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TIYA MILES

“His Kingdom for a Kiss”: Indians and Intimacy in the Narrative of John Marrant

In the spring of 1785 an American-born evangelist described his return from an extraordinary sojourn among the Cherokee Indians:

I now and then found, that my affections to my family and country were not dead; they were sometimes very sensibly felt, and at last strengthened into an invincible desire of returning home. . . . I had seventy miles now to go back to the settlements of the white people. . . . My dress was purely in the Indian stile [sic]; the skins of wild beasts composed my garments, my head was set out in the savage manner, with a long pendant down my back, a sash around my middle, without breeches, and a tomahawk by my side.1

Although this description may conjure images of Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett, the speaker was, in fact, a mild-mannered Methodist, born in New York, raised in South Carolina, and living in England under the patronage of a countess.2 John Marrant, who was thirty years old in 1785, found God as an adolescent boy and dedicated his life to saving others, especially the natives of North America. Perhaps it should not surprise us that Marrant felt called to Christian evangelism, a process that Native American studies scholar Vine Deloria Jr. has noted went “hand in hand” with colonial land acquisition, for Marrant had experienced multiple imperial regimes in his lifetime: the English in America, the Americans in America, and the English around the globe.3 Indeed, Marrant’s fluency in the narrative forms that accompanied and rationalized colonization are evident in his articulated life story, rendered as an Indian captivity narrative, perforated by Indian princess and American woodsman tropes, and told in public preceding his ordination to the ministry.
But the most outstanding aspect of John Marrant's story need not have been spoken. For the "facts" were clearly in evidence to Marrant's British audience that the orator was black. The novelty of his racial assignment, coupled with his fantastical story of spiritual awakening, capture by Indians, and subsequent conversion of a Cherokee "kingdom," captivated John Marrant's eighteenth-century audience on both sides of the Atlantic. After hearing Marrant's account, Englishman S. Whitchurch published a poetic tribute, titled "The Negro Convert, a Poem; Being the Substance of the Experience of Mr. John Marrant, a Negro, As Related by Himself." A written rendition of Marrant's own narrated life story would be published in 1790 under the editorship of the Reverend William Aldridge, who transcribed the tale. Within its first year of publication Marrant's unusual report went through four editions, and it would soon become one of the three best-selling Indian captivity narratives in the genre's history. By 1835 Marrant's narrative had been republished at least twenty times. But despite this strong early showing, the text saw a prolonged period of diminished public and academic interest through the mid-nineteenth century and the late twentieth, until the notice of African American literary scholar Henry Louis Gates brought it renewed attention.

"A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant" has confounded some scholars of the Indian captivity narrative and of early African American literature, and I am no exception. John Marrant's rendering of his dramatic transformation during the Great Awakening and his ardent proselytism among the southeastern Indians includes strange and surprising features that led one scholar of early Native American literature to describe it as "opaque." Chief among the stumbling blocks to our comprehension of what John Marrant conveys is the notion that Marrant, an African American man, has composed a life story devoid of racial consciousness and revelation. One ethnohistorian expressed frustration over this: "When one starts reading [Marrant's] narrative itself one would practically never even know that a black man was behind the pen." Literary scholar Rafa Zafar, who has written extensively about Marrant's text, has observed that "virtually none of the narrative concerns issues of race or slavery" and has speculated that editor William Aldridge is likely responsible for this absence. Critic Benilde Montgomery has argued that "because Marrant identifies himself as 'black' only twice in the narrative, his work apparently lacked interest for both nineteenth century abolitionists and certainly for Protestant nativists. Up to now, he has continued to be ignored or dismissed."
Perhaps Rafia Zafar is correct in positing William Aldridge’s role in excising black racial identification from John Marrant’s memoir. Aldridge’s function as Marrant’s amanuensis, more common in early American Indian literature than in early African American literature, is certainly another barrier to “transparency” in Marrant’s text. Though Aldridge’s participation in the construction and production of Marrant’s story has led critics to question Marrant’s degree of authorial control, most acknowledge Marrant as the “author” of this work but note the tensions involved in white transcription and editorship of African American writings. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr chose to reprint the fourth edition of the text, which they note was originally published for the author. Potkay and Burr point out that William Aldridge refused to sell this version, suggesting that Aldridge may not have approved of additions that Marrant made to the fourth edition. Interestingly, this singular version of Marrant’s narrative includes a sympathetic description of Native American experience of white settlement, as well as the addition of a white mistress’s cruel treatment of African American slaves, but it does not include augmented references to Marrant’s own identification as a black man. The relative independence that Marrant seems to have had in this particular version of his narrative and the persistent lack of attention to his own racialization as black in the text suggests that John Marrant was not interested in positing his racial assignment as a central theme of his personal revelations and leads us to confront the possibility that Marrant was more interested in associating himself with Indians than with African Americans. If this is the case, the meanings of racial classification and identification in Marrant’s narrative become more evident at the juncture of black and red racial signification than in the realm of black experience alone.

What John Marrant seemed to recognize, and what I seek to explore in this chapter, is that entering the sphere of cleric, citizen, and culture hero that is strictly reserved for white men in the transatlantic Enlightenment milieu means distancing oneself from blacks and drawing nearer to Indians. In claiming a relationship with native people, John Marrant enters into implicit dialogue with a prominent concept in late-eighteenth-century American and European thought that seizes on the Indian as a primary symbol of nobility, liberty, and national identity. Conscious of the sorting system that Europeans devised to categorize and assign value to diverse populations, and aware of the differential positioning of African Americans and American Indians within that taxonomy, Marrant “flips the script” of the colonial narratives that he employs, refusing to accept the subordination that his
racial assignment dictates and projecting familiarity with Indians to enact a status for himself akin to that of an authoritative white man. Central to my interpretation here is the notion that the mechanism through which Marrant stakes his claim is knowledge of and closeness with native people. This idea takes multiple forms in his text and most often appears as corporeal, cultural, and emotional connection, as indicated by Marrant’s adopting of Indian dress and habits, his sharing of Indian spaces, his capturing of Indians’ spiritual passions, and his receiving an Indian’s kiss. This link between expressions of closeness and the exercise of power in Marrant’s tale echoes the tenor of indigenous and white relations in colonial and early American history, in which contact was “close but abrasive” and benevolence masked the threat of violence.17

EXPLORATIONS: BLACK AND INDIAN DIFFERENCE IN THE WORK OF JEFFERSON AND TOCQUEVILLE

In her new foreword to classic writings by women of color *This Bridge Called My Back*, feminist theorist Cherrie Moraga describes Indians and blacks as the “first and forced Americans.”18 Moraga’s alignment of black and native historical experience locates her in a long line of intellectuals who have made this gesture of comparison, a gesture that posits a simultaneous sameness and difference in the position of African and indigenous peoples in America. As the joint objects of European and Euro-American exploitation, blacks and Indians are classed together in this gesture, but within this shared classification a key distinction is implied: American Indians are the “first” (or colonized) and Africans are the “forced” (or enslaved). It is this bifurcated association of Native Americans with land and African Americans with labor that inspires contrasting characterizations of blacks and Indians by Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville, two men whose political writings have deeply influenced the ways that the early American nation-state, its subjects, and its citizens have been understood.19 Though the following tandem discussion of Jefferson’s and Tocqueville’s thoughts on race will be familiar terrain for scholars of early America, it structures a previously unexplored context for interpreting the narrative of John Marrant.

While Cherrie Moraga’s modern-day foreword seizes on an Afro-Native comparison to mark a history of “internalized colonization” and to further a coalitional political vision, eighteenth-century American statesman Thomas Jefferson and nineteenth-century French traveler Alexis de Tocque-
ville examine African Americans and American Indians comparatively in a manner that highlights an insurmountable difference between these two populations. The two men’s separate treatments locate Indians and blacks at differential distances from whiteness, Americanness, and the promises of democracy, which in turn secures the idealized image of the Indian for use by the new republic even as it protects the American citizenry from the specter of black contamination. In Notes on the State of Virginia (1785) Thomas Jefferson concludes that Africans and Native Americans are antithetical in moral virtue, strength of mind, imagination, beauty, and self-possession. Jefferson first arrives at this bifurcated racial assessment while rationalizing his aversion toward blacks and arguing the necessity of African colonization. In a second, related passage Jefferson begins with a discussion of black inferiority that shifts into a comparative discussion of Indian acceptability. While Jefferson observes that “in imagination they [blacks] are dull, tasteless, and anomalous,” he comments that evidence of Indian artistry “prove[s] the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation.” Jefferson, it seems, is unable to explain his views on the bankruptcy of those designated as black without invoking the first Americans as a point of contrast.

Alexis de Tocqueville engages in a similar, though more sympathetic, act of comparison. In volume one of Democracy in America Tocqueville laments the black and Indian condition, noting the pathos and irony of black exclusion from white society and Native American pride in isolation: “The Negro, who earnestly desires to mingle his race with that of the European, cannot do so; while the Indian, who might succeed to a certain extent, disclaims to make the attempt. The servility of the one dooms him to slavery, the pride of the other to death.” Tocqueville views both blacks and Indians as ill-fated races who can never be fully incorporated into white society. As political theorist Jennifer Pitts has noted, black and native populations represented two poles for Tocqueville, marking the outer limits of American democracy.

Is it significant that Jefferson and Tocqueville both take this comparative turn in their interpretations of early America? As anthropologist and historian Ann Stoler has observed, constructing comparisons, or preserving particular subjects and modes of commensurability and incommensurability, was a strategy of meaning “management” employed by imperial regimes and their subjects. In Stoler’s assessment “selective comparison was itself part of colonial projects that also served to secure relations of power.” Indeed, in the writings of Jefferson and Tocqueville relations of power between
whites and nonwhites, citizens and noncitizens, were encoded and stabilized through the act of comparing African Americans and Native Americans, implicating the two men in a larger “politics of comparison” of which black evangelist John Marrant seems to have been all too aware.26

Though Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville were citizens of distant nations writing decades apart, they had a number of experiences in common. Jefferson was a statesman and scholar who served as governor of Virginia, secretary of state, and third president of the United States, and he was principally responsible for extending American colonialism into the West. Alexis de Tocqueville was a statesman and scholar who served as a parliamentary member and foreign minister for France, and he was essential to the planning and assessment of France’s imperial interests in North Africa. Both men were profoundly shaped by the Enlightenment movement that intoxicated Europe and its colonies, inspired works of political theory and art, and catalyzed revolts against monarchical governments and aristocratic institutions. It follows, then, that the Enlightenment ideals of reason, knowledge, feeling, freedom, democracy, humanity, and justice informed and suffused Jefferson’s and Tocqueville’s writings. Each man, therefore, would confront in his master work the ulterior conflict that shadowed the Age of Enlightenment: namely, that the innovations and transformations of this era both disavowed and depended on systematic slavery and comprehensive colonialism.

Thus, Jefferson, who had earlier acknowledged the “unalienable rights” of human liberty and equality finds it necessary in Notes on the State of Virginia to rationalize his dislike of blacks, to confess his fear of a just God who would certainly punish America for the inhumanity of slavery, and to devise a plan for the eventual abolition of all bondsmen and women. Likewise, Tocqueville laments the destruction of native peoples at the hands of the “most grasping nation on the globe” in Democracy in America, even as he accepts the inevitability of the Indians’ demise as the price of civilization.27 Jefferson’s and Tocqueville’s comparative analyses of Indians and blacks seem to grow out of the implicit recognition that the conjoined presence of these populations whose exploitation and expulsion constituted the groundwork, or land and labor, of the American state chaffed at the very Enlightenment principles that each man held dear. Jefferson and Tocqueville were pressed, therefore, to address the “Indian plight” and “Negro problem” that were foundational to, if irreconcilable with, American nationhood.28

As de facto spokesmen for an American experiment that would model the
enlightened present and “mirror” a liberated future, Jefferson and Tocqueville faced the unenviable task of interpreting the inherent rift between Enlightenment principles and American practices. The politics of their comparison of blacks and Indians worked toward narrowing this gap by rationalizing the difficulties of black emancipation and the necessities of black expulsion from the national body, and by reiterating the image of the idealized Indian and the benefits of Indian incorporation into the national body. The continuation of slavery, though horrific in both men’s view, could be understood, for the cost of black freedom would be catastrophic to the nation; and the history of colonization, though a tragedy, could be recompensed if only the Indian were willing to be assimilated. In actuality, these lines of thinking resulted in the continued dehumanization and abuse of African Americans and the ongoing dispossession and decimation of Native Americans. Symbolically, these lines of thinking reflected and created an elevated space for the Indian, but not for the African, in the increasingly racialized national and international imagination.

This necessity for separating blacks from Indians, for highlighting African inferiority in contrast to Indian superiority, for associating Indians with bountiful land and Africans with debased labor found ready expression in the shared symbolism of the European Enlightenment and American national identity. Native American studies scholars Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen have argued convincingly that the European “discovery” of American Indian peoples would later provide a living example of embryonic Enlightenment notions, for French and English philosophers of this period viewed Indians as existing in absolute liberty and contentment, with no constraints save the laws of nature. The Noble Savage archetype took shape in these early interpretations, and the American Indian as imagined by Europeans “suffused enlightenment thought.” America’s founding fathers saw in the idealized Indian not only an example of emancipated man but also of democratic principles in practice, and they viewed Indian peoples and Indian lands as the model and mechanism of the American experiment and as the intangible essence of American exceptionalism.

That Americans were able to endure the cognitive dissonance of devastating native populations and usurping native land bases, even while valorizing the image of the Indian through their own appropriation of Indian-like ideals, appearances, and behaviors, is as central to the nation’s founding as the irony of slavery. As American studies scholar Philip Deloria has pointed out: “Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the

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continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants. . . . American social and political policy towards Indians has been a two-hundred-year back-and-forth between assimilation and destruction.34 American studies scholar Rayna Green has explained, further, that even as Euro-American settlers disappeared living Indians, white Americans stepped into that empty space, claiming the legacy of Indian nobility and freedom for themselves.35 The tale of Daniel Boone, published for the first time in 1784, one year before John Marrant told his own life story, epitomized this act of substitution and, as Richard Slotkin has observed in his classic work on American mythology, became the quintessential formulation of an American culture hero. Slotkin explains that “it was the figure of Daniel Boone, the solitary, Indian-like hunter of the deep woods, that yielded the most significant, most emotionally compelling myth-hero of the early republic.”36

At the convergence of Enlightenment ideals, democratic longings, and land lust, European and Euro-American thinkers consistently called on the idealized figure of the American Indian. Both Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville reproduce this figure, albeit to different degrees, preserving Indians as the noble savage of the American wilderness and, by comparison, assigning Africans to the irredeemable category of debased and racialized labor. For Jefferson this distinction is a sharp one. Blacks are “inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind” in his view, whereas Indians are “brave” and “keen” and possess a “vivacity and activity of mind . . . equal to ours in the same situation.” Jefferson proclaims that “we shall probably find that they are formed in mind as well as in body, on the same module with the Homo Sapiens Europaeus.”37 For Tocqueville, however, the image of the idealized Indian in contradistinction to the debased African is subtler and more nuanced.38 Echoing Jefferson, Tocqueville says of Native Americans, “The Indians, in the little which they have done, have unquestionably displayed as much natural genius as the peoples of Europe in their greatest undertakings.”39 And in an extended scene with which he concludes his comparative discussion of Native Americans and African Americans, Tocqueville paints an intimate portrait of the multiracial American family:

I remember that while I was traveling through the forests which still cover the state of Alabama, I arrived one day at the log house of a pioneer. I did not wish to penetrate into the dwelling of the American, but retired to
rest myself for a while on the margin of a spring, which was not far off, in the woods. While I was in this place . . . an Indian woman appeared, followed by a Negress, and holding by the hand a little white girl of five or six years, whom I took to be the daughter of the pioneer. A sort of barbarous luxury set off the costume of the Indian; rings of metal were hanging from her nostrils and ears, her hair, which was adorned with glass beads, fell loosely upon her shoulders; and I saw that she was not married, for she still wore that necklace of shells which the bride always deposits on the nuptial couch. The Negress was clad in squalid European garments. All three came and seated themselves upon the banks of the spring; and the young Indian, taking the child in her arms, lavished upon her such fond caresses as mothers give, while the Negress endeavored, by various little artifices, to attract the attention of the young Creole. The child displayed in her slightest gestures a consciousness of superiority that formed a strange contrast with her infantine weakness; as if she received the attentions of her companions with a sort of condescension. The Negress was seated on the ground before her mistress, watching her smallest desires and apparently divided between an almost maternal affection for the child and servile fear; while the savage, in the midst of her tenderness, displayed an air of freedom and pride which was almost ferocious.

I had approached the group and was contemplating them in silence, but my curiosity was probably displeasing to the Indian woman, for she suddenly rose, pushed the child roughly from her, and, giving me an angry look, plunged into the thicket.⁴⁰

I quote this passage at length because it seems to express in full not only Tocqueville's view of Indians and blacks but also the divergent characteristics associated with blackness and redness that have persisted in American thought. Here Tocqueville reprises his central suppositions regarding Native Americans and African Americans: Indians are strangely alluring, naturally fierce, overly proud, and too fond of their freedom, which locates them at the margins of white society; blacks are desperate, devoid of culture, self-effacing, indecorous, and despised by the Europeans whom they emulate, which locates them in a subjugated position within white society. In this scene Tocqueville fluently incorporates the racial and gendered iconography of early America to display what is ultimately a simultaneous interdependence and separation of white, black, and native inhabitants.

As is often the case in Democracy in America, Tocqueville's observations
here are layered. His decision to reconstruct a domestic scene as the ultimate illustration of his analysis of “the three races” indicates his recognition that the power of the state to control racial meanings is reflected in and supported by intimate relations and that intimate relations are effectively expressed through representations of women’s bodies and emotions.\textsuperscript{41} Political theorist Laura Janara has asserted that Tocqueville shapes his argument around a “symbolic family drama” that charts the maturation of a child-like American democracy, which, at a distance from its English “mother,” is nurtured in the “‘cradle’ of a feminized North American nature.”\textsuperscript{42} In the passage quoted above Tocqueville doubles his symbolism of Native America as mother, figured here as both the land itself—the wood and stream that succor him—and the materialized Indian woman, mother to the child who is alternately described as “white” and “Creole.” The native woman whom Tocqueville portrays is a composite figure of the fierce yet noble Indian Queen once symbolic of the New World and the beautiful and assimilable Indian princess, epitomized in the American “origin story” of Pocahontas and John Smith.\textsuperscript{43} The woodland grove setting is also central to this scene, as the woods have long been a site of metaphorical resonance in America. Although Puritan and Quaker colonists feared the woods as a dangerous, interstitial zone peopled by wild, demonic Indians, the American settlers’ growing knowledge of the Indians’ woods ensured survival and paved the way for national independence.\textsuperscript{44} Tocqueville’s presence in these woods, as well as the presence of the settler’s cabin, marks the penetration of whites into Indian spaces and the subsequent taming of the wilderness. Though the Indian woman flees Tocqueville’s scrutiny by dashing deeper into the forest, the nostalgic tone of this passage reveals this means of escape as transitory. The enslaved black woman, ever subject and abject, remains a captive of the grove, exposed to Tocqueville’s imperial gaze even as the Indian woman finds temporary refuge in her native nature.

If Tocqueville’s use of familial symbolism can be applied to this single moment, then the mixed-race Indian-white child represents democracy, the naturalized American Indian woman is democracy’s mother, the enslaved black woman is democracy’s handmaiden, and the American wilderness is democracy’s birthplace. It is notable that the father of democracy, the white male pioneer whose prior actions of acquiring the Indian woman, Indian land, and black slave have given rise to the scene that Tocqueville observes, is an absent presence here, represented by his structural “improvement,” the log cabin. In rendering this primal scene, Tocqueville makes two im-

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licit assertions that I want to emphasize—that American relations of power are organized through racial categories and embedded in intimate interactions, and that whites (especially men) and Indians (especially women) share a particular closeness, expressed geographically, physically, sexually, and symbolically, from which blacks are excluded. Tocqueville’s cognizance of the intimate tenor of this scene is clear in his concluding statement: “But in the picture that I have just been describing there was something peculiarly touching; a bond of affection here united the oppressors with the oppressed, and the effort of Nature to bring them together rendered still more striking the immense distance placed between them by prejudice and law.”

Affection notwithstanding, Tocqueville recognizes and reproduces a hierarchy of racial designation that is not only enforced by law but also in the private realm of interpersonal relations: the native woman who caresses a child begotten by a white settler, the black woman who sits at their feet and gazes up with fondness and terror, the white child who feels contempt for both women, and Tocqueville himself, who surveys the scene from a sentimental, yet authoritative, distance.

Alexis de Tocqueville’s portrayal of this woodland respite recreates the longing for the Indian and loathing for the African that is prefigured in Thomas Jefferson’s work. The politics of their comparison ameliorates the gap between Enlightenment ideals and American practices and underwrites the bifurcated metaphorical and material uses to which Indians and Africans have been put by the white republic.

In this way the writings of Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville reflect and consolidate the overdetermination of African and Indian positioning in America. As Vine Deloria Jr. has put it: “Because the Negro labored, he was considered a draft animal. Because the Indian occupied large areas of land, he was considered a wild animal. . . . Thus whites steadfastly refused to allow blacks to enjoy the fruits of full citizenship. . . . The Indian suffered the reverse treatment. . . . Everything possible was done to ensure that Indians were forced into American life. The wild animal was made into a household pet.”

African American and American Indian intellectuals prior to and including Vine Deloria have long challenged their separate representations and abuses as inscribed in American letters and “common sense” understanding. However, few works by black or native thinkers reveal the comparative and therefore associated nature of African American and Native American racial classification and valuation. Considered in this context, John Marrant’s attention to Indians in “A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful

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Dealings” provides a rare opportunity. While Marrant’s story may lead us beyond the comfort zones of proper and expected African American subject matter, it leaves us with a record of one man’s refutation of received racial classifications and offers a glimpse into the meanings of native people, cultures, and spaces to eighteenth-century African American subjectivity.

ERRAND IN THE WILDERNESS: READING JOHN MARRANT

“A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant” borrows from proto-American literary forms—the spiritual conversion narrative and the Indian captivity narrative—to fascinating effect. The salient features of the text are Marrant’s emotive acceptance of Christianity and his God-given ability to convert the savage Cherokees who hold him hostage. In the first paragraph of his preface to the narrative, Marrant’s transcriber and editor, William Aldridge, highlights the wondrous quality of Marrant’s singular experience: “He crosses the fence, which marked the boundary between the wilderness and the cultivated country. . . . He wanders, but Christ is his guide and protector.—Who can view him among the Indian tribes without wonder? He arrives among the Cherokee, where gross ignorance wore its rudest forms, and savage despotism exercised its most terrifying empire. Here the child just turned fourteen, without sling or stone, engages, and with the arrow of prayer pointed with faith, wounded Goliath, and conquers the King.” While Aldridge views the Cherokees as an imperial people controlled by a single, despotic royal, it is John Marrant, who, when he emerges from the wilderness near the end of his tale, wields the power of a monarch.

Marrant’s narrated journey from sinner to saint, boy to man, and peasant to prince begins with a misstep. Marrant reports at the start of his life story that as an adolescent his love of playing the violin and French horn had “opened to [him] a large door of vanity and vice.” While walking with a friend along the streets of Charleston, Marrant, a free black boy who is nonetheless “a slave to every vice” (77), comes upon a meeting house in which the Reverend George Whitefield is preaching. The boys conspire to disrupt the service with a musical prank, but when they cross the threshold into the church, Marrant is paralyzed by the power of God. The reverend assesses Marrant’s condition, saying, “Jesus Christ has got thee at last” (79). Marrant is then bedridden for days with a mysterious spiritual malady and does not recover until Whitefield dispatches a Baptist minister to pray for him. Marrant describes the effects of the reverend’s ministrations: “and near
the close of his prayer, The Lord was pleased to set my soul at perfect liberty, and being filled with joy I began to praise the Lord immediately; my sorrows were turned into peace, and joy, and love” (79).

Following his conversion, Marrant reads the Bible incessantly and is moved to tears when his family members refuse to behave like Christians. When his mother and siblings begin to “persecute” him and call him insane, Marrant seeks safety beyond the limits of the town (80). Like the Israelites escaping Pharaoh in the Old Testament, he wanders into the “desert” wilderness: “Accordingly I went over the fence, about half a mile from our house, which divided the inhabited and cultivated parts of the country from the wilderness. I continued traveling in the desert [sic] all day without the least inclination of turning back” (81). Marrant roams directionless for miles, suffers from hunger and thirst, and is threatened by wolves and bears. Along the journey God repeatedly saves Marrant by revealing deer grass and mud puddles for his sustenance and shielding him from animal attacks, just as he had shielded the biblical Daniel in the lion’s den.

After Marrant has traversed fifty-five miles, surviving only by the grace of God, he encounters an Indian hunter who takes him in. Marrant travels with the man for ten weeks, learning hunting techniques as well as the Cherokee language. Much to his surprise, however, Marrant is told that he will be put to death for trespassing when he and his Indian friend approach the Cherokee village. Marrant’s would-be executioner explains his torturous methods and then jails Marrant. Marrant is moved by God to pray in the Cherokee language, and the executioner, on hearing the fervent prayer, converts to Christianity. After this marvelous turn of events, the Cherokee “king” demands an interview with Marrant. An interrogation ensues, during which the king’s daughter is mysteriously drawn to the black captive. Marrant tells us, “The executioner fell upon his knees, and intreated [sic] the king in my behalf, and told him what he had felt of the same Lord. At this instant the king’s eldest daughter came into the chamber, a person about nineteen years of age, and stood at my right hand. I had a Bible in my hand, which she took out of it, and having opened it, she kissed it, and seemed much delighted with it” (86). After kissing the Bible a second time, the Cherokee princess is stricken with a spiritual illness. Marrant alone has the power to save her, so the king must spare his life.

As Marrant prays for the princess, the king accepts the Christian faith and releases the Cherokee people from his heathen rule: “The Lord appeared most lovely and glorious; the king himself was awakened, and the others set

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at liberty. A great change took place among the people; the king's house became God's house; the soldiers were ordered away, and the poor condemned prisoner had perfect liberty, and was treated like a prince. Now the Lord made all my enemies to become my friends. I remained nine weeks in the king's palace” (87). In the afterglow of his success among the Cherokees Marrant travels farther south to preach to the Creek, Catawba, and Housa tribes. Finally, he rejoins his Cherokee hunter friend and begins the journey back home to Charleston. When Marrant returns, draped in animal skins and carrying a tomahawk, his relatives do not recognize him. Marrant reports, “The singularity of my dress drew every body’s eyes upon me, yet none knew me” (89). Finally, convinced that he is indeed kin, Marrant’s uncle reveals that they had thought him dead. Marrant, the prodigal son now embraced by his family, says of the reunion: “the dead was brought to life again; thus the lost was found” (90).

Marrant continues his work for the Lord, traveling seventy miles from Charleston to teach slave children the catechism and witnessing their cruel treatment at the hands of their mistress. However, the American war for independence from England disrupts Marrant’s preaching. He is impressed onto a British ship. When the ship encounters a ferocious storm, Marrant is first thrown overboard and is then miraculously rescued from sharks. It is at this moment that Marrant sees his “call to the ministry fuller and clearer” (95). He finds a patron in Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, and is ordained in her chapel in Bath, England. Marrant’s intention, at the conclusion of his narrative, is to travel to the British colony of Nova Scotia to spread God’s word: “I have now only to intreat [sic] the earnest prayers of all my Christian friends, that I may be carried safe there; kept humble, made faithful, and successful; that strangers may hear of and run to Christ; that Indian tribes may stretch out their hands to God; that the black nations may be made white in the blood of the Lamb.” (95).

John Marrant’s life story as recounted in his narrative observes the hallmarks of the Indian captivity form. As scholars of the genre have explained, authors of the captivity narrative were understood by their contemporaries to have been chosen by God to undergo extreme experiences. Because English colonists viewed Native Americans as innately different and morally inferior, time among the Indians was the ultimate test and fortification of Puritan beliefs.50 The author’s successful passage through the trial of being taken by Indians, a passage evidenced by steadfast adherence to the faith in the direst of circumstances, proved the author’s election by God. The repetition
of this story line in early American writing gave rise to what literary scholar Tara Fitzpatrick has described as an American myth of the “imperiled but chosen pilgrim alone in the wilderness braving the savage ‘other.’” As is common in works of this genre, John Marrant’s own salvation is tested and authenticated through his successful converting of the Indians. His ability not only to survive his ordeal in the “spiritual wasteland” that was the Indians’ wilderness but also to transform the Cherokee town makes his narrative an overstatement of the genre’s case.

In addition to demonstrating the individual author’s religious election, the Indian captivity narrative did the cultural work of reinforcing an English moral authority that was linked to the enforcement of imperial power over indigenous Americans. As literary scholar John Sekora explains, “From its beginnings the captivity had provided a theologically powerful as well as physically useful version of manifest destiny.” Indeed, the earliest text of America’s first organic literary genre, Mary Rowlandson’s 1682 narrative, “The Soveraignty and Goodness of God,” was published in the aftermath of combat. King Philip’s War, also known as Metacom’s War, devastated native and Anglo communities in New England between 1675 and 1676. The conflict resulted in a massive death toll and extensive dispossession of Native American lands. Rowlandson, who was kidnapped by Nipmuck Indians during the war, told her story of terror and triumph six years later. And as the title of Rowlandson’s memoir implies, the sovereignty of a Christian God overcomes all forms of American Indian authority in this new genre. Rowlandson’s narrative and others that followed served as ethnocentric records of Puritan-Indian relations and evidence of redemptive suffering that proved the Puritans, as a cultural and spiritual community, to be God’s chosen people. The interrelationship of narrative form and imperial power encoded in these texts created what Rafia Zafar has called a “literary imperialism.”

The narrative of John Marrant is reminiscent of Mary Rowlandson’s paradigmatic text, to which, as Benilde Montgomery has pointed out, Marrant’s work “closely adheres [in] spirit and design.” For instance, vanity precipitates the need for spiritual purification for both Rowlandson and Marrant. At the conclusion of her narrative Rowlandson writes: “The Lord hath shewn me the vanity of these outward things. That they are the vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit.” Similarly, Marrant’s spiritual journey ensues after he has entered “a large door of vanity and vice.” Marrant’s narrative, like Rowlandson’s, emphasizes the role of landscape and carefully marks the boundary between civilization and the wilderness. While Rowlandson orga-

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nizes her tale around a series of “removes” that take her deeper into the forest, Marrant tracks the number of miles that he travels into “uncultivated” country.  

These and other striking parallels between Marrant’s tale and early expressions of the genre have led Rafia Zafar and others to question whether John Marrant is implicated in the imperial politics of the captivity narrative form. Zafar concludes that Marrant, like most black authors of his day, wrote for his own purposes, which diverged from the colonial project of demonstrating the “rectitude of Puritan rule” by “reinforcing[ing] white views of Indians as inhuman.”  

At the same time, though, Zafar insists that Marrant’s text yields dialectical readings. For when Marrant controls the Bible before the Indians, he “can be viewed as both the agent of a white, Protestant colonizing power and the colonial subject adapting and mimicking the sign of the colonizer.”  

This moment and others like it, in which John Marrant presents himself as a colonial agent, deviate from the norm of early African American literature and therefore tap into the complexities of black subjectivity in the Age of Enlightenment. Critical here is that these acts of agency turn on the presence of Indians. For John Marrant—who, in the exactness of his narrative construction, evidences a familiarity with the relative positioning of Indians and Africans in the American and European imaginary, as well as a familiarity with American literary tropes of colonial expansion, African abjection, Indian disempowerment, and Indian negation—deploys this knowledge to reposition himself in the racialized scale of humankind.  

In my attempt to understand Marrant’s iterated relationship with Indians, I envision his narrative as a tripartite tableau, a set of three scenes that interpolate with one another and with familiar plotlines of conquest. From this perspective these moments in Marrant’s text become “scenes of subjection,” to borrow the language of literary scholar Saidiya Hartman. However, the subjected person here is not the figure of the black slave, as is often the case in African American literature, but rather the figure of the tempered Indian. In these scenes Marrant achieves closeness with Indians—gaining their knowledge, guiding their spiritual lives, adopting their habits—in a manner that makes the Indians subject to Marrant’s authority. In effect, Marrant trades on the idea of the idealized Indian to trade up his own position in the dominant racial hierarchy.  

As historian James Merrell has elucidated, the notion of the woods as pernicious, mysterious spaces and as the natural abode of American Indians
has long held sway in American thought. Certainly, the captivity narrative and early works of American fiction express this deep-seated fear of the forest. But, as Richard Slotkin has pointed out, being forced into the wilderness against one's will also allows for the fulfillment of a hidden need for knowledge of the woods and its inhabitants. For the woods not only represent danger but also the possibility of transformation. The individual white captive, as well as the American colonies and future nation, must come to know the wilderness in their quest for survival and self-making. Slotkin explains that the captivity narrative "constitutes the Puritan's peculiar vision of the only acceptable way of acculturating, of being initiated into the life of the wilderness." The initiator in this transaction is the Indian, who, in progressive stages of the development of this genre, teaches the European how to be an American. By the mid-1700s to early 1800s, Slotkin continues, "the captivity experience itself became an experience of adoption or initiation into the Indian's world." John Marrant's use of the captivity narrative form, then, can be viewed as initializing his bid for closeness with Indians. The native woods become a transformative space for Marrant, a portal to his future self and a resonant setting for the narrative tropes that he enacts.

The first scene of note begins just as John Marrant is being interrogated by the Cherokee king, who intends to have him killed. As the king is questioning Marrant, the king's daughter disrupts the proceedings, draws near to the captive, and kisses his Bible. The woman's contact with Marrant's potent appendage, coupled by his prayer, causes her to "cr[y] out." And as Marrant is the only one capable of soothing her through the power of prayer, the king spares his life.

Marrant's inclusion of Indian royalty in his remembrances is not original, for the Indian queen figure, and her iconographic daughter, the Indian princess, had been associated with the "New World" since 1575. The idea of the Indian princess was integrated with story in 1624, when Captain John Smith published his History of Virginia, in which Smith described his rescue by a young woman named Pocahontas, daughter of the Indian ruler Powhatan. Over the course of decades American writers, artists, and dramatists embellished the tale, emphasizing the romantic tenor of the lovely princess who saved the Englishman's life, throwing her body over his and protecting him from the fatal blow of her father's men. As Rayna Green has convincingly argued, this image of the Indian princess, which turns on her betrayal of "the wishes and customs of her own 'barbarous' people to make good the
rescue, saving the man out of love and often out of ‘Christian sympathy,’” became a template for relations between Indians and whites. Because the native woman’s body had come to symbolize American land in narratives and images of colonial exploration, the Indian princess’s action of offering her body to the foreigner is at the same time an offering of indigenous terrain.

When John Marrant describes the Cherokee princess, he rehabilitates a story line that authorizes English and American conquest of native peoples. The kiss of the princess, her invitation to intimacy, sets in motion a chain of events that leads to Marrant’s eventual influence over her nation. Like Pocahontas, whose bodily offering ensures and symbolizes the conquest of native lands, the kiss of the Cherokee princess makes her people’s conversion possible and reforges conquest as the fulfillment of native desires. John Marrant, like John Smith, is the beneficiary of this transaction, as his encounter with the Indian princess underwrites his authority in the Indians’ homeland.

The scene in which the Indian princess kisses Marrant’s Bible, and is “much delighted with it,” extends into a second key moment in this narrative. The young woman, having bestowed her kiss, reaches for Marrant’s Bible again. Marrant reports: “His daughter took the book out of my hand a second time; she opened it, and kissed it again; her father bid her give it to me, which she did; but she said, with much sorrow, the book would not speak to her.” It is this singular instance that led Henry Louis Gates to recover Marrant’s text from obscurity in 1988, identifying it as a key work in early African American literature. Gates cites Marrant’s narrative as a primary example of what he terms the “trope of the talking book,” arguing that the recurrence of this trope in the narratives of Ukasaw Gronniosaw (1774), John Marrant (1785), John Stuart (1787), Olaudah Equiano (1789), and John Jea (1815) indicates a dialogic relationship among black-authored texts that marks the emergence of an African American literary tradition. In tracing out this lineage, Gates credits John Marrant with: “inaugurat[ing] the black tradition of English literature, not because he was its first author but because he was the tradition’s first revisionist.”

An earlier occurrence of Gates’s trope appears not in an African American context but in a Native American one. Ethnohistorian James Axtell has described the “sense of wonder” and “almost totemic reverence” with which nonliterate native peoples of North America first encountered the books of European missionaries. He suggests that in the late 1600s Jesuit priests among the Huron and Iroquois met with greater success in their con-
version efforts in large part because of the native perception that a secret force existed within their Bibles. And Axtell notes further that some native peoples in the Northeast expressed their reverence for the written word by kissing, fondling, and rubbing their bodies against the books of Europeans. This pattern of white and Indian contact recorded in missionary writings, together with the similar pattern of white and black contact expressed in African American slave narratives, makes the “talking” or “wonderful” book a far-reaching and compelling motif.

The trope of the talking book as defined by Henry Louis Gates entails an illiterate person (black) viewing a literate person (white), reading a book (the Bible). In this interaction the illiterate person feels impotent and marginalized because he cannot access the text and make it “talk” to him as the literate person can. The repetition of this exchange in early black-authored texts points to what Gates calls “the problematic of speaking and writing,” or the challenge of reconciling orality with literacy in African American experience. As Gates notes, Marrant repeats and amends the trope of the talking book when he describes the Cherokee princess’s reaction to his Bible. Furthermore, Marrant augments and enlivens this African American trope by merging it with reiterated descriptions of northeastern Indians’ early reverence for the book. While Ukasaw Gronniosaw’s narrative depicts a white slave master holding the book and a black slave, Gronniosaw himself, standing bewildered, Marrant describes himself as having sole access to the written word. Because he borrows from the image of the awestruck native, Marrant’s take on the trope of the talking book is unique within the African American literary tradition. Gates explains that unlike others in the tradition, Marrant: “seeks to reverse the received trope by displacement and substitution” and “restructures the trope such that it is the Cherokee who assume the perilous burdens of negation.”

Indeed, in Marrant’s version—an amalgamation of African American and Native American archetypes—Marrant stands in the place of the literate white man, and the Indian woman stands in the place of the subjugated slave. Even as Marrant displaces the exclusion and subjugation of blackness onto Cherokees in this scene, he projects his own disempowered persona onto the Cherokee woman. She becomes the embodiment of the qualities that render Marrant weak and vulnerable early in the memoir. For it is in opposition to the Cherokee woman’s feminized illiteracy that Marrant sheds his own boyish weakness and enters into the authority of manhood. His intimate exchange with the princess, which begins with a kiss, ends by position—
ing Marrant as reader, knower, and master or, in Gates's words, as a “substituted white man.”

The third scene in this tableau is a compilation of disparate segments that build to the moment when John Marrant returns to Charleston dressed “purely in the Indian stile.” The manner of his reentry to the civilized world reflects the influence of an extended sojourn among the Indians that has been a process of learning and self-transformation for Marrant, in which he takes on the characteristics of the Cherokees even as he converts them to Western beliefs.

When Marrant first enters the wilderness at the start of his tale, he is at a loss for how to survive until God provides him with food and drink and an Indian hunter, who offers him aid. It is through travels with the hunter that Marrant’s initiation into Indian ways begins. By the time he is taken captive, Marrant is proficient in the Cherokee language and has learned how to hunt and skin deer, create bedding out of moss, and tend a fire to prevent the approach of wild animals. After he revives the princess and is released from prison, Marrant graduates from his position of Indian initiate and becomes a leader in Cherokee affairs. His elevated status is expressed through his clothing, which is as fine as the king’s. Marrant says, “I had assumed the habit of the country, and was dressed much like the king, and nothing was too good for me. The king would take off his golden ornaments, his chain and bracelets, like a child, if I objected to them, and lay them aside. Here I learnt to speak their tongue in the highest style.”

The black adolescent, who was at first bewildered in the woods, looks like a native, speaks like a native, and has significant influence over the native potentate.

Marrant’s is a story of surviving the wilderness through an adoption of Indian ways that leads, circuitously, to mastery over indigenous peoples. This plotline, featuring a male woodland hero, is borrowed and adapted from a previous text. Embodied by the heralded eighteenth-century figure Daniel Boone and, later, Davy Crockett and James Fenimore Cooper’s Natty Bumpo, the white man who acts like an Indian and evidences deep knowledge of the wilderness is a recurring character. Richard Slotkin discusses this figure at length, describing him as “the solitary, Indian-like hunter of the deep woods,” who is the “archetypal American and mediator between civilization and the wilderness.”

The Indian-like hunter, in the primary example of Daniel Boone, is also a consummate Indian fighter who clears the way for white habitation. John Marrant’s rendition of this myth follows suit, demonstrating the author’s ability to mediate between “civilized” and
“uncivilized” cultures through familiarity with Indian ways and facility with Christian doctrine. When John Marrant returns to town, Indianized and triumphant, he catapults up the dominant racial scale, leaping from the status of black boy to the status of white culture hero, on the backs of red Indians.

Benilde Montgomery has observed about this narrative that “Marrant undergoes a complete change of identity, the fullness of his rebirth signified by his assuming the wardrobe of an Indian King.” Indeed, by the time he has exited the forest and inscribed these three familiar scenes, Marrant has undergone a miraculous transformation in both persona and caste. The new Marrant is a purposeful, self-possessed agent of God, whose perseverance and accomplishments rival those of John Smith and Daniel Boone. In the territory of the Cherokees, beyond the limits of Tocqueville’s democracy, John Marrant does not perish but is instead empowered. Though unpredictable and at times unwieldy, the narrative of John Marrant reveals an astute awareness of the symbolic valuation of Indians and relative devaluation of Africans in Enlightenment thought, a familiarity with narratives of conquest that are enacted through closeness with Indians, and an employment of these same plotlines to subvert assigned racial categories.

Yet John Marrant’s act of narrative subversion is something akin to re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic, as racial taxonomies and the meanings assigned to them proved arbitrary and changeable into the nineteenth century and beyond. Though imaginary American Indians would continue to be sporadically romanticized in American life and thought, living Indians were vilified, exploited, exterminated, and defined as others in an expanding white world. Nor does Marrant seem fully at ease with telling a life story that borrows much of its logic from colonial scripts. Although he acts as an agent of native conversion, Marrant evidences ambivalence. In the singular fourth edition Marrant reports the following after his return from preaching among the southern tribes: “When they recollect, that the white people drove them from the American shores, they are full of resentment. These nations have united, and murdered all the white people in the back settlements which they could lay hold of, men, women, and children. I had not much reason to believe any of these nations were savingly [sic] wrought upon.” This brief moment of introspection suggests not only the limits of Marrant’s evangelical influence, and by extension God’s power, but also implies a nascent connection with native peoples’ motivation for resistance. Embedded in John Marrant’s tale of triumph might be a seed of anticolonial sentiment that, to misapply the words of Thomas Jefferson, “only wants
cultivation.” But in the ever-mystifying layers of meaning that characterize this text, Marrant’s ambivalence at the conquest in which he has taken part might also be read as another hallmark of his memoir’s resonance with foundational narratives of imperial desire.

NOTES

I am grateful to Jean O’Brien and Catherine Griffin, whose comments in a graduate seminar shaped this essay in its earliest stages, and to Kathleen Brown, Ann Stoler, Alexandra Stern, and Vicente Diaz, whose later comments contributed greatly to my conceptualization and revisions.


2. Potkay and Burr, “About John Marrant,” 67–68. My essay does not delve into the specifics of Methodism in African American experience. John Saillant has written extensively about race and the Methodist Church in late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century America. He argues that white Methodist ministers who believed in divine providence saw slavery as part of God’s design to test the righteousness of white Christians and to convert Africans. Though they supported emancipation, Methodist leaders believed that blacks were so different from whites that they would contaminate America if they remained there. For more on blacks and Methodism see Saillant, “Slavery and Divine Providence in New England Calvinism”; and Saillant, “Remarkably Emancipated from Bondage, Slavery, and Death.”

3. Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins, 102.


6. Ibid.

7. See Gates, The Signifying Monkey, 142; see also Montgomery, “Recapturing John Marrant.”

8. For a recent, innovative, and inspired study of Marrant’s work see Brooks, American Lazarus.


13. For more on the debate concerning Aldridge’s role as editor and Marrant’s role as author see Sekora, “Black Message/White Envelope”; and Zafar, “Capturing the Captivity.”


15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 73.
18. Moraga uses this phrase in a parenthetical comment and attributes the wording to a friend: “We recognized and acknowledged our internally colonized status as the children of Native and African peoples (‘the first and forced Americans,’ as a friend once put it)” (Moraga, “From inside the First World, Foreword 2001,” xvi).
19. My thoughts on historical associations of Indians with land and Africans with labor have been influenced by conversations with Catherine Griffin. See Griffin, “‘Joined Together in History.’”
20. Ibid.
21. Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 145. Though Jefferson was against black-white intermarriage, he supported Indian-white intermarriage. In an address to Delaware and Mohican Indians he clearly expressed this support: “You will unite yourselves with us, join in our great councils and form one people with us, and we shall all be Americans; you will mix with us by intermarriage, your blood will be in our veins, and will spread with us over this great island” (quoted in Padover, The Complete Jefferson, 503).
24. Jennifer Pitts, introduction to Writings on Empire and Slavery, xv.
26. Ibid., 27.
28. I have derived my formulation of the “Negro problem” and the “Indian plight” from the work of W. E. B. Du Bois and Vine Deloria Jr.; see Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk; and Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins, 1.
30. The rhetorical segregation of Africans from Indians in Jefferson’s and Tocqueville’s work did not reflect the reality of New World configurations in which indigenous Americans, along with Africans, were enslaved in the first centuries of American colonization, and in which African lands, as well as Indian lands, were usurped and plundered for their natural resources. Nor does this rhetorical segregation reflect the findings of contemporary ethnohistorians who have documented integral cultural, social, and political relations between blacks and Indians in the Americas. These scholars include, among others, Littlefield (Africans and Seminoles); Perdue (Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540–1866); Wright (The Only Land They Knew); Merrell (“The Racial Education of the Catawba Indians”); Forbes (Africans and Native Americans); and Brooks (Confounding the Color Line).
31. See Grinde and Johansen, Exemplar of Liberty. For more on the Noble Savage see Berghofer, The White Man’s Indian.

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32. Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 63. As Gary Nash, Karen Kupperman, and others have shown, English colonists’ views of Indians varied, changing over time and differing between those who lived near native people and those who lived at a distance. In his classic article Nash traces three images of Indians that developed between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: the “guileless primitive of certain sixteenth-century writers,” the “savage beast of colonial frontiersmen,” and the “noble savage of eighteenth-century social critics” (Nash, “The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind,” 197). Kupperman argues, in contrast, that English colonial gentry of the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth did not view Indians as especially or irrevocably savage but rather saw Indians in similar terms as they did English commoners; see Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians*. For an analysis of European views of native women in America and Africa see Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder.’”

33. Grinde and Johansen discuss in detail ways that the Iroquois Confederacy of the Northeast inspired and influenced American political thought and organization; see Grinde and Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty*, 19–35, 141–68. However, other scholars have questioned the soundness of this claim; see, e.g., Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 8, 359. For a gendered analysis of the influence of Six Nations social and political organization on American political life see Landsman, “The ‘Other’ as Political Symbol.”


38. Jennifer Pitts has pointed out that Tocqueville had the luxury of observing rather than legislating in the United States, which shaped his reflections in *Democracy in America*. His attitude toward the native people in the French colony of Algiers was far less generous. See Pitts, introduction to *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, xxxi.


40. Ibid., 335–36.

41. Ibid., 331; see Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” 829, 832. For more on the intersection of race, power, and intimate relations in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America see Bynum, *Unruly Women*; Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*; Hodes, *White Women, Black Men*; and Pascoe, “Race, Gender, and the Privileges of Property.”


43. For more on the Indian queen and Indian princess figures see Fleming, “Symbols of the United States”; Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex.” I am borrowing the term “origin story” from Philip Deloria, who uses it to describe the Boston Tea Party; see Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 2.


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46. Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 8. Deloria’s observation echoes a similar notion of Tocqueville’s—that “we should almost say that the European is to the other races of mankind what man himself is to the lower animals: he makes them subservient to his use, and when he cannot subdue he destroys them” (Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 332).

47. As is often the case with racial definitions, the relationship of blacks and American Indians within a hierarchical racial scale has sometimes been inverted. A primary example is the Indian Program at Hampton Institute, in which African American students were viewed as appropriate role models for Native American students because of their higher level of civilization attained through the experience of enslavement. For more on race relations at Hampton see Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877–1923*; and Lovett, “African and Cherokee by Choice.”


49. Marrant, “A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant,” 77. Parenthetical page citations in the following four paragraphs of the text proper refer to this narrative.

50. For more on English views of Indians as expressed through the captivity narrative see Nelson, *The Word in Black and White*.

51. Fitzpatrick, “The Figure of Captivity,” 1–2.

52. See Kolodny, *The Land before Her*, 20.


54. For more on this conflict between the Wampanoag leader, Metacom, his native allies, and the English colonists see Lepore’s *The Name of War*. Lepore argues that the label “King Philip’s War” is a misnomer, suggesting instead that this war for Indian land should be called a “Puritan Conquest” (Lepore, *The Name of War*, xv).


59. For detailed comparative analyses of Rowlandson and Marrant see Montgomery, “Recapturing John Marrant”; and Zafar, “Capturing the Captivity.”

60. Zafar, *We Wear the Mask*, 42.

61. Ibid., 59.


65. Ibid., 247.

66. I am grateful to Vicente Diaz, who asked pointed questions about the role of the woods, and to Alexandra Stern, who described the woods as a “portal” or “threshold.” Both aided me in attempts to understand the relationship between John Marrant and the Cherokee wilderness. Vicente Diaz and Alexandra Stern, conversations among *Haunted by Empire* contributors, Ann Arbor, Mich., Feb. 28, May 20, 2003.
69. Tilton, Pocahontas.
70. Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex," 704, 700. Clara Sue Kidwell offers an alternative explanation for Pocahontas's apparent "rescue" of John Smith. Reinterpreting this moment from the perspective of southeastern native peoples, Kidwell suggests that Pocahontas was performing a valued duty endemic to her community's rituals for adopting war captives or strangers into the tribe. See Kidwell, "What Would Pocahontas Think Now?" For a review of the historical debate about whether Pocahontas was in fact participating in an adoption ritual see Tilton, Pocahontas, 6. For more on the role of southeastern indigenous women and the adoption of outsiders see Perdue, Cherokee Women, 38–39.
71. For more on the Indian woman as symbolic of American land see Kolodny, The Lay of the Land; Sparks, "The Land Incarnate." The association of the native female with the action of "possessing the charms inherent in the virgin continent" was especially apparent during the American Revolutionary War, when the Indian princess repeatedly appeared in anti-British propaganda as the symbol of an independent and promising America. See Kolodny, The Lay of the Land, 4; Fleming, "Symbols of the United States," 3.
73. Ibid.
75. Axtell, The Invasion Within, 102–3.
76. Ibid., 102.
77. Ibid; Axtell, "The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands."
79. It is interesting and perhaps suggestive of the need for further research that the trope of the talking book seems to be repeated only by African American men; Gates does not give examples of African American women writers who employ it.
81. Ibid., 143.
82. Ibid., 145.
83. Ibid., 150.
85. Ibid., 87.
86. Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence, 21, 23.
87. Montgomery, "Recapturing John Marrant," 109. For more on the meaning of dress in the cross-cultural contact experience see Little, "'Shoot That Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!'"
89. Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 147.

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