

## SIGNS OF RACE

*Series Editors:* Arthur L. Little Jr. and Gary Taylor

*Writing Race across the Atlantic World: Medieval to Modern*

Edited by Philip Beidler and Gary Taylor (January 2005)

*Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip-Hop*

By Gary Taylor (January 2005)

*English and Ethnicity*

Edited by Janina Brutt-Griffler and Catherine Evans Davies

(December 2006)

*Women & Others: Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Empire*

Edited by Celia R. Daileader, Rhoda E. Johnson, and Amilcar Shabazz

(September 2007)

*The Funk Era and Beyond: New Perspectives on Black Popular Culture*

Edited by Tony Bolden (August 2008)

*Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance*

By Paul Outka (August 2008)

*Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance*

Edited by Scott L. Newstok and Ayanna Thompson (January 2010)

*Richard Wright: New Readings in the 21st Century*

Edited by Alice Mikal Craven and William E. Dow (July 2011)

*Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*

Edited by Jonathan Gil Harris (May 2012)

## INDOGRAPHY

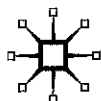
### WRITING THE "INDIAN" IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Edited by

*Jonathan Gil Harris*

palgrave  
macmillan





# INDOGRAPHY

Copyright © Jonathan Gil Harris, 2012.

All rights reserved.

First published in 2012 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®

in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world,  
this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,  
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,  
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies  
and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States,  
the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978-0-230-34137-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Indography : writing the "Indian" in early modern England / edited by  
Jonathan Gil Harris.

p. cm.—(Signs of race)

ISBN 978-0-230-34137-1 (hardback)

1. English literature—Early modern, 1500–1700—History and  
criticism. 2. Indians in literature. 3. East Indians in literature. I. Harris,  
Jonathan Gil.

PR428.I58I53 2012

820.9'352997—dc23

2011044800

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: May 2012

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
Introduction: Forms of Indography <i>Jonathan Gil Harris</i>	1
<b>I Indology: Discovery, Ethnography, Pathology</b>	
1 How to Make an Indian: Religion, Trade, and Translation in the Legends of Mõnçaide and Gaspar da Gama <i>Bindu Malieckal</i>	23
2 Looking for Loss, Anticipating Absence: Imagining Indians in the Archives and Depictions of Roanoke's Lost Colony <i>Gina Caison</i>	43
3 From First Encounter to "Fiery Oven": The Effacement of the New England Indian in <i>Mourt's Relation</i> and Histories of the Pequot War <i>Thomas Cartelli</i>	57
4 Trafficking in Tangomóckomindge: Ethnographic Materials in Harriot's <i>A Briefe and True Report</i> <i>Kevin Boettcher</i>	71
5 Translation and Identity in the <i>Dialogues in the English and Malaiane Languages</i> <i>Melissa Walter</i>	85
6 Playing Indian: John Smith, Pocahontas, and a Dialogue about a Chain of Pearl <i>Karen Robertson</i>	105
7 Tobacco, Union, and the Indianized English <i>Craig Rustici</i>	117
8 Sick Ethnography: Recording the Indian and the Ill English Body <i>Jonathan Gil Harris</i>	133



## FROM FIRST ENCOUNTER TO "FIERY OVEN"

### THE EFFACEMENT OF THE NEW ENGLAND INDIAN IN *MOURT'S RELATION* AND HISTORIES OF THE PEQUOT WAR

*Thomas Cartelli*

Much has been written on the evolution of Puritan relations with native Americans from the comparatively pacific "first encounters" on Cape Cod to the arguably genocidal approach taken to the Pequots of Connecticut in 1637, and some time later, to a larger mass of New England Indians in King Philip's War. This change has been charted in paradigmatic terms by the literary scholar John Seelye, who in *Prophetic Waters* speaks of "the peaceful message of the Gospels giving way increasingly to the militant burden of the Pentateuch" and of "the prophet becoming the soldier of God as the wilderness becomes the threshold to Canaan."<sup>1</sup> Seelye effectively depicts a shift from pastoral to polemic in the first 20 years of Puritan writing on the colonization of New England, with the collectively authored *Mourt's Relation* (1622) displaying a "distinctly Hesiodic strain" that would soon yield to the martial beat of Puritan militancy recorded in John Mason's *Brief History of the Pequot War* (1656) and other accounts of that conflict published by Lion Gardener (1660), John Underhill (1638), and Philip Vincent (1638), the latter two in the immediate aftermath of the war.<sup>2</sup>

While Seelye's account of the discursive transformation of New England from Eden to Canaan has much to recommend it, I find the prospects of pastoral already superseded in the discursive formations of *Mourt's Relation*, and the New England Indian more an object of rhetorical effacement than of idealization in its pages. The shift Seelye charts, from the construction of an innocent and tolerated to a corrupt and intolerable savage, is, I would argue, dictated less by force of (changed) circumstance than by the largely undifferentiated nature of the Puritan's positioning of the Indian in the New



England landscape. Mason's *Brief History*, and the "war" it describes, merely make explicit what is everywhere implicit in *Mourt's Relation*: namely, that the New England Indian is a disturbance in the field of Puritan vision whose presence in the landscape will be duly effaced when the desire for a land empty of native inhabitants evolves into the resolve to empty the land.

The English who arrive at Cape Cod and, ultimately, Plymouth in 1620 expect to encounter Indians, and have more than a few inklings of how to make a self-serving peace or accommodation with them. As Gina Caison notes in the previous chapter, Indians have by this time visited England; some, like Samoset, have learned at least a "broken English" from the traders and fishermen who have long frequented the fishing grounds off the New England coast. The fact that the New England Indians initially appear and, for the most part, prove to be more pacific than the Powhatans in Virginia, gives the English less cause to attend to them. The primary basis for interaction is, at first, the need for food; later it will be trade in skins. Apart from fulfilling these needs, the Indians are represented as nuisances. Repeated mention is made in *Mourt's Relation* of Indians overstaying their leaves, getting in the way of the colonizers' plans, acting like pests. For such reasons among others, they are cast as comparatively marginal characters in these narratives, dwelling naked and without shame on what the land provides, making few improvements on it, showing a marked lack of industry and ambition. These words have both moral and practical valence for the Puritans. It is with little mediation that savages "that doe but run over the grasse" soon become conflated with "foxes and wilde beasts," and lose claim to land on which they are said merely to graze or hunt.<sup>3</sup>

The first (living) Indian the Puritans directly encounter, on March 16, 1621, is presented as the second of two interruptions of their determination "to conclude of the military Orders," a resolve undertaken in the wake of an Indian theft of tools (31–32).<sup>4</sup> Unlike the other "savages" who have heretofore only furtively shown themselves before stealing away, the subsequently named Samoset is represented as a savage who "very boldly came all alone" and "presented himselfe" to the Puritans, and "saluted" them "in English, and bad us well-come, for he had learned some broken English amongst the English men that came to fish at Monchegggon, and knew by name the most of the Captainers, Commanders, & Masters that usually come" (32). Despite the novelty of being first addressed and welcomed by an English-speaking "savage," who, moreover, "was a man free in speech, so farre as he could expresse his minde, and of a seemely carriage" (32), the English appear to tire of Samoset very quickly. Having learned from him that "the place where we now live" has been emptied of inhabitants due to "an extraordinary plague," hence, that "there is none to hinder our possession, or to lay claim unto it," the English "would gladly have been rid of him at night" and do, in fact, "dismiss" Samoset the next morning.

We witness here a lack of curiosity about the Native American comparable to that recorded in Columbus's earliest diary entries.<sup>5</sup> And though there is little here that is symptomatic of what we would term racism, the Indian

appears to the English recorder more as an annoyance than as a subject of interest. (His surprising ability to speak English, far from being greeted with wonder or admiration, for example, is immediately diminished by the observation that it is but a "broken English.") Although the author of this, the longest section of the *Relation*, takes pains to distinguish the comparatively pacific Puritan approach to the Indian from that taken by others (e.g., Sir Fernando Gorges and "Master Hunt"), whose violence toward, and attempted enslavement of, a party of Nausets have "much incensed and provoked" that tribe "against the English" (33), the Puritans' milder approach is (like Raleigh's in Guiana) largely utilitarian and harbors within it an undifferentiated, distrust of the Native American. Even the seemingly guileless Samoset is "watched" the entire night that he is lodged with the Puritans, and later visitors are strictly required to leave their bows and arrows some distance away from the space in which they encounter the English settlers.

This sustained "first encounter" with Samoset and, subsequently, with Squanto and Massasoit, which climaxes in a celebrated treaty of peace, has seemed to some (particularly Seelye) to constitute a comparatively Edenic, if comparably ephemeral, moment in the relations of Englishman and Indian. What allows its Edenic qualities to register is that the English are operating in an early exploratory stage of the colonization process in which the desire to claim or possess is temporarily held in abeyance and reliance on the Indians' cooperation is crucial. The English do not explicitly discriminate between themselves and the Indians on the ground of racial difference, but neither do they position themselves in any condition of equality with the Indians, who occupy, as it were, the same childlike, undeveloped status as the land they inhabit. *Mourt's Relation* repeatedly positions Englishman and Indian as fixed at decidedly different stages of intellectual and moral development. This factor helps explain how the English can ultimately insist that a land that is, in fact, occupied can be held to be empty.

To be sure, certain Indians do stand out as subjects in their own right, comparable in many respects to the English themselves. Like Samoset, for example, one Quaddequina "was a very proper tall young man, of very modest and seemely countenance" (38). Another, Iyanough, is portrayed as "very personable, gentle, courteous, and fayre conditioned, indeed not like a Savage, save for his attyre" (50). However, as the phrase "not like a Savage" indicates, Iyanough is the exception that proves the rule. The Indians in general more often committed "abuses in their disorderly comming unto us" (40) and "pestered us, till we were wearie of them" (42). And as in the comical scene in which an embassy of Puritans finds itself compelled to spend a night in the same bed with Massasoit, his wife, and "two more of his chiefe men," the "importunace" of the Indians in their insistence on bestowing unwelcome hospitality is symptomatic of their childlike ignorance of the signs and markers of maturity and civility alike.

Much of this begs further comparison with Columbus's attitude toward the Indians of the Caribbean. As Todorov observes, Columbus either "conceives the Indians... as human beings altogether, having the same rights





as himself," hence, as "identical" and susceptible to assimilation, or else "he starts from the difference" and immediately translates difference "into terms of superiority and inferiority." "What is denied," in each instance, "is the existence of a human substance truly other, something capable of being not merely an imperfect state of oneself."<sup>6</sup> This manner, or habit, of denial becomes more explicit when the four episodic narratives of the *Relation* give way to the more practical considerations outlined in the volume's two concluding entries, "A Letter Sent from New-England to a Friend in these parts," authored by E. W. (Edward Winslow), and "Reasons & Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing out of England into the Parts of America," initialled by R. C. (Robert Cushman). The language of the "Letter" is rich in positive appraisals of the Indians—e.g., "We have found the Indians very faithfull in their Covenant of Peace with us; very loving and readie to pleasure us"—and richer still in promotional assurances to would-be settlers that one may "walke as peacably and safely in the [American] wood, as in the hie-ways in England." But the summary assessment that "they are a people without any Religion, or knowledge of any God, yet very trustie, quicke of apprehension, ripe witted, just" (61–62) at once qualifies and disqualifies the Indian's claim to occupy the same stage of human development as the Englishman. Indeed, Winslow's sentence formulaically echoes observations of the natives of the Caribbean Islands made by Columbus on his first voyage, which convinced him that they "should be good and loyal servants."<sup>7</sup> Its initial assertion that the Indians "are a people without any Religion" would also remind readers that, in John Smith's proverbial formulation, "Religion 'tis that doth distinguish us,/From their bruit humor, well we may it know."<sup>8</sup> Any claim that this "ripe witted, just" people might make to being self-determining agents of their own destinies is, moreover, implicitly vacated in Winslow's subsequent depiction of Massachusetts as a "Country" that "wanteth onely industrious men to imploy, for it would grieve your hearts (if as I) you had seene so many myles together by goodly Rivers uninhabited, and withall to consider those parts of the world wherein you live, to be even greatly burthened with abundance of people" (62).

Winslow's positioning here is of interest in its own right, having first "planted," then effectively effaced, a people "quicke of apprehension" in this virgin landscape. The reasoning that seems operative, at least initially, is that the Indian, who only sporadically "plants" himself in specific areas of this landscape, will continue to make room for the colonizing Englishman until he is literally effaced, either by force of disease, time, numbers, assimilation, or conversion. Like other agents of discovery before (and after) him, Winslow himself decides to "make room" for Europeans on behalf of the native inhabitant, while overtly claiming that the decision has already been consciously (and legally) made by the agreement of the Indians' representatives to submit their people to "our sovereign Lord King James" (61). The clearly vexed logic of this move was presumably recognized by the presiding compositor of *Mourt's Relation*, who concludes the volume with a more formal (though similarly formulaic) entry justifying the colonization of New England.

I do not intend to address here the debate about justification in which the volume's final author, R. C. (Robert Cushman), engages. Rather, my interest lies in exploring the rhetorical moves in which the justification argument is conducted. Cushman begins by dismissing an argument based on the precedent of the Jews' dispossession of the Canaanites, first, on the grounds that "now there is no land of that Sanctominie, no land so appropriated; . . . much lesse any that can be said to be given of God to any nation as was Canaan," and, then, more poignantly, because "now we are all in all places strangers and Pilgrims; travellers and sojourners, most properly, having no dwelling but in this earthly Tabernacle" (66). However, Cushman then introduces a new, moralized justification of colonization, claiming that "a man must not respect only to live, and doe good to himself, but he should see where he can live to doe most good to others." After offering a decidedly unflattering description of the "no-bodies" and "eyesoares" of present-day England who live only for themselves, he fastens on the possibilities for fruitful labor offered by the needful "conversion of the heathens" of America. Arguing that "we" ought to "use the meanes" available to us "to convert them," and that "the meanes cannot be used unlesse we goe to them or they come to us," Cushman pragmatically concludes that since "to us they cannot come, our land is full: to them we may goe, their land is emptie" (68).<sup>9</sup> At this point we again witness the characteristic slippage that transforms a populated land into an empty space in which those who populate the land—and justify its colonization by those who would convert them—are rhetorically effaced:

This then is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live, lawfull: their land is spacious and void, & there are few and doe but run over the grasse, as doe also the Foxes and wilde beasts: they are not industrious, neither have art, science, skill or facultie to use either the land or the commodities of it, but all spoiles, rots, and is marred for want of manuring, gathering, ordering &c. (68).

The conversion argument, without any explicit transition, gives place here to an argument that fastens on the emptiness of the land, its lack of cultivation, and the association of its "few" inhabitants with foraging animals. And that argument soon makes room for a recuperation of the previously dismissed precedent of the Jews' resettlement of Canaan:

As the ancient Patriarkes therefore removed from straiter places into more roomthy, where the Land lay idle and waste, and none used it, though there dwelt inhabitants by them, as Gen. 13.6.11.12, and 34.21, and 41.20, so is it lawfull now to take a land which none useth, and make use of it (68).

The hypocrisy of this transposition is of less interest to me than how it is presented and enabled. Although the native inhabitants of Massachusetts, and the conversion argument, resurface in the next two paragraphs of Cushman's disquisition—which recount the formal and willing submission of Massasoit



and his tributary "kings" to the mastery and command of the "Kings Majestie of England" and their agreement by "ajoynt consent" to a "peaceable composition" (68–69)—both inhabitants and argument are summarily swallowed up in Cushman's intensified reiteration of what remains the first and primary ground of justification, namely, the claim that New England constitutes "a vast and emptie Chaos." The intensification of this claim, its transformation of an "empty" or "uncultivated" land into a vast space of disorder that calls out for the intervention of an ordering hand, has a basis in something more than the need to justify colonization. That "something more" is discernible in the Puritans' indifference to Samoset in their "first encounter" and repeated reduction of subsequent encounters to the imperatives of sustenance and security. What enables, and underlies, this indifference, or failure to differentiate, is the wish that the land were, in fact, empty. Despite the earnest efforts of other Puritans like John Eliot to work with, and convert, the Indian, the authors and actors of *Mourt's Relation* would prefer to wish him out of existence, so long, that is, as he leaves cleared fields and stores of corn behind in the wake of his demise.

This wish, and its concomitant indifference to the humanity of the New England Indians, is particularly evident in an earlier entry in *Mourt's Relation* in which the colonizers come upon rich lands that have been left deserted by the recent death by disease of an entire village of Indians: "Thousands of men have lived there, which dyed in a great plague not long since: and pittie it was and is to see, so many goodly fieldes, & so well seated, without men to dresse and manure the same" (42–43). As the rhetorical choices we have already examined demonstrate, the pity evinced here focuses solely on rich lands gone to seed for lack of cultivation. And, as Cushman's retrospective commentary on such scenes suggests, the only men considered capable of dressing and manuring such land are not the Indians who cleared it but the English who will succeed them. Indeed, a kind of archeological imperative seems at work here that distances and effaces the surviving remnants of the "thousands of men who have lived there" from the abandoned site of their settlement in order to make the English "discoverers" seem the logical successors to the land.

It is not difficult to predict that a wish that the land were empty of its native inhabitants, conveyed in linguistic formations that diminish their number and transpose them into foraging animals, may evolve into a resolve to empty the land, or to assume that the will to empty the land is embedded in the wish. Such determination is plainly made manifest in narrative accounts of Puritan motives and methods in the Pequot War, particularly in John Underhill's *Newes from America* (1638) and John Mason's *A Brief History of the Pequot War* (1656), which would not be published in full until 1736, nearly a hundred years after the events it records. Although this war was fought in Connecticut against a different tribe than those the Puritans encountered in Massachusetts, the events themselves, as they were subsequently reconstructed, may well be considered displaced realizations of the wish evinced in *Mourt's Relation* that the land were made empty of its native

inhabitants (a wish that is also apparent in Indogrophy of the East, as the Introduction to this volume notes with respect to Luís Vaz de Camões's *Os Lusíadas*).<sup>10</sup>

As with the language deployed by self-styled crusaders in our contemporary "war on terror," it is often difficult to distill from the Puritans' rhetoric what constitutes self-serving rationalization and what stands as (powerfully deluded) conviction, especially given the Puritan penchant for mixing the two. But the exaggeratedly alarmist rhetoric employed by Underhill, among others, in rehearsing the alleged evidential causes of the war—one of which involved the transparently false attribution to the Pequots of a crime committed by the Narragansetts, a weaker tribe that the Puritans would enlist as allies against the Pequots—suggests that in this instance, self-serving rationalization clearly trumped conviction. This becomes particularly obvious in passages like the following, whose retrospective gloss on the proceedings makes the demonstrably fierce Puritans seem like defenseless prey in the face of the devouring fury of the demonstrably overmatched Pequots:

But the old Serpent according to his first malice stirred them up against the Church of Christ, and in such a furious manner, as our people were so farre disturbed, and affrighted with their boldness that they scarce durst rest in their beds: threatening persons and cattell to take them, as indeed they did: so insolent were these wicked imps growne, that like the divell, their commander, they runne up and downe as roaring Lyons, compassing all corners of the Country for a prey, seeking whom they might devoure: it being death to them for to rest without some wicked employment or other, they still plotted how they might wickedly attempt some bloody enterprise upon our poore native Countrey-men.<sup>11</sup>

As in Gina Caison's account in the previous chapter of how Virginia "becomes a space where loss justifies force" against the Powhatan, "the written record" effectively uses "negative proof" to justify "aggressive colonial actions" against the Pequots. Indeed, one would never guess from Underhill's words all that his employers—the governors of the established Massachusetts Bay and the new Connecticut colonies—had to gain from emptying northeastern Connecticut of the inconvenience of Pequot habitation, or that the behaviors enlarged upon here represented the desperate straits to which the Bay Colony's unreasonable and increasingly imperious demands were driving the Pequots.

A less obvious but closely related explanation, both for the hyperbolic character of the run-up to the short-lived Pequot War and for its genocidal nature, stresses its temporal coincidence with the outbreak and suppression of the antinomian threat to paternalist Puritan authority embodied by Anne Hutchinson and her argument of grace over works. No less a witness to, and actor in, both conflicts than John Winthrop Sr. himself supplies support for this explanation in a representative passage from his *Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruine of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines that Infected the Churches of New-England*. In this passage, Winthrop pursues the same



strategy as Underhill in representing the stronger party (in this instance, the victors of the antinomian debate) as victims of the weaker party's aggression, whose aggression becomes, in turn, the stronger party's justification for its vigorous suppression of its self-styled opponent:

All things are turned upside down among us: As first, in the Church, hee that will not renounce his sanctification, and waite for an immediate revelation of the spirit, cannot be admitted, bee he never so godly; he that is already in the Church, that will not do the same, and acknowledge this new light, and say as they say, is presently noted, and under-esteemed, as savouring of a Covenant of works: thence it spreads into the familiar, and sets divisions between husband and wife, and other relations there till the weaker give place to the stronger, otherwise it turns to open contention: it is come also into Civill and publike affaires, and hath bred great disturbance there, as appeared in the late expedition against the Pequods.<sup>12</sup>

Evoking the long-established belief in the correspondence between microcosmic and macrocosmic disturbances, Winthrop not only claims that the sponsors of the antinomian challenge turned the religious dispensation of the Massachusetts Bay colony "upside down" but effectively generated the more expansive "Civill and publike" disorder of the Pequot War.<sup>13</sup>

As for the ultraviolent nature of that war, Ann Kibbey contends that its connections to "the rhetoric of the controversy were varied and complex," but that it was "very similar to the violence [the Puritans] imagined and prophesied in the antinomian crisis," indicating its status as a form of displaced aggression.<sup>14</sup> And as for our difficulty in reconciling the variably reasonable and alarmist tenor of Puritan rhetoric with the genocidal nature of the prosecution of the war against the Pequots, Kibbey claims that "Puritan men created a consistent structure of meaning for themselves and systematically denied it to those whom they believed to be their enemies," adding that

The rhetoric that accompanied the actual violence was crucial to creating the threat of terrorism, for it was through the inconsistent, irrational juxtaposition of their words and their actions that the Puritans incited widespread fears outside their own society even as they established a social order within the colony.<sup>15</sup>

Kibbey persuasively documents the effectiveness of the "Puritan commitment to unstable signification" in underwriting "the sense of threat that Puritan men could resort to excessive violence for strange, sudden, and arbitrary reasons."<sup>16</sup> Although her argument that the Pequot War was primarily a war against women and children is less convincing, its genocidal drift offers a particularly good explanation of why John Mason and John Underhill, the professional soldiers that Massachusetts Bay and the new Connecticut plantation hired to lead their forces, initially chose not to attack the main warrior band of Pequots further up the Connecticut River, but instead surrounded

the undefended Pequot fort at Mystic, which harbored hundreds of women, children, and old men, and proceeded to burn it to the ground, with the aim of destroying everyone within it.

In *Newes from America*, Underhill describes the aftermath of this action in the following, ostensibly sympathetic manner:

It is reported by [the Pequots] themselves, that there were about four hundred soules in this Fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands. Great and dolefull was the bloody sight to the view of young souldiers that never had been in Warre, to see so many soules lie gasping on the ground so thicke in some places, that you could hardly pass along.<sup>17</sup>

But in the process of explaining why he and his "young soldiers" were "so furious," and failed to show "mercy and compassion" to the Pequots, Underhill "hurled Old Testament precedents" instead of pleading "military necessity".<sup>18</sup>

I would referre you to *Dauids* warre, when a people is growne to such a height of bloud, and sinne against God and man, and all confederates in the action, there hee hath no respect to persons, but harrowes them, and sawes them, and puts them to the sword, and the most terrible death that may bee: sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents; some-time the case alters: but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.<sup>19</sup>

Newcomers to this material should know that the primary criticism of Puritan behavior at Mystic was leveled by their own Narragansett and Mohegan allies who, accustomed as they were to the Indian practice of war as more the performative demonstration of power than its definitive application, "greatly admired the manner of *English* mens fight: but cried *mach it, mach it*; that is, it is naught, it is naught, because it is too furious, and slaies too many men."<sup>20</sup>

Though new and unprecedented to their Indian allies, the ruthlessness of the Puritans had more than a few precedents, particularly in the "unconventional wars" waged against designated "rebels, heretics, infidels, or barbarians" in early modern Europe. As Ronald Dale Karr observes, "The long Elizabethan conquest of Ireland, from Sidney in 1566 to Mountjoy in 1602," for example, had left a swath of scorched earth across the island; others may recall the more concentrated atrocities visited upon French Protestants in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Karr also offers a related explanation for the furiousness of Puritan violence that partly turns on the frequency with which commentators like Underhill describe the Pequots as "insolent."<sup>21</sup> Although the Puritans usually represented their negotiations with the New England Indians in terms of one sovereign nation treating with another, the success of the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies, and the recent development of new colonies in Connecticut, had made them considerably more aggressive, peremptory, and impatient in their demands,



such that they had begun to construe the Indians as "virtual subjects." And, as Karr adds,

In dealing with lawless subjects, English military tradition was clear. Whatever force necessary to compel "absolute submission" was justified, including the utter destruction of the foe. Entire populations were legitimate military targets. The Pequots were [thus] doubly damned as both infidels and rebels.<sup>22</sup>

Underhill's emphasis on the "insolencie" of the Pequot nation echoes Philip Vincent's references to the Pequots' "cruel insolency" in his slightly earlier *True Relation*, which is, however, less Biblically inflected than it is morally, and humorally, oriented.<sup>23</sup> Vincent seeks to explain the hardening of "the hearts of the *English*" as a phenomenon that developed over time in response to the shedding of English blood and other alleged outrages performed by the Pequots. But he does so in an unusually forthright manner, such that the fierceness of the English response to the violent "phrensie" of the Pequots scarcely serves to distinguish the one from the other on the ground of civility or humanity. Vincent starts by claiming of the Indians in general that,

Their correspondency of disposition with us, argueth all to be of the same constitution, and the sons of *Adam*, and that we had the same matter, the same mould. Onely, *Arts* and *Grace* have given us that perfection which yet they want, but may perhaps be as capable thereof as we (sig. B1r).

Vincent continues, in this universalizing, egalitarian vein, to claim that "Nature" has not only taught us wisdom, but "for our own defence... hath made us fierce, injurious, revengefull, and ingenious in the device of meanes for the offence of those we take to be our enemies" (sig. B1r). He even adds the intriguing qualifier, "This is scene in creatures voyd of reason, [but] much more in mankinde," before offering an application of traditional humoral theory that only slightly distinguishes the effects of "choler" on "barbarous and cruell natures" from its effects on reputedly civilized creatures:<sup>24</sup>

We have in us a mixture of all the Elements, and fire is predominant when the humours are exagitated. All motion causeth heat. All provocation moveth choler, and choler inflamed, becommeth a phrensie, a fury, especially in barbarous and cruell natures. These things are conspicuous in the Inhabitants of *New England*. In whose Southermost part are the *Pequets*, or *Pequants*, a stately warlike people, which have been terrible, and troublesome to the *English* (sigs. B1r-B1v).

This "phrensie" or "fury," Vincent claims, so possessed the Pequots that it prompted the Puritans to adopt an answering fury of their own in order to avoid repeating the fatal mistake of their countrymen at Jamestown, whose "long forbearance, and too much lenity... toward the Virginian Salvages, had like to have bin the destruction of the whole Plantation" (sigs. B3r-B3v).

Vincent strikes this same exculpatory note, with its direct reference to the 1622 Indian massacres of English colonists in Virginia, three times in his commentary, arguably to legitimate what might otherwise seem like a too unyielding commitment to principles such as "Mercy marres all sometimes, severe Justice must now and then take place" (sig. B3r). However, an unqualifiedly cold-blooded rigor emerges in its third and last iteration in his book's closing passage where Vincent imperiously states, "Doubtless there was no way better to chastise the insolencie of these insulting homicides, than a sharp warre pursued with dexterity and speed" (sig. C4r): a theme that will be sounded with considerably more Biblical thunder in Mason's *Brief History*.

Operative throughout Mason's account is the tendency to transform every Puritan success against the Pequots into an exemplary occasion for celebrating God's sponsorship of the Puritan cause and humbling of the pride of those who resist it.<sup>25</sup> The devastating massacre of hundreds of Pequot men, women, and children at Mystic, for example, gives cause for God to "laugh his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to Scorn, making them as a fiery Oven."<sup>26</sup> Even more notable, however, is the Puritan insistence on binding the surviving Pequots "by Covenant" that "none should inhabit their native Country, nor should any of them be called PEQUOTS any more, but MOHEAGS and NARRAGANSETTS for ever" (18). Landscape and identity are conflated in this formulation, leaving a vacated space on the map of New England that the expanding colonies will soon fill in.<sup>27</sup> The resolve to annihilate the very identity of the Pequots also retrospectively clarifies the slippage we witness in *Mourt's Relation* where what is represented as a populated land is just as often referred to as empty. Or, as Mason has it: "Thus we may see, How the Face of God is set against them that do Evil, to cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth... Thus the Lord was pleased to smite our Enemies in the hinder Parts, and to give us their Land for an Inheritance" (20-21).

In these sentences, the discourse of Canaan achieves apotheosis. The Pequots, according to Mason "a great people" possessed of "great Pride and Insolency," effectively resolve the contradictions of Puritan empty land theory by restoring in force the viability of the Canaan analogy. By filling the land "badly," that is, in resistance to the expansive aims of the Bay colony and the new colonies of Connecticut and New Haven, the Pequots allow the Puritan wish that the land were empty to achieve realization in the form of a war to render it empty. The excessiveness of the effort, evident in the proclamation that seeks to rid the earth of the very memory of Pequots, and in the fighting—which climaxes in the massacre at Mystic—reveals the strength of the will that has thus far been inhibited, as much by the comparatively easy acquiescence to Puritan domination of the Massachusetts Indians as by the moral restraint of the Puritans themselves. As the most conspicuously differentiated New England tribe, prominently bearing the Puritans' assigned marks of pride, insolency, and aggression, the Pequots are the first to suffer an effacement that is every bit as physical as it is rhetorical. In this respect,





the Pequots make, or are constructed to make, the perfect enemy, the one most plainly allowed the Puritans by virtue of geographic proximity and Biblical precedent.

## NOTES

1. John Seelye, *Prophetic Waters: The River in Early American Life and Literature* (New York: Oxford UP, 1977), 121, 123.
2. John Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War* (Boston, 1736 [1656]); Lion Gardener, "Gardener's Narrative," originally in *Massachusetts Historical Collections* III (1833), 131–160, repr. in Charles Orr, *History of the Pequot War: the Contemporary Accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent and Gardener* (Cleveland: Helman-Taylor, 1897), 112–149; John Underhill, *Newes from America; or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England; containing a True Relation of Their War-like proceedings these two yeares last past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palisado* (London, 1638); and Philip Vincent, *A True Relation of the Late Battell Fought in New-England between the English and the Pequot Salvages* (London, 1638).
3. Edward Winslow and William Bradford, *Relation or Journall of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation Settled at Plimouth in New-England* (London, 1622), 68. All references to Winslow and Bradford's text, otherwise known as *Mourt's Relation*, are cited in the main body of the chapter.
4. As Phillip H. Round notes, "the initial encounter with the native people of Cape Cod," in *Mourt's Relation*, actually "takes place between the expeditionary party and the buried Algonquin dead" whose graves the Puritans pillage for their large stores of corn. See *By Nature and By Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production, 1620–1660* (Hanover, NH: Tufts University Press, 1999), 217.
5. Seelye notes an even more remarkable lack of wonder in the Puritans' discovery of yellow hair on the skull of a ritually buried body, an embodied precedent for ethnic and cultural mixing they had no intention of repeating. As Seelye observes, "always alert for marvels of providential favor, the Pilgrims were blind to the light emerging from that singular, even miraculous grave" (Seelye, *Prophetic Waters*, 114).
6. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 42.
7. Letter of October 11, 1492 in Oliver and James E. Kelley Jr., eds, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492–1493* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 67–68.
8. John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia* (London, 1624), 37.
9. The conversion argument developed here becomes pointedly elaborated in "the form of the colony's seal, which the metropolitan Massachusetts Bay Company sent to John Endecott in Salem in 1629." As Round observes, "the seal featured a representation of an Indian, encircled by a motto based on Acts 16:9: 'Come over . . . and help us'" (*By Nature and By Custom Cursed*, 213).
10. As Ann Kibbey observes, "Despite the Puritan claim of self-defense, the evidence strongly implies that the Pequots, far more than the Puritans, acted in self-defense"; see *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism: A Study of Rhetoric, Prejudice, and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

- 1986), 100. The run-up to the Pequot War, with its repeated misrepresentations of Pequot ambitions and behavior and succession of unfulfillable demands made on the Pequots (in the way of fines, hostages, extradition of suspects) by the governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, bears uncanny resemblances to the Bush administration's transparently fabricated, but aggressively defended, justifications for invading Iraq between September 2002 and March 17, 2003. In both instances, an obviously weaker entity, hardly constituting an enemy in the first place, was put into the position of having to surrender everything, including its pride, in order to avoid destruction, while suffering repeated discursive representation as a stronger, more threatening, and more aggressive party to a dispute invented by the party of the first part to begin with.
11. Underhill, *Newes from America*, 22.
  12. John Winthrop, *Short Story of the Rise, reign, and ruine of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines that Infected the Churches of New-England* (London, 1692), 24–25.
  13. Winthrop would similarly hold Anne Hutchinson's religious transgressions accountable for the 30 little monsters she was said to have subsequently given birth to, which Winthrop ordered exhumed so he could personally vouch for the event. According to Kibbey, "The belief that the malformed fetuses were proof of the horror of antinomianism associated religious heresy closely with the female gender and implied that the beliefs of the antinomians violated the natural, physical order" (112).
  14. Kibbey, *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism*, 93.
  15. Kibbey, *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism*, 100.
  16. Kibbey, *The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism*, 100–101.
  17. Underhill, *Newes from America*, 39–40.
  18. Ronald Dale Karr, "'Why Should You Be So Furious?' The Violence of the Pequot War." *Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 876–909, especially 877.
  19. Underhill, *Newes from America*, 40.
  20. Underhill, *Newes from America*, 42–43. Francis Jennings's comment on this passage is worth noting: "In Underhill's day the word *admire* was used to express astonishment or wonder . . . and the word *naught* meant bad or wicked. What Underhill smugly passed on as the Indians' comment was their incredulity at the ruthlessness of the English"; see *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1976), 223. Underhill himself claims that given his first-hand experience of Indian-on-Indian warfare, "they might fight seven yeares and not kill seven men: they came not neere one another, but shot remote, and not point blanke, as wee often doe without bullets, . . . and then they gaze up in the skie to see where the Arrow falls, and not until it is fallen doe they shoot againe, this fight is more for pastime, then to conquer and subdue enemies" (*Newes from America*, 40–41).
  21. Karr, "The Violence of the Pequot War," 901. Compare his observation, "When colonists used the words 'insolent' or 'insolency' to describe Pequot behavior and justify the need for war against them, they were referring to the latter's haughty refusal to acknowledge their rightful subordination to Christian rule" (907).
  22. Karr, "The Violence of the Pequot War," 908.
  23. Vincent, *A True Relation*, sig. B3r. All further references to Vincent's text are cited in the main body of the chapter.



24. As Craig Rustici's and Jonathan Gil Harris's contributions to the volume make clear, similar applications of humoral theory are pervasive in early modern Indogrophy.
25. As Gesa Mackenthun writes, "Mason's sentences...have the character of an incantation, of a rhetorical ritual of taking possession, of repeating the extinction of the former owners in verbal form"; see *Metaphors of Dispossession: American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492-1637* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 291.
26. Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*, 9. All further references to Mason's text are cited in the main body of the chapter.
27. According to Mackenthun, "Puritan demands exceeded the physical death of Pequot tribal members. What was apparently at stake was the need to create a truly vacant spot on the map, something that could be achieved only by annihilating the name of the defeated tribe as well" (*Metaphors of Dispossession*, 292).

