienced, in her life time, both happiness and unhappiness. But she was not a completely frustrated woman. In light of this fact, it is obvious that Seaver wants to depict Indians as monstrous, since Jemison affirms that her husband was kind and tender only to spend the following three pages saying he was actually thirsty for blood. In “‘However Extravagant the Pretension’” Michelle Burnham argues that Seaver uses Jemison and the sentimental story of her “captivity” and life among the savages to establish racial distinction, depicting Indians as evil-natured and whites as the legitimate owners of the new nation called United States. It is to this very effort of distinguishing whites from non-whites through the appropriation of Mary Jemison’s experience that the term ‘racial drag’ applies to. “‘However Extravagant the Pretension’”

so, he allows readers to feel the pain that Jemison, the allegedly “white” woman, felt while with the Indians. *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* is indeed an emotional account, and the story of her life among the Indians is filled with moments of suffering, most of which only happen because she has left her white community to live with the Indians. When suffering with Jemison, therefore, readers cannot look at her and fail to see in her an Indian captive, who needs to return to life as a white woman in order to end her sufferings and finally achieve happiness. Through sentiment, therefore, Seaver transforms the narrative of a hybrid woman into the captivity narrative of a white woman.

This transformation can be read, for instance, towards the end of the book. In Chapter Twelve, a few pages prior to the last chapter, Jemison reflects on her state: “Being now left a widow in my old age to mourn the loss of a husband, who had treated me well, and with whom I had raised four children.” As we have discussed, in addition to the loss of her husband, Jemison also “suffered the loss of an affectionate son.” After so many afflictions she “fondly fostered the hope that [her] melancholy vicissitudes had ended, and that the remainder of [her] time would be characterized by nothing unpropitious.” She soon realizes, however, that “but a short time [. . .] elapsed after my husband’s death before my troubles were renewed with redoubled severity” (139). Similarly to what had happened earlier in her life, when her son John killed his brother Thomas, Jemison again suffers the death of one of her children: John kills another brother, this time Jemison’s youngest son Jesse. The reason for the fight John and Jesse engaged in was the drinking of spirits, which Jemison, throughout the book, deems to be a “baneful article” that “threatens the extinction of our people [the Indians],” and to

which she blames “the whole of [her] misfortune in losing my three sons” (159).²⁹ Going back to Noble’s argument that non-slaves could experience what the suffering of slavery was like, Seaver relied on the fact that most readers of *A Narrative* were certainly familiar with death and the sorrow that comes along with losing a loved one, so that they could connect with Jemison and feel the pain she felt. What they were probably not familiar with, however, was the killing of one brother by the other. Although Jemison blames alcohol for her disgrace concerning her sons’ fate, to the readers of her narrative drinking was probably not the reason for her misfortunes. The real reason behind so much disgrace was the fact that she became an Indian. Had she “been ransomed” and returned to the white society she once left none of all the hardships she had to endure, including the tragic death of her children would have happened.

In *Cartographies of Desire*, Rebecca Blevins Faery points out that captivity narrative was used by Anglo-Americans on the one hand to create their own whiteness and on the other to form a dark and inferior category, which included both Indians and Africans, and which whites controlled (12). The narratives that deployed captivity stories, therefore, were used to convey whites’ agendas since the seminal captivity narrative of Mary Rowlandson. But whereas Rowlandson’s text contributed to the formation of a colonial Puritan identity, Jemison’s text, published well into the nineteenth century, works toward the formation of a white national identity.³⁰ As Hilary E. Wyss asserts,

²⁹ John was eventually killed after drinking and quarrelling with two Squawky Hill Indians, who agreed to kill him after the quarrelsomeness.

³⁰ In light of this discussion Faery affirms: “when Rowlandson’s narrative appeared in the late 17th century, just at the time when discourses of racial difference were evolving in the colonies into the forms we would recognize today, at first, English colonists saw the

the narrative of Jemison was published in a period in which the very idea of racial and cultural mixture was a source of enormous political tension. Racial categories were reconceptualized in the first half of the nineteenth century as an increasingly 'scientific' approach replaced more mutable climate theories with immutable racial categories that brought with them a strong hierarchical structure. The logic of this structure demanded the physical separation of racially disparate groups. (2)

Wyss continues by bringing up Thomas Jefferson's 1803 attempt to geographically separate whites from Indians by "simply removing all Native Americans residing east of the Mississippi and settling them on lands further west" (2). By keeping Native and Anglo-American cultures distinct, Jefferson envisioned not only that Native Americans would eventually disappear from the American continent, but that "they were to vanish from the cultural and political landscape as active agents of their own fate" (2). This explains Seaver's struggle to depict Jemison as a sentimental and helpless white woman abducted by the savages instead of someone who learned to respect a different culture and ultimately become part of it. By appropriating Jemison's valuable status as an informant of Indian life and culture, Seaver impersonates his subject and writes *as* Jemison, becoming the ventriloquist who controls his puppet. Seaver ultimately uses Jemison's voice and experience to communicate what he believes will be convenient and profitable to the formation of a white national identity.

Also essential to comprehending Seaver's plan of creating national identity through rhetorical racial drag in *A Narrative* is Daniel E. Williams introduction to *Liberty's Captives*, in which he discusses in a comparative fashion various types of

differences between themselves and the indigenous people as cultural rather than racial. The process of racializing the Indians as utterly and irrevocably other took fully two centuries" (34).

captivity narrative, showing how such narratives helped to shape debates about American freedom and self-identity in the nation-building years from 1770 to 1820. In the book Williams states: “during the first half century after the Revolutionary War, an astonishing variety of captivity narratives were published in American print culture. In hundreds of narratives, readers of the early Republic encountered sensational accounts of individuals who struggled to escape hostile confinement and regain their liberty” (1). In that time period, in which the United States had just gained its independence and become a new nation, the discourse around liberty was very prominent, and stories of captives who regained freedom from their oppressors, be they Native Americans or English people, fueled the dreams of the new nation which was thirsty for freedom. Even “decades before the Revolution,” asserts Williams, “American colonists had inherited the British belief that individuals had certain rights and that liberty was an essential condition of these rights,” which makes the theme of freedom “a popular cause of the Revolution and in some way touched all English-speaking people” (2). Jemison’s narrative is but one example of an early national tale that depicted issues of liberty. Her choice to remain among the “heathens” however, complicates the idea of the necessity of freedom to the pursuit of happiness. Williams claims:

In depicting the loss of liberty, captivity texts touched some of the deepest fears and desires of American readers, particularly fears concerning tyranny and slavery. Significantly, as the new nation struggled to establish its autonomy and explore its identity as a free country, captivity texts presented readers with dramatic spectacles not only of tyrants and slaves but also of individuals forced to live without any measure of self-autonomy (4).

Jemison’s story of success as a white woman who became Native American destabilizes the concept of liberty and the right to pursue personal happiness that was in vogue during

the post-Revolutionary period. To the citizens of the new nation, the idea of liberty was completely opposite to that of captivity, and no one captive could achieve real freedom until ransomed. Successful captives were those who either managed their own way out of captivity or who were ransomed, and their stories “helped to define both the new American nation and its citizens as freedom loving” (Williams 7). That a captive might choose to remain among the Indians instead of regaining liberty and yet was able to achieve happiness and live a decent life was unacceptable and contrary in nature to the formation of the American identity. Seaver, therefore, *had to* modify Jemison’s story in order to make it appeal to the reading public that was desirous of stories of captives who suffered viciously but who were able to live happy lives once they regained their liberty.

Seaver’s act of rhetorical racial drag, however, does not turn out to be perfect. As mentioned earlier, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* stands out for its dialogic voice as well as for its dissonances. Examples of incongruity abound in the narrative. For instance, in Chapter 3, Jemison comments that “it was my happy lot to be accepted for adoption” (78), being called by the Indian sisters who adopted her as Dickewamis, “which being interpreted signifies a pretty girl, a handsome girl, or a pleasant, good thing” (77). Once settled in the Indian community, Dickewamis affirms to be provided with a home and “employed in nursing the children, and doing light work about the house” (78). Although still missing her parents, which prevents her from being fully happy, Dickewamis asserts: “My situation was easy; I had no particular hardships to

endure” (78).³¹ Of the sisters that adopted and cared for her, Jemison states; “I was very fortunate in falling into their hands; for they were kind good natured women; peaceable and mild in their dispositions; temperate and decent in their habits, and very tender and gentle towards me. I have great reason to respect them, though they have been dead a great number of years” (79). Jemison spends three pages of the narrative talking about how lucky she was not to be killed but adopted, how light her work and easy her life was only, in the following page, to contradict what she had just said:

Early the next morning the Indians took me over to the fort to see the white people that were there. It was then that my heart bounded to be liberated from the Indians and to be restored to my friends and my country. The white people were surprised to see me with the Indians, enduring the hardships of a savage life, at so early an age, and with so delicate a constitution as I appeared to possess. (80)

For no apparent reason, and in a very emotional state, Jemison seemingly disagrees with her own previous statement of a light and easy life to affirm that she actually “endures the hardships of a savage life.” Unreasonable, this contradiction is one of the examples of the dialogic voice present in the text.

On the manner by which Seaver uses Jemison’s voice/ experience to meet nationalistic ends Burnham claims that the dialogism present in *A Narrative* works to “colonize internally the voice of the informant” (327). Burnham comments on the

³¹ On the nature of the work women performed Jemison also affirms: “our labor was not severe; and that of one year was exactly similar, in almost every respect, to that of the others, without that endless variety that is to be observed in the common labor of the white people. Notwithstanding the Indian women have all the fuel and bread to procure, and the cooking to perform, their task is probably not harder than that of white women , who have those articles provided for them; and their cares are certainly not as numerous, neither nor as great. In the summer season, we planted, tended and harvested our corn, and generally had all our children with us; but had no master to oversee or drive us, so that we could work as leisurely as we pleased” (84).

ambivalence Seaver creates by asserting Jemison's unquestionable whiteness even while acknowledging her Indianness; ambivalence which is not only present throughout *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* but "characterizes the early nationalist discourses of the contemporary United States, a former settler colony that at the time of the book's publication had still recently gained independence from Britain." In this sense, Burnham asserts:

In America's transition from settler colonialism to national autonomy, white settlers at once opposed European imperialism and more forcefully inhabited the position of colonizer wrested from their founding European centers. In this process, they replaced international with internal colonialism, a condition described by Alfred Artega as one in which 'the colonizer never goes home.' ("However Extravagant" 327)

Seaver manipulates Jemison's story and converts what would be the simple telling of the life story of an Indian woman into the story of her transformation to a colonial subject. In a very subtle manner, Seaver confers authorship upon Jemison by affirming, in the preface, that "this is the story of her life, a piece of autobiography" only to retrieve it by signing himself as the author of the book. Correspondingly, "Seaver's depiction of Jemison as a Seneca Indian woman is eclipsed by his classification of her as a white woman" (Burnham, "However Extravagant" 328). *A Narrative*, therefore, is not, as it should appear, the story of a white woman who chose to become Indian. It is, instead, the story of how the life of a white woman who decided to become Indian was used by Seaver as an instrument in the formation of identity of the new nation called United States. Jemison, thus, is the perfect example of internal colonialism in the process of national identity formation: she is racially dragged by Seaver and her story is

manipulated and used to conform political purposes of third parties. Burnham finishes her article on Jemison by affirming that

Like much of the better-known contemporary literature of the so-called “American Renaissance,” *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* seeks to legitimize the United States as a new nation in the wake of its successful political and military resistance to Europe. It does so, however, by internally colonizing the voice and authority of a transcultural subject—just as, one might argue, many “American Renaissance” texts do. To this extent, the *Narrative* mirrors contemporary legal narratives which establish white American settlers’ rights to property possession only by internally colonizing minority subjects and their property claims. (343)

Jemison, her life, experience, and story becomes an instrument in the hands of Seaver, who represents the image of the colonizer attempting to legitimize American settlers’ intention to possess both “minority subjects and their property claims.” By internally colonizing the voice of such subjects, colonists such as Seaver managed to appropriate for themselves their stories, portraying them according to their objectives.

The political end of developing a white national identity Seaver had in mind when interviewing and writing Mary Jemison’s story did not leave space for Dickewamis and her “two falling voices” to fully come out. Unfortunately, the reader of *A Narrative* will not encounter the truly hybrid woman who Dickewamis really was, a woman who learned to respect and love both the Seneca culture and its people as her own. As a matter of fact, in the narrative put together by Seaver, Dickewamis had to disappear so that the white American identity of Mary Jemison would shine. It is through this very identity, thought Seaver, that readers of the post-revolutionary period would find their own identity as white Americans in opposition to Native Americans. The real life Dickewamis, then, becomes in fiction Mrs. Mary Jemison, serving the purpose of the new national identity

formation. Such a deed would certainly not be possible without the sentimental depiction of Jemison as a suffering captive. But as this chapter proves, the real Dickewamis is not forever buried in the rhetorical racial drag of James Seaver. Instead, to the attentive reader, the very act of dragging is exactly what ultimately gives away Mary Jemison's true identity.

CHAPTER 4
 JOHN TANNER: HYBRIDITY, MASCULINITY,
 AND ANXIETY IN RACIAL DRAG

In 1830, six years after the publication of *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* Edwin James, also a doctor, followed James Seaver and interviewed an Indian “captive” who for many years lived among the Ojibwas as one of them: John Tanner (c. 1780—c. 1846). When the narrative telling the story of his life was published for the first time, Tanner, fifty years old, was described by James as “erect and rather robust, indicating great hardiness, activity, and strength, which, however, his numerous exposures and sufferings have deeply impaired” (3). His face, says James, while originally handsome, is now representative of “many thoughts and passion, as well as of age.” His blue eyes, “quick and piercing,” symbolize “the stern, the violent, and unconquerable spirit” which made of Tanner an object of fear and apprehension to many of the Indians when he was with them (3). James goes on to describe Tanner by stating that

his isolated and friendless situation, in the midst of a community where the right of private warfare is recognized as the only defence of individual possession, the only barrier between man and man, was certainly in the highest degree unfavorable to the formation of that enduring and patient submissiveness, which, in civilized societies, surrenders so great a share of individual rights to the strong guardianship of the law” (3).

These passages giving information on Tanner’s life and personality come from James’s nineteen-page introduction to *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Saut de Ste. Marie) During Thirty Years Residence*

Among the Indians in the Interior of North America (1830). Interestingly enough, though, Dr. Edwin James—the first to become interested in Tanner’s life, the one who first encouraged him to tell his story and who eventually wrote it—is totally invisible to the modern reader of *The Falcon*, since the 1994 Penguin Nature Library edition (the only one widely available nowadays) removes his name and contributions to the narrative, creating the false impression that Tanner himself wrote the story of his life. Such an attempt to erase the editor, however, does not go unnoticed by the reader, mainly for two reasons: Tanner’s inability to communicate to whites because he forgot most of his English (yet the narrative is written in very elaborate language), and the footnotes, which remain in the republished text and obviously cannot have been added by Tanner himself. Thus, I will argue in this chapter that Tanner’s narrative, as was the case of Jemison’s text, is a product of rhetorical racial drag, for James not only wrote *for* Tanner but endeavored to portray him as a white man corrupted by the savagery of the Indians, rather than the erstwhile captive who later made the decision to live as an Indian, that is, as the hybrid individual Tanner actually was.³² As a corrupted white man, therefore, Tanner would need to have his whiteness restored so that he could be happy again.

In addition to all these issues, the Penguin edition of the book complicates matters even further, for it attempts to portray Tanner as the author of *The Falcon*. This double form of dragging (the one performed by James and the other made possible by the Penguin reprinting of the book) works, on the one hand, towards establishing identity

³² On the way Tanner is seen by his contemporaries Sayre comments: “Consistent with the antipathy toward mixed-blood identities in the US, he has never been recognized by whites as an Indian, only as a white man corrupted by savagery” (481).

formation for the newly born America and, on the other, towards legitimizing the imposition of civilization on an Indianized subject.³³ Interestingly, as it was the case in *The Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, sentimentality also plays a major role in the establishment of national identity. But whereas in Jemison's account sentimentality has the end of inviting the reader to suffer with the captive, that is, to literally feel the pain Jemison felt for being among the heathens, Tanner's narrative employs emotion as a way to legitimize imposing civilization on a threatening hybridized character, so that his whiteness may ultimately be reestablished.

John Tanner was a nine-year-old boy living in Kentucky, not far southwest of what is now Cincinnati, when he was abducted by a group of Shawnees while irresponsibly collecting nuts in the backyard of his house (Tanner knew of the presence of Indians and that he could be taken by them). Upon capture, Tanner was given in adoption to an old Shawnee woman, so that he could replace her son, killed in battle. With this first family Tanner suffers greatly, being deprived of food while forced to work hard, and he says that "by one or the other of them [. . .] beaten almost every day" (11). Tanner's fate is changed when he was sold to "Net-no-kwa, a remarkable Ottawa woman, who, with her Ojibwa husband, adopted him as a replacement for a biological son she had lost" (Beidler 38).³⁴ It is with this new family that Tanner is raised to become an Indian

³³ Sayre on why Penguin does that.

³⁴ Tanner comments on this new family he was sold to: "The old woman they called Ne-keek-wos-ke-cheeme-kwa—'the Otter woman,' the otter being her totem—treated me with much kindness, as did her daughters, as well as Kish-kau-ko and Be-nais-sa, the bird, the youngest son, of about my own age" (14).

man; he learns to hunt as well as other activities performed by the Ojibwas. In this sense he was, as Beidler points out, an Ojibwa in all but his genes (38).

Clearly, Tanner's book calls for a comparison to *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. Like Jemison, Tanner was a white individual who started as an Indian captive but soon decided to remain among the Indians, marrying an Ojibwa woman and having children with her, thus establishing life as an Indian man. Tanner and Jemison also share the fact that, "contrary to the captivity narrative, [they] found that redemption and return was no salvation" (Sayre 481). As I have discussed in Chapter 3, Jemison stayed with the Seneca because she feared returning to the white world after acculturation as an Indian woman. Similarly, Tanner says that "I believed my father and all my friends had been murdered, and I remember the laborious and confined manner I must live if I returned among the whites; where, having no friends, and being destitute of money or property, I must, of necessity, be exposed to all the ills of extreme poverty" (26). One situation, however, sets the two of them apart: whereas Jemison never really reentered white society (she in truth barely even conceives the possibility of going back), Tanner, although he decided not to return to the white community he came from a few years after he was taken, "always intended, at some future time, to return and live among the whites" (26). And so he eventually did. At the end of the narrative, Tanner left the Ojibwas in today's Winnipeg, Manitoba and headed back to the U.S. in order to look for members of his family who might still be alive. It is during this emotional process of going back that his double identity of an Indian/white man becomes most evident.

What also becomes clear in Tanner's reencounter with the white world, as Gordon

Sayre points out, is the alienated position he occupies in respect to both Ojibwa and white society: in the narrative, an Ojibwa man named Wa-ge-tone accuses Tanner of being a stranger, and states: “you [Tanner] are one of many who have come from a distant country to feed yourself and your children with that which does not belong to you. You have been driven out from your own country, and you come among us because you are too feeble and worthless to have a home or a country of your own. [. . .] Go back, therefore, from this place, and be no longer a burthen to us, or I will certainly take your life” (158). But Tanner is also a stranger to the white people, even to his own blood kinsmen, as it becomes clear on his own affirmation for why he decided not to accept an offer to return from Canada to the States where his relatives could still be living:

I then believed that most of my near relatives had been murdered by the Indians, and if any remained I knew that so great a lapse of time must have made us, in all respects, like *strangers* to each other. [The trader] also proposed to take me to England with him, but my attachments were among the Indians, and my home was in the Indian country. I had spent a great part of my life there, and I knew that it was too late for me to form new associations. (222, emphasis added)

The Falcon, thus, is a story of displacement; a sentimental narrative of a suffering hybrid man and his pursuit of truth, of finding a place where he can fit and belong. But “to find a sense of the ethnic autobiographical subject,” comments Sayre, “the educated reader must winnow out the editor,” for Seaver’s attempt was to transmit the message that Tanner is a not hybrid, but a corrupted white man, as I gestured earlier. Once the editor is sifted out, *The Falcon* also becomes the tale of an Ojibwa making the difficult transition back to the Anglo-American world. As a matter of fact, the sentimental tale of a white individual who became an Indian and many years later decided to go back to the white society was the perfect story for the post-American Revolution period, in which the newly formed

American nation, and consequently, the new American people, needed to establish their identity as well as to legitimize colonization and the imposition of civilization on the Natives who inhabited this country. Sentiment, incontestably, would become an effective tool in achieving national identity.

In order to understand the emotional impersonation performed by James, I want to start by bringing up into this discussion various points from the introduction written by him (not included in the Penguin edition of the book). This introductory chapter definitely changes one's understanding and interpretation of the text. As in the introduction of Jemison's narrative, in which Seaver acknowledges having added to the narrative information not coming directly from Jemison,³⁵ James states, "It ought to be distinctly understood, that his whole story was given as it stands, without hints, suggestions, leading questions, or advice of any kind other than to 'conceal nothing.'" A few lines later, however, James intriguingly recognizes that "one liberty it has been found necessary to take, namely, to *retrench* or altogether to *omit* many details of hunting adventures, of traveling, and other events, which in the simple lives of the Indians have only a moderate share of importance" (5, emphasis mine). Although James does ultimately acknowledge having edited the text, it would be difficult for one to measure how much of the narrative was actually written by him. One may certainly argue,

³⁵ In the introduction to the narrative, Seaver asserts: "for the life of her last husband, we are indebted to her cousin, Mr. George Jemison, to whom she referred us for information on that subject generally" (xiii-xiv).

however, that the final text unquestionably has James's intervention, be it either omission or addition of information.³⁶

It is indeed difficult to establish exactly the extent to which Tanner's story was edited. Thus, while applauding Sayre's interpretation of the editorial intervention present within *The Falcon*,³⁷ I disagree with his statement regarding the lack of dissonant voices in the text. Sayre claims that "Tanner's narrative voice reads coherently as his own; there are no obvious changes in tone, no easy way to detect 'where the Indian leaves off and the Anglo begins' as scholars have done in unraveling the words of Seaver from those of Tanner" (485). The narrative does read well, and it smoothly progresses from Tanner's childhood in Pennsylvania to the present moment in his adulthood. However, some moments are indeed incongruous and contradictory: one of the first dissonant occasions to stand out in the reading of *The Falcon* is the confusing manner by which the pronouns "they" and "we" are used when Tanner is referring to himself in relation to the Indians. In Chapter VIII, for instance, when describing preparations for a war excursion and the hunting of buffalo practiced by the Ojibwas, Tanner uses the pronoun "they" to refer to the Indians: "*They* must, if possible, avoid wetting their feet, but if *they* are ever compelled to wade through a swamp, or to cross a stream, *they* must keep their clothes

³⁶ In this sense, "the suppression of Edwin James enhances autobiographical authority for Tanner, yet it is only James's great skills as an editor that makes this cynical move possible. Tanner's narrative voice reads coherently as his own; there are no obvious changes in tone, no easy way to detect 'where the Indian leaves off and the Anglo begins' as scholars have done in unrevealing the words of Seaver from those of Jemison" (Sayre 485).

³⁷ Sayre defends that "to find a sense of the ethnic autobiographical subject, the educated reader must winnow out the editor" (483).

dry, and whip their legs with bushes or grass when *they* come out of the water” (109, emphasis added). Nevertheless the use of the pronoun “they” to talk about the Ojibwas in this passage Tanner later uses, in the same chapter, the pronoun “we,” now portraying himself as one of them: “*We* found, at each of [the Sioux] encampments, the place of their ko-sau-bun-zitch-e-gun, from the appearance of which *we* were able to infer that they knew accurately our position from day to day” (128, emphasis added). The use of “they” seems to indicate James’s attempt to set Tanner apart from the Ojibwas, depicting him as a white man in contrast with the Indians. The same thing happens in the heading of Chapter XII, which reads “Superstitions of the Indians,” as well as in many other places in the book in which Tanner refers to the Ojibwas as “they” or “the Indians,” transmitting the idea that the Ojibwas are “they” and, consequently, that Tanner is not part of this group. The pronoun shift could also indicate, in an even more problematic way, the very liminality of Tanner. If this is the case, then, James becomes trapped in his own game of rhetorical manipulation. His control of language and rhetoric, thus, is exactly what gives away his plan to misrepresent Tanner’s identity.

By the same token, James attempt to describe Tanner as a mix of the “bon sauvage” and, at the same time, of a white man corrupted by savagery. James first asserts, “carefully instructed in early youth, in all those principles and maxims which constitute the moral code of the unsophisticated and uncorrupted Indian, his ideas of right and wrong, of honourable and dishonourable, differ, of course, very essentially from those of white men” (3). Later on, though, he states that “actions considered among us not only

reprehensible, but highly criminal, are among them accounted shining virtues. In no part of his narrative will he probably appear in a more unfavorable light than when he details his severity to an unfortunate captive girl, through whose negligence his lodge, and all his little property, was consumed by fire, in the midst of winter” (7). Hence, Tanner represents, on the one hand, the idea of the purity of the savage but on the other, he has been corrupted to savagery to the point of accepting as “shining virtues” what in the white world are reprehensible crimes. Further developing the savagery that contaminated Tanner, James states that

this kind of cruelty, as well as the abandonment of the sick, the aged, and the dying, practiced so extensively by [. . .] northern Indians, and more or less by all the tribes, reminds us, how much even in what seem spontaneous and natural courtesies, we owe to the influence of civilization. The conduct of the Indians in all these cases, however we may see fit to call it, is certainly not unnatural, being in strict and implicit obedience to that impulse of nature, which prompts so irresistibly to self-preservation. (7)

James’s take on the importance and necessity of bringing the savage heathen to a state of civilization is, as a matter of fact, central in his introduction. To him, had not the Europeans come to America and imposed their civilization on its land and people, the barbarous Native American customs would never have been ameliorated and the crimes practiced by them simply would not come to an end. “To the influence of civilization,” thus, “we owe,” and to this extent James implies that it is necessary that some of the Native Americans may perish; in the end, they would have killed each other anyway. For this savage conduct of the Indians, James blames nature and its impulses, which leads to self-protection. At the peak of his acclamation of civilization James asserts, “How admirable is that complicated machinery which in so many instances avails to overcome

and control this impulse—which postpones the interest, the happiness, or the life of the individual, of the good of the associated whole!” (7).

Following this assertion, however, James changes the tone of this introduction and blames the white men for the corruption of the once pure and naïve savages, drawing the attention to the idea that “in vain do we attempt to deceive ourselves, or others, into the belief that in whatever ‘relates to their moral conviction and prospects, the Indians have been gainers by their intercourse with Europeans’” (8).³⁸ James adds by asserting that among the worst things the Indians have been brought in contact with through the help of the European colonizer is “the introduction of ardent spirits among them” and “trade for peltries, which has been pushed among them from the earliest occupation of the country by the whites.” Finally, James makes the point that “the intercourse between the two races, has been the uniform and rapid depression and deterioration of the Indians” (8), which composes the central point of his argument, continuing thus to the end of the introduction.

It is tough to determine where exactly James wants to take the reader: what is the idea he is trying to convey, the point he is making? Is he confused or having trouble dealing with the liminal state of Tanner? He goes from stating that Tanner is an example of a “bon sauvage” to saying that he is corrupted by savagery to finally making the case that the white man is the one to be blamed by the corruption of the Indians. It seems to

³⁸ Tanner comments that “This kind of hospitality is much practiced among Indians who have had but little intercourse with the whites, and it is among the foremost of the virtues which the old men inculcate upon the minds of children in their evening conversations” (72).

me that the constellation of personalities James uses to describe Tanner and his state is but an indication of the rhetorical racial drag that was employed in the text; it is obvious from the narrative that Tanner is none of the above: he is neither the “bon sauvage” nor a white man corrupted by savagery but a hybrid individual who inhabits a liminal position, and who is trying to find a place that is both welcoming and where he can feel he belongs. James’s misrepresentation of Tanner, therefore, may be understood as a form of erasing Tanner’s liminality, that is, the duality he inhabits as a culturally miscegenated Ojibwa-white man.

The accomplishment of such a project, as already pointed out in this chapter, does not happen without the aid of sentimentality. One has to question, therefore, how sentiment is connected to the erasure of hybridity and, consequently, to the imposition of civilization on Tanner. The answer to this question may come from the passage depicting Tanner’s decision to return to the white society. When he finally decides to go back to the States, the reader is presented with an emotional account of this man who is not even able to get his own food because he cannot communicate well enough in English and because he looks like an Indian: “‘Why do you not go,’ said [the trader], ‘to your own people of the Hudson’s Bay Company?’ I told him I was now wishing to go to the States. ‘It would have been well,’ he replied, ‘had you gone long ago’” (234). By the answer he gets from the trader one will understand that Tanner is so indianized that when he returns to the white world he is not anymore perceived as a white subject by the whites, but in truth despised because they see him as an Indian: “I could not make the people comprehend that I was hungry; at least they seemed determined not to understand me,” asserts Tanner

when he tries to get something to eat from a house where food was plenty. As they can't understand that he wants to eat, Tanner says he sees "part of a loaf of corn bread," then points first to it and next to his mouth, "but as [the woman] appeared not to understand my meaning, I took it in my hand and raised it to my mouth, as if I would eat it."

Tanner's behavior is then taken to be over the limit, to which the woman "called to the man outside, and he coming in, took the bread from me, pushed me violently out of the house, then went and took the corn from my horse, and motioned to me to be gone"

(245). But Tanner is really persistent, and once again tries to communicate that he is hungry: "I came next to a large brick house, and hoping I might meet gentler treatment, I determined to try there. But as I was willing to pass on, a very fat man came and spoke to me in a loud and harsh tone of voice" (245). Tanner says he cannot understand what the man is saying; he does understand, however, that "he was cursing me for an Indian." The man's attitude makes Tanner angry, driving him to engage in violence: "having in my hand a hickory stick about as large as my thumb and three or four feet long, I struck him over the head with it, so hearty a blow that he immediately quitted his hold on my gun, and I rode off" (246). It seems that the interaction between Tanner and the white people shown in these passages, therefore, does not make of him as much of a stranger to the whites because he cannot communicate for having forgotten the English language but because he is perceived as an Indian, and not as a white man. Tanner is, therefore, as portrayed by James, a wretched individual due to his very Indianness; to successfully achieve happiness Tanner *needs* to become white again. This is exactly why sentimentality comes into place: by emotionally moving readers to feel sorry for this man

whose hybridity is responsible for the wretchedness of his state, the editor manages to make it clear that only the erasure of the liminality of Tanner may bring him to fully enjoy his rights as a white man.

Looking at the differences between Jemison and Tanner as captive subjects may also help understanding how emotion is used to mask hybridity: we have seen, in Chapter 3, that Seaver portrayed Jemison as a sentimental woman so that readers would suffer with her, thus interpreting her story as that of a white subject abducted by the savages, forced to live among them and, as a result, someone whose happiness lies solely in the reestablishment of her freedom, that is, in returning to the white community she was once forced to leave. Her decision to remain among the Seneca as one of them was certainly threatening to the formation of national identity, and as Sayre puts it, "it was a kind of racial betrayal to admit that these individuals preferred Indian life" (486). The solution to the problem was to reestablish Jemison's whiteness, emphasizing, as Seaver does in his Introductory chapter, that "although her bosom companion was an ancient Indian warrior, and notwithstanding her children and associates were all Indians, yet it was found that she possessed an uncommon share of hospitality, and that her friendship was well court and refreshed" (54). An inoffensive and charitable woman, Jemison "made the naked as comfortable as her means would admit of; and in all her actions, discovered so much natural goodness of heart, that her admirers increases in proportion to the extension of her acquaintance, and she became celebrated as the friend of the distressed" (54). Even though Jemison's Indianness was a threat to national identity formation, she herself was not, for despite having married to an Indian warrior and bearing Indian children, Jemison

managed to keep her “share of hospitality and friendship.” Bringing an eighty-one-year-old female “friend of the distressed” back to the white world, therefore, would not be a real threat to the other white individuals. She would certainly readapt quite easily. In addition, Seaver’s plan to invite readers to suffer with Jemison for the sentimental story of a white woman deprived of her whiteness would contribute to not only bringing Jemison back to the white world but to actually welcome her into it.

That was not, however, the case for Tanner. As with Jemison, his hybridization was a threat to civilization. But in addition to that, a fifty-year-old hybrid man certainly stirred up some anxieties that Jemison, a female, did not. In direct contraposition to the harmlessness of Jemison, James says the following referring to Tanner in the introduction to *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*: “the stern, violent, and unconquerable spirit, which rendered him an object of fear to many of the Indians while he remained among them [. . .] disqualifies him for that submissive and compliant manner which his dependent situation among the whites render necessary” (3). In addition, the scene in which Tanner assaulted the white man who tried to drive him out of the establishment where he wanted to buy food certainly contributed to the anxiety of accepting this individual back in the white world.

The recurrent depiction of Tanner as a skilled hunter who could shoot very well and as a warrior likewise adds to this anxiety white individuals experienced. Chapter VIII, for instance, describes the preparation for a war excursion, in which Tanner says that it was “our intention to join a war party then preparing to go against the Sioux” (105). Tanner’s tribe ends up “diminished from sixty to five” (114), after the battle

against the Sioux. Tanner is one of the few not to be defeated and, reflecting on why the Sioux did not kill him when they had a chance, he speculates: "Why they did not fire upon me before I was out of the light of their camp fire, I cannot tell. Perhaps they were somewhat intimidated at seeing me so well armed, so active, and so entirely sober, which last circumstance gave me an evident advantage over most of them" (177). Tanner is thus not just a powerful male warrior but one that is respected and feared by Indians of opposing tribes. If the Sioux fears him, as it becomes evident in the passage quoted above, he would certainly be the cause of fright and anxiety of the whites. Once again, it is imperative to reiterate how differently Jemison and Tanner were seen by white Americans, and how their different personalities and history of hybrid individuals represented completely opposite images, that is, Jemison as the good, good-natured, and warm-hearted old lady and Tanner as the fairly young and potentially violent male warrior.

It is thus because Tanner himself is a threatening Ojibwa-white man that sentimentality is used by James, who needs to impose civilization on him so that he can succeed in the white society. By turning Tanner's narrative into an emotional account and by describing his life as very miserable and unhappy while he was among the Indians as well as when he decides to reenter the white society, James manages to transmit the message that Tanner will not achieve any success in any of his endeavors unless he gives up his Indianness and totally re-embraces his whiteness. James only accomplishes such a task because he writes emotion when employing rhetorical racial drag. The real Tanner as

an ethnic autobiographical subject, therefore, will only be revealed once the reader sifts out the editor.

CONCLUSION

In the very last paragraph of *The Falcon* Tanner (or James, if we are to consider rhetorical racial drag) transmits, at the last minute, a message confirming the necessity of the establishment of his whiteness so that he can succeed in the white world. So strong is the idea of whiteness that his daughters—the children of a man who clearly saw himself as a hybrid individual inhabiting the liminality between the white and Indian cultures—are depicted by Tanner as Indian captives. James states:

Three of my children are still among the Indians in the north. The two daughters would, as I am informed, gladly join me, if it were in their power to escape. The son is older, and is attached to the life he has so long led as a hunter. I have some hope that I may be able to go and make another effort to bring away my daughters. (280)

Tanner's fear of the disappearance of his captive daughters among the Native Americans at the end of *The Falcon* portrays an interesting reverse to the motif of the "vanishing Indian" in the literature of the nineteenth century. The "vanishing Indian" theory spoke to the potential disappearing of Indians during the nineteenth century, since that was a time "in which Indian people of many diverse backgrounds were all unified as a single, collective entity" (Dougherty). This unification had the objective of removal, assimilation, and possible destruction of Native American people.

By the year 1830 the Indians were disappearing from east of the Mississippi, for Andrew Jackson's Indian Wars, which lasted from 1814 to 1824, had forced several tribes out of the Southeast region. Finally, by 1830, the year of the publication of *A Narrative of the Capture and Adventures of John Tanner*, the "Indian Removal Act" came into place. This act, although meant to be voluntary, forced many Indians to leave

the lands they inhabited and establish themselves west of the Mississippi, so that European Americans could have access to the lands where the “Five Civilized Tribes” inhabited. The removal act resulted, in 1831, in the “Trail of Tears,” the dismissal of Native Americans from their homelands to Indian territory in the then Western United States (now Oklahoma). The first of the Five Civilized Tribes to be removed from the Southeast (Georgia, the then biggest southeastern state) were the Choctaw, who became a model for the other removals. Following the Choctaw in 1831, the Seminole were removed in 1832, the Creek in 1834, the Chickasaw in 1837, and the Cherokee in 1838. It is estimated that more than 46,000 of the so-called “Civilized Indians” had been removed by 1838, opening up 25 million acres for white settlement. In the 1890’s, Frederick Jackson Turner developed the “Vanishing Indian” theory claiming that “the Vanishing American was an organic and inevitable feature of the frontier’s dynamism” (qtd. in Dougherty). Such theory worked as a justifiable explanation for colonization.

In fictional literature, the “vanishing Indian” motif is especially represented in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of The Mohicans* (1826), the second book of the Leatherstocking tales. By the late 1820s and early 1830s Cooper’s widely read Leatherstocking tales (*The Last of the Mohicans* being the second book in the series) mourned the disappearing Indians, calling American readers to cry for the fate of Native Americans he depicted as noble savage but also tragically doomed, as if U.S. policy, and the white American readers themselves, had no role in the Indians’ inevitable disappearance. It seems pertinent, thus, to look at *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Cooper’s most famous work of fiction, to draw conclusions on the objective behind the

portrayal of sorrowfulness for the vanishing Indians who only happened to disappear because of whites' intentions to take over the land previously inhabited by them. At the very end of the book Uncas, one of the only two remaining individuals of the once great Mohican tribe, is stabbed to death by the villain Huron Magua. Upon his death Chingachgook, Uncas's father and now literally the last of the Mohicans exclaims:

‘Why do my brothers mourn!’[. . .] ‘Why do my daughters weep! that a young man has gone to the happy hunting-grounds; that a chief has filled his time with honor! He was good; he was dutiful; he was brave. Who can deny it? The Manitou had need of such a warrior, and He has called away. As for me, the son and the father of Uncas, I am a blazed pine, in a clearing of the pale-faces. My race has gone from the shores of the salt lake, and the hills of the Delawares. But who can say that the Serpent of his tribe has forgotten his wisdom? I am alone—’ (406).

Similarly to what can be read in the captivity narratives studied in this thesis, Cooper writes emotion and invites readers to cry. Not for the victimized white individual abducted by the demonic savages, though. Surprisingly, now readers are invited to cry for the poor Native Americans who are vanishing. They are disappearing, obviously, because of Jackson's Removal Act, but Cooper's fiction finds a way of driving readers to tears without making them feel guilty or whatsoever responsible for the vanishing of the Indians. In this sense, while the Indian removal is real, the sentimental Indian removal played by Cooper's narrative functions to excuse whites of any responsibilities concerning the fate of Native Americans. Thus instead of questioning U.S. policies concerning Indian removals, their land, and their future, readers prefer to have the writing of emotion mask the real facts, disregarding any accountability they would otherwise have to show for their white government actions. Therefore, the disappearance of the Indians, clearly due to whites' uncontrolled desire for land expansion, driving Indians out

of their land so that white settlements may progress, become through the fictional works of Cooper a simple occasion of the natural destiny of the Indians.

The Last of the Mohicans ends with an exhortation by Tamenund, the ancient, wise, and revered Delaware Indian sage who has outlived three generations of warriors. “‘It’s enough,’” says Tamenund after prayers were said and people paid their last respect to Uncas. “‘Go, children of the Lenape,’” he continues,

‘the anger of the Manitou is not done. Why should Tamenund stay? The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of Unamis happy and strong; and yet, before the night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.’ (407)

The sentimental ending of Cooper’s book is an interesting match for the sentimental ending of *The Falcon*. While Tanner laments the disappearing of his children (who were born among the Indians of Indian mothers) due to Indian captivity and thus invites white readers to feel sorry for him, whose life was destroyed by the Native Americans, *The Last of the Mohicans* calls readers to mourn for the disappearing of the Indians. Interestingly, however, while the Indians are demonized for Tanner’s fate at the end of *The Falcon*, whites are never held responsible for the disgrace of the Indians at the end of *The Last of the Mohicans*. Fate itself, instead, is held responsible for the end of an Indian tribe, and consequently for the end of all Indians in the future of American civilization.

There is still one situation that needs to be addressed concerning rhetorical drag in the late nineteenth century: Cooper and James put the acceptance of “vanishing” as a natural/inevitable phenomenon *into the mouth of the Indian characters*. Cooper (and other writers from the period, like Catharine Maria Sedgwick, do create Indian characters

to voice the “vanishing Indian” as an accepting circumstance. This becomes another way of masking white/national agency in the policies of Indian removal. Arguably it wouldn’t work as well to have white figures lamenting Indians vanishing.

Finally, it seems fair to state that by the 1830s Indian captivity narrative was replaced by another type of narrative. The Indians, who so far had been portrayed as the real enemy of the white men, the dangerous savages who would not hesitate to kill and who are ultimately responsible for the impediment of the project of American expansion became, in the early nineteenth century, the individuals for whites to be sorry for. This is exactly because the Indian removal act dissipated the fear of Indian captivity, since the Indians were not a threat to the white anymore. It is no longer necessary to talk about Indian captivity just because it is not an issue at this point in time. What does need to be made sure, though, is that Indians are disappearing and that civilized Americans do not have to fear them anymore, since the situation is now under control. Not that Americans have anything to do with it, obviously. It all happened just because it had to; or better yet, things happened just because they did.

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