

*Colonial Period
to 1700*

Native American Oral Literatures
New Spain
New France
Chesapeake
New England
A Sheaf of Seventeenth-Century Anglo-
American Poetry

The revised section headings in Volume One of *The Heath Anthology* represent a continued evolution in the focus on place and cultural specificity as key determinants in analyzing and interpreting the multicultural texts of the Americas. Whereas the opening sections on Native American oral traditions ask students to consider large global patterns of difference between “European” and “Native” worldviews, between Christian and non-Christian cultures, subsequent divisions complicate these initial distinctions by recognizing that “culture” does not refer to a homogeneous, static structure of social meaning. Instead, any given cultural structure is itself a dynamic, volatile field of divisions and alliances, fissures and reformulations. From an examination of the cultural contact, collision, and invasion following Columbus, *The Heath Anthology* explores cultural divisions both large and small, both those between indigenous and European peoples and those within each group, especially given that neat distinctions between the wholly “Native” and wholly “European” began to dissolve upon the first interactions between these groups.

While Andrew Wiget’s excellent introductions to the sections on “Native American Oral Narrative” and “Native American Oral Poetry” stress crucial commonalities among native peoples in relation to European cultural practices, the anthology also locates each selection of indigenous texts within specific tribal cultures and contexts. Similarly, contact between European and native peoples is organized according to major European “tribal” groups—Spanish, French, and English—posing the pedagogical question of how terms like “Native American” and “European” both organize but also inevitably limit our understanding of culture contacts. Further, the division of the English colonies on the basis of geography

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(Chesapeake and New England) adds another intracultural variable, while the inclusion of texts such as Richard Frethorne's complaint about his exploitation as an indentured servant and Nathaniel Bacon's revolutionary manifesto point to deep divisions of social class that divided the various colonial enterprises, divisions that led into the development of the American systems of racial definition and oppression.

Thus, as students read Cabeza de Vaca's captivity narrative, they can consider not only the various rhetorical purposes served by Cabeza's descriptions of the indigenous societies he encountered but also the internal conflicts among the Spanish explorers/invasers based on social rank and ethnocentric hubris that fractured and doomed the expedition. A consistent foregrounding of the relationships among language, culture, power, and privilege help problematize in useful ways the question of with whom in these historical texts we as contemporary readers might identify as "our" ancestors.

Native American Oral Literatures

Contributing Editor: Andrew Wiget

Classroom Issues

Teachers face a number of difficulties in bringing before their students some-thing as unfamiliar as Native American oral literatures. The problems will vary, of course, from situation to situation. Jeanne Holland's article in the Bibliography on page 12 outlines some of the difficulties she faced in using the first edition of this anthology, some of which we have tried to remedy in later editions, others of which I addressed in an issue of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature Newsletter* (see Bibliography).

In the absence of real knowledge about other cultures or other periods in time, most students tend to project their own sense of appropriate human behavior onto all other peoples and call it "universal human nature." The principal problem teachers will have, not only with their students but with their own experience, is the recognition that people in other cultures understand the world and human behavior in significantly different ways. This means, in literary terms, that we may not be able to apprehend the motivation of characters nor the significance of their actions without supplying a good deal of cultural information. To address this problem instructors should avail themselves of the notes that are supplied with the texts, perhaps even going over this material explicitly in class,

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coupled with the additional information provided in the headnotes and the introductions. There are also a number of resources readily available that an instructor can consult. Wiget's *Native American Literature* and Ruoff's *American Indian Literatures* constitute a very valuable core of essential reference works. Instructors should also consult the Smithsonian's multivolume *Handbook of North American Indians* for its many articles on the history and culture of specific tribes and its extensive bibliographies, and Murray (1990) for a thorough discussion of how the dynamics of the translation/transcription situation shape the text we read.

Many students will come to class with assumptions about how American Indians lived, their historical relations with the United States, and their contemporary situation. Many of these stereotypes—that Indians were in perfect harmony with nature; that they were communalists and shared everything; that they did not believe in any form of individualism; and most frighteningly, that there are no more real Indians today—will need to be addressed in class as a preface to the discussion of any kind of Native American literature. Concerning stereotypes, I find it best to begin any discussion of Native American literature with an exploration of what students in fact think they know about Native Americans, and I provide some basic background in terms of the population of Native Americans as of the latest census, cultural information about modes of living and adaptation to particular environments, and historical information. I also make it a point to emphasize that every society has evolved a useful and fitting adaptation to its social and physical environment. That adaptation is called *culture*. Culture is a system of beliefs and values through which a group of people structure their experience of the world. By working with this definition of culture, which is very close to the way current criticism understands the impact of ideology upon literature, we can begin to pluralize our notion of the world and understand that other peoples can organize their experience in different ways, and dramatize their experience of the world through different symbolic forms. If time is available, I would highly recommend that the class view "Winds of Change," a PBS documentary that dramatizes the adaptability of contemporary Indian cultures, and goes a long way toward restoring the visible presence of Indian diversity.

Many forms of Native American literature also employ

different kinds of artistic devices that are unfamiliar or even antithetical to conventional Anglo-American notions of aesthetic response, such as acute brevity, much repetition, or cataloging. None of these literary conventions appeal to the experience of contemporary readers. To address this problem, I illustrate how cultural conventions that students assume as essential characteristics of literary experience, in fact, have changed over time. This is very easy to do. A classic example is to point out how conventional notions of what constitutes good poetry have changed significantly from the Renaissance through the early nineteenth century and up to the present day, and that we recognize contemporary poetry as being marked by the absence of some features that used to be valued as significant in poetry. This will show the changeableness of literary forms and undermine the students' assumptions that the way things look today is the basis for all judgments about what constitutes good art. I might also indicate the important influences of American Indian literature on American literature, and that some of these Native forms and conventions and themes were borrowed by Anglo-American writers from Cooper through the Imagists and up to the present.

Classroom Strategies

Anthologies present the possibility of successfully developing several teaching strategies. There is enough material in both volumes of the anthology, for instance, to develop a semester-long course just on American Indian literatures. Most teachers, however, will be teaching American Indian traditions in the context of other American literatures. I will suggest three basic strategies.

I think the most important teaching strategy for Native American literature is to single out one text for extensive in-class treatment and to embed it richly in its cultural and historical context. Work through a text with constant reference to notes. Also offer startling images for the class's contemplation, inviting them to reflect upon a range of possible meanings, before suggesting how this imagery or symbol might have meaning in its original cultural context. It's also very helpful to use films, because they provide visual

connections to the cultural environment. I would particularly recommend for a general southwestern Native American worldview, *Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World*, a film by Pat Ferreiro.

A second strategy uses culturally related materials, or even materials from the same tribe, and teaches them back to back, mixing the genres, in order to let the context that you develop for one enrich the other. There is enough Iroquoian and Zuni material here, for example, to do just that. An especially good unit would include showing the film, teaching the Zuni “Talk Concerning the First Beginning,” contrasting it with Genesis, then moving on to teach “Sayatasha’s Night Chant” under the Native American Oral Poetry section. This way the cultural context that you have built up (by understanding fundamental symbols like corn and rain and how they emerge from the people’s experience with the land) can serve more than one work.

A third strategy I have used successfully involved what I have called elsewhere “reading against the grain.” Many Native American texts invite comparison with canonical texts from the Euro-American literatures. I always teach the Zuni creation story with readings from the Bible. Genesis 1 through 11 offers two versions of the creation of the world and a flood story, as well as opportunities to discuss social order in chapters 4, 5, and 10. Genesis 27, which gives the story of Jacob and Esau, provides a biblical trickster figure in the person of Jacob. And finally the book of Judges, with its stories of Samson and Gideon, provides good examples of culture heroes, as do other classics such as the *Aeneid*, the *Odyssey*, and the various national epics. These classical works are also good counterparts to the Navajo story of Changing Woman’s children, the hero twins, who are also on a quest to transform the world by ridding it of monsters, which, like Grendel or the Cyclops, are readily understood as projections of our fears and anxieties, as well as interesting narrative agents. The Yuchi story of “The Creation of the Whites” and Handsome Lake’s version of “How America Was Discovered,” together with the Hopi version of the Pueblo Revolt, are powerful antidotes to the European mythopoeticizing of the invasion of North America. This is a point I emphasize in my article on “Origin Stories,” which reads the Zuni emergence story against Villagrà’s epic poem on the history of New Mexico and Bradford’s *Of Plymouth*

Plantation, both of which are excerpted in Volume 1 of this anthology. Finally, the Iroquoian description of the confederacy is usefully compared with colonial political documents that envision various social orders, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Federalist papers.

Native American Oral Narrative

Contributing Editor: Andrew Wiget

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Some very important themes evolve from this literature. Native American views of the world as represented in these mythologies contrast strongly with Euro-American perspectives. Recognizing this is absolutely essential for later discussion of the differences between Anglo-Americans and Native Americans over questions of land, social organization, religion, and so on. In other words, if one can identify these fundamental differences through the literature very early on, then later it becomes easier to explain the differences in outlook between Native American peoples and Anglo-American peoples that often lead to tragic consequences.

If culture is a system of beliefs and values by which people organize their experience of the world, then it follows that forms of expressive culture such as these myths should embody the basic beliefs and values of the people who create them. These beliefs and values can be roughly organized in three areas: (1) beliefs about the nature of the physical world; (2) beliefs about social order and appropriate behavior; and (3) beliefs about human nature and the problem of good and evil.

The Zuni “Talk Concerning the First Beginning” speaks directly to the nature of the physical world. If we look closely at the Zuni “Talk,” the story imagines the earth as hollow, with people coming out from deep within the womb of the earth. The earth is mother and feminine and people are created not just of the stuff of the earth, but also from the earth. They are

born into a particular place and into a particular environment. In the course of this long history, imagined as a search for the center (a point of balance and perfection), they undergo significant changes in their physical appearance, in their social behavior, in their social organization, and in their sense of themselves. By the time they have arrived at Zuni, which they call the center of the world, they have become pretty much like their present selves. It is especially important to follow the notes here with this selection and with the Navajo selection. Both of these stories talk about transformations in the physical world. The world is populated by beings who are also persons like humans; all of the world is animated, and there are different nations of beings who can communicate with each other, who are intelligent and volitional creatures.

Both the Zuni story and the Iroquoian story of the origins of the confederacy also talk about how society should be organized, about the importance of kinship and families, about how society divides its many functions in order to provide for healing, for food, for decision making, and so on. The Iroquoian confederacy was a model of Federalism for the drafters of the Constitution, who were much impressed by the way in which the confederacy managed to preserve the autonomy of its individual member tribes while being able to manage effective concerted actions, as the colonists to their dismay too often found out. The Navajo story of Changing Woman and the Lakota story of White Buffalo Calf Pipe Woman are important illustrations not only of the role of women as culture heroes, but also of every people's necessity to evolve structures such as the Pipe Ceremony or the Navajo healing rituals to restore and maintain order in the world.

The Raven and Hare narratives are stories about a Trickster figure. Tricksters are the opposite of culture heroes. Culture heroes exist in mythology to dramatize prototypical events and behaviors; they show us how to do what is right and how we became the people who we are. Tricksters, on the other hand, provide for disorder and change; they enable us to see the seamy underside of life and remind us that culture, finally, is artificial, that there is no necessary reason why things must be the way they are. If there is sufficient motivation to change things, Trickster provides for the possibility of such change, most often by showing us the danger of believing too sincerely that this arbitrary arrangement we call culture is the way things really are. When

Raven cures the girl, for instance, he does so to gain her sexual favors, and in so doing calls into question the not-always-warranted trust that people place in healing figures like doctors. The Bungling Host story, widespread throughout Native America, humorously illustrates the perils of overreaching the limits of one's identity while trying to ingratiate one's self.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Perhaps the most important thing that needs to be done is to challenge students' notions of myth. When students hear the word "myth," they succumb to the popular belief that mythology is necessarily something that is false. This is a good place to start a discussion about truth, inviting students to consider that there are other kinds of truth besides scientific truth (which is what gave a bad name to mythology in the first place). Consider this definition of myth: "The dramatic representation of culturally important truths in narrative form." Such a definition highlights the fact that myths represent or dramatize shared visions of the world for the people who hold them. Myths articulate the fundamental truths about the shape of the universe and the nature of humanity.

It is also important to look at important issues of form such as repetition. Repetition strikes many students as boring. Repetition, however, is an aesthetic device that can be used to create expectation. Consider the number three and how several aspects of our Euro-American experience are organized in terms of three: the start of a race ("on your mark, get set, go"); three sizes (small, medium, and large); the three colors of a traffic signal; and of course, three little pigs. These are all commonplace examples, so commonplace, in fact, that initially most students don't think much of them. But there is no reason why we should begin things by counting to three. We could count to four or five or seven, as respectively the Zunis, the Chinooks, and the Hebrews did. In other words, these repetitions have an aesthetic function: they create a sense of expectation, and when one arrives at the full number of repetitions, a sense of completeness, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

Original Audience

The question of audience is crucial for Native American literature, in that the original audience for the literature understands the world through its own experience much differently than most of our students do. As a result, it's important to reconstruct as much of that cultural and historical context as possible for students, especially when it has a direct bearing upon the literature. So, for instance, students need to know in discussing Zuni material that the Zunis, Hopis, and Navajos are agricultural people and that corn and moccasins figure prominently as symbols of life. Rain, moisture, and human beings are imagined in terms of corn, and life is understood as an organic process that resembles a plant growing from a seed in the ground, being raised up, harvested, and so forth. Historically, it's important to realize too that visions of one's community and its history differ from culture to culture. So, for instance, the Hopi story of the Pueblo revolt imagines the revolt as a response to a life-threatening drought that is caused by the suppression of the native religion by the Franciscan priest. This way of understanding history is very different from the way most of our students understand history today. Its very notion of cause and effect, involving as it does supernatural means, is much more closely related to a vision of history shared by Christian reconstructionists, seventeenth-century Puritans, and ancient Hebrews.

At the same time, students should be cautioned about the presumption that somehow we can enter entirely into another cultural vision, whether it be that of the Lakota during the Ghost Dance period of the 1880s or the Puritan Separatists three centuries earlier. This is not only a matter of translation and transcription. As both Murray and Clifford point out, what is sometimes blithely called "the need to understand" or "the search for knowledge" is not a neutral quest, but one determined in great measure by the often unarticulated aims and attitudes of the dominant society that structures fields of inquiry and creates the need for certain kinds of information. Although most contemporary students often assume that all differences can be overcome, the facticity of difference will remain.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

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1. The number of works addressed in this section is so great and the material so varied that particular questions would not be useful. A good lead-in to all of these works, however, would focus on motivation of characters or significance of action. I would want students to identify some action in the narrative that puzzles them, and would encourage them to try to explain the role of this action in the narrative and what might motivate it. They will not necessarily be successful at answering that question, but the activity of trying to answer that question will compel them to seek for meaning ultimately in some kind of cultural context. There is, in other words, a certain kind of appropriate aesthetic frustration here, which should not necessarily be discouraged, because it prepares the student to let go of the notion that human behavior is everywhere intelligible in universal terms.
2. I usually have students write comparative papers. I ask them to identify a theme: for example, the relationship between human beings and animals, attitudes toward death, the role of women, or other similar topics, and to write comparatively using Native American texts and a Euro-American text that they find to be comparable.

Native American Oral Poetry

Contributing Editor: Andrew Wiget

Classroom Strategies

The Inuit and Aztec poetry requires the introduction of cultural background in order to understand some of its themes and imagery, but it is much more accessible than “Sayatasha’s Night Chant.” Because it is expressive of individual emotional states, it is much closer to the Western lyric poetry tradition, and therefore more readily apprehended by students than the long Zuni chant. “Sayatasha’s Night Chant,” on the other hand, is very difficult for students for a number of reasons, which, if properly addressed, make it a rich aesthetic experience.

First of all, it is absolutely essential to refer students to the notes that supply important, culture-specific, contextual information that is necessary for understanding the poems. This is less urgent in the more accessible poetry of the Aztecs and the Inuit, but it is required for the other very brief song texts and especially for “Sayatasha’s Night Chant,” which I think will pose the most problems for students. One can enrich the cultural context of the “Chant” by teaching it in conjunction with the Zuni “Talk Concerning the First Beginning.” This origin story establishes some of the fundamental symbols that are expressive of the Zuni worldview and some of the fundamental themes, so that if the students read “Sayatasha’s Night Chant” following the emergence story, they can carry forward some of the cultural information acquired from reading the origin story to support their reading of “Sayatasha’s Night Chant.”

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The Inuit and Aztec poetry is relatively accessible to students, who recognize in it some fundamental human emotions that have literary expression in Euro-American traditions as well.

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The Inuit poetry is remarkable for its juxtaposition of human beings against the natural world. Nature is viewed as an enormous arena that dwarfs human beings, who are continually struggling to secure their existence. Much of the Inuit view of nature corresponds rather well to the notions of the Romantic sublime. This is a Nature that the Inuit face with a combination of awe, terror, and humility, as reflected in the Copper Eskimo “Song” and Uvavnuk’s “Moved.” On the other hand, the “Improvised Greeting” suggests that in the presence of such an overwhelming Nature, which isolated people, the experience of social contact was a cause for tremendous joy. And yet, as the “Widow’s Song” suggests, alienation from one’s community left one isolated and trapped in one’s self. (Inuit poetry can be very reflective.) Orpingalik’s song speaks to a loss of competence and power experienced in one’s old age that undermines the sense of accomplishment and identity. A good poem to read to work-aholics, whose identity usually rests in their work!

Aztecs, it seems, are familiar to everyone. Their popular reputation rests on a series of images—the offering of human hearts to the sun, cruel and violent warfare, a powerful militaristic empire—many of which were true. Thus it comes as a surprise, having set up this cultural and historical context, to discover a poetry whose central theme is the fragility of life, the transience of beauty, and the elusiveness of truth. At the height of their power, the Aztecs experienced life, beauty, and truth as inexorably slipping away. They expressed this theme in their poetry through three images or vehicles, the most important of which are images associated with flowers. Flowers in their fragile beauty represented for the Aztecs the very essence of life. In the poem “Like Flowers Continually Perishing,” the poet imagines that we are like flowers slowly dying in the midst of and despite our beauty. Flowers throughout literature are symbols of fragility as well as great beauty. A second cluster of images has to do with feathers. Feathers in Aztec culture represented things of great value and preciousness because many of them had to be imported from the jungles of Central America. They were also objects of great delicacy, and, like flowers, became symbols of the fragility, beauty, and preciousness of life. The third and most important image was poetry itself. Aztecs wrote poetry to achieve immortality. Because they experienced life as transient, they looked to create an ideal world through the

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images articulated in their poetry. In this they felt they were imitating their principal deity, Omeoteotl, the creator of the universe, also called the Lord of the Close and the Near. Omeoteotl achieved immortality through creativity, and the Aztec poets sought to do the same.

“Sayatasha’s Night Chant” is more accessible to students if one can view it as a quest, in which a human being, representing the Zuni people, is sent on a journey from the village to the Zuni “heaven,” Kothluwalawa. The purpose of this journey is to obtain the seeds and power needed to regenerate life for a new year. “Sayatasha’s Night Chant” is a poem recited in the context of a world renewal ritual. In narrative form, it describes how a man has been appointed in the beginning of the poem (line 106) to represent the Zuni people. His mission, which takes the better part of a year to accomplish, is undertaken because the world is in need of renewal (line 67). His appointment takes place in January, and throughout the next nine or ten months this person is busy visiting many shrines at Zuni to plant prayer sticks (physical representations of the basic elements of life in this world) as offerings to the deities (lines 120–33). Later, forty-nine days before the Shalako ceremony in early December, the man who will impersonate Sayatasha is formally invested with the symbols and the costume of his role (see notes 8 and 9). Now having been transformed into a being who represents the spirit world of the rain-bringing ancestors, the Sayatasha impersonator returns to the village bearing the seeds of new life. Before he reaches the village, however, he visits twenty-nine separate springs around Zuni, each of which represent the different places where the Zuni people stopped on their way to the Center of the World, the village of Zuni. In reenacting this migration, the Sayatasha impersonator recovers the force, energy, and potency of that first creation to reenergize life in the village. The poem ends as the Sayatasha impersonator, on the eighth night of Shalako, confers upon the entire village the blessings of life and fertility that he had been sent to gain for them.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Students need some initial help in understanding the meaning of prevalent images, like flowers in Aztec poetry. They might

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also need assistance in seeing some potent juxtapositions that occur in the Inuit poetry. For example, the despairing woman in the “Widow’s Song” holds an amulet (a token of religious faith) in her hands while she stares angrily at the northern lights that taunt her with their beauty and promise.

In the case of “Sayatasha’s Night Chant,” there is much ritual language, and students will need help in working through the characters and understanding the ritual actions that are a key to the poem. Ritual poetry is very formulaic and repetitive. Students are frequently frustrated by repetition and aggravated by the apparent lack of spontaneity and the stiltedness of the language. Point out to them that in serious religious settings, spontaneity is not valued, not only in Zuni settings but also in ritual contexts throughout the world, including Euro-American cultures. It’s also good to develop in them some understanding of the key symbols, like water and corn as symbols of life. Water, in particular, is something that they ought to be able to relate to. Notes 1, 3, and 8 should help students understand ritual poetry.

All of these songs were sung in different ways, which affects the way in which they were experienced. The “Night Chant” is just that, a narrative chant in which the words are uttered on a sustained tone with a falling tone at the end of each line. The short songs were sung to more complex melodies, sometimes by the individual alone, sometimes with an audience chorus response. Short songs were often repeated many times in order to deepen the emotional experience stimulated by the song.

Original Audience

I make it a point to try to reconstruct the cultural context of the poems’ origins in order to recover for the students the aesthetic force that these poems must have had for their original listeners. I remind them of the terrible and frightening confrontation that human beings have with the physical environment in the Arctic and how people cling to each other under such circumstances. Understanding the relationship between the physical and the social worlds in Inuit life is a necessary precondition for understanding the poetry. The same thing is true of the Aztecs. One juxtaposes the poetry against the cultural and historical context from which it emerged.

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In all cases, I also stress the unique context in which these songs were first performed. The Eskimo, for instance, had song festivals in which these very intense and private songs were sung in public. The Inuit, in other words, had created a socially sanctioned forum for the expression of one's most private joys and griefs. This suggests a new way of thinking about the function of poetry and the relationship between an individual and his social context. Among the Aztecs, poetry was composed principally by the nobility, most of whom had also earned great fame and success as warriors. It is effective to point out to students that the poetry most sensitive to the fragile beauty of life was created by the noble warrior class. In terms of the Zuni poem, it is useful to remind students that ritual poetry is recited publicly in the context of a variety of significant and meaningful religious actions, and that these actions are as much a part of the total experience as the recitation of the poetry. Consider also Jane Green's "Divorce Dance Song" as a kind of publication. The notion that poetry is coupled with action and so comes closer to approximating the condition of drama than any other Western form is initially unfamiliar to students. They may need some help in realizing that poetry, even in the Western tradition, emerged from the recitation of hymns in dramatic settings in ancient Israel and Greece.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

The Aztec and Inuit poetry compares well in theme and form to British and American Romantic lyric poetry. Certainly the Aztec poetry compares well with Western poetry in the elegiac tradition. The Inuit and Aztec poems also offer opportunities for comparing and contrasting the role of poetry as a vehicle for self-expression and for the creation of individual identity, another important Romantic theme. One can contrast "Sayatasha's Night Chant," in which the individual identity of the speaker of the poem is totally submerged in his ritual role or persona, with the Inuit and Aztec poetry where the "I" reflects the personal identity of the poet/subject. "Sayatasha's Night Chant" can also be effectively contrasted with British and American poetry whose subject is the power of Nature. Reading "Sayatasha's Night Chant" against Bryant's "Thanatopsis," Emerson's "Nature," or Thoreau's *Walden* will

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lead students to consider Native American views of Nature as something very different from the Anglo-American Romantic understanding of Nature. Such contrasts are especially instructive because they enable students to understand why Native Americans and Anglo-Americans might hold different attitudes toward the land and activities involving the natural world.

Discussion Strategies

Begin the discussion of Eskimo and Aztec poetry by inviting students to consider, in the case of the Eskimo, the physical environment in which the Inuit people live and the need for powerful social bonds in the face of the overwhelming power and intimidating scale of the natural world of the Arctic. By the same token, begin the discussion of Aztec poetry with a presentation of the scale and scope of the Aztec military, political, economic, and social achievements. In both cases the poetry stands against this powerful cultural context and effectively discloses its key themes sometimes by contrast to one's expectations (as in the case of the Aztecs) and sometimes by conforming to one's expectations (as in the case of Inuit poetry). With "Sayatasha's Night Chant," I usually begin by insisting that most cultures have rituals, such as first fruit feasts (like our Thanksgiving) or foundational feasts (like our Fourth of July or New Year's), which are designed to commemorate the forces of life and order that structure and animate our world. I talk about the role of ritual in people's lives, and I disassociate ritual from its popular definition of something routine. This discussion of ritual and the role of the sacred in culture is an enormously valuable preface to approaching this particular poem.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. I would draw students' attention in the Eskimo poetry to the place of human beings in the physical universe and the relationship of the individual to society; and in the Aztec poetry, to the images of flowers and to the function of poetry. In "Sayatasha's Night Chant," I would focus on important images such as cornmeal and

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invite students to make connections between symbols that they discover in “Sayatasha’s Night Chant” and their antecedents in the Zuni origin myth, “Talk Concerning the First Beginning.”
2. Aside from obvious thematic papers focused around topics such as nature, death, ritual, and so on, I would invite students to write on broader topics such as the role of poetry in these societies and to compare how poetry functions in them with how it has functioned in the Western tradition.

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New Spain

Christopher Columbus (1451–1506)

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (1490?–1556?)

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés (1519–1574)

Fray Marcos de Niza (1495?–1542)
Pedro de Casteñeda (1510?–1570?)
Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà (1555–1620)
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695)

Contributing Editors: Juan Bruce-Novoa and Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students' lack of general historical knowledge is compounded by the usual disinformation they learn about U.S. history as taught in this country. To address this problem, I give the students a list of historical facts as they probably have learned them (i.e., dates of Jamestown, Plymouth, etc.), and we discuss this traditional way of teaching U.S. history. I sometimes ask them to draw a map representing U.S. history in movement. Then I give them a second list with the Spanish and French settlements included and discuss how this new context changes the way we conceive of U.S. history. Next I take time to explain the European backgrounds of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in which Spain, the first national state, was a dominant power and England a marginal and even second-rate power. Third, I emphasize the economic reality of colonization. Students must understand that none of the Europeans viewed the Native Americans as equals. The destruction of the Acoma people is just the start of a long U.S. tradition of subjugating conquered peoples and should not be read as a Spanish aberration. Cabeza de Vaca's experience is important in prefiguring not only captivity literature but also migrant literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: he and his comrades had to assimilate and acculturate to survive, working at whatever jobs they could get among a majority culture that did not necessarily need or want them around.

Students often ask why these texts are important and how they relate to more conventional U.S. literature. You might suggest that they consider changing their traditional concept of the United States as an English-based country and entertain the paradigm of a land from the start where several language groups and distinct origins contended. Students should be taught that this situation remains the same, in spite of the assumption that English won out. The forces present in

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the early period are still contending for a place in U.S. territory. Perhaps the oldest tradition in the United States is the struggle among different groups for the recognition of the right to participate fully in determining the future of this land.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The headnotes specify two major themes: the newness of the experience and the need to relate it in European terms. Columbus initiated the dialogue between American reality and the European codes of signification.

Another theme is the strategies utilized to convince powerful readers of the benefits of the New World. Again, Columbus marks the beginning. These authors are constantly selling the unknown to potential investors and visitors. Here begins the tradition of hawking new property developments beyond the urban blight of the reader's familiar surroundings and promoting fantasies of ideal realms or cities of untold wealth.

Cabeza de Vaca introduces the familiar theme of wandering the back roads of the country—a sixteenth-century Kerouac. It is the theme of finding oneself through the difficult pilgrimage into the wilderness—a Carlos Castaneda *avant la lettre*. Cabeza de Vaca is transformed through suffering, perseverance, and the ability to acculturate.

The Avilés text introduces inter-European rivalries as a major theme of American culture. Competition over territory resulted in violent encounters. The encounters with the Native American population were equally violent, introducing the theme of the subjugation of the native peoples, who would rather retain their own way of life. The arrogant assumption that one's own system is naturally superior to the native's way is again an indisputable characteristic of U.S. history.

Another theme is the sincerity of the religious motivation of the explorers and settlers of New Spain in light of the contradicting evidence of economic ambitions. Cabeza de Vaca's account calls into question Spain's justification of its imperial designs and strong-arm methods. This conflict between philanthropic ideals and exploitative motivation still underlies U.S. foreign policy.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

First, the form of much of the texts from New Spain is the epistolary chronicle: a subjective report on the events of exploration and conquest without the limitations of supposedly objective historical science. It is a personal account like a memoir, but it is also a letter to a powerful reader, not the general public. It has no literary pretensions, but the circumstances demanded rhetorical skill.

Second, the period is one of transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, so there will be mixtures of characteristics from the two, the Medieval chronicle alongside the Renaissance epic of Villagr a or the satires of Sor Juana In s.

Style is also hybrid. While most of these authors were educated well above the average commoner of the period, most of the early explorers were not trained in letters. Thus their writing is mostly unpretentious and direct. Again, Villagr a and Sor Juana In s are the exceptions.

Most of these texts record personal experiences in the New World and New Spain, and thus have a ring of realism and direct contact with the land and native people. Students should be encouraged to look for the European filter through which these experiences are recorded, in terms of voice, imagery, comparison, and attitudes. Students can also look for an emerging “American” voice and set of concerns, specifically in Cabeza de Vaca. Villagr a, by contrast, uses classical forms and epic conventions to render the conquest of New Mexico heroic. Toward the end of the century, Sor Juana In s challenges the reigning gender conventions in colonial New Spain in her use of poetry, the most elite of forms, for her satires, meditations, and religious dramas.

Original Audience

The audience for the exploration narratives of New Spain were specifically the powerful kings and queens of Spain, including their advisers and ministers and perhaps members of the court and potential investors and backers, although some of these narratives were translated and read across Europe as part of the general populace’s fascination with accounts of the New

World. They can be compared to U.S. military reports on Vietnam or propaganda films on World War II, like *Victory at Sea*, to get a sense of the rhetoric of nationalistic justification. Sor Juana Inés, whose concerns are spiritual and philosophical as well as social, was writing for a growing class of Creole settlers in Mexico, as well as an elite, educated class of Spaniards.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Many of the writers in this section can be compared and contrasted with each other, and with similar exploratory accounts from New France, the Chesapeake, and New England. Students might consider how the attitude toward and treatment of Indians differ among the three major imperial powers. Comparisons with the early accounts of the Jamestown and Massachusetts Bay Colonies as well as the Jesuits in New France would allow students to compare the sense of newness, the use of divine right to justify imperial projects, and the determination to hold and civilize what was considered wilderness. Students can also compare and contrast the competing narratives of origin that emerge from these three imperial projects, as well as issues of millennialism, the role of poetry in the formation of the nation-state, America as an adopted “homeland,” and the sex-gender systems imposed by the colonial regimes. Captivity narratives provide a fruitful comparison: Cabeza de Vaca with Mary Rowlandson, John Williams, or Father Isaac Jogues. Sor Juana Inés can be compared to Anne Bradstreet or Sarah Kemble Knight to illustrate differences in the experiences of colonial women in Catholic and Protestant traditions.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Ask students to review what they learned about this period in previous classes: who, what, where, when, why. Have them formulate a brief summary on the period according to this training. Have them compare it to the list of places and events you gave them at first, and then consider what the second list implies.
2. General assignments: Write about how this information changes their view of U.S. history. Write on the imagery used by the authors to characterize the New World.

3. Consider the role of violence in the colonization of the Americas.

Specific possibilities: On Cabeza de Vaca: Compare his experience with Robinson Crusoe's. On Villagr : Compare his version with the Native American one in the anthology selections.

History of the Miraculous Apparition of the
Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531

Don Antonio de Otermín (fl. 1680)

The Coming of the Spanish and the Pueblo
Revolt (Hopi)

Don Diego de Vargas (?–1704)

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The central issue raised by these selections from New Spain revolves around the opposing forces of colonialism and native resistance to it. In my experience students tend to side with the Native Americans against the Spanish, focusing on the Hopi text and its act of direct and simple rejection through violence. The protests against the Columbus quintcentennial celebrations provided added impetus to this anti-Spanish sentiment, especially among the U.S. Latino population. Students should be encouraged to engage in a discussion of the legal and moral rights of conquest, but care should be taken to avoid focusing solely on the Spanish. Certainly by the seventeenth century, the other major powers in the Americas, the English and the French, were dealing with similar resistance in very similar ways. No European colonial power willingly gave up possession of American territory to its native inhabitants; the U.S. government followed suit in later centuries.

“The History of the Miraculous Apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe” is an important text because of its appearance everywhere Mexicans have settled in the United States. The hybrid character of the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe suggests an alternate image of American identity, one of a cultural and biological fusion of Old and New World peoples.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Two contradictory themes dialogue throughout this section: the Native Americans’ determination to defend their culture to

the death, and the colonizers' determination to hold conquered territory with equal zeal. Both feel bound by their specific and divergent cultural codes of behavior to resist the efforts of the other and neither seems willing to compromise. The Virgin of Guadalupe, however, represents a possible point of mediation. Her tale raises the theme of miscegenation, one that has been treated very differently in Latin America and the United States.

Students lack the historical training to contextualize these tales. The headnotes, as well as references to studies of the period, provide a good introduction. It is important to keep in mind that these texts reflect the ongoing efforts of the Spanish empire to perpetuate itself by maintaining order and control over its territory and inhabitants.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The differences in the formal character of these texts reflect the conflicting issues mentioned above. While Spanish officials use the written word, with the full authority of a document within a legalistic political order, the anonymous Hopi resistance text began as oral tales and preserves a kinship with folklore and clandestine communications. The Guadalupe text is, like the image of the Virgin herself, a hybrid of elite and popular styles. The governmental texts obey the conventions of bureaucratic communiqués, employing the rhetoric of political justification that underlies hegemonic regulations; the other texts counter this rhetoric through an appeal to a sense of common justice for the oppressed at the margins of that same order.

Original Audience

Again, the Spanish governors addressed themselves to those few powerful officials in the chain of command whose task it was to judge their conduct and recommend action by the crown. Their texts were never meant for distribution to readers other than those versed in the formalities and legalities of the colonial situation. There was no room for flights of literary fancy among these bureaucrats, yet it is exactly this cut-and-dried style that conveys to us now the harsh realities of the

colonial system; its highly organized and controlled character as contrasted with the relatively loose structure of the English colonies.

The Guadalupe text was intended for the Native Americans of central Mexico; a proselytizing text for people of non-European cultures, it was originally published in Náhuatl and thus not directed at a Spanish readership. However, one must consider that the great majority of Native Americans could not read in any language, so the text could have well been intended for trained clerics to use in evangelizing.

The Hopi text was originally an oral story repeated by and for members of this and other tribes. It is still found among the oral tradition tales in the Southwest.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

The Otermín and Vargas texts can be read with Villagrà's account of the resistance at Acoma a century earlier; stylistic differences arise from the roles the authors played within the imperial system. Villagrà chronicled his experience in the epic verse common to his time, free to fictionalize the events and characters, while Otermín and Vargas wrote in the governmental form that they were expected to use to report facts without embellishments.

Students can compare these texts to Thomas Morton's account of the massacre of the Wessaguscus by the Plymouth colonists. Also, they could consider the difference between the positive image of miscegenation in the Virgin of Guadalupe and the negative image of that possibility in Mary Rowlandson's captivity.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Ask students to consider the moral and political issues addressed in the selections in a contemporary setting. The particular locality and region in which your institution is located should fit the purpose, since it is difficult to find any place in the United States that did not experience a similar frontier situation at some point. Have them ponder what it would mean for them and their families to be forced to relinquish their property

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and return to their ancestors' homeland. What would they expect of their elected official, the court, the police, and the military?

2. Have students think of the Virgin of Guadalupe metaphorically as a figure of cultural confluence designed to ameliorate conflict among ethnic and racial groups. Ask them to consider if such figures could be useful now in the United States and if they have existed in our history. Is the model of hybridism (cultural and racial) viable in the United States?

New France

René Goulaine de Laudonnière (fl. 1562–1582)
Samuel de Champlain (1570?–1635)
The Jesuit Relations: The Account of
Father Isaac Jogues, 1647

Contributing Editors: John Pollack and Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Like the texts from New Spain, these texts will be unfamiliar to U.S. students of literature and history, as will be the prominence of France in the early colonization of North America. Students will probably know less about New France than about New Spain, since there is no major contemporary movement in the United States to revise the history of French exploration and settlement in the Americas. But these texts can provide another opportunity for students to reconsider the monocultural and monolingual origins of U.S. culture. One could ask students to think about political, linguistic, and cultural issues in Canada, the largest nation in North America, and how Canadian policies on the issues of bilingualism, native (or first peoples') rights, and assimilationism differ from U.S. policies. How do U.S. relations with and attitudes about Canada differ from relations with and attitudes about Mexico in the South?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

One might begin with a brief overview of the history of French exploration and settlement in the New World (consult the introduction, "Colonial Period to 1700") and the history of the conflicts between France and Spain over Florida, and later between France and England in northern North America. Particularly important is a clarification of the religious issues

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and their impact on imperial projects in the New World. Spain's colonial emissaries were Roman Catholic, and their missionaries came from the Dominican, Jesuit, and Franciscan orders. English colonialism was carried out largely by Protestant groups who demonized Catholics and regarded their missionizing as satanic seduction. France's Catholic kings had a more ambivalent relationship with Rome, and saw themselves as head of a national church. Like England, France experienced a Protestant Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century; its adherents were called Huguenots, who suffered persecution and suppression. Several groups of Huguenots, like the English Pilgrims and Puritans in New England, attempted to establish colonies in French-claimed regions of the New World, but were defeated and ejected by the Spanish (see the account by Menéndez de Avilés in the section on New Spain). The spread of Protestantism caused a Counter-Reformation across Europe, out of which emerged the Jesuits in Spain, a group of Catholic priests with an active, rather than a contemplative, mission to spread Christianity to as wide an area as possible, from neglected regions in rural and urban Europe to India, China, Japan, and the Americas. Jesuit methods included open-air preaching and the use of catechisms in order to instruct children. In Europe, the Jesuits enjoyed remarkable success, but in Canada the results were more mixed. Jesuits sought to induce nomadic Native groups to settle in villages near the French, in order to minister to them more regularly, but few Native groups accommodated them. The missionaries also attempted to impose monogamy and a European-style sexual division of labor upon Natives; Native women seem to have been particularly resistant to this tactic.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The three selections in this section represent three different kinds of writing. Laudonnière was a Huguenot nobleman who served under Jean Ribault and helped establish, first, the colony at Port Royal, South Carolina, and when this failed, Fort Carolina in Florida. After his defeat by the Spanish, Laudonnière, who had been wounded in the fight, escaped to France and wrote a history of the colony that remained unpublished for twenty years. Like other early colonial writers,

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his account is a personal memoir inflected by political motives, specifically a critique of Huguenot activities and actions. Champlain acquired a reputation as a navigator from expeditions to the West Indies and Central America, and so was invited to go to North America in 1603 where he retraced Jacques Cartier's earlier trip up the St. Lawrence in 1534–35. When his report was published, it sparked interest in further exploration and settlement, especially when an English colonial expedition spent a winter in Kennebec (now Maine) in southern Acadia in 1607. A commoner given an honorary title by Henry IV, Champlain would have had a basic education; his reports (seven in all) are factual narratives interested in landscape and the resources for settlement. He was instrumental in allying with the Algonquians and Montagnais against the Iroquois, and so was also interested in native culture to the extent that it impacted on his colonization efforts. Father Isaac Jogues was a Jesuit on a mission to the Huron Indians. His account was compiled by his superior, Jerome Lalemant, with the particular intent of all the Jesuit *Relations*: to justify the missions in the New World and glorify the sacrifice of the missionaries.

Original Audience

Laudonnière and Champlain were writing for an educated French audience, people at court with the money and influence to enhance France's colonial efforts. Laudonnière's account, as a religious adventure, attracted a wide audience in Protestant Europe. Champlain's books were read by elite audiences fascinated with accounts of the New World. Jogues's account is only a short excerpt from a remarkable output of Jesuit documents that runs to seventy-three volumes covering two centuries in the standard modern edition (ed. Thwaites). In seventeenth-century France, the *Relations* were best-sellers, circulating widely among the royalty and elite, as perhaps among the marginally literate as well, as part of the Counter-Reformation movement in France.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Laudonnière should be read in conjunction with the account of the Spanish colonist who defeated him, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, but he can also be compared to other colonists who

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observed native customs, such as Champlain, Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, and John Smith. Champlain's accounts express the European's response to the expanse and wildness of the New World, and can be compared to the extravagant rhetoric of Fray Marcos de Niza and the failed expeditions of Coronado, as recorded by Pedro de Casteñeda, as well as the ideologically motivated descriptions of the land by Thomas Morton, William Bradford, and Samuel Sewall.

The relation of Father Jogues raises several points of comparison. One is the central political and economic role assigned to the Jesuits in New France by Cardinal Richelieu, contrasted with the marginal position of John Eliot and Puritan missionaries in New England, and the almost complete lack of English missionary efforts in Virginia. (A group of English Jesuits spent only a brief time in Maryland during the 1630s.) Like missionaries in New Spain, the Jesuits were central figures in the colonial regime; however, they enjoyed far less military support than their Spanish counterparts. It is interesting to compare missionary methods among the French, Spanish, and English, and the attitudes they had about each other. Roger Williams and John Williams are scathing in their condemnation of Jesuit methods of conversion. Students also have to come to terms with the remarkable strength of the Jesuit religious conviction. They can think about Father Jogues's *Relation* as a captivity narrative, and consider how it contrasts rather sharply with what we have come to regard as the originary "American" captivities of Cabeza de Vaca and Mary Rowlandson. Jogues never doubts himself or his faith and appears entirely prepared to submit to kidnapping and torture in the fulfillment of his mission. The strength of the Hurons' faith is equally remarkable, although both can be read as textual "creations" by Jesuit editors who, seeking to gather support for their cause among French readers, shaped their *Relation* to privilege a particular religious interpretation of events in which Jogues and the Huron converts are martyrs suffering intense earthly pains but winning eternal glory for their cause.

Jogues's *Relation* can also be compared to English and Spanish texts in terms of the way the narrative voice spiritualizes the landscape, and the comfort it feels in this alien place. The graphic nature of this account serves to remind us of the violence and bloodshed endemic in colonial North America, often glossed over in other accounts. The narrative

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also illustrates the interrelationships among competing colonial groups (a map is of great benefit here): in a few pages, Jogues passes from Quebec, to the Huron country, to Mohawk villages, and to the Dutch settlement at Fort Orange. Finally, students can compare the way this narrative represents native people, their customs and thinking about captives and missionaries, to the representations by Laudonnière, Champlain, Columbus, Casteñeda, Roger Williams, and Cotton Mather. To what extent does Jogues engage in the construction of “good” and “bad” Indians, from his very interested point of view?

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. As with the selections from New Spain, you can ask students to consider the role of violence in the colonization of the Americas.
2. Students can compare/contrast the representation each of these texts gives of the New World, the native populations, the possibilities for colonization, and think about the differences in terms of the audience and intentions of the texts.
3. In the twentieth century, Jesuit accounts have been used by anthropologists, linguists, folklorists, historians, and literary critics seeking information about French and Native cultures in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But what is the value of these texts as historical “evidence”? To what extent do we “hear” Native voices in an account such as Jogues’s? What can and can’t we learn about the Jesuits, the Hurons, or the Mohawks from this piece?

Chesapeake

Thomas Harriot (1560–1621)

Contributing Editor: Thomas Scanlan

Classroom Issues and Strategies

It was not until 1585, almost a full century after Christopher Columbus had claimed vast portions of the New World for Spain, that an English expedition, led by Sir Richard Grenville, established a colony on Roanoke Island in what is today part of North Carolina's Outer Banks. Sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh, Grenville's expedition followed the voyage to Roanoke led by Arthur Barlowe and Philip Amadas in the previous year. Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* renders an account of what he and the other members of Grenville's expedition team found in their voyage. Accompanying Harriot and the others on that expedition was John White who, having sailed with Martin Frobisher in 1577 in his exploration of Greenland and Baffin Island, was already a veteran explorer by the time he joined Grenville in 1585. White would of course become better known as the governor of the ill-fated second Roanoke colony. The members of this so-called "lost" colony set sail from England in May of 1587. While White himself returned to England for supplies shortly after he arrived in Virginia, those who stayed behind at the Roanoke colony had vanished by the time White reached the area again in 1590 with the needed supplies. Although the mysterious disappearance of the Roanoke colonists significantly dampened English enthusiasm for colonial adventure, Thomas Harriot's pamphlet was published at a moment when the English were feeling very optimistic about their affairs both at home and abroad. Fifteen-hundred-and-eighty-eight, the year Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* was published, was also the year that the English defeated the Spanish Armada. Moreover, Harriot's readers would not yet have known of the fate of the second Roanoke colony.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

There are basically two ways to approach Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report*: either from a comparative perspective or from an Anglo-American one. In the comparative frame, Harriot works well when read alongside other narratives of early European contact with America and its native people. Instructors, therefore, might wish to pair Harriot with one or more of the following authors: Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, or Champlain. Students could be asked to compare the attitudes of these writers toward the notion of colonial undertaking, generally speaking: Do they seem to have the same goals in embarking on colonial voyages? Do they write their accounts for the same reasons? Are they taken aback by anything they see or do? More specifically, students could be asked to compare the attitudes of the various writers toward the native people they encounter: What sorts of details do they choose to give us? Do they seem to view the native people as a resource to exploit or as potential neighbors? Do they seem to admire the native inhabitants?

Read as one of the earliest chapters in the English colonization of America, Harriot might be paired with Thomas Morton, William Bradford, Roger Williams, or Mary Rowlandson. Each of these writers offers students a different version of the English colonial mind-set. Students could be asked to find similarities as well as differences among the five, and then they could be asked to account for what they find. For example, can one see an evolution of a colonial ideology from Harriot to Rowlandson? Does English colonial writing appear to be monolithic or heterogeneous? Is there anything in Harriot's text that seems to anticipate the negative views toward the Indians in the writings of Bradford and Rowlandson? Finally, can Harriot be useful as background for reading nineteenth-century texts that portray Native Americans—for example, Sedgwick and Cooper?

Whether one reads Harriot comparatively or not, one will want to be sure to consider introducing students to the spectacular images that accompanied the second edition (1590) of Harriot's text. These copperplate engravings by Theodor DeBry were based on the watercolor drawings of John White, who accompanied Harriot to the New World in 1585.

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Influenced both by the accounts of explorers returning from the New World and by the prevailing artistic conventions of the day, DeBry's stunning engravings can complete a picture that Harriot's text seems only to gesture at. By examining these images, students will see the extent to which early settlers felt genuine admiration for the native people they encountered. But they will also see the extent to which Europeans tended to infantilize the natives, often treating them as nothing more than wild children desperately in need of European civilization. DeBry's images have been widely reproduced and are available in a paperback reprint of Harriot's *Briefe and True Report*.

Edward Maria Wingfield (1560?–1613?)

Contributing Editor: Liahna Babener

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Despite its centrality in the colonization of America, there is very little particular data and few firsthand accounts of the Jamestown enterprise. A comparison with other eyewitness accounts (John Smith, Richard Frethorne) helps clarify and balance Wingfield's point of view. Presentation of background on the settlement history of Jamestown is also useful, as is a review of the political, religious, and social issues that shaped colonization experiences in various regions of America, particularly New England, the Middle Colonies, and the South.

Students are most interested in the problems of maintaining discipline, managing provisions, and fostering cooperation. They like to explore the contrasts between settlements undergirded by strong religious ideology and those driven by economic ambitions (often reluctantly concluding that the former are more "successful" if also more regimented communities). Students also debate whether Wingfield is too timorous, whether he pads his case, and whether he manipulates their sympathies.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. The problem of leadership and political authority in early colonial government. Class, economic, and political conflicts among constituencies of colonists. The impact of these issues on the evolution of colonial democracy. Relations between New World and mother country.
2. Wingfield's personal strengths and failings as a colonial administrator. The conflicts between the drive toward anarchy and the pressure for authoritarian government, where Wingfield is poised precariously between the two.
3. Conditions of life at Jamestown, including class stresses,

daily life and its deprivations, illness and calamity, the absence of women, etc.

4. Can we begin to discern an image of America (as a culture in its own right, as distinct from its English occupants) in this document?
5. In what ways does the Jamestown experience as Wingfield tells it reflect the fact that it was an all-male society?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

We may view this document as a political treatise, apologia, manifesto, historical chronicle, and memoir. A consideration of the conventions of each genre and a comparison with other examples of each from the colonial period is illuminating. We may use it to discern the ethos of a male English gentleman, and explore the collision between his worldview and the realities of life in Virginia under the devastating stresses of colonization.

Original Audience

Because the document is a self-defense, it is useful to determine whom Wingfield meant to address, and how his particular argument might appeal to his implicit audience. Would investors in the Virginia Company respond differently from fellow colonists? Would upper-class readers respond differently from the working class? Which groups might be alienated by his self-portrait and vision of leadership?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Compare accounts of the Jamestown settlement and issues of colonial governance by John Smith (*A True Relation of Occurrences and Accidents in Virginia*, 1608, and *General History of Va.*, 1624), and Richard Frethorne (“Letters to His Parents”). Other documents that explore the pressures facing colonial executives and the crises of colonization and

community include Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and Morton's *The New English Canaan*. Especially suitable for its parallel case of deposed leadership and its differing vision of government is John Winthrop's "Speech to the General Court" included in his *Journal*. What differences between religiously and economically motivated settlements can be seen?

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) Discern the underlying worldview of Wingfield, taking into account his background as an upper-middle-class male Englishman and perhaps a Catholic.
(b) Identify his various strategies of self-justification. Are you sympathetic? Why or why not? Do you think his audience is won over? Explain.
(c) Which issues seem more imperative: political struggles over power or economic struggles for provisions? What about military concerns about the colony's safety from Indians?
2. (a) Compare Wingfield's style of leadership to Bradford's, Morton's, Winthrop's, John Smith's.
(b) Re-create a vivid picture of daily life at Jamestown.
(c) How might the situation have been different if women had been present in the colony from the outset? If Wingfield had been an artisan or worker?
(d) What were the particular obstacles to effective governance at Jamestown?

Bibliography

There is surprisingly little particularized history of Jamestown. Wingfield appears as a footnote or brief entry in most textbooks or historical accounts of the Jamestown colony. In John C. Miller's chapter "The Founding of Virginia" in *This New Man, The American: The Beginnings of the American People* (1974) there is a substantive and articulate account of the colony's story. Richard Morton's treatment of the same material in the first two chapters of Vol. 1 of *Colonial Virginia* (1960) is also useful and very detailed, though, again, does not contain much express material on Wingfield. I had hoped to

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find a feminist reconsideration of the Jamestown experience to address the problems of a gender-imbalanced society, but found no sustained inquiry on that issue.

John Smith (1580–1631)

Contributing Editor: Amy E. Winans

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Since the time of their writing, Smith's works have evoked wildly divergent responses from readers: Smith has been viewed both as a self-aggrandizing and inaccurate historian and as the savior of the Virginia colony and friend to Native Americans. For example, one historian, Karen Ordahl Kupperman, has suggested that Smith's writing was most self-consciously literary—and therefore most historically suspect—in those passages that recount his interchanges with Powhatan. Interestingly, she and others also contend that Smith offered his readers a fairly reliable ethnographic account of Native American life. Students might usefully examine the process of Smith's self-fashioning that has evoked this variety of responses. Such an examination could also provide the basis for a discussion of the opposition between the New England and Virginian models of colonization, as well as strategies of self-representation.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Smith's individualized portrait of Powhatan is unique among early writers, who often referred to Native Americans in much more generic terms, typically invoking a Manichean allegory. Still, these selections can usefully be compared to the selections from Roger Williams, Thomas Morton, and William Bradford. Consider, for example, the differences between Smith's account of Powhatan and Bradford's accounts of Samoset, Squanto, and the Pequot War. As background for this

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discussion, review differences between the Jamestown settlement and the Massachusetts settlements. Smith should also be examined in the context of the other Jamestown writers included in the anthology: Richard Frethorne and Edward Wingfield.

I have found it helpful to broaden students' understanding of colonial discourse, storytelling, and history writing by examining a brief excerpt from the conclusion of Disney's film *Pocahontas* after we have discussed Smith's writing. Consider similarities and differences between the rhetorical strategies of the colonial text and the contemporary film.

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Richard Frethorne (fl. 1623)

Contributing Editors: Liahna Babener and Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Virtually no historical data about Frethorne is available, but we can place him in the context of the Jamestown colony since he settled near that village. He also draws a revealing picture of the deteriorating relations between the English settlers and the Indians that is consistent with the history of Jamestown in the period between the two attacks on the colony by the Powhatan chief Openchancanough. The first, which Frethorne refers to, occurred in 1622 and the second in 1641. Both attacks were in retaliation for specific incidents of murder and depredation on the part of the English, but were responses, more generally, to English expansion into native lands and the resulting erosion of native lifeways.

The writer's candor about his own experience is compelling. He used vivid details to describe his discontent, deprivation, and discomfort. The small specifics of daily life (quantities and kinds of food, items of clothing, catalogs of implements) and the data of survival and death (lists of deceased colonists, trade and barter statistics, numerical estimates of enemy Indians and their military strength, itemized accounts of provisions, and rations records) lend credibility to Frethorne's dilemma and enable students to empathize with his distress.

Students respond to reading Frethorne with questions like these:

What happened to Frethorne?

Did he remain in the New World, return home, or die?

Did he receive provisions from his parents?

Why is there no other historical record of his life or his fate?

Why was there so much rancor over provisions, and why couldn't the English authorities address the scarcity?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Invite students to imaginatively re-create, through the details in the text, the world Frethorne inhabited, gleaning his worldview as a white, Christian, European (English), and presumably working-class man. What assumptions does he make about the mission of settlement, the character of the New World, the nature of the native peoples, the relationships between colonists? What does he expect in terms of comfort and satisfaction? What class attitudes does he reveal? Compare his implicit vision of the New World with the region he actually encounters. What religious, social, political, and ethical beliefs does he bring to his account, and how do they shape his view of his experience? What can be inferred about the constraints upon indentured servants—and the lives they led—from Frethorne's record?

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. Consider the "letter" as a literary genre, exploring issues of format, voice, reliability and self-consciousness of speaker, assumed audience, etc.
2. Discuss the letter as a social history document as well as a personal record and literary construct.
3. Discuss the strategies of persuasion and justification employed by the speaker. How does he win over his parents' support and pity through rhetorical tactics as well as emotional expression?
4. Consider the literary precedents and background of biblical allusion related to Frethorne's letter.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

1. Use other letters and firsthand accounts from colonists in the New World: cf. letter from "Pond," a young

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Massachusetts settler, to his parents in Suffolk, England (repr. in Demos, John, ed., *Remarkable Providences, 1600–1760*. New York: George Braziller, 1972, p. 73).

2. Use Pond to compare New England and Jamestown experiences.
3. Use chronicles by Bradford, Smith, and Wingfield—recording both personal and communal life in the colonies—to discover the diversity of such experiences and the impact of his background and ethos upon Frethorne’s viewpoint in these letters. Use women’s accounts to identify gender issues.
4. Compare Frethorne’s account of his indenture to James Revel’s account of his experience as a transported felon a half a century later. Has the life of an indentured servant changed much with the economic expansion of the colony?

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) Invite students to itemize the basic assumptions (worldview components) that Frethorne brings to his experience—these then become the basis for class discussion (as we discern them from evidence in the document).
(b) Ask students to try to determine what aspects of Frethorne’s appeal have been calculated to move his parents to aid him. How does he use persuasive and manipulative techniques (or does he?) to affect them?
2. (a) Write out responses to (a) and (b) above.
(b) Using other primary sources, imaginatively recreate the world of Jamestown by inventing your own letter or diary entry or newspaper story or other fabricated “document” that conveys a vivid sense of colonial life.
(c) Write an imagined reply from Frethorne’s parents.

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A good description of the events at Jamestown from the native as well as the English perspective is Frederic W. Gleach,

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Nathaniel Bacon (1647–1676)

Teaching material for Nathaniel Bacon is available on *The Heath Anthology* web site. (To access the site, please go to the Houghton Mifflin college home page at **<http://college.hmco.com>**. Select *English*, then select *The Heath Anthology* textbook site.)

James Revel (after 1640s)

Teaching material for James Revel is available on *The Heath Anthology* web site. (To access the site, please go to the Houghton Mifflin college home page at **<http://college.hmco.com>**. Select *English*, then select *The Heath Anthology* textbook site.)

New England

Thomas Morton (1579?–1647?)

Contributing Editor: Kenneth Alan Hovey

Original Audience

Most students have some knowledge of Puritans and their role in the settlement of New England, but very few are familiar with pioneering Cavaliers like Morton. His values, therefore, and their relation to the more familiar swashbuckling Cavaliers of Europe need to be carefully explained. According to his own self-description, Morton was the university-educated son of a soldier, devoted to the British crown and old English ways, and a staunch supporter of the Church of England, its liturgy, and its holy days.

His portrait of the Indians is an attempt to show how, despite their uncivilized state, they share many values with the traditional Englishmen whom he takes to be his audience. The Indians' personal modesty, hospitality to strangers, respect for authority, and even religious views mirror those of England, and their contentment surpasses that of the English because of their greater closeness to nature. They are swashbucklers without the trappings of Europe, indulging in pleasures because they are natural and upholding authority because it allows indulgence. By contrast, the Pilgrims appear to be ill-educated rabble-rousers who despise all tradition and authority. Devoid even of common humanity, they serve their own self-glorifying appetites and deny the bounty that nature has left open to all.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Morton is best read beside Bradford to bring out the full contrast between their views of Cavaliers, Indians, and Pilgrims. Morton also provides an interesting contrast in style to Bradford. Both works are highly rhetorical, but where

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Bradford uses his rhetoric to magnify God and humbly to minimize his poor persecuted people, Morton uses his to satirize those same people and to flaunt the superiority of his own wit and learning. All students should be able to pick out the clear cases of Morton's fictionalizing, especially in the account of Standish's response to Morton's escape, and some may see how he used *Don Quixote* and medieval romance to shape his own mock-romance.

The contrast between Morton and Bradford can serve not only to establish the relative credibility of the two authors and the nature of their rhetoric, but to raise important moral questions about the whole colonial endeavor, especially with respect to the Indians. Were the Pilgrims, for instance, inhumane in denying the Indians firearms? Did Morton display true humanity in encouraging the Indians, male and female, to party with him and his men? To what extent could both groups be called hypocritical? Did British culture corrupt natural Indian ways or did Indian ways corrupt in different ways both the industrious Pilgrims and the pleasure-loving Cavaliers? Can the meeting of two such different cultures ever bring out the best in both, especially when each is itself divided into tribes or factions? Such questions rise naturally from much of colonial literature but perhaps most glaringly from Morton's work.

In addition to the contrast afforded by reading Morton and Bradford together, instructors can also consider pairing Morton with Thomas Harriot, Roger Williams, or Mary Rowlandson. All of these writers wrote about their contacts with Indians. Students might be asked whether religion seems to influence the authors' views of the Indians. (Williams and Rowlandson were Puritans, while Harriot and Morton were not.) Students might also be asked whether they perceive any sort of progression or evolution in the English attitudes toward the Indians from the early contacts to the late seventeenth century. Finally, students should be asked to file away their impressions of these early writings so that they might revisit them later on when they read such writers as James Fenimore Cooper, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, and William Cullen Bryant.

John Winthrop (1588–1649)

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Contributing Editor: Nicholas D. Rombes, Jr.

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The sweeping nature of the *Journal* encompasses social, political, economic, and “daily survival” issues. Thus, it might be wise to focus on an area, or areas, at least to begin with. When looking at cultural or historical implications, consult supplemental information. That is, although Winthrop’s writings illuminate his biases and assumptions, they “shape” the history of the period as well as record it.

Students are generally shocked by the rigidity of Winthrop’s view of the world. Their shock may be addressed by consulting outside sources (e.g., on the Hutchinson affair) and making them aware of Winthrop’s assumptions concerning power, patriarchy, etc., as well as the position and voice of women in the Puritan community. However, it might be wise to note, as well, how our twentieth-century notions of what is fair and unfair can sometimes impose themselves upon the cultural environment Winthrop was operating within. Winthrop and the Puritans should be approached not only as philosophical, political, and religious figures, but also as real people who struggled daily against nature, hunger, and disease.

Students are often curious about the distinctions between the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace, and the Elect. You might explore the notion of community and social structures and the role of the individual in these structures, or you could discuss the Bible as a typological model for the Puritans, as well as Puritan conceptions of original depravity, limited atonement, grace, and predestination.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Certainly, based on the selections in this anthology, it would be fruitful to focus on the Hutchinson controversy and its implications for the Puritan oligarchy. Examine the early Puritans’ conception of liberty and its inextricable connections with their obligation to God. Likewise, the notion of a “city

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upon a hill” and the Puritans’ link between America and the
“new Israel” is important. You could discuss as well the
providential interpretation of events and the nature of
hierarchy in the Puritan community.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Winthrop had training as a lawyer; the style and form of *A Modell of Christian Charity* reflect this. Likewise, the entire self-reflexive nature of the *Journal* lends itself to examination: Who was Winthrop’s audience? Where does the *Journal* belong in the convention of the personal narrative or spiritual autobiography? What was his purpose for writing?

Original Audience

Recent examinations of *A Modell of Christian Charity* suggest that the sermon was not only intended for those who would soon be settling in America, but also for those who were growing weary (and by implication becoming disruptive) during the long voyage aboard the *Arbella*. In what ways was Winthrop’s audience (especially in the *Journal*) himself?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Perhaps compare Winthrop’s sermons with those of Jonathan Edwards (who was writing a century later). Note how the style changed, as did the emphasis on religious experience (the experience becomes more sensory and less restrained). Compare Winthrop’s vision of God’s grace with Roger Williams’s vision.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) What motivated the Puritans to flee England?
(b) Did the Puritans have a “blueprint” for organizing their new communities, or did the social structure evolve slowly?

- (c) From what type of social, cultural, religious, and economic background did Winthrop emerge?
- 2. (a) Examine Winthrop's 1645 speech in which he responds to charges that he exceeded his authority as governor. Is this speech a fruition (or expression) of the Puritan ambiguity between the value of religion and the value of individual liberty?
- (b) How did the Hutchinson controversy potentially threaten the Puritan oligarchy?
- (c) Explore the "spiritual autobiography" and its characteristics. What philosophical purposes did it serve? What pragmatic purposes?
- (d) In *Modell*, have students trace image patterns Winthrop uses, that is, allusions to biblical passages, discursive form of sermon, etc.

William Bradford (1590–1657)

Contributing Editor: Phillip Gould

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Bradford's history at once perpetuates and demystifies the mythic status that mainstream American culture has bestowed upon the "Pilgrims" of New England. This might be a useful place to start: the ways in which Bradford's narrative mythologizes first-generation heroism, and yet exposes the all-too-human squabbling, selfishness, and greed of the Plymouth settlers.

The tension between Bradford's desire to construct a place for Plymouth in a divine historical plan, and his eventual, implicit recognition of the diminution of Plymouth's status, lends itself to discussion of the nature of history-writing in general. This tension, which involves Bradford's painful negotiation of correctly reading providential design, shows students how the supposedly objective genre of "history," like all forms of narrative, is a construction of prevailing ideologies.

As in Winthrop's *Journal, Of Plymouth Plantation's*

account of the quotidian realities of a frontier society dismantles the quasi-Victorian stereotypes that students bring to the concept of the “Puritan” (or, in this case, the Separatist). As a text composed, for all intents and purposes, on the frontier, students might consider how this historical reality also shapes Bradford’s treatment of Amerindians.

The issue of Bradford’s composition of his history may raise issues about the coherence of the text. Do students see distinctive subjects, thematic motifs, or narrative tones in each of the two parts?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The concept of community pervades the entire text of Bradford. The history demonstrates the problematic maintenance of the national covenant—the community’s collective dedication to live by the purity of God’s ordinances—as a parallel to the covenant of grace, by which each individual “saint” was redeemed (through Christ) by belief itself. Ironically enough, the logical extension of a “covenanted” people was a communitarian enterprise that at first simulated a kind of socialism, one which soon proved to be untenable. In Bradford’s account of this minor crisis lies (as in a well-crafted novel) a foreshadowing of the eventual dispersal and fragmentation that later beset the colony. In this context, *Of Plymouth Plantation* recounts both the internal (material greed, “wickedness”) and external (Thomas Morton, the Pequod—so far as Bradford perceives them) threats that constantly besieged the community.

The relationship between sacred and secular history, if theologically reconcilable, poses another thematic tension in the text. Bradford’s insistence upon the “special providences” of God (those reserved for the elect in times of crisis) exists in counterpoise with the detailed catalogs of human negotiations, contrivances, and machinations that describe daily life in England and America.

Some scholars believe that Bradford’s wife committed suicide while awaiting disembarkment from the *Mayflower*. This personal tragedy, along with the cycles of disappointment and success that Bradford underwent, and the constant struggle to maintain the communitarian ideal, all raise the issue of his

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narrative tone. The text modulates tenors of resolve, sadness, and humility.

This edition of the *Heath Anthology* reprints the final section of Bradford's annals for 1642, which concerns the indictment and execution of Thomas Granger for buggery. Considered a worse offense than either premarital heterosexual sex or adultery, bestiality ranked with sodomy as "things fearful to name." In considering Bradford's tortured response to the outbreak of "wickedness" in Plymouth, students can be asked how sanctioned and proscribed modes of sociality and sexuality define communal identity. Fellowship "between men," to use Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's formulation, was integral to the social structure of Plymouth Colony. But what made Plymouth novel was the inclusion of women, children, and servants—of families—in the venture of colonizing North America. One way to approach the Thomas Granger section is to discuss the tension between a communal ideal of society as a juridical commonwealth founded on a sacred bond between men and one where issues of procreation and reproduction have become more important. Jonathan Goldberg's chapter on Bradford in *Sodomities* (1992) is suggestive for this type of discussion. Granger's class status, a servant, also is relevant to issues of social reproduction. Bradford laments the necessity of bringing in outsiders to labor for the colony and further that these may reproduce and dilute the core constituents of the original covenant. Thus bestiality, a profane intermixing of different species, evinces once again the strain of Plymouth's dual missions, one religious and the other secular.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Of Plymouth Plantation exemplifies, perhaps as well as any colonial New England text, the aesthetic virtues of the "plain style." The simplicity of its syntactic rhythms and the concreteness of its imagery and tropes demonstrate the rhetorical power of understatement. The plain style theoretically reflected the need to erase the self (which Bradford also achieves in referring to himself as "the governor") in the very act of creation, by having one's words stylistically approach the biblical Word of God. Bradford's history, however, shows students how the theological rigors of Puritan thought nonetheless allowed for distinctive "voices" to

emerge, in this case, Bradford's uniquely compassionate, humble, and sometimes embittered one.

The issue of Puritan typology—which reads the Old Testament not only as a prefiguring of the New Testament, but of contemporary history as well—is also somewhat problematic in Bradford's history. The correlation, in other words, between the Old Testament Hebrews and the Plymouth “saints” is not a stable one. For example, when Bradford alludes to Mount Pisgah in chapter IX, he, in effect, suggests a distinction between the Israelites' Promised Land and the wild terrors of New England.

Original Audience

The private nature of Bradford's history and its delayed publication in the nineteenth century complicate the issue of the text's reception. A close reading, however, suggests that Bradford appeared to have envisioned multiple audiences for the text. As certain scholars have noted, the narrative seems to be addressed to lukewarm Anglicans at home, the remaining Scrooby Congregation, members of the larger Massachusetts Bay colony, and, perhaps most visibly, to members of the second generation who had strayed from the founders' original vision.

Moreover, students might be reminded that, despite its delayed publication, the manuscript significantly influenced a number of later New England historians such as Nathaniel Morton, Cotton Mather, and Thomas Prince.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Although the latter sections of Winthrop's *Journal* were written retrospectively, *Of Plymouth Plantation* provides a useful distinction between a retrospective narrative and an ongoing chronicle of historical events.

Bradford's relatively austere prose style, as well as his problematic moments in interpreting providence—and thus the meaning of New England—contrasts strikingly with the productions of Cotton Mather. These distinctions help to prevent students' tendencies to see “Puritanism” as a monolith.

There are parallels, however, between Bradford's mythologizing of first-generation founders like Brewster and John Robinson and the kind of biography Cotton Mather conducts in the *Magnalia*.

Bradford's history is an early instance of themes prevalent in American immigration and frontier literatures. The cycles of struggle, survival, and declension characterize, for example, a much later writer—such as Willa Cather, who was far removed from Puritan New England. The instability of community in these genres make for a line of thematic continuity between Bradford and writers of frontier romance such as Catharine Maria Sedgwick and James Fenimore Cooper.

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Roger Williams (1603?–1683)

*Contributing Editors: Raymond F. Dolle and Renée L.
Bergland*

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Most of the selections included here are drawn from Roger Williams's only published book, *A Key into the Language of America*. It is important to present *A Key* as a utilitarian travel guide; white readers could have carried it with them in Narragansett country (and many did). But the work is also a socio-linguistic treatise and an extended sermon. Williams is very explicit in stating that his book is written on many levels: he writes that "a little *Key* may open a *Box*, where lies a *bunch of Keys*." Students may find these multiple layers of meaning difficult, but many of them will enjoy Williams's puns and paradoxes.

One of the most striking features of *A Key into the Language of America* is that Williams embeds a detailed critique of white, Christian New England into his portrait of Narragansett New England. Williams never explicitly criticizes Christianity or Christian values, but he does repeatedly assert that few Christians live up to Christian ideals. It isn't that Narragansett culture is *more* virtuous than European or Euro-American culture, but that all cultural groups are equally far from Williams's Puritan ideals.

Another distinctive feature of *A Key into the Language of America* is its form. In a sense, this book is a dictionary; but it is a dictionary in dialogue form. Rather than word lists and grammar paradigms, Williams presents short dialogues that imply specific situational contexts. In this aspect, the book

resembles current-day Berlitz language handbooks. But *A Key* goes much beyond Berlitz. Each chapter includes a few dialogues, followed by “Observations” that explain an ethnographic context for each dialogue, and then by a “Generall Observation” that shifts the focus from the Narragansett context to the human condition. Finally, each chapter concludes with a “More particular” observation, an emblematic poem that shows readers the point of the chapter. These “More particular” observations function like the final couplets of Shakespearean sonnets—they provide the zingers.

Williams’s use of dialogue is important. Even Williams’s more well-known but difficult tract, *The Bloody Tenent*, is written as a dialogue. This tract lays out Williams’s central notions of the separation of church and state and the importance of the freedom of conscience. It was a response to John Cotton’s defense of the theocracy of Massachusetts Bay that exiled Williams for his “unorthodox” views. You may want to ask students to consider the effect of dialogue and why Williams returned to this form over and over.

Students admire Williams’s rebellion against authority and his argument for individual liberty of conscience. Although they may not understand his religious beliefs, they respect his courage and determination to stand up for what he believed and for the right of others to follow their beliefs.

Parallels between the Indians’ religious beliefs and Christian concepts often surprise students and stimulate discussion of the nature of religion.

Williams’s apparent toleration of personal religious differences often confuses students because it seems to contradict his radical and extreme Puritanism. Students must be reminded that although he accepted sects such as the Quakers into Providence plantation, he did not think that their beliefs were acceptable. Rather, he believed that the free search for Truth and the liberty to argue one’s beliefs would lead the elect to God.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Roger Williams was sheltered by the Narragansetts after he had been banished from the Puritan colonies. In order to understand the conflict between Williams and the Puritan

leaders that led to his banishment, we need to understand the three extreme positions he expounded:

1. Civil magistrates should have no jurisdiction over religious matters, and Christian churches should be absolutely divorced from worldly concerns (i.e., separation of church and state)—a position destructive to the prevailing theocracy of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth. The elect had to be free to seek God according to their beliefs. His letter “To the Town of Providence” refutes the *reductio ad absurdum* charge that this position leads ultimately to political anarchy if individuals can claim liberty of conscience to refuse civil obedience.
2. The Puritans should all become Separatists because the Church of England was associated too closely with political authority—a position that jeopardized the charter and the relative freedom it granted.
3. The Massachusetts Bay Company charter should be invalidated since Christian kings have no right to dispose of Indian lands—a position again based on separation of spiritual and material prerogatives. Williams was a friend of the Narragansett Indians, a defender of their legal property rights, and an admirer of their natural virtue. He devoted much of his life to understanding their language and culture so that he could teach them about Christ. Many Christian missionaries believed the “savages” had to be civilized before they could be Christianized, but the colonization of the Indian lands often had tragic effects. The importance of bringing knowledge of Christ to the Indians, despite this dilemma, created one of the central conflicts in Williams’s life.

The banishment of Williams from the colony reflects basic conflicts and concerns in the patriarchal Puritan society of colonial New England. The community leaders felt an urgent need to maintain authority and orthodoxy in order to preserve the “city on a hill” they had founded. Any challenge to their authority undermined the Puritan mission and threatened the New Canaan they had built with such suffering and at such great costs. However, the zeal and pure devotion needed to continue the efforts of the founding fathers were too

much for most colonists; the congregational social structure began to fracture almost before it was fully established. Not only did secular attractions, worldly concerns, and material opportunities distract immigrants, but the strict requirements for church membership denied many full status in the community. Like Anne Hutchinson, the figure at the center of the Antinomian controversy, Williams advocated attractive individualistic principles that threatened the prevailing system. The colony banished him from Christ's kingdom in America in an attempt to hold their community of saints together.

Williams's sympathetic treatment of the Narragansett stands in sharp contrast to his satiric descriptions of European hypocrisies. This makes sense when *A Key* is read in the context of Williams's own story of being banished from the colonies and sheltered by the Narragansetts.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

The introduction to *A Key* (in fact, the title itself) invites attention to Williams's figurative language, as in the proverb, "A little key may open a box, where lies a bunch of keys." The meaning and implications of such statements are fruitful points for class discussion. Other good examples are the ship metaphor in the letter to Providence and the emblematic poems at the end of the chapters in *A Key*.

Throughout *A Key*, especially in the General Observations, the satiric contrast between true natural virtue and false Christianity creates a tension that invigorates the text and makes it a unique example of the promotional tract tradition.

The "stories" of intercultural contact that emerge in the dialogic vocabulary lists are worth attention.

Original Audience

Although Williams usually wrote with particular readers in mind, his themes and subjects have universal relevance and can still reward readers today.

Williams tells us that he intended *A Key* "specially for my friends residing in those parts." In other words, he wants to instruct fellow missionaries and traders how to interact with his other friends, the Indians. He is determined to dispel the

stereotypes and false conceptions of them as subhuman savages current in the early colonies. Images of the Indians in writings from Williams's contemporaries and earlier explorers should provide students with a clear sense of the audience, their assumptions, and their needs. Williams has much to say about interracial understanding, respect, and harmony.

The audience for the letter to Providence is again quite specific, readers with a particular misconception and need. Williams writes to settle a controversy over freedom of conscience and civil obedience. Again, this controversy is still alive, and we can consider Williams's statement in light of the writings on the subject by such people as Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Williams's descriptions of the Indians can be compared to descriptions in many other texts, ranging from the orthodox Puritan attitudes toward the satanic savages, as in Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romantic tributes to the Noble Savage. It is also fruitful to compare Williams's attitudes with those of the Spanish and French explorers and traders and missionaries like the French Jesuit, Father Isaac Jogues.

Williams is often seen as a forerunner of Jefferson and Jackson, but we must remember that he did not advocate liberty as an end in itself for political reasons, but rather as a means to seek God.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) What can we infer about Williams's intentions from the fact that he chose to compose *A Key into the Language of America* as an "implicit dialogue" rather than as a dictionary?
- (b) Characterize the persona of the first-person narrator in *A Key*. What kind of person does Williams present himself as?
- (c) How is Williams's book like a key?
- (d) How do the various sections of each chapter in *A Key* relate to one another and to the whole work?
- (e) What lessons can a Christian learn from the Indians?
- (f) Why might Williams once have objected to Europe?

and the rest of the West being referred to as “Christendom”?

- (g) In what ways was a colony in the New World like a ship at sea?
 - (h) What did Williams gain from his treaty with the Indians besides legal ownership of some land?
2. Here are some alternative writing assignments:
- (a) Personal Response Paper: Ask the students to compare one or more of Williams’s observations to their own experiences and observations.
 - (b) Creative Response Paper: Ask the students to write a letter back to Williams, written by a spokesperson for the town of Providence, refuting Williams’s argument and defending the right to act as one believes one’s religious beliefs demand.
 - (c) Creative Research Paper: Assign supplemental readings from Winslow’s biography of Williams (or other sources) related to his trial and banishment. Then ask the students to compose a transcript of the trial proceedings or a speech by Williams defending himself.

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Thomas Shepard (1605–1649)

Contributing Editor: Gregory S. Jackson

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Shepard's autobiography provides a wide-ranging interdisciplinary portrait of transatlantic Anglo-America, spanning a number of important historical, cultural, and ideological divides. As a transitional document with roots deeply embedded in British ecclesiastical and political canons, colonial ideology, and continental philosophical and literary traditions, the autobiography can thus play a key role not only in a unit on the American Puritans, but also in broader American, British, and postcolonial surveys. For students who too often view "America" as a nation that rose *sui generis*, whose social customs and cultural traditions began and evolved in hermetic isolation from European influences, Shepard's autobiography provides a powerful corrective. No single text in the early colonial American tradition paints a more comprehensive picture of the origin of the cross-cultural dialogue between America and Great Britain that began in the seventeenth century and remains vital even today.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Since the groundbreaking works of V. L. Parrington and Perry Miller, scholars have recognized the connection between nineteenth- and twentieth-century narratives of American exceptionalism and seventeenth-century New England millennialism, the belief in a progressive history that sees the culmination of time in a golden age of Messianic reign. Less noticed in early American scholarship, however, is the way in which this progressive historical narrative fostered the spread

of Humanism, the increasingly secular belief in the perfectibility of the human being. Taken together with a millennial sense of destiny, Puritan Humanism was to work all kinds of mischief upon and within the more restrictive, less democratic political system of a constitutional monarchy.

Shepard's life story presents a poignant contradiction between the Puritans' own exile in the name of religious tolerance, and their often brutal persecution of the Quakers and Anabaptists. Doctrinal differences were cruelly suppressed, and perceived heretics—like Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and John Wheelwright—were, after being tarred with the broad brush of Arminianism, banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. As students become more sophisticated in their understanding of historical causality, they often translate this contradiction into a myth of national origin, viewing the nation's revolutionary emphasis upon individual liberties as a safeguard mounted in opposition to "Puritanical" social control.

Such a myth predisposes even advanced students to a thinly fleshed understanding of the rich intellectual and religious heterodoxy within New England Puritanism. It disguises the important Puritan influences on early U.S. nationalism, and students come to view the political origins of the nation as wholly distinct from Puritan culture. Reading out of historical context, students often assume, for instance, that the constitutional safeguard separating church and state was intended to circumscribe the authority of the post-Revolution church in order to protect the democratic sovereignty of national government. They fail to see this safeguard as mutually protective, originally designed, in fact, to preserve the autonomy of the colonial Puritan Church from the coercive authority of the state-sponsored Anglican Church, which had a political sovereign as its head.

Thus, the American literature survey provides an important venue to begin complicating this conventional narrative. Students should first be reminded of the liberal tradition that descends from Puritanism. Shepard's focus on Puritan education at Cambridge University and what would become Harvard College, his emphasis on the new science, and his repeated allusions to Hebrew and Classical Greek and Roman languages, law, and arts place his autobiography on the cusp of the cultural shift from Medieval Scholasticism to the Early Modern metaphysics, even as these interests reveal the

Puritan debt to Humanism. Certainly one can see the emphasis the Puritans placed on “liberty of conscience” and human volition—what Milton describes as man’s having been created “sufficient to stand but free to fall.” Their stress upon the individual’s role in the “completion” of sacred, preordained history is written large in the credo of the American Revolution, and redacted broadly through the various nineteenth-century manifestoes of universal suffrage, from the abolition of slavery and African-American civil rights to women’s political enfranchisement and child-labor laws.

Our students’ impressions about Puritan culture are not altogether wrong. The humanist impulse passed down from the Puritans to nineteenth-century liberal reformers never lost its double edge. The egocentrism fostered by a divine plot of election and reprobation, in league with a solipsistic individualism encouraged by the doctrine of free will, often led to movements that simply peddled social bigotry under the guise of progressive reform. If Puritan Humanism, through its emphasis on volition and the individuated conscience, would advance such noble nineteenth-century reforms as abolitionism, temperance, woman suffrage, transcendental utopianism, and Bellamistic Nationalism, to name but a few, its perverse emphasis on selective regeneration and strict adherence to a belief in providential history would help to justify social policies as lurid as the postbellum eugenics movement and as horrific as racial and social supremacy and Native American genocide.

Finally, students are often surprised to learn of the political traditions that this country inherited from Puritanism, not only in law and social custom, but in forms of government and constitutional philosophy. Shepard’s emphasis on the Puritans’ struggle to balance the doctrine of free will—the individual’s right to will or nil as he saw fit—with a Covenant theology that sought to unify New England’s social order powerfully registers the Puritans’ place in the larger seventeenth-century discourse on social contract. It places the New England Puritans in company with such important seventeenth-century Contractualists as Thomas Hooker, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and James Harrington, all of whom were brought up under Calvinist discipline. As “contract” implies, the Puritans, like their eminent contemporaries, proffered “consent” as the trigger for social contract. Thus, contractualism as a political and social

arrangement evolves out of the Protestant emphasis on individual volition. But whereas Locke and Harrington saw rational self-interest as the motivation for the individual's consenting to mutual alliance, and Hobbes saw the fear of human nature as the fundamental impetus behind man's allegiance to state, the Puritans viewed the soul's desire for grace as the basis for social contract, in the form of a covenant between the visible church and God. Shepard's focus on human volition in his autobiography—exhibited on the macrolevel in his depiction of the tensions between Anglican coercion and Puritan consent, and on the microlevel in the citizen-subject's internal struggle to balance allegiance to state (or king) with "liberty of conscience"—poignantly demonstrates, however, the perpetual rub between consent and social contract. In this tension, we see the cornerstone of a modern democracy built from the enduring conflict between the civil liberty of the citizen, on the one hand, and the sovereignty of the state, on the other.

Thus, Shepard's autobiography provides a portrait in miniature of the contradictory legacy of Puritanism on American culture. In truth, if the Puritan emphasis on the unmediated relationship between the individual and God tended to increase the consciousness of the self as a spiritual entity, inspiring an egocentrism that did not suffer difference gladly, that same nascent individualism also tended to a kind of democratization of moral and social outlook. And if the Puritan emphasis on "liberty of conscience" was for a time pressed into the service of a theocracy that denied that same liberty to others, it was also this crucial liberty that would empower the American colonists to break their imperial bonds. Although Puritan theology could not ultimately survive its structural contradictions that pitted the need for social controls against the individual's spiritual autonomy, its theological imperatives spurred on the American Enlightenment, and its Protestant insistence upon free will provided the foundation of a century that was to give birth to human civil liberties. Perhaps Puritanism's most surprising legacy, however, was the blueprint it provided for American federalism. Puritan covenant ("Foederal") theology and its organization of the Church into self-directing congregations democratically united through representation to a larger religious coalition established a pattern for American republicanism.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Convention

An analysis of genre and other literary conventions in relation to Shepard's autobiography helps students not only to situate the Puritan writers in a broader context of Anglo-American literary tradition, but also to understand the complex ways in which generic form and linguistic style were often a vital part of social ritual and cultural values long before they were prized as aesthetic conventions. Understanding the complex interplay between form and function in early American discursive/oral practices—such as sermons, confessionals, captivity narratives, political jeremiads, and devotional poetry—will enrich students' understanding of later American authors and their works. For example, the use of first-person narration by a broad range of nineteenth-century authors—including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, and Henry Adams—was as much a celebration of regional memory and cultural atavism as it was an index of nineteenth-century literary vogue.

One useful way to approach Shepard's work is by reading from our present literary perspective backward through time. As the rootstock of American life writing, Shepard's narrative is the literary forebear of several genres in the American autobiographical tradition. From this Puritan tradition of the devotional confession evolved such disparate cultural forms of self-expression as the Puritan conversion narrative, the early American captivity narrative, the African-American slave narrative, the rogue journal, the modern memoir, and the first-person narration of American fiction, in the vein of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and Mark Twain.

The American tradition of life writing is a product of the Protestant Reformation. Because Protestantism rejected clerical mediation between the individual and God, it placed new emphasis on spiritual independence, essentially requiring individuals to monitor their own moral behavior and to evaluate their own spiritual progress. The idea of religious self-scrutiny as the primary duty of the individual is not an innovation of Protestantism. Since at least Augustine, introspection has been an essential feature of Christian spirituality and its conversion morphology. John Calvin,

however, elevated introspection as the essential mechanism of the Protestant conversion process, bequeathing to the Anglo-American Puritans of Shepard's generation a belief in the necessity of scrutinizing the "inner man" for evidence of his or her place in the divine plan of election and reprobation.

This shift from mediated salvation to a self-directed relationship with the divine resulted in what scholars of Early Modern subjectivity refer to as an "internalization of conscience." In effect, an increased awareness of the individual's inner impulses and immoral compulsions—and the continuous self-scrutiny required to expose them—tended to deepen the sense of human interiority, marking a break between early modern psychology and its scholastic and classical precursors. Both the internalization of conscience and the need to track spiritual progress required a method of self-inventory that could be plotted over time. Not surprisingly, the Puritans turned to life writing as the most effective means of graphing their spiritual progress, thus registering and regulating their moral conduct. As Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson have pointed out, almost every literate Puritan kept some kind of journal with daily entries. These journals logged spiritual progress, cataloged sins, traced isolated thoughts and actions for larger patterns, accounted for personal frailty, decried moral backsliding, and praised spiritual victories, functioning all the while as a kind of internal dialogue between the supplicant and God. In this way, the autobiographer transformed his life into narrative as an elaborate explanation of how his moral choices and actions revealed his place in God's providential scheme.

Located in Shepard's autobiography are the inchoate conventions that would become "indigenous" New England literary forms. Shepard's agonistic internal monologues and spiritual doubt look forward to the pietistic self-abnegation of later Puritan diarists, from the pathetic lamentations of Michael Wigglesworth to the obsessive self-doubting of Maria Sedgwick, Amos Bronson Alcott, Theodore Parker, Henry Ward Beecher, Herman Melville, and Margaret Fuller. In Shepard's account of his youthful, preconversion depravity—an Augustinian conceit—we see a foreshadowing of Benjamin Franklin's cosmopolitan trope of vaunted libertinism, itself a near contemporary of the great secular confessions of the Calvinist-reared Samuel Pepys and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. And in Shepard's obsession with the visible signs of God's

saving grace, we see the model for Puritan-born Franklin's American myth of the self-made man, where the rags-to-riches plot bespeaks social, rather than spiritual, election. Thus, Shepard's fierce Protestant self-reliance and moral self-fashioning are the psychological and generic precursors to later autobiographical traditions. The increasingly self-conscious, modern identity construction of latter-day autobiographers—Franklin, Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Henry Adams, and Walt Whitman, to name but a few—announces the sea change from the deep sacramentalism of New England's feudal origins to the democratization of the young nation's moral and social outlook.

In his practice of “reading” the external world as a system of signs, Shepard foregrounds the alienated self-detachment and inner isolation present in Puritan captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's. As both Shepard's and Rowlandson's narratives remind us, however, Puritan life writing participated in the seventeenth-century shift to an empirical epistemology equally suited to a wide array of disciplines and genres. In secular form, the self-detached gaze and ideology of the good Puritan as “outside” chronicler of world action—a kind of primitive anthropology—is the antecedent to the “objective,” empirical studies of the American Enlightenment, best exemplified in the scientific writings of Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Jared Eliot, Franklin, William Bartram, and Thomas Jefferson, and in the journals of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. And this new epistemology predicated on John Locke's sensual psychology would inspire a new genre—one that was both a symptom and a purveyor of modernity. As Ian Watt has taught us, the individual identity particularized by continued self-examination contained the narrative seeds of modern realism that would transform the Puritan allegory into the novel: two genres still intermingled in the works of the nation's earliest novelists, from Charles Brockden Brown, Rebecca Rush, and Susanna Rowson, to Catharine Sedgwick, Hannah Webster Foster, and Tabitha Gilman Tenney. Finally, more recently, critics have described the Puritan concept of earthly stewardship—manifested in Shepard's representation of the dignity of manual labor and cultivation of both earth and soul—as the forerunner of the developing canons of literary ecology, precociously present in the nature writing of

Jefferson, Edward Everett, Emerson, and Thoreau, and showcased in the sublime grandeur of the Hudson River School's romantic landscapes.

Original Audience

Shepard's autobiography differs strikingly from the life writing of most first-generation New England Puritans—such as William Bradford, John Winthrop, and Anne Bradstreet—in that it was intended for a public audience. Few of the New England clergy went to the trouble to revise their journals and diaries into a formal and cohesive life story. That Shepard did so bespeaks a different set of priorities from the customary purposes of Puritan introspection. By shaping the daily record of his life into a coherent narrative, Shepard sets out to create a history, to unfold the place of the Puritans in God's larger providential design. The narrative's implication is that when readers consider the evidence that Shepard lays before them, they cannot but fail to see the mark of salvation in the miracles wrought in the lives of Shepard's company.

As Shepard saw it, every detail of his narrative had a larger, providential significance. Thus, his education at Cambridge, the Anglican persecutions that gave to Puritan conviction a martyr's resolve, the perils at sea that forged the bonds of a covenant, and even the sudden remove of Thomas Hooker and his congregation to Connecticut—leaving empty houses and a vacant church to be filled by the new immigrants—were all events portending the arrival of Shepard's company, not merely to a physical location in the New World, but to a spiritual place in the New Jerusalem. For Shepard takes the design of his providential narrative from biblical typology, subtly re-creating the Old Testament tribulations of God's chosen people in their journey from bondage to salvation. In this typological structure, the Puritans play the role of God's captive children in Egypt to the Anglican bishopric's Pharaoh. The plot of the autobiography thus turns with the biblical trope: like the Hebrew exodus from Egypt across the Red Sea, the Puritans take flight in ships upon the ocean, a diaspora that would leave their descendants on three separate continents. Like the children of Israel wandering in the Sinai desert, the Puritans suffer trials and tribulations in the wasteland of the Atlantic. Finally, like

Israelites entering the Land of Canaan, the Puritans arrive at the promised land, a tried and worthier people. Such typology offers a plausible explanation for the Puritan animosity toward Native American cultures, for both biblical Canaan and America, as the “New Canaan,” were inhabited by what their respective invaders deemed an “unclean” people.

Thus Shepard renders the process of determining an individual’s state of grace—his or her knowledge of election—as a pilgrimage, in which the spiritual trials of doubt, despair, greed, sloth, and other sins, or “the rulers of darkness” and “the spiritual wickedness in high places,” are made manifest in the flesh as physical contests to be won. If Shepard’s autobiography begins to resemble Christian’s journey in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, or Red Crosse Knight’s crusade in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, it does so for good reason, for religious allegory and spiritual autobiography in the Augustinian tradition are closely related. Shepard’s insistence upon rendering each personal experience as a moral lesson cast in terms of biblical typology—as a mark of God’s favor or the sting of his chastising rod, or as Satan’s temptation—eradicates the particular, effacing the individual circumstances and the temporal index that cooperate to create historical specificity. He even abstracts the unique and privileged position of the autobiographer: that is, typological tropes transform the “I” of the first-person narrative into a communal plurality of Shepard’s audience. Shepard essentially becomes an “Everyman,” a position in his allegory that the Puritan readers assumed, as they recast their own experience in the template of Shepard’s typology. Thus, unlike autobiographies in the memoir tradition of today, spiritual autobiographies were interactive. They evoked the reader to respond. Such narratives were not only offered to Christians—particularly young readers—as models of how to wage the “good fight,” but they also provided a kind of heuristic—a typological template—by which the young reader could plot his or her own spiritual journey upon the communal path of regeneration. Shepard’s autobiography as allegory instilled a particular community hermeneutic practice—or way of interpreting the external world as a sign system of divine meaning.

Anne Bradstreet (1612?–1672)

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Contributing Editor: Pattie Cowell

Classroom Issues and Strategies

There are many ways to approach Bradstreet: as a “first” (given that she is the first North American to publish a book of poems), as a Puritan, as a woman. I have found an interplay of all three approaches useful for piquing student interest. Those who are skeptical of my feminist readings may be caught by historical and cultural perspectives. Those who think they want nothing to do with Puritanism may be intrigued by Bradstreet’s more personal writings.

Beginning students are generally unfamiliar with the historical and theological contexts in which she wrote. Many close off their reading of Bradstreet and other Puritan writers because they disapprove of what they think they know about Puritan theology. Brief background materials make that context more accessible and less narrowly theological.

Again for reasons of accessibility, I usually begin with the more personal poems from the second edition. The poignancy of Bradstreet’s elegies, the simplicity of her love poems, the stark reality of her poem on childbirth, the wit of “The Author to Her Book”—all travel across the centuries with relative ease, even for less skilled readers. When these immediately readable poems are placed in the context of women’s lives in the seventeenth century and in the North American colonies, most students find a point of entry.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Thematically, Bradstreet's body of work is both extensive and varied. Teachers will find much that can be linked with other materials in a given course. Bradstreet wrote on culture and nature, on spirituality and theology, on the tension between faith and doubt, on family, on death, on history. I like to suggest the range of her subject matter for students and then concentrate on a single thematic thread (though the thread I choose varies with my interests of the moment). It is a strategy that helps students follow their own interests of the moment at the same time that it allows us (by close reading) to see the skills Bradstreet had developed. "In Honour of . . . Queen Elizabeth" is a fine poem for tracing both thematic threads and poetic technique, though its length and complexity present problems for beginning students. "The Prologue" is more manageable in a single class session, short enough to allow multiple readings to develop but complex enough to tantalize. Many of the other short personal pieces—well represented in *The Heath Anthology* selections—work effectively with this approach too.

The remarkable nature of Bradstreet's accomplishment is highlighted when students learn the historical conditions women poets struggled with. Women who wrote stepped outside their appropriate sphere, and those who published their work frequently faced social censure. The Reverend Thomas Parker, a minister in Newbury, Massachusetts, gives a succinct statement of cultural attitudes in an open letter to his sister, Elizabeth Avery, in England: "Your printing of a book, beyond the custom of your sex, doth rankly smell" (1650). Compounding this social pressure, many women faced crushing workloads and struggled with lack of leisure for writing. Others suffered from unequal access to education. Some internalized the sense of intellectual inferiority offered to them from nearly every authoritative voice.

Bradstreet's personal situation gave her the means to cope with some of these obstacles. Before she came to North America, she received an extensive education; she had access as a child to private tutors and the Earl of Lincoln's large library. She was part of an influential, well-to-do family that encouraged her writing and circulated it in manuscript with

pride. Her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, took the manuscript collection to London for publication. Such private support did much to counteract the possibility of public disapproval.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Bradstreet's attention to form and technique is usefully studied in the context of two quite different aesthetics, both of which influence her: Puritanism's so-called plain style (marked by didactic intent, artful simplicity, accessibility, and an absence of rhetorical ornamentation) and seventeenth-century versions of classicism (which stressed poetry as imitation, exalted the genres of tragedy and epic, and worked toward unity of action, place, and time).

Original Audience

Discussions of seventeenth-century English and New English audiences allow room for fruitful digressions on colonial literacy, manuscript culture, print culture, publishing, and book distribution. I frequently challenge beginning students to develop a description of Bradstreet's original readers by exercising their historical imaginations. Those who haven't read much history keep running into the barriers I set for them, but the exercise is useful nonetheless. They begin to "see" the circumstances of literate and literary culture in an environment that is sparsely populated, with only a fledgling publishing and book distribution establishment, without libraries, with books as relatively expensive luxuries.

Having imagined how Bradstreet's poems might have fared with her original audience, I ask students to compare themselves with those readers. How well do her themes and strategies travel across time? What elements seem to connect to contemporary concerns? What fails to relate? Why?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Bradstreet can usefully be read in relation to

- other Puritan writers, especially the poet Edward Taylor.
- contemporary British women writers, such as Katherine Philips.
- the Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Bradstreet's contemporary, also heralded as "the tenth muse").
- Phillis Wheatley. Because Wheatley wrote more than a century later, from a black perspective and in a neoclassical tradition, she provides points of sharp contrast. But on certain themes (humility, the importance of spirituality), their voices merge.

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Michael Wigglesworth (1631–1705)

Contributing Editor: Danielle Hinrichs

Classroom Issues and Strategies

For students, and for many literary scholars, Puritan ideology and Puritan poetry often seem distressingly at odds with modern aesthetics. This is a particularly vexing issue for Wigglesworth's modern readers because the poet-minister fully embraced Puritan theology and a literary aesthetic based on didacticism and biblical exemplum. Critics have long suggested that Wigglesworth's intense faith precluded true artistic expression. As recent scholars like Jeffrey A. Hammond and Ronald A. Bosco have argued, however, an appreciation of Michael Wigglesworth's poetic depends upon an acceptance of Wigglesworth on his own terms and upon an understanding of Puritan literary expectations, which often "did not distinguish between aesthetic and spiritual response"

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(Hammond 8). Puritans believed that poetry should move readers' spirits, drawing them closer to God. Students will gain more from reading Wigglesworth's diary and poetry if they are asked to enter Wigglesworth's world as fully as possible and to try to glean from his writings a sense of Wigglesworth's personal and literary objectives. Although students will discover very different purposes in Wigglesworth's diary and his published poems, they will also find similarities that may lead them to an understanding of the confluence of Wigglesworth's private and public goals. He often wrote poetry about issues in his own life and he gained authority by telling readers that direct experience informed his public writing. In his diary, he sought to move himself closer to God, and in his poems he urged others toward the divine.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

Throughout Wigglesworth's writings, he attempts to counter what he perceived as the waning spiritualism of mid-seventeenth-century New England. As Bosco points out, by the 1660s, the New England Puritans seemed to be moving steadily away from the firm religious ideals of the original settlers. Wigglesworth's sometimes fiery style and didacticism should be seen as a part of this attempt to right the course of Puritanism in an era marked by declining attention to Puritan standards and discipline. The evidence of God's displeasure with this wayward trend seemed everywhere apparent to Puritan leaders. Puritans constantly searched the material world for spiritual meaning; "Believing that God spoke to his people through events, believing that God's will or disposition toward his people was discernable in everything from the weather to the state of New England's economy, New England's orthodox leaders put their symbolic imaginations to work" (Bosco xx). Wigglesworth took his place among these leaders and preached about the signs of God's disapprobation in his sermons and in his poetry. In one of the diary excerpts included in this anthology, Wigglesworth interprets a fire, a very common event in seventeenth-century New England, as an incident invoked by God to punish sinners.

Wigglesworth's intense anxiety about his sexuality has contributed to his reputation as a conventionally grim and

dark-hearted Puritan. Students should resist reading Wigglesworth's sexuality in terms of contemporary ideas and norms and attempt instead to explore the ways in which ideas about sexuality and definitions of masculinity and femininity are fluid and particular to a historical context. Alan Bray's article, listed in the bibliography below, provides a valuable historical lens through which to view Wigglesworth's candid and anguished comments about sexuality and masculinity. Bray suggests that Wigglesworth's obsessive guilt does not arise from the dreams themselves: in Wigglesworth's day, dreams were believed to unfold beyond the rationality and will of the individual, and thus, they could not implicate the dreamer in a sinful act. Wigglesworth feels guilt, then, Bray argues, not because he dreams and ejaculates during sleep, but because Wigglesworth believes that his dreams evince a weakness caused by venereal disease (207). His fears about masculinity exist within this specific context of seventeenth-century Puritan society. According to Bray, Wigglesworth's struggle against feminization has less to do with his desire for his students (all male) than with his inability to control his sexual thoughts. The Puritan man becomes feminized through lack of restraint: "What these avowedly unmasculine figures share, drunkard, glutton, fornicator, and sodomite alike, is a ruinously unrestrained appetite without 'masculine' restraint; and the sodomite's improper sexual appetite is but one expression of this" (209). As Bray points out, Puritan culture and definitions of Puritan manhood seem entirely out of place in our current consumer economy, an economy that prizes lack of restraint. Raising these issues with students will help them look more carefully at how Wigglesworth defines sexuality, masculinity, and guilt and how these terms bear on Wigglesworth's other themes. As Walter Hughes suggests, "It is perhaps a mistake to try to distinguish between overtly erotic uses of these [sexualized] words and figurative ones. Sometimes these words relate directly to Wigglesworth's quite real desire for his students or to his frequent nocturnal emissions and 'vile dreams'; but other times they are applied to moments of inattention in church, concern for his economic welfare, or overinvolvement in his studies" (110). Wigglesworth's constant attempts to divert his thoughts from his students often become a part of his larger goal to rid himself of all powerful attachments to worldly things (Verdun 226).

Reading Wigglesworth's diary excerpts and poem together may allow students to explore Wigglesworth's struggle to disengage himself from the material world and fully embrace the spiritual realm, a major theme in both selections. In "Vanity of Vanities," Wigglesworth warns his readers that the more one derives from the world, the more one desires, and no matter how much one achieves, the things in the world are, in the end, not enough: "Most wretched man, that fixed hath his love/Upon this world, that surely will deceive him." Death comes for everyone, rich, poor, powerful, and weak alike, and only devotion to God remains. Wigglesworth's catalog of past heroes, marked by strength and riches, demonstrates the limits of all human achievements, no matter how grand.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Wigglesworth's readers would have easily identified his references, biblical and otherwise. His poetry is characterized by a plain style, accessible language, and persuasive tone that sometimes bears the tenor of a fervent warning and sometimes assumes the voice of a sympathetic teacher. Bosco explains that Wigglesworth "related his personal experience or advice through homely language and commonplace events; he alluded to accessible biblical figures and stories for authority higher than his own to underscore both the universality of his experience and the valor of such advice as he might offer" (xxv). Wigglesworth wrote much of his poetry in the form called fourteeners, a jogging, easily memorized verse that readers often read or recited out loud.

Original Audience

Wigglesworth directed his poetry toward a broad audience, seeking to convince Puritans of the significance of their own salvation. In the preface to *The Day of Doom*, Wigglesworth calls upon his muses: "*Oh! Guide me by thy sacred Sprite/So to indite, and so to write,/That I thine Holy Name may praise,/And teach the Sons of Men thy wayes.*" Through poetry, he strove to praise God and to instruct his readers about God's ways. In this sense, it is useful to discuss Wigglesworth's biography and to ask students to consider how Wigglesworth used poetry to reach a larger congregation than

he could address as minister at Malden. Wigglesworth's *Diary* assumes a very different tone from that of his poetry in part because of his intended audience. Not meant for publication, Wigglesworth's introspective diary existed for only one reader: Wigglesworth himself. If Wigglesworth crafted his diary in any sense for an outside audience, he crafted it for God, to whom Wigglesworth occasionally speaks directly in the pages of his diary. Wigglesworth also used a shorthand code for some entries, often those expressing his worries about sexuality and his fondness for his students; these coded passages further emphasize the very private nature of this writing. Although the diary and poem share common themes, Wigglesworth conveys the themes differently for his distinct audiences.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Scholars frequently compare Wigglesworth's poetry with the poetry of Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor, often with unfavorable results for Wigglesworth. Nevertheless, reading Wigglesworth's work in the context of these other Puritan poets helps the reader to understand both a contextual confluence of Puritan aesthetic ideas and a striking variety of Puritan viewpoints and approaches. Wigglesworth's works might also be read effectively alongside Puritan sermons, and compared to other diaries and journals, such as William Byrd's *Secret History*.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Wigglesworth refers to biblical passages throughout his poetry and his diary. His Puritan readers would have immediately recognized these biblical references. Consider the complete biblical passages and discuss how these allusions function in Wigglesworth's writing.
2. Describe the relationship between the individual and the community in Wigglesworth's *Diary* and/or in his poem.
3. Wigglesworth expressed concern for seventeenth-century New England's waning spirituality. How does Wigglesworth address this growing secularism and God's response?

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4. Choose a theme common to both Wigglesworth's diary and his poem and discuss the similarities and/or differences in how that theme is conveyed in the two different genres. How does the intended audience of each work affect the presentation of your theme?
5. Discuss gender in Wigglesworth's diary in terms of any or all of the following: Wigglesworth's masculinity, his sexuality, and his relationship with his wife.

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The Bay Psalm Book (1640)

The New England Primer (1683?)

Contributing Editor: Jean Ferguson Carr

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Readers may assume that both of these texts are simply functional transmissions of doctrine and discipline, representing a narrow and dogmatic religious culture of merely antiquarian interest. Readers should be encouraged to question their prejudgments both about Puritan culture and about religious/educational texts, particularly texts that have many parts and that are written not by a single author but by a group representing broader cultural interests and values. They need to see these texts as an emergent culture's effort to formulate values that can be taught and maintained.

For example, in reading the psalms, it is useful to compare the *Bay Psalm Book* version with those of the King James translation or others, noting the choices made and the interpretation those choices represent. Also, in reading the *Primer*, consider what those lessons suggest about not only what the culture authorized teachers to enforce, but what the culture feared or had difficulty controlling.

Students are often unnerved by the old-style spelling, but with a little practice they can read the material smoothly. Once they are comfortable with these external issues, they are often surprised and impressed by the frankness with which such topics as death, sin, and governmental punishment are treated.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The *Psalm Book* reflects a concern about making worship contemporary, particular to their time and place and special circumstances as pilgrims to a new land. The book's design and production stress the belief that faith must be attended to on a daily basis by each individual. The small books, written in English and in contemporary verse forms, could be carried into the home and the place of work, their lessons repeated to ward off the dangers and temptations of life in a "wilderness." The *Primer* recognizes the difficulties of remaining faithful and obedient, and it values learning as a way to preserve from one generation to another "that part,/which shall never decay," the cultural and religious values of the community which cannot be silenced by the state or death.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

John Cotton's preface is a fascinating document about translation, advocating use of the vernacular and defending "modern" poetry. The psalms are "contested" versions, retranslated to mark a cultural and religious difference from those versions widely used in Europe and England, as well as to distinguish the Massachusetts Bay Colony Puritans from the Plymouth Pilgrims, who used the Sternhold-Hopkins Psalter of 1562.

Original Audience

The *Psalm Book*, written and printed by the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1640, was designed to allow a whole congregation to sing psalms together in church and at home. Neither Cotton's essay nor the poems have been attended to by modern critics: the psalter has been generally treated as a simple "text" of antiquarian interest only. The *Primer* was the chief educational text of the New England colonies for over a hundred years, from its first printing in 1683.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Melville's call for American readers to "boldly condemn all imitation, though it comes to us graceful and fragrant as the morning; and foster all originality, though, at first, it be crabbed and ugly as our own pine knots" ("Hawthorne and his Mosses," 1850) suggests how the psalms and Cotton's preface might usefully be reread. The *Bay Psalm Book* can be compared with the literary credos of Emerson and Whitman, which prefer originality over literary polish or imitative technical perfection. The *Primer* could be used to frame discussions about attitudes toward learning and childhood, toward the propagation of cultural values through books. It serves as a useful anthology of cultural concerns to compare with such later textbooks as McGuffey's *Eclectic Readers* or Webster's *American Speller*.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. (a) Compare two versions of a psalm (perhaps King James, Isaac Watts, Bay Psalm, or a modern version). What do the changes suggest about what is valued by the translator? What do they suggest about how the translator understands the difficulties or possibilities of faith?
 - (b) What does John Cotton's preface propose as the important considerations for poetry and religious song? What established values is he thus opposing?
 - (c) What seems to be the daily conditions of life for the readers of the primer, as exemplified in the lessons' details? What did they have to fear or to overcome?
 - (d) How does the *Primer* envision the relationship of parent to child? Of state to citizen? Of God to person?
 - (e) How do the lessons demark proper social relations? How do they suggest the community's ability to contain crime or misbehavior?
 - (f) How does the primer propose to shape (control?) speech and writing?
 2. (a) Compare the claims about poetry and national
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literature in Cotton's preface to one of the following texts: Emerson's "The Poet," Whitman's "Preface" to *Leaves of Grass*, Rebecca Harding Davis's *Life in the Iron Mills*, Melville's "Hawthorne and His Mosses."

- (b) Discuss how *The New England Primer* represents both the importance and difficulty of learning cultural values and behavior.
- (c) Compare *The New England Primer* as a cultural artifact with a contemporary textbook for children. What seem to be the fears each text guards against? What does each text presuppose about childhood and children? How do they represent the relationship of school to children, of parents to children? What do they propose as the proper subjects for children?

Mary White Rowlandson (1637?–1711)

Contributing Editor: Paula Uruburu

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The narrative is best approached from several perspectives, including literary (what makes it a work of literature?); historical (where does fact mix with fiction?); and psychological (what factors may be affecting Rowlandson's interpretation of her experience?).

Students respond well to the personal diary-like quality of the narrative and the trials Rowlandson undergoes. Although most side with her, some also recognize the hardships the Indians have experienced at the hands of the colonists.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

It is important for the students to get the straight historical facts about King Phillip's War, during which Rowlandson was taken captive. This allows them to see both sides of the issues that caused the "war" and to better understand the Indians' plight as well as Rowlandson's reaction to her eleven-week captivity.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Discussion of the Indian captivity narrative as a genre is essential. Also, a background on Puritan sermons and their reliance upon the Word in the Bible is important since the movement/structure of the narrative juxtaposes real events with biblical comparisons or equivalents.

Original Audience

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We discuss how the Puritans would have responded to the narrative and why Rowlandson wrote it. I ask students for their own reaction (with whom does their sympathy lie—the settlers or the Indians?). We then look at Benjamin Franklin’s essay “Some Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” for an ironic comparison/contrast and then discuss the changes in perception from his time until now.

Feminist perspective: In what ways does this narrative lend itself to a greater understanding of the woman’s place in Puritan history? How does being a woman affect Rowlandson’s point of view?

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Using Bradstreet’s poetry (especially “Some Verses Upon the Burning of our House”) and Winthrop’s sermon, give two different views of the details and effects of covenant theology on ordinary people’s lives and how they were expected to respond to traumatic or trying events and circumstances.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. How does the *Narrative* demonstrate Puritan theology and thinking at work?
2. In what ways does Rowlandson use her experience to reaffirm Puritan beliefs? How does she view herself and her fellow Christians? How does she see the Indians? What do her dehumanizing descriptions of the Indians accomplish?
3. Are there any instances where she seems to waver in her faith?
4. Why does Rowlandson distrust the “praying Indians”?
5. How does she use the Bible and varied scriptural allusions in her analysis of her captivity and restoration?
6. Does her worldview change at all during her eleven weeks of captivity? Why or why not?
7. How does the *Narrative* combine/demonstrate/refute what William Bradford in *Of Plymouth Plantation* and John Winthrop in *A Modell of Christian Charity* had to say about the Puritan’s mission in the New World?

After addressing any number of the above questions,

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aimed at a basic analysis of the *Narrative*, an instructor can then continue with a discussion of the possible motives Rowlandson had for writing it. This aspect appeals to students who are most interested in trying to understand the human being behind the prose.

1. Compare and contrast the Indian captivity narrative with the slave narrative genre. What elements and conventions do they share? How do they differ?
2. Explain how Rowlandson's narrative reinforces her worldview. Where (if at all) does her covenant theology fail her or seem insufficient to explain actions and events?

Edward Taylor (1642?–1729)

Contributing Editor: Karen E. Rowe

Classroom Issues and Strategies

Students may recoil from Taylor's overly didactic, seemingly aesthetically rough or unpolished poetry, in part because he seems too preoccupied with issues of sin and salvation, which they find alien. The fundamental need is to familiarize students with basic Puritan concepts, biblical sources and allusions, and the meditative tradition. This background allows students and teachers to move beyond the easy post-Romantic definition of the poetry as "lyric," which locks the class into a quick survey of only the occasional poems. Taylor may also seem both too easy ("doesn't he tell it all?") and too complicated, because of arcane word choices, the curious compounding of images, and the plethora of biblical images.

The organization of selections in *The Heath Anthology* permits one for the first time to trace Taylor's chronological development as a poet and also emphasizes a more personalized Taylor. By clustering selections from the *Meditations* and engaging students in playing with the multiple meanings of curious words, the poetry comes alive as an intricate orchestration of recurrent themes and interconnected images. The point is to capture Taylor's imaginative flexibility as much as his tortured angst, while at the same time seeing all of his poetry as part of an overriding concern with personal preparation for heaven and with how Taylor as poet can best serve God—and in what language.

Students respond initially to the personal anguish and graphic degradations to which Taylor submits himself, yet they are also quick to recognize the pattern of self-abasement followed by Christ's intervention and re-elevation of humankind. Through class discussion, they revise their thinking about both the seeming lack of sophistication in Taylor's poetry and the dismissal of Puritan poets.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal

Issues

Major, but different, themes and historical issues emerge from each selection. Metrical paraphrases of Psalms were acceptable “hymns” for Protestants, as reflected in the Massachusetts *Bay Psalm Book*, although Taylor models his poems on the earlier Sternhold-Hopkins Psalter. Available in *Edward Taylor’s Minor Poetry*, Version 1 of the Psalm paraphrases (1–9, 18) dates from 1674; Version 2, transcribed in the early to mid-eighties, includes Psalms 11–39 and 48–49. Psalm 1 (Version 1) and Psalm 19 (Version 2) can be found in the *Heath* third edition and may be set in comparison with the excerpts from *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640). Seventy-three of the 150 biblical Psalms are assigned to David, and all, except 48 and 49, of Taylor’s known paraphrases are of David’s Psalms and use the common meter (alternating lines of eight and six syllables) for singing hymns. From this early self-imposed tutorial in the Psalm paraphrases, the Greek *psalmos* itself signifying a poem sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments, Taylor begins to formulate his own concept of poetry as godly song, fully in evidence later in his recurrent references in the *Preparatory Meditations* to melodies, hymns, and tunes played on wind pipes, bagpipes, virginals, organs, and golden harps.

Important themes in Psalms 1 and 19 include Taylor’s adoption of David as his model for the poet; the concept of poetry as an act/offering of ritual praise; distinctions between the godly (righteous) and ungodly; God’s power as Creator and Lawgiver; the righteous man as the Lord’s servant; Christ as a Rock and Redeemer; and God’s voice as that which speaks truly and which man’s voice merely echoes. As Thomas Davis suggests, by “providing a means of fashioning his own experience in the framework of biblical and historical precedent, the paraphrases invited the poet to make poetry a central concern in his life,” and with the emergence of an “authentic note of his own voice” point directly to the *Preparatory Meditations*.

Probably completed in 1680, *Gods Determinations* usefully introduces students to Taylor’s major dilemmas as preacher and individual saint—how to ascertain and sustain the belief in one’s place among God’s Elect and what standards of admission to uphold for Church membership. In its historical context, *Gods Determinations*

reflects Taylor's local need to found a frontier Church for the true Elect (1679). His battles were against both the wilderness and the Indians without and Satan within. This minisequence from among the total of thirty-five poems allows one to talk about the difficult progress from conversion to justification and sanctification in two ways. A narrative reading opens with the magnificent evocation of God's creation, then the "Souls Groan" for salvation and "Christ's Reply" as a lover or mother to a lost child counseling the soul to "Repent thy Sin" and accept Christ's purifying grace, followed by Satan's renewed attempts at casting doubt. "Satan's Sophistry" focuses on the Devil's insidious stratagems to tempt the Elect to doubt their inward worthiness and God's assurances of saving grace, temptations that must be resisted in order to ensure the final triumphant entry into "Church Fellowship rightly attended," whether on earth or in heaven. Hence, the poem becomes a narrative of a spiritual journey. Taylor's position is as narrator and as voice of the saint.

One can also read the poems as a "debate," emphasizing various oppositions, between God and fallen man, the unworthy Elect soul and grace-giving Christ, the doubting soul and Satan the tempter, between Christ and Satan, hence between lowly earthly things and God's grandeur, being outside the covenant community of Elect saints and being within (the coach), between doubt and assurance, sin and salvation. Thus, *Gods Determinations* captures the dynamic *psychomachia* of both providential history and the individual soul that arches dramatically from the perfect promise of Creation, through the sinful downfall and soul's constant battle against Satan's renewed temptations, to the final joyful envisioning of "Christ's Coach" in which "Saints sweetly sing,/As they to Glory rid therein." The poems also anticipate later allegorical renderings of Christ's marital relationships with the Church and individual soul in terms of the Dove and the Bride, set off against images of Satan as a mongrel cur and his deceptive seductions, hence a battle between loving faith/grace and distorting reason.

The Occasional Poems, which include eight numbered poems, were probably begun in the early 1680s, just as Taylor had completed *Gods Determinations* and was initiating the second version of the Psalm paraphrases and the early *Preparatory Meditations*. Because these poems are the most "lyrical," they are more accessible to modern students. But

what motivates Taylor is a desire to meditate upon natural “occurrences” in order to extract allegorical or spiritual meanings.

Taylor’s fondness for extended metaphors is apparent in his famous “Huswifery,” which leads to discussion of Taylor’s frequent use of spinning and weaving terms, frequently in relationship to poetic language or the need for the “Wedden garment” of righteousness that robes mankind for the Lord’s Supper and union with Christ. “Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children” reveals Taylor at his most personal because the death of infants severely tested Taylor’s faithful submission, as a loving father and husband, to God’s divine plan, yet also strengthened the “True-Love Knot” binding him to both wife and Deity. It usefully links with other poems from *Edward Taylor’s Minor Poetry*, which trace his domestic relationship with Elizabeth Fitch from his courtship (1674) to her death (1689).

“A Valediction to all the World preparatory for Death” permits comparisons among different versions, showing Taylor’s substantial revision of late poems even during a time of severe illness. Although only one of the total eight canticles is included in *The Heath Anthology*, it nevertheless displays Taylor in the process of shedding worldliness, particularly all things that appeal to the senses and sensualities of the flesh. His “farewell” to the world, the flesh, and the devil is renunciatory and poignant, a meditation on “vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 12:6–8) that evokes the very fondness for created nature that he appears to abjure.

“A Fig for thee Oh! Death” expresses Taylor’s defiance of death, and it is a *memento mori* meditation that should be placed side by side with his later Canticles poems, in which he envisions the beauties of heaven. His anticipation of the final judgment and reunion of body and soul gives rise to an ecstatic affirmation of faith in the divine promise of eternal life.

As a complete sequence, the poems selected here, together with those from the *Preparatory Meditations*, trace Taylor’s preoccupations over a lifetime:

- from the early focus on creation to the later renunciation of earthly vanities
- from his earliest attempt to map the soul’s conflicts with Satan to his later celebration of Church fellowship, the Lord’s Supper, and Christ as the divine host

- from his domestic espousal to his spiritual union with Christ as the eternal Bridegroom
- from his questioning of poetic status to his desire to be another David or Solomon, singing hymns for all eternity
- from his entrance into the minister's life to his death—the end of a long preparation recorded in a virtual poetic autobiography

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Taylor's verse experiments range from the common meter of the Psalm para-phrases to the varied stanza and metrical forms in *Gods Determinations* and the Occasional Poems, and finally to the heroic couplets of "A Valediction to all the World preparatory for Death" and "A Fig for thee Oh! Death." Variety also appears in Taylor's choice of forms, including the Psalm paraphrases, a debate or narrative sequence of lyrics in *Gods Determinations*, elegies, love poems, a valediction and reflection on worldly vanities, and *memento mori*—all of which were commonplace among his English predecessors, such as John Donne, George Herbert, and Henry Vaughan. For a more in-depth study of form, students might be urged to read and compare Taylor's elegies on public figures with those on personal losses, such as "Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children" and "A Funerall Poem upon . . . Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor," all in *Edward Taylor's Minor Poetry*.

Taylor's form and style sometimes seem too predictable, because of the unchanging six-line, iambic pentameter, ababcc stanza of the *Preparatory Meditations*. Discussion should relate his use of a disciplined, even caged and controlled, verse form to his concept of poetry as ritualistic praise, as a rational framework within which to explore (and contain) irrational impulses of the rebellious soul, as a stimulus to imaginative imagistic variations, and as a habitual exercise of spiritual preparation. These poems are meditative self-examinations, illustrating the Puritan requirement to prepare the heart and soul before entering the Church or partaking of (and administering) the Lord's Supper. They also mediate between Taylor's composition and delivery of his Sacrament sermon.

As Louis Martz has argued in his "Foreword" to *The Poems of Edward Taylor* (1960), treatises, such as Richard

Baxter's *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (1650), articulated a process that utilized the soul's three faculties: the Memory draws forth scriptural doctrines that the Judgment (or understanding) considers, thereby rousing the soul to feel the affections of the Will, particularly love and desire that lead to hope and joy. Taylor's meditations seem both to recapitulate reasoned doctrinal analysis and to elicit emotionally affecting responses or, as he declares, they "force my Will, and Reason to thee [God] so," that "my Soule, rid of their Sophistry/In rapid flames of Love to thee may fly" (2.36.27, 29–30). Each meditation disciplines the mind by formally squeezing theological complexities into an inflexible stanza and rhyme scheme, yet each also releases spiritual affections through cumulative floods of ingenious images and metaphors. Thus, the *Preparatory Meditations* raise useful critical questions about changing artistic tastes and conventions, since the reasoned didacticism that in Taylor's meditations seems too dominant—a remnant of analysis of a biblical text or a tortured theological exegesis—fulfilled a seventeenth-century model of religious poetry that emphasized instruction more than pleasurable entertainment or romantic diversion. On the other hand, the boldly imaginative and highly evocative conceits seem to modern consciousnesses more the "stuff" of poetry that stems from personal confession and lyrical introspection, like that to be found much later in Emily Dickinson's similarly angst-ridden poems of doubt and faith. In Taylor's poetic art, both strands interweave, spiritual yearnings and effusions rising up naturally from reasoned scriptural analysis.

Taylor's imagistic variations in the *Preparatory Meditations* permit one to teach him in different combinations and ways. Structurally, the poems reflect differing manipulations of image patterns, such as the focus on a single metaphor ("Prologue," 1.6, 1.8, 2.50); figural images and interpretations (1.8, 2.1, 2.26, 2.50); allegorical panoramas of salvation history (1.8, 2.50); associational tumbings of images (2.26, 2.115); magnifications and diminutions ("Prologue"); and allegorical love poems that anatomize the Bridegroom's and Spouse's beauties (2.115).

Thematically, poems cluster around recurrent ideas, such as Christ's nature and life (1.8, 2.115); man's nature and estate (1.6, 1.8, 2.1, 2.26, 2.50); Old Testament types (persons, events, ceremonies) that foreshadow New Testament fulfillments in Christ (2.1, 2.26, 2.50); the Lord's Supper as

sacramental feast (1.8); the marriage of Christ to his Bride, signifying the Church and individual soul (2.115); and the necessity of poetic praise (“Prologue”).

As a study of Puritan preparationism and aesthetics, the *Meditations* also reveal Taylor’s yearnings to celebrate the Lord’s Supper with a cleansed soul, robed for the feast in the wedding garment of righteousness (2.26, 2.115), and to create poetry as a medium for spiritual purging and preparation (“Prologue”). Wracked by despair over his diseased, leprous condition as an inheritor of Adam’s original sin (2.26), Taylor nonetheless seeks through Christ a “cure” that will heal his soul and assure him of his divine election. Washed clean in a “Chrystall Crimson Fountain” by partaking of Christ’s body (1.8) and blood celebrated in the Lord’s Supper, Taylor can momentarily anticipate the eschatological redemption that secures his place in eternity, where he will be robed in wedding finery to unite with Christ the Bridegroom (2.115) at the marriage feast.

Chronologically, the *Meditations* open with the first series’ dichotomy between mankind (a “Crumb,” yet imprinted with the divine “Image, and Inscription”) and the perfect Christ of the Incarnation (“Heavens Sugar Cake”). In keeping with a reorientation in Taylor’s preaching, the second series begins anew with the Old Testament typology (2.1, 2.26). He then shifts to a focus on the Christology of the New Testament in poems (2.50) that correspond with the *Christographia* sermons, then to Meditations on God’s providential deliverance of Israel (2.58–61) and on the Lord’s Supper (2.102–111), and finally to the Canticles (2.115), Taylor’s most sensual love poems, which anticipate the heavenly union beyond death (as also in the “Valediction”).

Finally, the poems can be organized to reflect the context and progress of mankind’s existence, beginning with the magnificence of the creation in the “Preface” to *Gods Determinations* and the providential schema mapped out in Meditation 2.50. Man’s fallen nature (2.1, 2.26) yet divine aspirations (1.6) necessitate Christ’s intervention and redemptive grace, brought about through His incarnation (1.8, 2.1), shedding of blood on the cross, and His eternal Godhead. Mankind’s spiritual pilgrimage, like Taylor’s, concludes with the anticipation of the espousal between Elect souls and Christ (2.115) and of the heavenly feast, which the Lord’s Supper commemorates and foreshadows (1.8, “Valediction”).

Original Audience

Taylor never published his poetry, although he carefully transcribed many poems in the manuscript “Poetical Works.” A consideration of audience must, therefore, take account of the fact that the elegies and perhaps *Gods Determinations* were written in a more public mode, but that the majority of his Occasional Poems, the *Preparatory Meditations*, and the later “Valediction” and “A Fig for thee Oh! Death” are intensely personal, written it would seem for an audience of God or Christ alone, or as meditative self-examinations of Taylor’s soul. As readers, we eavesdrop on Taylor, but we are not easily invited into the poems, except insofar as we identify with the Elect soul in its struggles or with Taylor as a representative pilgrim in his journey toward salvation.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Fruitful comparisons can be drawn both intratextually and extratextually. For the *Preparatory Meditations*, corresponding sermons are extant from *Upon the Types of the Old Testament* (Meditations 2.1, 2.26) and from the *Christographia* (Meditation 2.50). Edward Taylor’s *Treatise Concerning the Lord’s Supper*, notably Sermon 4, yields excellent excerpts on the need to prepare for the Lord’s Supper and the wearing of the “wedden garment” for the feast. Because Taylor habitually clusters poems on the same biblical text, providing students, for example, with all three Meditations (1.8–10) on John 6: 51, 55, “I am the Living Bread” and “My Blood is Drink indeed,” contextualizes a reading of Meditation 1.8 and of the Lord’s Supper. Similarly, a short typological series, such as 2.58–61, permits a study of Taylor’s fascination with the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and with the various types that foreshadow man’s spiritual journey to salvation under the New Testament, as well as a more specific contextualizing of Meditation 2.60B on the “Rock of Horeb.” Meditations 2.102–111 combine a theological defense with a festal celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and the Canticles series that opens with Meditation 2.115 yields many examples of Taylor’s interpretation of sensual imagery.

Comparisons with George Herbert’s *The Temple*, particularly poems on the types, with John Donne’s sonnets on

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the Ascension, death, and Christ as Spouse, and of Meditations 2.24 and 2.50 with contemporary Christmas poems on the Incarnation by Herbert, Southwell, and Milton enable students to identify different poetic styles and to place Taylor in a broader seventeenth-century meditative tradition.

One might also compare Anne Bradstreet's "The Prologue" and "Author to her Book" with Taylor's meditations on poetic craft in "Were but my Muse an Huswife Good," the "Prologue" to the *Preparatory Meditations*, and Meditation 2.43. Bradstreet's "Vanity of all Worldly Things" and "The Flesh and the Spirit" complement Taylor's "Valediction," and her poems "In Reference to Her Children 23 June 1659" and "Before the Birth of One of her Children" work in tandem with Taylor's "Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children," as do Bradstreet's several elegies on various grandchildren ("In Memory of my Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet" and "On my Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet"). Selections from the prose meditations of Bradstreet also provide an intriguing counterpoint to Taylor's poetic meditations.

Taylor's Puritan belief in the transcendent perfection of God's divine Word and his preoccupation with his own linguistic inadequacy usefully herald issues of self-consciousness about language, words, poetry, and human fallibility versus divine incomparability that take us in an arc through Emerson to Dickinson and beyond. In frequent allusions to pens, quills, ink, letters, melodies, and tunes, and even in minitreatises on language (refer students to Meditation 2.43), Taylor foregrounds his concerns about "Speeches Bloomery" and the aesthetics of earthly hymns. Original sin, he bemoans, infects his very language, since "words are befouled, Thoughts filthy fumes" like "Will-a-Wisps that rise/From Quagmires, run ore bogs where frogs do Croake" (2.43.19, 20–21). Although he acknowledges that for mankind "Words" are the "finest twine of reason," they are nonetheless "Too Course a web for Deity to ware," so he must beg God's pardon that "I have no finer Stuff" (2.43.11, 12, 26). But Taylor's denigration of his poetic skill gives rise to an equally compelling countermovement to define himself as a "singer," modeled after the psalmist David or a lyric poet, such as Solomon, so that he too can "sing together fore his blessed face/Our Weddin Songs with Angells mild****/In ravishing notes throughout Eternity" (2.133.44–46). Extracting the phrases, allusions, and metaphors that circle around writing

not only enables students to generate a theory of Puritan esthetics that Taylor espouses, but it also sets up discussions that inevitably come forward with later poets, Whitman included as well as the later moderns, about poetry, voice, words as signifiers and signs, language as constructed and elusively imperfect.

Presentational and Strategic Approaches

It proves particularly helpful to provide students with background information about key Puritan concepts, some of which are detailed in the headnote for the Edward Taylor selections. Many of these should also be discussed in relationship to other Puritan texts. But one can also prepare handouts on typology by listing Taylor's sermons and poems on the types (see *Saint and Singer*); a diagram of Israel's tabernacle and temple and its furnishings, together with a synopsis of the role of the High Priest and of the significant ceremonies; excerpts from a good Bible dictionary on major biblical figures or events; or pre-distributed excerpts from key biblical passages related to a poem's imagery. Visual arts only approximate the verbal, but Vaughan's emblem of the stony heart from *Silex Scintillans* for "The Ebb & Flow" or Renaissance paintings of death's heads ("A Fig"), worldly vanities and the heavenly Paradise ("Valediction"), Christ, and the Lord's Supper instructively guide textual analysis. A diagram labeling parts of the spinning wheel and spinning process illustrate Taylor's love of using weaving, looms, and webs as metaphors for poetry and for the construction of the self in "Huswifery." Comparing metaphysical with typological conceits stimulates discussion about poetic technique (e.g., Meditations 2.50 on Old Testament types and New Testament fulfillments and 2.26 on Christ's blood as the sacrificial purification of mankind's sin). Finally, reading poems aloud in class captures the surprisingly personal voice and intensity of many poems.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Specific questions can be generated easily for most poems, but it helps students (not only with Taylor but

also with the study of other Puritan literature) to ask them to research key terms, using Donald Stanford's glossary, a well-annotated Bible with a concordance, such as the *New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, an ecumenical study Bible, the New Scofield Reference edition, Johnson's *The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor*, or the *Milton Encyclopedia*. Terms might include Elect/election, covenant, baptism, Lord's Supper, preparation, law, grace, typology, providential history, apostasy, marriage, the Dove, the Rock, first fruits, offerings/sacrifices, Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the Fall, Passover, the Exodus, Christ's incarnation, the crucifixion and resurrection, the Bride and Bridegroom, New Jerusalem, and the Second Coming. One can assign students to look up the Bible verses mentioned in the footnotes or to read selections from Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Canticles, the Gospels, Hebrews, and Revelation. Because of Taylor's playfulness with different meanings of a single image, students might be asked to look up in the *Oxford English Dictionary* the complete history of "fillet," "squitchen," "screw" and "pins," "knot," "kenning," "huswifery," "cocks," or "escutcheon" (one word each, perhaps). They might research the construction of the spinning wheel, thumbscrews and rack, tenon and mortise carpentry, the tabernacle and temple, a mint, and an alembic. Such preparation frequently alerts students to Taylor's multiple strands of imagery, his tricky punning, even humorous use of language, and the variety of areas from which he draws images and metaphors (architecture, horticulture, heraldry, carpentry, clothing, book-binding, warfare, alchemy, music, classical mythology, history, printing, domestic chores).

2. Obvious paper assignments involve interpretive readings of poems not otherwise studied in class. Advanced students can be encouraged to compare Genesis as the principal creation story with Taylor's rendering in Psalm 19, the "Preface" to *Gods Determinations*, Meditation 2.50, and his "Valediction to all the World preparatory for Death." Analysis of different strands of imagery that cut across several poems allows students to see Taylor's recurrent methods and themes, as with the water, blood, and wine associated with Christ and the Lord's Supper.

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Similar assignments might be made around the concepts of the feast, marriage, the garden, reciprocal relationships (master and servant, Bridegroom/Beloved and Bride/Spouse, God and the elect), or around broad areas of imagery, such as purification by fire, water, and blood (“Christ’s Reply,” 2.1, 2.26), and writing/imprinting (“Prologue,” 1.6, 2.50, “Valediction”).

3. Creative writing assignments also immerse students in the complexities of Taylor’s artistry, while challenging them to write poetry that captures his fundamental theological concepts and the Puritan vision of mankind’s history and life in relationship to Christ. Students can be asked to compose a paraphrase (or a musical hymn) of a Psalm; to choose a biblical verse (perhaps one of Taylor’s own), a dominant image, or Old Testament type in order to create a preparatory meditation imitative of Taylor’s metrical form and imagistic techniques; to write a lyric on a natural “occurrent” or domestic event; to imagine a valediction or *memento mori* poem reflecting the vanity of this world and joys of the heavenly paradise; to use Canticles as a model for a love poem either written to Elizabeth Fitch, Taylor’s wife, or as a celebration of the anticipated nuptials between Taylor and Christ as Bride and Bridegroom; or to generate a debate (in allegorical form perhaps) between Christ and Satan over man’s soul. Students may also choose to create two poems on the same subject that reflect the different style and poetic forms preferred by Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor.

Teaching Issues and Interpretation

Placing Taylor in the context of other Puritan literature becomes illuminating in two ways because it responds to the question of what is poetry supposed to be and do. First, Taylor’s work shows how the Puritan emphasis on spiritual examination of the individual soul can take the form of meditative and autobiographical poetry. Poetry for Taylor is both an immediate preparation for his ministerial administering of the Lord’s Supper *and* a lifelong preparation for eternal life. Students often stumble with Taylor’s poetry because they do not understand how intensely Taylor

renounces this world in favor of a spiritual life within and a heavenly life yet to come. But they can identify with the human psychology of doubt, fear, loss, and a need for some form of consoling grace, comfort, or higher being to give meaning to the innately corrupt heart.

Second, because Taylor is the most prolific poet of America's first two hundred years (the anomaly of a "poet in the wilderness"), his meditations open up the question of a supposed Puritan disdain for poetry. Taylor's own puzzling over the proper uses of poetic language appears in "Were but my Muse an Huswife Good," the "Prologue" to the *Preparatory Meditations*, Meditation 2.43, and "A Valediction to all the World." By setting Taylor in a seventeenth-century tradition of paraphrases of Psalms, Job, and Canticles and, thus, the sanctioned acceptance of biblical poetry, and of a respect for *Sola Scriptura* as the model of language to be imitated, students can begin to appreciate the roots of an American tradition of poetry. The association of Taylor with David and Solomon as biblical models of poets becomes a useful end point for discussion because it points to Taylor's hope for his role in heaven, validates poetry as a medium of spiritual expression acceptable to God, sets the standards for "a transcendent style," and defines poetry as a ritual (meditative) offering of praise and worship.

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Selections from the *Preparatory Meditations* and *Gods Determinations* have been published by permission of Donald E. Stanford, ed. *The Poems of Edward Taylor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960) and the "Psalm Paraphrases," "Occasional Poems," "A Valediction . . .," and "A Fig for thee Oh! Death" by permission of Thomas M. and Virginia L. Davis, eds. *Edward Taylor's Minor Poetry* (Boston: Twayne, 1981).

Aside from sources already mentioned in the headnote's bibliography and the footnotes, the introductions to Taylor's published works by Donald Stanford, Norman Grabo, Thomas and Virginia Davis, and Charles Mignon always prove helpful. The most succinct biographical sketch is Donald Stanford's "Edward Taylor" in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Michael Schuldiner has edited the most recent collection of

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essays in *The Tayloring Shop: Essays in Honor of Thomas M. and Virginia L. Davis* (1997). Key chapters on Taylor are found in Sacvan Bercovitch's *Typology and Early American Literature*, Michael Colacurcio's *Doctrine and Difference*, Albert Gelpi's *The Tenth Muse*, Barbara Lewalski's *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*, Mason Lowance's *The Language of Canaan*, Earl Miner's *Literary Uses of Typology*, Peter White's *Puritan Poets and Poetics*, Ivy Schweitzer's *The Work of Self-Representation*, and Jeffrey Hammond's *Sinful Self, Sainly Self*.

Samuel Sewall (1652–1730)

Contributing Editor: Susan Clair Imbarrato

Classroom Issues and Strategies

In introducing the diary as a literary form, I encourage students to consider the genre's use of the usual elements of literary analysis: audience, imagery, symbols, authorial voice, and themes. We then consider Sewall's *Diary* as an opportunity to examine an individual's life within the larger Puritan community. We discuss Sewall's application of Puritan doctrine to his everyday life, which potentially humanizes the ideology and offers a good parallel to Winthrop's *Modell of Christian Charity*. When students notice that Sewall was uncharitable in some of his characterizations, we discuss these apparent contradictions and the unrealistic rigors of living as an "elect" and model Puritan. Sewall's recantation of his role at the trials in Salem and his courtship draw attention to his willingness to admit failings, leading to a discussion of the confessional mode and its connections to religious self-examination. Sewall's distress over the deaths and illnesses of family members surprises some students who imagine that a belief in the Doctrine of Predestination would preclude expressions of personal sorrow. Students might be surprised by the 1700 publication date for *The Selling of Joseph* and be puzzled by its lack of moral outrage against the institution itself. This, then, leads to a discussion of slavery, doctrinal law, economics, labor, and race in New England at the turn of

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the century.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

1. Puritan Doctrines of Preparation and Providence inform Sewall's *Diary* with its constant self-scrutiny and self-examination.
2. Autobiography as both a personal narrative and a tool for self-knowledge.
3. The intentions and effects of Sewall's public confession and the overall impact of the witchcraft trials on the Puritan community.
4. *The Selling of Joseph* not only argues against the slave trade in religious and ethical terms, but also undermines its economic justifications. These arguments will become central to the slave narratives of Olaudah Equiano and Frederick Douglass, among others.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

1. The episodic structure of a diary focuses more upon the details of everyday life than on a larger, overarching theme. This explanation allows students to appreciate the diary's various details and perspectives.
2. Sewall's *Diary* as a tool for self-examination and a social chronicle rather than simply a document to justify the Puritans as the elect, as in Winthrop, Mather, or Rowlandson.
3. The relevance of scripture to everyday actions. The difficulties of applying scriptural law to these actions.
4. *The Selling of Joseph* combines the sermon with the political tract.

Comparisons, Contrast, Connections

1. *Diary*: John Winthrop's *Journal*; Edward Taylor's *Preparatory Meditations*; Sarah Kemble Knight's *Journal*; John Woolman's *Journal*; William Byrd II's

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Secret History.

2. *The Selling of Joseph*: John Woolman's "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes"; Cotton Mather's "The Negro Christianized"; Franklin's *An Address to the Public: From the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.*

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. What does Sewall's *Diary* reveal about his Puritan Boston community, its character and its concerns?
2. Discuss Sewall's personal reactions to the illnesses and deaths in his immediate family. Do these reactions surprise you? How do they counter stereotypes about Puritans?
3. How does Sewall's depiction of his courtship of Madame Winthrop compare to contemporary concerns about marriage and prenuptial contracts?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph*? Is it a convincing argument? How was it received?

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Cotton Mather (1663–1728)

Contributing Editors: Kenneth Alan Hovey and Gregory S. Jackson

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The challenge in teaching Mather is to humanize him without sacrificing the complexity that makes him so fascinating. One strategy might be to stress his burdens as an eminent figure in a prominent Puritan family, at a time of radical change.

Students might identify with Mather's strenuous attempts to live up to his perfectionist father, Increase Mather, who in his prime dominated the Bay Colony's intellectual and political life. Cotton's fragile constitution, particularly as a child, suggests how fierce the struggle sometimes was; and there often seems to have been a contest in his life between optimistic self-assertion and an equally potent despair. Prodigious works like the *Magnalia Christi Americana* show Mather responding to cultural shocks in the same way he confronted personal ones—by attempting to situate them within ever larger and more dramatic Old Testament typological narratives. Instructors may then explore the tools with which he does so: both the typological figures that

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convey Mather's optimism and the ambiguities and contradictions that confess his despair.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

As New England became increasingly secular and commercial, and as the semblance of orthodoxy gave way to religious diversity, Mather strove, both ideologically and personally, to adapt to the change, though this struggle often introduced visible theological contradictions into the very system that he dedicated his life to shoring up. Although a guardian of Puritan tradition, he was nevertheless an avid naturalist, a member of the British Royal Society, a leader in the revolt against Governor Edmund Andros—appointed by the king—and, through his interest in evangelical piety, a religious progressive. His numerous biographies of first-generation Puritans assert the continued vigor of New England's millennial role: Mather repeatedly relies upon elaborate figures to link the colony with both ancient Israel and the Apocalypse. Underlying his interest in witchcraft, for example, is the millennial conviction that great troubles would mount as the last days approached, while his portrait of Hannah Dustin suggests an American biblical heroine smiting the enemy and loosening the bonds of captive Israel. Thus, Mather's writing often reveals the tensions in his hard-won position. His marking off of witches, Native Americans, and the disorderly suggests not only a constant need to police his ideology, but also an acknowledgment of its increasingly rapid erosion.

This erosion was hastened by a shift in the New England worldview, a split between a more cosmopolitan group of Puritan merchants, who studied Descartes at Harvard and read widely in the works of Isaac Newton and John Locke, and an older, more conservative group of Puritan ministers and colonists. While many of the former party bitterly condemned the Salem witch trials at the time, many of the latter viewed them as an offensive strike against the forces of evil. Thus the witch trials accentuated two competing worldviews: the one an ebbing Platonic view of a corresponding universe, in which the moral battles fought in this world were part of the larger cosmic struggle between good and evil; and the other a modern materialist view predicated upon scientific empiricism

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and the exaltation of instrumental reason and human rationality. Students can often better understand this epistemological shift if the instructor compares and contrasts the deeply pietistic Mather with Benjamin Franklin, Mather's deistic younger contemporary who was also born into a Boston Puritan family. Even in their passion for science the two are quite different. Whereas Franklin, like Locke, seems to pursue science in the Baconian tradition of secular Humanism, Mather, like Isaac Newton and Jonathan Edwards, continually presses scientific discovery into the service of theological validation.

Like his father's *Essay for the Recording of Remarkable Providences* (1684), Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), his defense of the Salem court in the aftermath of the trials, epitomizes the ebbing worldview of a corresponding universe. By cataloging a series of prodigies and omens, Mather supported the Salem court's finding that witches were indeed conspiring with Satan to corrupt the New England Church. Those who saw the witch hunt as a reckless indulgence of superstition, however, immediately lampooned this treatise on the supernatural. In essence, the Salem witch trials would become a contest between two radically opposing points of view. Nowhere is this difference in epistemology better expressed than in the transatlantic controversy over what constituted legitimate "evidence" in the Salem witch trials.

The court convicted the accused for a capital offense almost exclusively on what was termed "spectral evidence," a witness's testimony that he or she saw a spectral image of the accused performing a preternatural feat. For the most part, the controversy over "spectral evidence" did not hinge upon the veracity of the preternatural feat itself—few doubted the manifestations of demonic forces—rather, it hung upon a finer point. Whereas for the court, ocular evidence of a preternatural act—such as the appearance of a neighbor as a demonic specter—was proof positive of the alleged witches' compact with Satan, for others, like Increase Mather, such "spectral evidence" begged a question that undermined its validity as a litmus test of witchcraft: If Satan could take the form of animals, why could he not assume the appearance of any person, thus implicating an innocent in his ruinous plot? Still others, such as Robert Calef and Thomas Brattle, rejected outright the accusations of witchery as simple-minded superstition. As Mather well knew when he wrote *Wonders* in

defense of the Salem executions, the stakes were enormous: what had been a trial to determine the course of individual lives had become a trial to determine the course of an entire culture; and what had been adjudicated in the zeal of religious devotion in a provincial court would forever after be tried in a spirit of secular rationalism in the court of public opinion. It was a wager Mather lost to history. His homiletic report of the trials would become the “bible” of Washington Irving’s Ichabod Crane and would make Mather’s name a symbol of Puritan superstition, in spite of his contributions to early American rational and scientific thought. Although Mather would continue to find momentous importance in common incidents, never again would he do so with such abandon.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Mather’s distinguishing literary characteristic is the degree to which he merges history and autobiography. Certain elements of Mather’s approach to church history, for example, can be found in the numerous models that he used, among them William Bradford. But whereas Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation* is narrated in the modest, self-effacing manner one associates with Puritan saints, Mather constantly intervenes, forcing his own voice upon the reader. Such obtrusiveness makes sense if one realizes that Mather’s real interest lies not only in conveying the facts of men’s lives but also in turning lives into instructive “examples”—examples that allow him, in turn, to extend his own sense of the Puritan errand. In this regard, it may be useful to compare Mather’s self-presentation with that of Mary Rowlandson, whose wilderness ordeal also spoke to New England’s providential fortunes.

Mather’s treatment of cultural “others” also bears notice. His treatment of Native Americans, for example, has neither the sympathy of William Byrd’s nor the almost clinical detail of Rowlandson’s portraits. What it does, rather, is expose the ideological uses to which Mather put Native Americans, as figures in New England’s cosmic drama. Conversely, although his plea, in *The Negro Christianized*, for justice to African-American “servants” stopped short of calling for emancipation, it nevertheless insisted that God is colorblind. Converting slaves contributed to the rising glory of Christian America, as Mather found by ministering to his own slave,

Onesimus, the slave he acquired in the same year he published *The Negro Christianized*. Relatively speaking, Mather was apparently a humane, liberal, but suspicious slave owner, teaching Onesimus to read and write and allowing him outside income, but keeping him under strict surveillance.

Finally, Mather has been profitably compared with much later figures such as Henry Adams, whose cultural inheritance left them unprepared for change.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. Compare the court records of *Wonders of the Invisible World* to Mather's account of the Goodwin children in book VI of the *Magnalia*. What kinds of concerns does Mather bring to these more personal encounters?
2. Compare Mather's benevolent project in *Bonifacius* with those described in Franklin's *Autobiography*. What impulses unite the two endeavors? How are they different?
3. Sample other sections of the *Magnalia*. If Mather intends for New England, whether it "Live any where else or no," to "Live in [his] History," what cultural aspects does he choose to preserve, and how successful is his project?
4. How does Mather's history differ from Thomas Shepard's earlier history of New England, from Shepard's *Autobiography*? What rhetorical strategies do they have in common? And in what important ways do these two different historical accounts differ in their vision of the Puritans' "errand into the wilderness"?
5. Compare Mather's *The Negro Christianized* to Samuel Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph*. How does the possibility of miscegenation and the confusion of racial identities serve both to limit and clarify the Puritan sense of self?

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Instructors will find a number of primary works on the witch trials not only accessible to students but also provocative in the classroom: Deodat Lawson, *A Brief and True Narrative of Some Remarkable Passages* and "Christ's Fidelity the only

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John Williams (1664–1729)

*Contributing Editors: Rosalie Murphy Baum and Elizabeth
Dillon*

Classroom Issues and Strategies

The popularity of the captivity narrative during the Puritan period is being repeated today among students who vicariously enjoy the narrators’ experiences and realize the effect such narratives have had on popular frontier and Wild West adventure stories. To many students already familiar with Mary Rowlandson’s 1682 *Narrative*, John Williams’s 1707 narrative is especially welcome—not simply because it offers a male version of captivity, but also because it describes captivity both by the Indians (for eight weeks) and by the French (for two years). The primary difficulty students have in reading the narrative lies in their lack of knowledge of the French and Indian War and of the differences between Roman Catholicism and Puritanism.

Background information about the relationship between the French and English in North America can eliminate this difficulty and give students a more accurate idea of colonial history. To be stressed first is the fact that the hostilities between the French and the English in North America began as early as 1613 and that the period between 1613 and the Peace of Paris in 1763 was one in which some six extended conflicts, or “wars,” resulted in captives, usually women and

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children, being taken from New England to Canada.

Students also need to be reminded of the theological and ritualistic differences that distinguished the Puritans from the Established Church of England. Roman Catholicism represented a structure and theology even more pernicious to Puritans than the structure and theology of the Church of England. In such a context, Williams's strong reaction to the Indians taking him "to a popish country" (Québec) and to the efforts of the French Jesuits to convert him to Roman Catholicism becomes clear.

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

The Redeemed Captive is, then, an excellent work to dramatize for students what the French and Indian Wars were about and to clarify the antagonism between Catholics and Puritans during this period. It is also a form of the jeremiad more readable and interesting to modern students than most of the Puritan sermons, histories, or personal narratives.

In addition, it illustrates "the significant mythic experience of the early white-Indian relationship" (Louise K. Barnett, *The Ignoble Savage*) and the "Puritan myth of 'America,' " "the first coherent myth-literature developed in America for American audiences" (Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*). Students can see in both Williams's and Rowlandson's narratives the way in which such accounts typically open with an Indian raid in which white settlers are brutally massacred and then proceed to describe the inhuman hardships Indians inflict upon their captives. The concept of the Indian is that of satanic beast. No attempt is made in these narratives to indicate that the Indian aggression is a part of the hostilities of decades and may have been provoked or equaled by white aggression. Little note is made of the decency or kindnesses of the Indians: such good fortune as the captive may experience is never attributed to the customs or virtue of the Indians but to God. Living conditions that are everyday parts of the Indian life or result from the normal state of travel at that time are regarded by captives as horrendous personal injuries being deliberately and cruelly inflicted upon them by the Indians. Clearly no cognizance is taken of the inherent difficulties that arise when two such disparate cultures come together under conditions of warfare.

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Williams's narrative also demonstrates that anxieties about encountering alien cultures extended to the French (as Catholics) as much as to the Indians; he shows equal concern over the threat of Catholicism as over Indian "savagery." His narrative thus indicates that in this early period, the *racial* distinction between white Europeans and Native Americans was not the sole boundary between civilized and savage for Williams. Rather, religious and cultural differences were keenly felt in relation to Indians *and* Europeans. This may prove a useful point of discussion for students, enabling them to consider changing understandings of race over the course of American history, and relations between racial and cultural difference.

A final significant aspect of Williams's narrative is his concern for his daughter Eunice who does not return to New England even when later offered the chance to do so. The threat of "going native" is often at stake in captivity narratives, particularly with respect to women and children. John Demos's *The Unredeemed Captive* gives a full account of Eunice Williams's fascinating history, including her marriage to a Mohawk man, the many years of attempts by her family and authorities to have her returned to New England, and her visits to her brother in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, in her old age.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

Of particular interest to many students will be the subject of the captivity narrative as a genre particularly American in its subject matter years before American writers—like Freneau, Bryant, Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, and James—became concerned about the question of an inherently *American* literature. This genre was clearly, in its early stages, a religious statement, emphasizing redemptive suffering, with the captivity being either a test that God had set for his people or a punishment to guide them from their evil ways. Williams's narrative was such an excellent example of the type that Sunday School versions appeared as late as the 1830s and 1840s (e.g., Titus Strong's *The Deerfield Captive: an Indian Story, being a Narrative of Facts for the Instruction of the Young*).

Original Audience

Students should be reminded too, of course, that Williams is writing for a Puritan audience. Thus, for a people familiar with the jeremiad, he emphasizes God's wrath against his people for their shortcomings, but also rejoices in God's mercy and goodness toward his people. (See Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, for a study of the negative and positive sides of the jeremiad.) He assumes the satanic nature of the Indians, particularly fearsome creatures by which God tests his people or punishes them. And he stresses the diabolical nature of the Jesuits, who, in their zeal to convert him to Roman Catholicism, make him attend a Latin Mass, urge him to pray to the Virgin Mary, and try to force him to kiss a crucifix.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

For their writing assignments, some students may wish to read other captivity narratives either to compare narratives of redemptive suffering or to trace the changes in the genre emerging during the propaganda and fictionalized thriller stages. Wilcomb E. Washburn's *Narratives of North American Indian Captivities* offers facsimile reprints of 311 such narratives dating from the late seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century.

But even without such additional reading, the possibilities for essays based upon Williams's narrative are considerable. Students may wish to discuss Williams's *The Redeemed Captive* as a jeremiad, comparing it to jeremiads they have read in other genres. They may wish to examine Williams's narrative techniques, especially with a view to the contribution the genre has made to the horror story or thriller. Students interested in women's studies or feminist criticism may wish to consider conceptual and stylistic differences between the narratives of Rowlandson and Williams. Students interested in Indian studies can compare attitudes toward the Indians in Williams and other authors studied (e.g., in Bradford, Roger Williams, Cotton Mather, Rowlandson, or, moving into a later period, Franklin, Freneau, Bryant, Cooper, Melville). Students familiar with Joseph Campbell's *The Hero*

With a Thousand Faces can consider the archetypal nature of *The Redeemed Captive*, perhaps in the light of other works they have read. Students may also wish to consider more contemporary versions or analogues of the captivity narrative, such as the 1956 John Wayne film, *The Searchers*, or the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979–81.

Specific discussion questions concerning Williams's narrative might include the following: What is Williams's purpose in writing the narrative? Why was the captivity narrative such a popular American genre, both in the eighteenth century and in subsequent periods? Why might women and/or children be more likely to remain with Indian tribes? Why are Catholicism and Native American culture such significant threats to John Williams and to Puritan New England? To what extent is Williams concerned about the following issues: racial difference, cultural difference, religious difference?

Bibliography

Of particular value as background reading for teaching *The Redeemed Captive* is Wilcomb E. Washburn's "Introduction" to *Narratives of North American Indian Captivity: A Selective Bibliography* (1983), xi–lvv, and Edward W. Clark's "Introduction" to *The Redeemed Captive* by John Williams (1976), 1–25.

A number of secondary sources on the captivity narrative explore the relation between cultural boundaries, gender, and the captivity genre in American culture, including Michelle Burnham's *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature 1682–1861*, Gary Ebersole's *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity*, and Christopher Castiglia's *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-crossing, and White Womanhood for Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst*.

A Sheaf of Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Poetry

Contributing Editors: Jeffrey A. Hammond and Ivy Schweitzer

Classroom Issues and Strategies

While students are pleasantly surprised at the diversity of poets and poetic themes in early America, they are often disappointed with the poems themselves. This disappointment is a good starting point for discussion, since it highlights the differences between seventeenth-century and contemporary expectations and responses regarding poetry. When students articulate what disappoints them about much of the verse—the generalized speakers, the religious themes, the artificial language, the high level of allusion—they begin to understand that art and its cultural functions are subject to historical change. Good questions to begin discussion of particular poems in this selection include: Why was the poem written? What reading response does the text seem to foster? What is the relationship between the poem and the values of the culture that produced it? What view of poetic language does the poem seem to demonstrate?

Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, Personal Issues

These poems also become more interesting for students when they are asked to identify the blend (or opposition) of Old World and New World features— formal as well as thematic—within the texts. Another issue concerns the expected functions of verse in the seventeenth century. Once students realize that poets were more interested in voicing communal values, commemorating important events, and seeking coherence in their world than in expressing “original” ideas, the poems begin to make better sense. Students may not agree with the literary conventions they encounter, but they will gain a better contextual understanding of them. This in

turn may help them see that modern reading expectations also exist in a particular historical and cultural framework.

Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions

For most students these poems are quite difficult. The syntax is sometimes cramped into a rigid meter (Wilson and Alsop), the allusions often seem remote and excessive (Saffin), the speakers seem remote and impersonal, and, for many, the poem's ideology seems trite or alien (Goodhue). A discussion of "metaphysical" wit often helps students understand—if not enjoy—the seemingly strained effects in many of the poems. The Renaissance view of poetry as a frankly artificial discourse is also helpful. The poet is usually not trying to replicate "natural" speech in texts that were written, in one sense or another, for the ages.

Original Audience

The selections here reflect a wide range of intended readers. Students might try to determine the nature of those readers (their social class, education, reading expectations) as a means of humanizing the texts. This will also underscore the contrasts between the literary culture that these poems embody and the students' own literary culture, including its microcosm in the English classroom.

Comparisons, Contrasts, Connections

Students familiar with the English cavaliers and metaphysical poets will bring a great deal to the discussion of these poems, especially in matters of form and style. It is also useful to compare the poems with other treatments of similar themes: Saffin with Shakespeare's sonnets, French with later slave narratives, Steere with later Romantic depictions of nature, Goodhue with Bradstreet, Alsop with promotional tracts and Ebenezer Cook, Wilson and Hayden with Milton's *Lycidas*. In addition, any of the poems could be profitably compared with works by Bradstreet, Wigglesworth, or Taylor.

Questions for Reading, Discussion, and Writing

1. What do the poems suggest about the cultural functions of poetry in the seventeenth century?
2. What do they suggest about the relation between individual identity and culture or ideology?
3. What do they suggest about seventeenth-century distinctions between “poetic” discourse and everyday speech?
4. What implied readership is suggested in their diction and allusions?
5. In what sense(s), thematic or formal, are the poems “American”?
6. In what sense(s), thematic or formal, are the poems “British”?
7. What expressions of the cultural diversity characteristic of a later America seem already present in these poems?
8. Do thematic or formal differences emerge in the work of the female and male poets collected here?

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