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4 • The Pequots

THE CENTER of Pequot communal life was the area between the Thames and the Mystic rivers in present-day Connecticut. At the time of colonization, the Pequots numbered approximately thirteen thousand, and they controlled some two thousand square miles of territory. Undeniably a powerful force in colonial New England, they were a commanding presence before European contact as well. This long-standing dominance may be one reason that Mohegan and Narragansett leaders allied against the Pequots during the colonial period despite their earlier association with them in trade and kinship networks.

Like the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and other groups in the area, the Pequots followed a traditional cosmology guided primarily by Cautantowwit, the creator, and Cheepi, a spirit who linked the living and the dead. These groups understood themselves to inhabit a world infused by the spiritual; powerful people, animals, and objects were referred to as *manitou*.

Largely thanks to European colonial prejudices, the Pequots have been known historically as brutal aggressors. Although recent linguists link the name Pequot to elements of the landscape, and the archaeologist Robert Grumet notes that modern Pequots connect the name to an Algonquian word for “ally,” colonial English writers used the translation “destroyer,” a stigma that contributed to the tragic events and aftermath of the 1637 war. The conflict, sparked by trade and land disputes among the Pequots, the Mohegans, the Narragansetts, the Dutch, and various English colonists, led to the burning of the Pequot fort at Mystic by English militiamen—a massacre so terrible that Bay Colony settlers felt compelled to defend the act in print—and a swamp fight that ended Pequot military resistance. Colonial authorities secured their victory by forbidding survivors to call themselves Pequot and by forcing captives to work as their servants or selling them in the West Indies.

The war may be considered a defining aspect of Pequot history; however, contrary to the assumption of many historians, it failed to achieve the extinction of the Pequot people. In fact, Pequot survivors immediately began to leave their enforced servitude, reclaim their identities, and establish settlements in New England. Eventually, they acquired reservation lands at Noank, Stonington, and (in 1666) Mashantucket, a settlement that the Pequot Nation holds to this day. Most Pequots converted to Christianity during the Great Awakening in the first half of the eighteenth century. William Apess, a well-known early

nineteenth-century Pequot writer, published the Christian testimonies of several Pequot women in 1833. His other writings include an autobiography and pointed criticisms of English colonial history and its continuing racist legacy.

In the 1980s the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation successfully sued for land reparations and federal recognition. Today the nation operates several prominent businesses, including the Foxwoods Resort and Casino. The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center offers an especially rich resource for Native American scholarship and, through its website and exhibits, helps to tell the continuing story of the Pequot people.

Suggested Reading

Apess, William. *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*. Ed. Barry O'Connell. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.

Cave, Alfred A. *The Pequot War*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996.

Hauptman, Laurence M., and James D. Wherry, eds. *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center website. Available at <http://www.pequotmuseum.org/>. Accessed 30 June 2006.

Pequot Medicine Bundle

The object in question here, a Pequot medicine bundle, consists of a torn and folded page from a King James Bible and the front left paw of a bear which were contained in a small bag made of woolen trade cloth. This bundle was buried with an eleven-year-old Pequot girl in her community cemetery on what is today the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation. A portion of this bundle was preserved because of its contact with an iron object, which turned the organic materials into iron salts. The original size of the object is difficult to determine; it is estimated that the bag measured 5–6 inches by 5–6 inches. In 1993 the funerary objects which had been disturbed during the construction of a private home were reburied with the human remains at the tribal cemetery. We have not reproduced an image of any portion of the medicine bundle because of its nature as a funerary object.



Bundles, Bears, and Bibles

Interpreting Seventeenth-Century Native “Texts”

KEVIN A. MCBRIDE

The subject of this essay, the academic interpretation of funerary objects from a Mashantucket Pequot cemetery, is a very sensitive—and potentially problematic and offensive—issue for Native Americans. For many generations the Pequots and other Native peoples have struggled with the misappropriation and misrepresentation of their histories, sacred objects, and human remains by anthropologists, archaeologists, and ethnohistorians. More recently, Native people and scholars from various disciplines—recognizing both the opportunities and potential problems in their collaboration—have begun to work together to foster a better understanding of Native histories.¹ Toward that effort, this essay was reviewed and approved by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council and the tribal Historic and Cultural Preservation Committee, whose members provided many important insights. The Mashantucket Pequots have a long and productive tradition of collaboration with both archaeologists and anthropologists.² Although the Mashantucket Pequots do not necessarily agree with the perspective or the conclusions herein, they support and recog-

1. Kerber, *Cross-Cultural Collaboration*.

2. Jones and McBride, “Indigenous Archaeology.”

nize the importance of multiple viewpoints in the reconstruction and interpretation of the past, as long as the process and subsequent dissemination of information are carried out in a respectful manner. This essay is the result of our collaboration.

In the third quarter of the seventeenth century, a young Pequot girl was buried in her community cemetery on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation. The girl, who was eleven years old when she died, was the oldest member of her age group, on the verge of becoming a young woman. She, like the other individuals interred in the cemetery, was buried in a traditional manner. She was placed in a circular grave, the bottom of which was lined with woven mats made from reed and rush; her arms and legs, bent at the elbows and knees, were drawn tightly to her chin. She lay on her right side, facing the east, with the top of her skull and the long axis of her spine oriented toward the southwest. Funerary objects of a personal, symbolic, and ritual nature that were placed with her reflected her age and gender as well as her role and status within the tribe.

Her forehead was adorned with a headband made of brass and purple wampum-shell beads and sprinkled with red ocher. Several intricately designed necklaces made from purple and white shell and from brass and glass beads, incorporating effigies of shell and brass birds, turtles, and amphibians, were hung around her neck.

As an individual in transition from childhood to young adulthood, she was provided with objects that reflected both her identity as a child and her emerging role and status as a young woman. Like younger children in her age group, she received many objects of an ideological, ritual, or symbolic nature, such as necklaces, headbands, and effigies. Unlike younger children in her age group, she also received objects that reflected the maturity, responsibilities, and role of a young woman in the tribe, such as a pestle, a pothook, and an iron hoe.

Of particular interest, and the subject of this essay, was a small bag, a medicine bundle made from a piece of fine woolen trade cloth that contained the front left paw of a bear and a folded page from a seventeenth-century Bible. The bag and its contents were preserved by virtue of their direct contact with an iron cup or ladle, which partially covered the woolen bag and transformed the cloth and paper into iron salts, thus creating a pseudomorph (an exact reproduction of the form and structure of the original but in a different substance).³

The presence of a Bible or other Christian iconography would normally suggest some degree of involvement with Christianity, perhaps conversion. The association of the Bible page with the bear paw in the context of a medicine bundle, however, suggests the importance of further deciphering the “text” of

3. Amory, “The Trout and the Milk,” 56.

the bundle. The text comprises individual components or contexts that must be read or interpreted both individually and collectively, each of which poses a series of questions. What does the association of the bear and the Bible in the context of a medicine bundle inform us about Native transformation and appropriation of European objects, ideologies, and iconography? What does the medicine bundle inform us about Native strategies for spiritual and physical well-being during a period in which great pressures were being imposed on the Pequot culture and society from land loss, disease, and warfare? What does the Bible fragment inform us about Pequot perspectives on Christianity and the Bible? Finally, what does the “text” inform us about the character and personal history of the girl and her role and status in Pequot society?

Pequot Mortuary Ritual

The cemetery where the young girl was buried, now known as Long Pond, was used between 1666 and 1720 by the Councilor’s Town, one of two Pequot communities at Mashantucket in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1990 the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council authorized recovery, analysis, and reburial for twenty to thirty graves disturbed during the construction of a private home and excavation, analysis, and reburial for twenty-five undisturbed graves on the house lot. An additional twenty to thirty identified graves were to be left undisturbed.⁴

The Pequots buried at Long Pond ranged from as young as one to two years to more than sixty years old. Because of the extensive damage to the graves and the poor preservation of the human remains, few individuals could be identified beyond general age categories (adult/child) or gender. Of the individuals who were identified beyond these parameters, males ($n = 9$) outnumbered females ($n = 6$) and adults ($n = 19$) outnumbered infants ($n = 3$) and children ($n = 3$). The mortality rate among young adults was quite high, representing approximately 60 percent of the cemetery population. The high death rate in this age group suggests a population that was hit hard by disease and perhaps (especially in the case of the men) warfare.

The relationship between the mortuary ritual of the Native peoples of southern New England and their cosmology and worldview has been well documented.⁵ The alignment of the deceased, with the head oriented toward the southwest, corresponded to the direction that the soul traveled when it left

4. Currie and McBride, “Respect for the Ancestors”; McBride, “Ancient and Crazie.”

5. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*; Simmons, *Cautantowit’s House*.

the body, to Cautantowwit's house.⁶ The arrangement of the body in a flexed or fetal position signified the connection between birth and death, "giving symbolic expression to a belief in the process of continuous renewal between the community of the living and those of the ancestors residing in the afterworld in the southwest."⁷

The objects that accompanied the deceased on their journey consist of personal possessions (e.g., a pestle, an iron hoe, clothing), ritual items (e.g., a medicine bundle, effigies), and social or ideological objects (e.g., necklaces, headbands).⁸ The funerary objects (whether of European or Native manufacture), which were associated in significant ways with the individuals with whom they were placed, were selected on the basis of the individual's age, gender, role, and status. The European objects and materials had been transformed, adapted, and incorporated into the daily lives and traditions of the Pequots. In the context of the mortuary ritual, Native and European objects represented links with the community, the individual, and the afterlife and were considered highly symbolic of Pequot beliefs and practices in the physical and spiritual worlds.

On the basis of their elaborate treatment during the mortuary ritual treatment at Long Pond, ethnohistoric evidence, and comparative data from other seventeenth-century Native cemeteries, it is clear that the children—those between the ages of three and eleven years—formed a cohort, a group distinct from that of the infants and adults.⁹ Children in the three-to-eleven-year cohort constituted less than 12 percent of the cemetery population, yet they were buried with 95 percent of the ritual, social, or ideological objects (e.g., wampum belts, headbands, necklaces, and effigies).¹⁰ The children in this age group had survived infancy, presumably had been named, and had been ready to assume new status and identities within the community.¹¹

The bear paw offering is somewhat unusual; although it has not been identified in other mortuary contexts in southern New England, animal effigies (e.g., representations of turtles, bears, ducks, and amphibians) were common.¹² The bear and other animals represented in stone, copper, brass, and shell are be-

6. Simmons, *Cautantowwit's House*. Cautantowwit, the god of the Southwest, is the chief deity of the Native people of southern New England. According to Narragansett tradition, Cautantowwit, the creator of men and women, resided in the afterworld inhabited by the souls of the dead.

7. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*, 133.

8. Ibid.; McBride, "Ancient and Crazie."

9. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*.

10. McBride, "Ancient and Crazie."

11. Ibid.; Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings*.

12. Ibid.

lieved to be powerful beings capable of transitioning between the physical and spiritual realms of the sky and the terrestrial world and between the terrestrial and underwater worlds.

Children were perceived to be in a state of liminality, existing on the threshold or boundary between the physical and spiritual worlds. The perception that infants, in particular, did not have a firm existence in the physical world was often reflected in mortuary ritual by the presence of bracelets or anklets intended to keep the child tied to the earth.¹³ Although older children (between three and eleven years) may have had a firmer existence in the physical world, they had not yet achieved the status, knowledge, and power to travel unassisted from the physical world to the spirit world. This sheds some light on the presence or representation of powerful beings, infused with manitou, that can transition between the physical and spirit worlds.

Bible

All that remained of the Bible page in the medicine bundle interred with the eleven-year-old Pequot girl were six partly legible words. Because the words “new song” were included among them, Hugh Amory, the bibliographer who conducted the analysis, suspected that the lines were from a psalm and therefore from a Bible.¹⁴ Amory eventually identified the page as containing the opening line of Psalm 98: “O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvelous things.”¹⁵ Analysis of the size, type, line endings, and margin indicated that the page was from a small-format King James Bible printed in Holland between 1669 and 1680 and most likely imported to Boston between 1675 and 1680.¹⁶

Typically, seventeenth-century small-format Bibles were personal possessions. Like all Bibles, including the larger-format Bibles, which were used as family Bibles or at the pulpit, personal Bibles were sometimes quite expensive. The most common Bible associated with Native communities in the seventeenth century was the Eliot Bible, which was printed by John Eliot in two editions in 1663 and 1685. Eliot Bibles, which were written in Wampanoag and English, were provided to Native converts to Christianity, primarily to Christian Indian communities (“praying towns”) in Massachusetts. Because Pequot and Massachusetts were distinct languages and there is no evidence that Eliot visited Mashantucket (or would have been welcome if he had), it is unlikely

13. *Ibid.*; Benard, “Native American Childrearing.”

14. Amory, “The Trout and the Milk,” fig. 1.

15. Quoted in *ibid.*, 56.

16. See *ibid.*, 60.

that an Eliot Bible found its way to Mashantucket. English missionaries were somewhat active at Mashantucket in the seventeenth century; however, until the Great Awakening of the early 1740s, they had limited or no success in converting the Pequots or any other Native group in Connecticut or Rhode Island.¹⁷ In 1713 and 1714, when the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in the New World sent Experience Mayhew among the Narragansetts, Pequots, and Mohegans to determine the cause of their resistance to Christianity, he was met with hostility or indifference from the communities.¹⁸ It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the presence of the Bible at Long Pond does not indicate widespread acceptance of Christianity among the Pequots.

How the the girl, her family, or her community obtained the Bible is an open question, but it is likely that it was acquired by purchase, trade, or gift. Small-format Bibles were generally personal possessions; the larger format was generally used for family or pulpit Bibles.¹⁹ The Bible may have been a gift from an Englishman who was on friendly terms with the Pequots. The question of how it was acquired, however, is less important than how it was perceived by and used in the Pequot community. The fact that a single page of the Bible was found in the medicine bundle suggests that other members of the community may have used other pages from the Bible in similar ways. The use of a single page also suggests that the meaning, use, and perception of the Bible differed fundamentally from the Christian perspective. The inclusion of the page in the bundle transforms the symbolic system of the printed word to another communicative system—that of the Pequot mortuary ritual.

It is possible that the psalm had meaning for the Pequot community or for the young girl. In a personal communication with Jessie Little Doe in 2005, she suggested that the selection of the left paw of the bear and Psalm 98 might have been purposeful, as the psalm contains the words “his right hand.” In this context, the bear paw and Bible page reflect a balance between, on one hand, traditional beliefs and ritual and, on the other hand, the new beliefs and power represented by the Bible. Although there is no evidence that the Pequots were literate at this time, this does not preclude their having knowledge of the contents and meaning of the psalm.

The association of the bear paw with the Bible page in the medicine bundle is unusual in that it integrates the manitou (spirit) of objects that represent worldviews and beliefs that are fundamentally different from each other. In the context of the medicine bundle, however, the Bible and bear paw can also be

17. Simmons, “Great Awakening”; Simmons and Simmons, *Old Light*.

18. J. Ford, *Some Correspondence*.

19. Amory, “The Trout and the Milk,” 61.

considered culturally congruent in that from a Native perspective they were both perceived as objects of power and healing and, perhaps, a way of transcending or communicating between the physical and spiritual worlds. It can also be argued that the Bible had an analogous function in English society, which may have been understood at some level by the Pequots.

Found individually, even in a mortuary context, these objects would not be interpreted in the same way as in the context of a medicine bundle. Although the bear, in any context, would be interpreted as a Native symbol of power and healing, the Bible would normally indicate an interest in or conversion to Christianity. It is the association of the Bible with the bear paw in the context of a medicine bundle that shifts the meaning of the Bible away from that of an English religious text that contains the word of God.

The importance, meaning, and power of the Bible to the English would not have been lost on the Native people of seventeenth-century New England. The Puritans believed in the supreme authority of the Bible as the word of God and as an indispensable guide for spiritual and civil life. The Puritans further believed that their Christian faith delivered them from their enemies (as during the Pequot War of 1637) and protected them from misfortunes including drought, famine, and epidemic diseases such as smallpox. Conversely, of course, God's displeasure resulted in swift punishment that came in many forms. The Puritan belief that the Bible and their Christian faith protected them from the smallpox epidemics of the seventeenth century—which devastated Native communities throughout the Northeast, resulting in a 90 percent mortality rate by the early eighteenth century—was common knowledge among Native peoples. These communities may well have come to perceive the Bible as an object of great power, capable of protecting not only the English but also their own people from myriad misfortunes, including various newly introduced European diseases.

Manitou and Power

When the Pequots and other Native people first encountered Europeans in the early seventeenth century, they incorporated the strangers and their foreign objects into their own worldview. Native people initially perceived Europeans as culture heroes, supernatural man-beings who had returned from beyond the sea, bringing with them materials and substances of power from the under(water) world.²⁰ According to Ezra Stiles, when the Pequots saw the first European vessels sailing into Long Island Sound, “they said it was Weetucks a

20. Bradley, *Evolution of the Onondaga Iroquois*, 66.

coming again.”²¹ Weetucks is a local manifestation of a northeastern culture hero who had great power and often came to the aid of humans.²² As Roger Williams observed, the Narragansetts described Weetucks as “a man that wrought great Miracles amongst them, and walking upon the waters, & c. with some kind of broken Resemblance to the Sonne of God.”²³ This statement suggests that Williams (and, by inference, the Narragansetts) recognized similarities between Weetucks and Christ, essentially transforming the cultural and spiritual ethos of the “other” into their own worldview.

This perspective is also evident in the Native appropriation and transformation of European objects such as the Bible and printed text. Williams reported that “when they [the Narragansetts] talke amongst themselves of the English ships, and great buildings, of the plowing of their Fields, and especially of their Bookes and Letters, they will end thus: Manittowock [Manitou] They are Gods.”²⁴

In the burial of the young Pequot girl, the physical and contextual association of the Bible page with a being of great power (the bear) suggests not only a conceptual relationship between the two but also a process by which Native people transformed and incorporated European objects infused with manitou (i.e., the Bible) into their worldview.

Manitou, poorly defined from a Eurocentric perspective as “power,” is the spiritual potency associated with an object, with a being, or with natural phenomena. It “was the force which made everything in nature alive and responsive to man. Only a fool would confront life [or death] without it.”²⁵ Manitou can be accumulated by proper ritual and then used by individuals or communities as they make their way through or negotiate between the natural and spiritual worlds.

Manitou and Bears

Fundamental differences existed between the ways that Native people in southern New England, as elsewhere in North America, and Europeans viewed animals. According to the Native view, animals were different from people but not necessarily subordinate to them. Most animals had a special relationship with people and were connected to them through the spiritual and physical worlds. Manitou were also considered to be “other-than-human beings capable

21. Quoted in Dexter, *Extracts*, 83.

22. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes*, 172.

23. R. Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, A5.

24. *Ibid.*, 125.

25. Martin, *Keepers of the Game*, 34.

of assuming a variety of physical forms—including animals—and exerting spiritual power in a number of ways.”²⁶ Through appropriate ritual and training, individuals could exert “spiritual levels of control through the medium of an animal” such as the bear.²⁷

The bear, held in high esteem by Native groups throughout North America, is often associated with special hunting and healing rituals and is usually addressed with such honorific titles as grandfather, reflecting the power and wisdom of the bear and its similarity to humans. Williams identified the bear as one of only a few animals in the Narragansett (and presumably Pequot) world capable of exerting great spiritual power and described as possessing “divine powers.”²⁸ Rituals associated with bears have been recorded for the many Native groups in eastern North America.²⁹ Although analogies with respect to beliefs and rituals among the Pequots should not be made lightly, given the broad geographic and cultural distribution of these practices among Native peoples in eastern North America, it seems a reasonable inference that the bear was widely associated with power.

Frank Speck and Jesse Moses have argued for a cross-cultural symbology and ritual among Native peoples in eastern North America that reflects a close connection between the sky world (with its soul spirits) and the terrestrial world (with its living beings).³⁰ This connection is expressed in rituals whereby “the departed spirits of relatives and friends are believed to be present side by side with the living as visitors from the sky to the earth and the living.”³¹ The bear sacrifice ceremony, performed in many forms by Native peoples across the eastern woodlands, serves in part to renew the eternal relationship between earth beings and sky beings. The bear, a being that manifests itself as the earth bear and the sky bear, can transcend both the spirit world and the physical world.

Conclusion

The medicine bundle should be viewed as a Native text whose various elements must be read or interpreted both individually and collectively in order to discern its meaning. The Bible fragment, in the context of the medicine bundle,

26. Anderson, “Chickwallop and the Beast,” 29.

27. Speck and Moses, *Celestial Bear*, 27.

28. See Anderson, “Chickwallop and the Beast,” 29; LaFantasie, *Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 1:146.

29. Hallowell, “Bear Ceremonialism.”

30. Speck and Moses, *Celestial Bear*.

31. *Ibid.*, 32.

must be interpreted from a Native perspective, given that it reflects a process of transformation and appropriation of European objects into a Native worldview. Although the Pequots may have understood the literal meaning of the Bible page, the context in which it was found suggests that its original meaning (from an English perspective) was essentially transformed in order to accommodate a Native perspective on manitou and power. The text of the medicine bundle and its contents can be read as representing evolving Native strategies intended to assist the living and the dead as they traverse spiritual and physical worlds forever changed by the arrival of the Europeans.



The Confession and Dying Warning of Katherine Garret

Executed in 1738 for infanticide, Katherine Garret (Pequot) left “under her own Hand” the following final address, accompanied by an anonymous account of her behavior and religious conversion while she was in prison. Timothy Green of New London published both texts in 1738 as supplemental documents to the Reverend Eliphalet Adams’s thirty-seven-page execution sermon, under the full title *A SERMON Preached on the Occasion of the EXECUTION of Katherine Garret, an Indian-Servant, (Who was Condemned for the Murder of her Spurious Child,) On May 3^d. 1738. To which is Added some short Account of her Behavior after her Condemnation. Together with her Dying WARNING and EXHORTATION. Left under her own Hand.* Adams (1677–1753) began his career as an Indian missionary and served as a popular preacher at the First Congregational Church of New London. Green (1679–1757) published a wide variety of colonial pamphlets, including religious tracts and execution narratives. A copy of the forty-four-page pamphlet is housed at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts; a microform version is available through the Readex Early American Imprints series.

I Katherine Garret, being Condemned to Die for the Crying Sin of Murder, Do Own the Justice of GOD in suffering me to die this Violent Death; and also Acknowledge the Justice of the Court who has Sentenced me to die this Death; and I thank them who have Lengthened the Time to me, whereby I have had great Opportunity to prepare for my Death: I thank those also who have taken pains with me for my Soul; so that since I have been in Prison, I have had opportunity to seek after Baptism & the Supper of the Lord & have obtained both. I Confess my self to have been a great Sinner; a sinner by Nature, also guilty of many Actual Transgressions, Particularly of Pride and Lying, as well as of the Sin of destroying the Fruit of my own Body, for which latter, I am now to Die.³² I thank God that I was learn’d to Read in my Childhood, which

I thank my research assistant, Amanda Bennett, for her transcription assistance.

32. Gratitude for imprisonment, exhortations to honor the Sabbath, and the call to obey parents and masters, which are quite commonplace in dying warnings, exemplify how the genre seeks to enforce social hierarchies and gender norms. Infanticide confessions commonly establish a slippery slope from illicit female sexual activity to lying to conceal a pregnancy to murder.

has been much my Exercise since I have been in Prison, and especially since my Condemnation. The Bible has been a precious Book to me. There I read, *That JESUS CHRIST came into the world to Save Sinners, Even the Chief of Sinners: And that all manner of Sins shall be forgiven, One only Excepted;*³³ *For his Blood Cleanseth from all Sin.* And other good Books I have been favoured with, by peoples giving and lending them to me, which has been blessed to me.

I would Warn all Young People against Sinning against their own Consciences; For there is a GOD that Knows all things. Oh! Beware of all Sin, Especially of Fornication; for that has led me to Murder. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy. Be Sober and wise. Redeem your Time, and Improve it well.

Little Children I would Warn you to take heed of Sinning against God. Be Dutiful to your Parents; For *the Eye that Mocks at his Father and despiseth to Obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the Young Eagles shall eat it.*³⁴ Little Children, Learn to Pray to God; Sit still on the Lord's Day, and Love your Books.

I would also Warn Servants, Either *Whites* or *Blacks*, to be Obedient to your Masters & Mistresses. Be Faithful in your places and diligent: Above all Fear God; fear to Sin against Him: He is our Great Master.

I would also Intreat Parents and Masters to set a good Example before their Children and Servants, for You also must give an Account to God how you carry it to them.³⁵

I desire the Prayers of all God's People for me, Private Christians, as well as Ministers of the Gospel, that I may while I have Life Improve it aright; May have all my Sins Pardoned and may be Accepted through *CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

Katherine Garret.

33. A reference to Original Sin.

34. Prov. 30:17. Although many Native spiritual traditions consider eagles messengers of the Creator and ravens emissaries of the afterworld, a syncretic reading seems unlikely, given that both birds here serve as vehicles of extreme physical violence. If anything, the passage highlights the fact that Garret must refashion indigenous belief and see "other wise" in order to comprehend the Old Testament message of swift and brutal retribution.

35. Garret's warning to masters to improve their treatment of servants is atypical (although such protests would become more common later in the century). Her racial specificity concerning those servants who should obey their masters is also distinctive.

New London, May 3. 1738.

*It may Possibly be Acceptable to the Publick, if some brief Account were given of the person, on the Occasion of whose Execution the foregoing Discourse was Delivered.*³⁶

SHE was of the *Pequot* Tribe of *Indians* & Descended from one of the best Families among them; In her Childhood she was put into the Family of the Reverend Mr. WILLIAM WORTHINGTON, where she was taught to read well and to write & Instructed in the principles of religion; During her Confinement she often lamented her neglecting to Improve the Advantages she Enjoyed, always speaking honourably of her Master, who was frequent in giving her good Instruction and Advice.

Having Unhappily fallen into the Sin of Fornication & being with Child, it pass'd for a while without Suspicion by any in the family, at length being Question'd about it she deny'd it & turn'd it off, assigning *other causes* for the appearances that were observ'd, so that the suspicions about her were thereby *very much* laid asleep;

When her hour was Come, she was Delivered alone by her self in the Barn; upon search the Infant was found, with marks upon it of Violence, that had been used, of which wounds it soon Dyed.³⁷

Upon this she was Committed to the County Goal [*sic*], where she lay Confin'd for a considerable time, & the longer because the Witnesses who were to

36. The "foregoing Discourse" refers to Adams's thirty-seven-page execution sermon (not included here); the pamphlet published by Green opens with the sermon, which is followed by this account, and concludes with Garret's confession and dying warning. Here, we reverse the order of the documents in order to foreground the section written in Garret's "own Hand." Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, including possible printer errors, remain true to the original.

37. According to handwritten testimony in the *New London Superior Court Files*, Temperance Worthington, the wife of the Reverend William Worthington, testified that earlier that day, Garret had complained of stomach sickness, retired to rest, and later emerged from the barn. Hours later, a child's cry prompted a search, and Reverend Mr. Worthington located an infant under a pile of hay and spotted a bloody wooden block nearby. The Reverend Mr. Worthington stated, "The child was an Indian male child, naked and newly born, and Kate told in my hearing who was the father of it." (The father remains unnamed in the records.) According to William Worthington, Garret confessed to abandoning the infant, admitting that "she was the mother of the child, and that she was delivered of it in [said] barn, and that she hid it in the place above [mentioned], and because it cried, she took it out again, and then laid it there again, and it did not cry, and so she came in." According to Temperance Worthington, "Finally, Kate did confess to me that she did strike murder the child twice on the side of the head with a wood block." (The strikethrough appears on the handwritten testimony.) Despite the alleged confessions, Garret pleaded not guilty at her arraignment. The account suggests that Garret anticipated a more sympathetic response than the one she received from the Saybrook community where she lived and worked.

give Evidence in the case, were, by reason of Infirmity (one of them) not able to travel so far from home to the place where the Court was to be held, to bear their Testimony.

During this space, I have little to observe Concerning her; Only, that when the Court for her Tryal was appointed to be held at *Saybrook*, she seemed to Entertain a full Expectation that she should be Cleared.

But when upon her tryal, the proofs of her Guilt, appeared so plain and full to the Jury and the Court, that she was brought in Guilty and Sentence of Condemnation was pronounced against her, she was thrown into the utmost Confusion & Distress, Her Expressions were rash and unguarded and she scarce forebore throwing blame on all sorts of persons; With this Disposition of mind (tho' somewhat moderated) she was remanded back to her prison.³⁸

From this time pains were Continually taken with her, not only to allay this resentment, but to make her Sensible of the Heinousness of her Sin, of her Lost and undone Condition by Nature and her need of an Interest in Jesus Christ, setting forth at the same time the greatness of Gods mercy and that there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared, which pains (together with Gods Blessing, upon her reading the holy Scriptures and other good Books that were put into her hands and her attendance on the Ministry of the Word, on Sabbath and Lecture days, as well as at private Meetings from house to house in the Neighbourhood to all of which she was allowed to come) it is to be hoped were sanctified to give her quite another sight and sense of things than she had before: One of her Expressions were, *That she seemed to have been asleep in the former part of her Life and that things appeared to her quite other wise than they used to do.*

The Authority were so favourable to her, as to allow her Large Opportunity (almost six Months from her Condemnation to her Execution) which Time she was diligent to Improve in making preparation for her Death;

Having Never been *Baptized*, she was Earnestly Desirous of that, wherefore pains were taken to Acquaint her with the main principles of the Christian Religion and the Nature of the Covenant of Grace. The understanding of which her former good Education, made more Easie to her. And after some time, upon her *making an Open Acknowledgement of her great and Crying Sins*, taking shame to her self & manifesting her Sorrow on that account; *Professing the Christian Faith & Consenting to the Covenant of grace*, she was *Baptized*.³⁹

38. To prompt reluctant witnesses to testify, the court moved the trial from New London to Saybrook. Garret's trial was held from 15 November to 17 November, ten months after the infant was discovered. She was executed on 3 May 1738, nearly six months after the guilty verdict and execution order.

39. New London church records confirm that Adams baptized Garret on 29 January 1738 (see Blake, *Later History*).

Soon after, She was Extreamly Desirous to partake with us at the *Lord's Table before she Suffer'd*, And upon its appearing that she understood the Nature & Design of that Ordinance, at her request she was allowed and had the opportunity to Communicate with us *twice*.

In her attendance upon the ministry of the Word her Behavior was Decent & she ever appeared as one *Exceedingly Affected*, Especially when her Case was more particularly touch'd upon whither in *Prayers or Sermons*.

When I visited her in her prison, she seldom could part with me, without Desiring that I would Pray with her before I went, which favour she Desired of others also, who Visited her during her Confinement.

Many of her Expressions from time to time were Valuable and worth the Preserving.

Among other things she said, *That it was a Mercy she was found out, otherwise she might have gone on in her Course of sinning & been Eternally Lost. That sin seem'd now like poison to her & those sins in which she was wont to delight, were now Loathsom: That she had found more pleasure in her prison, than Ever she did in the Days of her Vanity. That she was heartily sorry for her sin not so much for the shame & punishment that it had bro't her to, as because thereby she had offended and dishonored God. She could submit to the shame of her Death, It would be soon Over & then she should not know what people talked of her. Some (she said) had reported of her things that were false, but she heartily forgave them; She Entertained no grudge or malice against any person on any account, for that alone, she knew, would ruin her, if she did. The Devil was very busie, she said, to hinder her from Praying & Reading, but she did it the more, to spite him (that was her word) and the Temptation Vanished & she found Comfort.*⁴⁰ She often Expressed her Concern lest she should *build upon a sandy foundation*. Being asked from time to time, how Death seemed to her, the nearer it Approached. She answered, *Sometimes More Terrible, sometimes Less Terrible*. And being asked at what times she Observed it to be less Terrible, she replied, *That after she had been Earnestly seeking to God, the fear of Death very much Abated*. She said, *that her dependence was upon the Righteousness of Christ for her acceptance with God and look'd up on him as a surety who had paid their debts for believers.*⁴¹

40. Such statements documenting the "benefits" of incarceration are typical in "miraculous conversion" narratives. More atypical is Garret's insistence, even after converting and confessing, that people had falsely testified against her. Garret's extreme distress as her execution day approaches might suggest an enduring hope that by earnest preparation, she might earn clemency.

41. Hebrews 7:22 constructs Christ as surety, bound by Covenant to "pay for" our sins. An indentured servant might certainly respond enthusiastically to this economic metaphor of a benevolent Christ, guarantor of earthly debts and obligations. The Indian servant Patience Boston uses a similar economic metaphor for salvation in her narrative, noting, "My Surety, I trust, has paid my whole Debt" (*Faithful Narrative*, 27).

But I forbear gathering up any more of her Expressions, That I be not too tedious.

The Day before her Execution she was Exceedingly Overwhelmed and cast Down, It seemed to be the most *trying time* to her, during her whole Confinement, whither it were Occasioned by the want of her taking her usual rest or food or whether the near approach of Death were Left to be an Uncommon Terror to her.

Every one's Compassions were moved for her, and she was Visited more frequently & by greater Numbers of persons and Prayers more fervently made on her account. Towards the evening *her Master* came from *Saybrook* to take his last farewell of her, with whose presence, the Instructions and Consolations that were given & the Prayers that were made for her, she something revived and was Overheard in her Prayers (after the people were, many of them, gone) to *bless God who had sent his Servants that Day to Pray for, to Instruct and Comfort her a poor Dying Creature.*

On the Day of her Execution, she was more strengthened and enabled to attend at the Sermon that was preach'd on that Melancholy Occasion, altho' with some faintings; Upon her retiring to the Prison, when it was Over, she made apt and pertinent remarks, upon the sight of her Coffin, the taking off of her fetters, the putting the rope about her Neck & other such Occurrences. Then she took her Leave of her friends thanking them for the good Offices which they had done her (as she Ever Expressed a grateful Spirit to every one, that at any time, had shewn her any Kindness) She passed on foot in the sad procession, for about a Mile, to the place of Execution & still *went On praying.*

Excepting when the *Rev'd Ministers in the Neighbourhood* (gathered together on the Occasion & who gave her their Company) Endeavoured to fill up the time, by ministering to her Counsels, Comforts & Encouragements, to whom she made satisfactory replies.

When she was arrived at the place of Execution, (which was surrounded with a Vast Circle of people, more Numerous, perhaps, than Ever was gathered together before, On any Occasion, in this Colony,) she first Commended her self to God's mercy, In a more set and very fervent Prayer. Tho' sometimes the Expressions were more broken and Incoherent.

Next Her Master, Full of Concern and Affection for her, Spread her Case before God; Her Warning left in writing was publicly read to which she added many Other Warnings and Counsels by word of mouth, Lifting up her Voice as she could that she might be the farther heard; We took our Leave of her and she of us in an Affecting Manner;

The few moments she had to live after this, she spent in warm & Devout

Addresses to her Heavenly Father, till her breath was stopt; And with her hands lifted up, as she cou'd, she past out of life, *in the posture of one praying*.

She was of a proper Stature & goodly Countenance and seemed to be Naturally of an Ingenious Disposition;

By her good Behavior all Along she generally gain'd the Esteem and good will of those that Came about her and it is *Charitably hoped*, that she might find Mercy in the sight of the Lord.

May this Example be of use to all Persons in *our times* to keep them from Sinning against God, that every one may *hear & fear* and *do no more Presumptuously*.

Particularly, may all her *Country people*, in their several Tribes, whither round about us or farther off, hearken diligently to the Offers & Proposals of the Gospel that are made to them! Let there be Nothing to Obstruct & Discourage so good a work, May the Time to favour them now Come, the set time let it Come! *Amen*.



Seeing Other Wise

Reading a Pequot Execution Narrative

JODI SCHORB

A century before the pathbreaking autobiography of William Apess, *Son of the Forest* (1829), the titles begin appearing sparsely among the annals of what are commonly classified as American criminal narratives: *The Faithful Narrative of the Wicked Life and Remarkable Conversion of Patience Boston* (1735), *A Sermon Preached on the Occasion of the Execution of Katherine Garret* (1738), and Mohegan minister Samson Oocom's *Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul* (1774). From the American print origin of the execution narrative in 1674, nearly a dozen texts by or about Native Americans find their way into the genre.⁴² Like narratives of Indians converted to Christianity, a related body of literature that preceded the execution genre in popularity, these rare and

42. The first published execution sermon is Samuel Danforth's *The Cry of Sodom* (1674), a jeremiad that marked the execution of a young, white, male servant for bestiality. For narratives by or about Indians, see Boston, *Faithful Narrative*; H. T. Channing, *God Admonishing His People*; Danforth, *Woeful Effects of Drunkenness*; Julian, *Last Speech and Dying Advice*; Moodey, *Life and Death of Joseph Quasson*; Oocom, *Collected Writings*; Pitkin, *Sermon Delivered at the Execution of John Jacobs*; and Spalding, *Sermon Delivered Previous to the Execution of Isaac Coombs*.

challenging texts mark some of the earliest ways Native Americans entered into American print culture. Documenting the last days and final words of Native peoples held in colonial jails before they were executed for capital crimes, this body of writings by or about Native captives makes for a compelling variation on Indian captivity literature.

To read these texts well, we need to consider them outside the genre of crime writings and within a longer cultural history of white fascination with the meaning of Indian death. More than a century earlier, Puritan missionaries had popularized a form of Indian deathbed literature that still resonates with later Indian criminal narratives, a genre devoted to recording the dying words and gestures of converted and unconverted Indians. In John Eliot's *Dying Speeches of Several Indians* (1685) and Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts* (1727), Eliot and Mayhew selected what they felt were good (meaning pedagogically useful) deaths, whereby Indians demonstrated their understanding of Christian principles and seemingly accepted their fate while they hoped for salvation. Laura Stevens argues that during the seventeenth century Indian death becomes "convenient to the stories and longings of America," most directly as missionaries construct dying Indians as "vehicles of affect directed towards various ideological ends." Such deathbed accounts represent Indian death with a blend of "satisfaction and sorrow . . . inevitability and guilt," as they simultaneously celebrate the conversion of heathen souls and mourn their passing. Paradoxically, although such deathbed literature establishes Natives as equals in the eyes of God, it was used to secure funding for colonial projects that dispersed and decimated Indian populations.⁴³ In this way, according to Stevens, Indian deathbed narratives enact a form of what Renato Rosaldo has called "imperialist nostalgia," in which the dominant culture mourns "the passing of what they have transformed."⁴⁴

More than a century later, such missionary efforts had been largely abandoned. Still, the importance of Indian deaths persisted, even as the meaning of Indian deaths altered. As both "good Christians" and "dying Indians," Katherine Garret, Patience Boston, Moses Paul, and other condemned Indians also serve as "vehicles of affect." As they had a century before, albeit much more subtly, ministers invoked audiences to seek "spiritual comfort from indigenous death."⁴⁵ Large-scale population decimation, land loss, and migration into small enclaves had greatly eliminated Indians as a threat to white expansion in

43. Stevens, "Christian Origins of the Vanishing Indian," 18, 17, 30.

44. Quoted in *ibid.*, 18.

45. *Ibid.*, 22.

New England. Moreover, funding for large-scale missionary efforts had all but evaporated, fueling Cotton Mather's 1724 lament that a project meant to spread so much zeal had converted so few.⁴⁶ Thus, ministers used the experiences of captive converts to revive hope that a historically failed missionary effort might once again become revitalized and succeed. If this meant that certain forms of Indian death continued to provide white observers with spiritual comfort, we must question why—and whether—Natives would willingly and passively participate in this form of imperialist nostalgia. Natives, however, often used their role as vehicles of effect for different ideological ends, often to express persistent feelings of loss and displacement and to voice subtle protests against the effects of colonization.

The core text included here, "The Confession and Dying Warning of Katherine Garret," was one of at least three texts circulated on the occasion of Garret's 1738 execution. A relatively unknown servant to a white minister, Garret suddenly became infamous as "Indian Kate" when, in January 1737 in Saybrook, Connecticut, an abandoned newborn "with marks upon it of Violence" was found in a barn owned by her master, the Reverend William Worthington. The minister's wife suspected that the baby belonged to Garret, and after repeated questioning, Garret confessed to concealing an unwanted pregnancy and hiding the newborn in the barn; she was less direct on whether she intentionally murdered the infant. Garret was subsequently arrested, tried, and convicted of murder.⁴⁷ Garret expected to be acquitted, but she was sentenced to death. The verdict was neither decided nor carried out easily: Because witnesses were reluctant to travel to testify against her, the court passed a special act to move the trial location. Moreover, because authorities considered Garret neither sufficiently resigned to her fate nor properly prepared to die, they postponed her execution by nearly six months in order to "allay [her] resentment" and make her "Sensible to the Heinousness of her Sin." Eventually Garret, like the majority of Natives for whom we have criminal captivity narratives, converted to Christianity. Her hanging was the first in New London history. On a fair day in May, Garret sat shackled while the Reverend Eliphalet Adams delivered her execution sermon. A huge crowd gathered to witness her execution; observers describe "a Vast Circle of people, more Numerous, perhaps, than Ever was gathered together before, On any occasion, in this Colony." Ministers and

46. In a 1724 letter to the Connecticut governor, Mather expressed his "despondencies" over the "gospelizing of our Indians" and hoped for better success than had been accomplished (quoted in Szasz, *Indian Education*, 192).

47. The investigation was persistent: the Worthingtons presented evidence that Garret had given birth, a midwife was ordered to "search the body of Kate" to confirm the pregnancy, and—strikingly—authorities scalped the corpse to conclude that the infant's skull had been fractured. See n. 37.

Garret used the somber occasion to address the crowd and attach pedagogical significance to her death.⁴⁸

Garret's execution produced three texts—the sermon, the account, and Garret's dying warning (the last two of which are included here). The account, which was most likely penned by Adams, the white minister who delivered Garret's execution sermon, seeks to make Garret legible as a Christian convert. Crafted in the style of the spiritual autobiography, a genre that traces an individual's spiritual growth, the account emphasizes Garret's jailhouse conversion to Christianity and monitors the strength of her newfound faith as she prepares for death. Interest in such accounts grew in the early eighteenth century as the Great Awakening created demand for tales of personal faith conquering doubt and the ever expanding public print sphere responded to audience interest in criminal biography.⁴⁹ Written "under her own Hand" and delivered as her direct oratory to her vast audiences, Garret's dying warning seems to promise access to her own consciousness. A quick perusal, however, reminds us that the text is shaped less by Garret's private thoughts than by the demands of the genre. Dying warnings existed as a popular literary form long before Garret climbed the scaffold to speak, and here, as earlier, audiences demanded religious insight from an individual's proximity to death. Thus, while "The Confession and Dying Warning" is written "under her own Hand," the text is nevertheless written for a predominantly white, Christian audience as part of a very structured public ritual.⁵⁰

As a result, although observers admiringly recount Garret's powerful speech, "Lifting up her Voice as she could that she might be the farther heard," her voice remains difficult for modern readers to access. The amount of formulaic content and the degree of editorial control that ministers maintained over Garret's texts create one of the most difficult interpretive challenges to reading both narratives and prompt us to question whether Garret's voice is in there at all. How are we to "hear" Garret, an eighteenth-century female Pequot servant, and what might her voice sound like?

The problem is not unique to these narratives but endemic to the entire genre of early Native American life writing, a genre in which "as told to" narratives abound, filtered and structured by the lens of the white amanuensis

48. On Indian death as a pedagogical moment, see Seeman, "Reading Indians' Deathbed Scenes," a study of hundreds of Indian deathbed scenes that offers a useful overview of traditions associated with the *ars moriendi*, or art of dying, the belief that proper behavior before death could ensure salvation.

49. On the popularity of miraculous conversion narratives during the Great Awakening, see D. Williams, *Pillars of Salt*, 7–11, and D. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt*, 66–72.

50. Although white audiences dominated, executions attracted a diverse spectatorship. According to one history, when Samson Occom addressed Moses Paul, there were "many Indians in the crowd" (Banner, *Death Penalty*, 53).

(whether anthropologist, ethnographer, biographer, or historian). This common challenge reminds us that Garret's text, which preceded the advent of the Native life-writing genre by nearly a century, bears more similarities to the later genre than may first appear.⁵¹ The voice we perceive is largely the voice that white editors want us to hear, a voice made legible by a process of translation, even though Garret could speak and read English and allegedly penned the dying warning herself. As a result, potentially important expressions by Garret are omitted, calling into high relief the moments when her "translator" fails or refuses to understand her language. For example, the account, describing some of Garret's words as "broken and Incoherent," declines to record a portion of her direct address to the gathered crowds. At other times, the minister, resolving not to continue "gathering up any more of her Expressions, That [he] be not too tedious," deems thorough attention to her speech unnecessary. On another occasion, the account reveals that while on the scaffold Garret "added many Other Warnings and Counsels by word of mouth" but withholds the content of her impromptu oratory.⁵² These textual blank spaces function like the dead letters of the contact zone—Garret sends the letters, but they miss their intended targets.⁵³

With this interpretive challenge in mind, readers should become attentive to the ways in which Garret's narrative becomes the literary equivalent of the "frontier" (a term that I borrow from Arnold Krupat, who uses it to refer to the "ground on which two cultures meet" within early Native texts, a ground marked by a history of domination and appropriation).⁵⁴ Instead of looking for a solitary "voice" in this text, Krupat urges us to read for voices—shifting, colluding, competing voices that give a text its complex texture and indeterminate tone. Krupat's formulation provides us with a nexus that allows us to read texts such as Garret's dying warning as Indian autobiography, a genre that,

51. For more on this genre, see Krupat, *For Those Who Come After*; D. Murray, *Forked Tongues*; and Brumble, *American Indian Autobiography* (especially Brumble's chapter titled "Editors, Ghosts, and Amanuensis," 72–97).

52. Similarly, the narrative of the Indian servant Patience Boston was published with a preface explaining that her story was—tellingly—"taken from her Mouth" (*Faithful Narrative*, i). Boston's amanuenses defend their practice as a necessary corrective to Boston's way of telling. For a detailed reading of voice in Boston's narrative, see Harvey, "'Taken from Her Mouth.'"

53. Here I refer to what Mary Louise Pratt describes as "the perils of writing in the contact zone": "miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces" (*Arts of the Contact Zone*, 590). Pratt argues that such moments are bound to occur when "the subordinated subject single-handedly gives himself authority in the colonizer's language and verbal repertoire" (588). Pratt defines the "contact zone" as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in context of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths" (584).

54. Krupat, *For Those Who Come After*, 33.

according to Krupat, is defined precisely by a process of limited collaboration and shaped *within* the nexus of colonial power dynamics. According to Krupat, Indian autobiography is “constituted as a genre of writing by its original, bi-cultural, composite composition, the product of a collaboration between the Native American subject of the autobiography who provides its ‘content’ and the Euramerican editor who ultimately provides its ‘form’ by fixing the text in writing.”⁵⁵ Extending Krupat’s argument, David Murray argues, “This entails seeing [the texts] not as a corrupted and inferior form, but as a *new form which reflects precisely the cultural limitations and contradictions inherent in a situation where oral and literate cultures meet.*”⁵⁶ By electing to read Garret’s narrative as a mode of Indian autobiography, we can embrace its challenges of voice and form by foregrounding its dual and often dueling voices and agendas.⁵⁷

Garret’s early education (during which she learned to read and write), her access to books while she was in prison, and her exposure to eighteenth-century oral sermon culture during her jailhouse excursions would have familiarized her with the expectations of written public confessions.⁵⁸ Ministers express hope that reading and attending sermons will reshape her belief system, offering her “quite another sight and sense of things than she had before.” As a “literate” Indian, Garret would be expected to pay tribute to the knowledge gained from this Christian education; she does so by noting, “I thank God that I was learn’d to Read in my Childhood, which has been much my Exercise since I have been in Prison.” Yet in contrast to dying warnings that testify to the clarifying power of specific biblical passages, Garret constructs reading as an opportunity for interpersonal exchange rather than private contemplation. On

55. Krupat, *Ethnocriticism*, 219. See Krupat, *For Those Who Come After* (especially 28–54), for a fuller statement of his theory. Krupat distinguishes Indian autobiography from “autobiographies by Indians,” which, in contrast to Indian autobiography, are “self-written lives” (*Ethnocriticism*, 219). For a different approach to the problem of Indian autobiography, see D. Murray, *Forked Tongues*, 65–97. David Murray suggests that Krupat’s distinction may be overstated; he argues that because self-authored texts are “equally implicated in cross-cultural complexities and contradictions,” the term “bicultural composite composition” can apply equally well to many texts authored “solely” by Native writers (68). On the usefulness of Pratt’s term “autoethnography” to describe this relationship, see Wyss, *Writing Indians*, 4, and Gussman, “Politics of Piety,” 104.

56. D. Murray, *Forked Tongues*, 68 (emphasis mine).

57. Analysis of vocal multiplicity occurs frequently in captivity narrative scholarship; I adapt my phrase from that of Tara Fitzpatrick, who notes the “dual (and sometimes dueling) voices” of ministers and captives in traditional Indian captivity accounts such as Mary Rowlandson’s narrative (“The Figure of Captivity,” 2); see also Castiglia, *Bound and Determined* (203 n. 4).

58. Ministers commonly gave prisoners biblical passages, sermons, and conversion narratives, including execution sermons and dying warnings, to help properly prepare them for death. For example, the Indian servant Patience Boston notes that “divers[e] Examples of poor Indians converted, and how they lived, and how they died” were read to her, “by which [she] was refreshed and revived” (*Faithful Narrative*, 17).

the scaffold, for example, she gives thanks to “other good Books I have been favoured with, by peoples giving and lending them to me, which has been blessed to me.” Here the blessing lies in the act of giving and lending rather than in the content of the books. Garret’s response to the fact that she is the *subject* of oral narrative suggests another kind of benefit afforded by her literacy: The account notes that she was “*Exceedingly Affected, Especially when her Case was more particularly touch’d upon whither in Prayers or Sermons.*” Thus, Garret’s knowledge of the genre, specifically her interest in hearing her own story circulated publicly, most likely motivates her own investment in writing her brief narrative. Penning a dying warning would do more than position Garret as a showpiece of Indian education and literacy; it would allow her to participate in the way her narrative was “touch’d upon” and recorded in history. Clearly, we miss something if we see Garret as a mere puppet lacking agency over her text and her performance on the scaffold.

Some knowledge of generic conventions helps us discern the formulaic from the unique elements in the narratives. Originally delivered as execution sermons—minister-penned jeremiads delivered the Sunday before or the day of a public execution—execution narratives are meant to foreground the signs and consequences of individual and communal spiritual backsliding. Intended to prepare the condemned for impending death and prompt audiences to engage in rigorous self-examination, the execution sermon’s emotive rhetorical strategy strives to instill fear, demand repentance, and—just when permanent damnation seems imminent—offer a glimpse of hope for salvation.⁵⁹ Concerned with creating in both listening and reading audiences a felt, immediate sense of their impending mortality, ministers tended to downplay distinctions between the prisoner and the general public, muting the potentially sensational details of capital crimes to make the sins of the condemned applicable to all. For example, Adams’s execution sermon and Garret’s dying warning caution against pride, lying, and fornication—transgressions that audiences were likely to share—with relatively little comment on the infanticide. In this way, execution narratives abstract the body of the condemned into a monument—a figure that carries meaning beyond the individual’s material and cultural specificity and transforms the person into a universal communal symbol.⁶⁰

59. For the classic statement on the jeremiad, see Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*.

60. On the history of the genre and the symbolic function of the condemned, see D. Williams, *Pillars of Salt*, and D. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt*. Seeman’s study of Indian deathbed scenes offers a fine analysis of the problem of—and productive possibilities for—working with formulaic texts from an ethnohistorical perspective. The study distinguishes between “model” and “unorthodox” elements, wading through the “standard plots and stock phrases” to locate unorthodox moments that “represent fissures through which something closer to the actual experience of dying Indians may be glimpsed” (“Reading Indians’ Deathbed Scenes,” 18–19).

By the mid-eighteenth century, execution narratives would grow increasingly concerned with the sociology of crime. Ministers and prisoners alike blame poor parenting, neglected education, and poverty for driving individuals to despair. As a result, theological justifications often compete with material and social conditions as explanations for crime.⁶¹ Audience demand for biographical detail tended to imbue the condemned with increasing material specificity, a development that was often at odds with the ministers' attempts to make generic examples of criminals. This trend had important implications for the genre's Native American subjects. Thus, the anonymous account explicitly foregrounds Garret's race and her distinguished tribal ancestry in its opening statement, "She was of the *Pequot* Tribe of *Indians* & Descended from one of the best Families among them." The introduction also supplies details that, although cursory, shed light on her class, occupation, and gender—including her precarious position as a household servant, her role as a reluctant convert to Christianity, her predicament in having to grapple with an unplanned pregnancy that could jeopardize her employment, and her fierce resentment toward the colonial courts over the justice of her sentence. Garret's dying warning anticipates the advent of the sociological wave by decades, and we see a glimpse of this emerging trend when—obliquely suggesting the types of power relationships and working conditions that enticed so many female servants to conceal and murder their infants—she admonishes masters to improve their treatment of servants.⁶²

Readers should be attentive to shifts and tensions in the narrative as it alternates between telling a specific story about Garret, turning her into a generic Indian, and universalizing her even further by erasing her racial, class,

61. For example, Samson Occom's 1772 sermon on the execution of Moses Paul—a fellow Indian who, while in a drunken state, killed a man—offers extensive discussion of alcohol and its impact on native communities. Although Occom does not attack white people directly for introducing alcohol, he articulates the milieu of despair under which alcoholism flourishes. Both D. Williams and D. Cohen document the rise of sociological explanations for crime in execution narratives; they also note that, as the century progressed, ministers ceded control of the genre to printers who continued to innovate and adapt the genre to public tastes, giving criminals more voice in the narratives. Williams's assessment of the extent to which criminals have agency in their narratives is more nuanced and cautionary than Cohen's.

62. Despite the harsh New England law that considered an unmarried mother's concealment of the death of an illegitimate newborn as evidence of murder, single women and servants had greater incentive to rid themselves of unwanted newborns. On the surge of single women, especially Indian and black servants, who were prosecuted for neonatal infanticide in Connecticut between 1740 and 1750, see Dayton, *Women before the Bar*, 210–13. For (1) further proof of the disproportionate number of charges against Indian and black people for serious crimes and (2) a discussion of the social usefulness of female crime to enforce female chastity, see Hull, *Female Felons*, 57–58 and 124–25, respectively. On the intersections of race, class and violence in New England infanticide narratives, see Harris, *Executing Race*.

and gendered specificity. As the account progresses, for example, “Indian Kate” becomes “a poor Dying Creature.” As a sympathetic figure, repentant and most likely redeemed, Garret is someone ministers encourage white audiences to sympathize with and even emulate: an “Example . . . to all Persons in *our times*.” Yet in the final lines, she is explicitly reinscribed within racial categories, repositioned not as a Christian everywoman but as an exemplary Indian. Appealing to “all her *Country people*, in their several Tribes” to “hearken diligently to the Offers & Proposals of the Gospel,” the account concludes with the hope that Garret’s example will resonate within tribal communities and encourage widespread conversion.

Despite generic conventions that elide Garret’s voice and her material specificity, both her dying warning and the account contain details that help us see Garret in her fuller social context. In fact, Garret’s narrative can be read as a direct product of the transformation of eighteenth-century New England Native cultures, capturing the tense and often fragile world of white–Indian relations. Her connection to North Stonington, her precarious place in the white household, her long period of jailhouse confinement, the formal structure of her narrative—all of these mark her narrative as a prime example of what has been called the period of “adaptation and persistence . . . in the century following political and demographic subordination” of northeastern Native communities.⁶³ Whether or not it is accurately recorded, Garret’s exclamation “*that things appeared to her quite other wise than they used to*”—a potent phrase for understanding Garret’s ambivalent position as speaker—captures the massive process of adaptation and adjustment for the Native. Traditional Indian captivity narratives emphasize how captives confront and adapt to “otherness”; here the word suggests the ongoing process of change that marks indigenous responses to colonial power.⁶⁴

It may be difficult for those modern observers who know relatively little about eighteenth-century New England Native life to see Garret as a Pequot. Scholarship tends to aggravate the problem: Traditional histories of New En-

63. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, vii.

64. Indian captivity narrative scholarship (which focuses largely on white colonists captured by Native Americans) emphasizes the importance of the captive’s liminal state—the period of confusion and strategic adaptation while he or she struggles to negotiate new rituals, social codes, and systems of meaning. Garret’s assertion offers an intriguing parallel to Rowlandson’s disconcerting admission, “I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together; *but now it is otherwise with me*” (“True History of the Captivity,” 64, emphasis mine). Hilary Wyss foregrounds the parallels between captivity narratives and Christian Indian tracts, arguing that both are premised on a “disruption of racial or cultural identity” through a “somewhat parallel” process of separation from community and appropriation of “an altered (Christian) identity” (*Writing Indians*, 13). For a fuller reading of the overlap between Indian captivity narratives by whites and Christian missionary narratives by Indians, see *ibid.*, 12–15.

gland Native communities, especially Pequot histories, frequently end in the late seventeenth century, overlooking this crucial eighteenth-century period of “adaptation and persistence.”⁶⁵ Yet Garret is interesting precisely for the ways she embodies an experience that is typical of eighteenth-century New England Natives: the process of loss and adjustment that accompanied large-scale population shifts from tribal lands into smaller enclaves in close proximity to English towns. During this time, the number of Indians who worked in the English towns and the number of Indian servants in white homes increased.⁶⁶ The Garret family experienced this shift firsthand, and surviving records of their family history begin where traditional Pequot histories end. A closer look at the Garret family brings this elided past to the foreground.

A century before Garret’s execution, nearby Mystic was the scene of one of the most notorious massacres in colonial history. In 1637 Captain John Mason set fire to the main Pequot fort, killing an estimated seven hundred Pequots, mostly women and children. The 1638 Treaty of Hartford attempted to divide and dissolve the decimated tribe into the Mohegans and Narragansetts, two tribes that had aided the colonists in the attack on the Pequots. From the 1650s to 1670s, Harmon Garret (Cashawasset), the son of a Niantic sachem and longtime leader of the Pawcatuck (eastern) Pequots, fought to wrest the tribe from Mohegan control and reclaim lands. Refusing to abandon land near Groton and Stonington during protracted battles with white settlers, Garret helped secure for the Pequots a permanent reservation at Lantern Hill in North Stonington, land that the Connecticut Colony purchased in 1685 for permanent use by the tribe. After Garret’s death, his son, Catapeset Garret (Carapazet, Kottupesit) moved a large network of Pequots onto this land, and there the Garrets remained for many generations.⁶⁷

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, mostly in response to rapid colonial expansion into previously secluded Native enclaves, missionaries renewed largely abandoned efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. The next

65. For example, Alden Vaughan concludes his history of the New England frontier with the following misinformation: “The tragedy is that in the long run the red man of New England succeeded neither in amalgamation nor in resistance. Rather, by 1750 the Indian had almost disappeared from the New England scene” (*New England Frontier*, 326).

66. On the changing patterns of New England Indian settlement, especially in eastern Massachusetts, see Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, who argues that, by the 1720s, the number of distinct Native villages had drastically declined. Tribes resettled instead into more condensed enclaves, suffered increased poaching and trespass by white neighbors, and saw growing numbers of their members become voluntarily and involuntarily employed in bordering white towns.

67. For Garret’s petition, see Connecticut (Colony), *Public Records*, vol. 2 (Connecticut 529). On the history of the eastern Pequots, see Campisi, “Emergence of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe”; Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes*; Deforest, *History of the Indians*; Caulkins, *History of New London*; and DenOuden, “Against Conquest.”

three generations of Garrets felt the effects of this movement firsthand, and by the 1740s a sizable portion of the North Stonington community had converted to Christianity.⁶⁸ During Katherine Garret's lifetime, missionary efforts focused on removing children from Indian villages and advocating schooling and indentureship as the primary models of socialization.⁶⁹ Born in North Stonington, Katherine—in contrast to her North Stonington kin—was not a baptized Christian. Other Garrets were, however, hailed as Christian success stories: While the renowned missionary Experience Mayhew was on an expedition through the Pequot settlement in 1713, two years after Katherine's birth, he recorded his interactions with members of the Garret family, including Catapeset's children, Joseph and Benjamin.⁷⁰ Mayhew, who relied on Joseph as interpreter, praised him as “a person of good parts and of very good quality among the Indians.”⁷¹ In 1725, when Katherine was fourteen, Connecticut governor Joseph Talcott recommended a plan for Christianization that focused on removing children from their reservation communities to keep them “separate from their parents and under good government”;⁷² around this time, Katherine, who was not baptized, was indentured into the Worthington household. Although there is no record of Katherine's parentage, her role in the Worthington household must be understood against this backdrop of social change that affected the North Stonington Native community.

When read in this context, Katherine's jailhouse conversion is notable not for happening suddenly but for taking so long. As Garret's employer and spiritual mentor for more than a decade, the Reverend Mr. Worthington was

68. Although the Connecticut General Court seemed willing—or at least resigned—to set aside land and coexist with Native communities, it sought to weaken tribal power. In 1717, for example, the Connecticut General Assembly passed “Measures for Bringing the Indians in the Colony to the Knowledge of the Gospel,” which advocated dividing and privatizing Indian land so that it would pass from “the Father to his Children,” thus diminishing tribal control over land (DenOuden, “Against Conquest,” 380).

69. For the fullest analysis of how the rise in servitude impacted Natives, see Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*, which argues that “servitude replaced old-style evangelization as [a] means of assimilating individual Indians to English ways” (102).

70. Katherine's parents are unknown; records reveal only that Benjamin and Joseph had a sister, possibly Katherine, her mother, an aunt, or a cousin. Records of the nearby Stonington Congregational Church show the baptismal records of numerous other Garret descendants. Benjamin (born circa 1701–5) had a son, Benjamin Jr. (born circa 1725), whose daughter, Hannah (born circa 1747) would marry a former fellow student from Eleazar Wheelock's boarding school, David Fowler (Montauk). Hannah and David would become important figures in Samson Occom's Brotherton movement. On Joseph, Benjamin, and Hannah Garret, see Szasz, *Indian Education*, 181–82, 224–31.

71. Quoted in Szasz, *Indian Education*, 181.

72. Quoted in DenOuden, “Against Conquest,” 383. Interestingly, the Reverend Eliphalet Adams took the future Mohegan sachem Ben Uncas III into his home as a boarder at the time that Katherine was bound to the Reverend Mr. Worthington.

required to bring Katherine to Christianity, but—for undisclosed reasons—she remained uninterested in conversion. The account downplays the failure of the Worthingtons to provide proper socialization and highlights Garret's conversion as a successful missionary effort. It is telling that the account ends with an impassioned plea to Native Americans; after all, Garret's narrative was written not in the flush of early colonial idealism but amid the prevailing eighteenth-century sentiment that widespread Indian conversion was no longer possible. In this sense, Garret's identity as an Indian becomes crucial to her status as a "monument," for she embodied the dream—in the unlikely form of a confessed murderer—that the conversion project might still take hold and succeed.

Is Katherine Garret's conversion, then, real? Is it forced? Or is it a form of strategic adaptation—the "posture" of prayer—designed, at best, to win her release from prison and, at worst, to hedge her bets against the unknown? Given the history of violence and coercion that accompanied the arrival of Christianity into indigenous communities, some observers may be tempted to dismiss Garret's Christian expressions as no more than colonialist propaganda. Others may eye her last-minute conversion with suspicion, as they would any dying man or woman who suddenly finds salvation. In Garret's case, her conversion grants her some immediate benefits, allowing her to travel from "house to house in the Neighbourhood," attend lectures (which could last eight hours), and to "partake . . . at the *Lord's Table*." Yet readers' skepticism, while understandable, can be disempowering to the very figures that they seek to construe. Citing the work of postcolonial scholars such as Abdul JanMohammed and Edward Said, Dana Nelson cautions against denying that Native peoples may embrace Christianity; she argues that this denial replicates a colonialist mode of seeing by "appropriating whatever subjectivity the native might claim and calling it the achievement of the colonizer."⁷³ Such dismissive readings regard evangelical discourse as little more than "an instrument of oppression, implemented against the hopeless resistance of Natives."⁷⁴

Still more might be gained by considering Garret's conversion genuine. Recent social and literary histories have argued the difficult but tenable position that Christianity served, ironically, as a force of both dispersal and cohesion during this time, offering many Natives support in times of turbulence and change. Although Christianity was leveraged by courts to separate Native children from parents and weaken tribal control of land, it also (as Occom and Apees testify to directly) helped many Natives endure the hardships of

73. Nelson, "(I Speak Like a Fool)," 52.

74. Kelleter, "Puritan Missionaries," 84.

colonization.⁷⁵ This religious self-fashioning is strikingly evident in the execution narrative of Patience Boston (Wampanoag). For example, Boston describes Christ empathetically as “buffeted scourged and spit upon . . . a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*,” identifying less with religious dogma than the physical sufferings and emotional isolation of a persecuted Christ.⁷⁶ In addition, many narratives rhetorically leverage the Natives’ understanding of Christian principles to expose Christian hypocrisy, a technique that Apess would put to effect brilliantly a century later in “The Experiences of Five Christian Indians” (1833). Garret practices a similar strategy in her dying warning, cautioning masters to improve their treatment of servants and reminding them that they must “Account to God” for their behavior.⁷⁷ She also refashions social hierarchies by recasting masters into servants: Referring to ministerial visits received in prison, she thanks God for sending “his Servants” to attend to her; later, she reminds all who are gathered that God is “our Great Master.”

As a result, even a heavy-handed amanuensis in these sample texts does not prevent readers from perceiving gaps in a minister’s interpretive frame or from locating alternative spaces of interpretation. For example, the account tells us that after her sentencing, Garret “was thrown into the utmost Confusion & Distress” and that “Her Expressions were rash and unguarded . . . throwing blame on all sorts of persons.” Despite the fact that Garret’s “unguarded” language is excised from the text of the account, the recounting of this incident undermines its claim that Garret passively embraced her fate. Similarly, where the minister highlights the forces of faith triumphing over Garret’s sinful nature, readers may see Garret’s persistent ambivalence and struggle. Her “faintings,” her “broken” expressions, her “Exceedingly . . . cast Down” appearance belie the “proper Stature” with which she ostensibly accepts her death. Moreover, portions of her dying warning function less as confession than as a self-vindication

75. Mandell notes, “The situation was complete with irony, for the religion introduced by English invaders now acted as a cement for native enclaves, and the transformation of Indian groups was in part facilitated by the faith that offered social and psychological stability in the sea of change” (*Behind the Frontier*, 59). Homer Noley (Choctaw) has demanded recognition for those Native Americans who worked to spread Christianity to Native peoples “because of the strength of their belief” (“The Interpreters,” 59). For further arguments about how Christian Indians redefine the terms of Christianity to endure the pressures and violence of colonization, see Gussman, “Politics of Piety”; Weaver, *Native American Religious Identity*; and Wyss, *Writing Indians*.

76. Boston, *Faithful Narrative*, 2. For a different examination of Native identification with the physical body and mental sufferings of Christ, see Joanna Brooks’s analysis of Occom’s hymnody (“Six Hymns”).

77. A lively example of how faith might be used for more disruptive purpose occurs in Patience Boston’s narrative, when the ever-quarrelsome Boston leverages her newfound faith to call attention to the dishonor of public execution, saying that she does not want “*Sambo* a negro [to execute her] . . . because it would be a dishonour to the Church of which he is a Member” (*Faithful Narrative*, 32).

strategy commonly found in Native American autobiography—notably her complaint that “Some . . . had reported of her things that were false.”⁷⁸

Even phrases that ostensibly function as pedagogical examples of “good death” do not necessarily further the minister’s ends. Take, for example, the seemingly pious opening of the dying warning: “I Katherine Garret, being Condemned to Die for the Crying Sin of Murder, Do Own the Justice of GOD in suffering me to die this Violent Death.” Here, the speaker accepts God’s judgment, but—calling her imminent execution “this Violent Death”—seems to question that of society. This phrase gains further resonance when juxtaposed with the text of the sermon preached by Adams. Adams’s sermon repeatedly emphasizes a single verse from Proverbs: “A Man that doth Violence to the blood of any person, shall flee to the Pit [i.e., grave], Let no man stay him.”⁷⁹ Repeating the line throughout the sermon, he emphasizes that *anyone* who does violence to *any* person must be swiftly put to death. Referring to the ensuing moment of execution as “this Violent Death,” Garret’s opening line begs the question “Who will answer for the violence of Katherine Garret’s death?” Garret’s opening line might then be viewed as a form of colonial mimicry, repetition with a difference.

Because Pequot execution narratives document real moments when actual crowds gathered to witness literal “Indian vanishings,” they can indeed highlight dramatic and oppressive displays of colonial power on the Native body. Yet the texts and rituals of public executions also work in less regimented ways, affording the condemned an opportunity—in mediated form—for autobiography, self-presentation, and even social protest. Despite the highly mediated form of the genre, the narratives—like the bodies of the condemned—are marked by surplus that cannot be contained by formulas, and Natives such as Garret use the narratives to testify directly to the processes of change, adaptation, and struggle that they faced in the eighteenth century. By embracing rather than evading problematic moments in the text, by seeing productive possibilities in its holes and gaps, in its dual and dueling voices, in its claims of seeing “*other wise*,” we can rightfully situate Garret’s dying warning on the boundaries of the Native American eighteenth-century literary frontier.



78. On self-vindication as a strategy in what he labels “pre-literate traditions” of Indian autobiography, see Brumble, *American Indian Autobiography*, 38–39.

79. Prov. 28:17.