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To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson. Edited by Laura Murray. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998. 324 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$19.95 paper.

Even in the new-and-improved American literary anthologies, early Native American literature is conventionally framed as the product of a precolonial moment. "Oral narratives" and "traditional songs," performed and recorded in the twentieth century but placed at the pre-Columbian top of the table of contents, tell readers that there *were* full and flourishing Native cultures; that sense, however, is hard to come by in the narratives and sermons selected to represent the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Consequently, *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson* will come as a revelation to many readers of early American literature and history. This compilation of letters, diaries, and speeches by eighteenth-century Mohegan minister and intertribal leader Joseph Johnson witnesses the richness and complexity of Native American writing in the colonial era. It is the first such collection published in more than fifty years, a welcome and much-needed contribution to early American studies.

Like his more famous father-in-law, Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson began his literary career at Eleazar Wheelock's "Indian Charity-School" in New Hampshire. Wheelock required personal letters from his charges, ostensibly for pedagogical purposes, but effectually as a means of discipline; some of these letters, now archived at Dartmouth, came to light through a series of publications designed to celebrate the history of the college: James Dow McCallum's *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians* (1932), Leon Burr Richardson's *An Indian Preacher in England* (1933), and Harold Blodgett's *Samson Occom* (1935). Laura Murray's approach to the "Eleazar Wheelock" papers is decidedly different than that of these predecessors—hers is a method informed equally by recent Native American scholarship and by contemporary literary theory, a criticism sensitive to historical context, textual nuance, and the politics of cultural exchange.

Thus, in the present collection, Joseph Johnson appears not as one of "Eleazar Wheelock's Indians," but as an actor in a series of intricate cultural negotiations. Johnson's letters and diaries record his arbitration of a rigorously prescribed Christianity and the inclinations of his own human heart—in early letters, he appears as the self-abasing "good for nothing Indian"; his later diaries, however, record a more poignant and nuanced dialogue with the divine. This is a spiritual autobiography as engaging as any written in the late eighteenth century, but spiritual autobiography is not the sole focus of this volume. Murray draws together documents spanning twelve years of Johnson's career, from his early proselytizing among the Oneidas to his advocacy of Brotherton, a pan-tribal Christian settlement in upstate New York. In his speeches and letters to Native audiences, be they Mohegan, Oneida, or broadly "Christian brethren," in his open letter to the famously executed Moses Paul, in his petitions to government officials, we see the production of a public Joseph Johnson. More than just another tortured soul, another casualty of colonialism, he emerges as a community leader trying to find in the language of religious fellowship a sustainable model of pan-tribal interaction.

Johnson's world, as refracted through these writings, is indeed a complex one. Unfortunately, Murray's copious annotation and intervening commentaries sometimes add to rather than clarify the complications. While readers will appreciate the devotion evident in this effort and the wealth of information gathered here—genealogical, ethnographic, legal, and historical—the details simply become too numerous to track. Murray sets aside roughly one-third of the book for supporting materials, almost one hundred pages for her own historical and critical essays.

This editorial strategy seems especially questionable when one learns that, due to spatial constraints, only two of Joseph Johnson's nine archived sermons appear in this mostly all-inclusive volume. Initially, Murray justifies her decision by citing the omitted sermons' formulaic quality. There is, however, another critical factor at work here, something the editor tries to resolve as a matter of cultural difference. She writes:

My decision to leave out most of Joseph's sermons draws attention to the challenges of reading Joseph Johnson over distances of culture and time. Present-day readers will likely find the instances of rebellion or fracture in Johnson's writing more interesting than its sustained though sometimes strained conformity to eighteenth-century epistolary etiquette or biblical exposition. (p. 24)

How does one dissociate the provocative tensions in Johnson's writing from the cultural conditions under which he wrote? Certainly his letters' obviously imitative form was no bar to their publication. The problem, rather, seems to lie in the assumption that the sermons' overtly religious quality puts an irreconcilable gap between the texts and their imagined audiences.

Readers of early American writing have long recognized that religion comes with the territory. But caveats of "cultural distance" now appear with some regularity as it is discovered that eighteenth-century writers of color, like their white contemporaries, had something to say about God. It is an unnecessary and presumptive precaution. Some readers of *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren* will recognize Johnson's religious engagement as part of a broader, sometimes costly process of cultural adaptation and survival; some may appreciate the personal dimension of his difficult devotion. More than a few, I suspect, will wonder what those seven omitted sermons sounded like and wonder why scholarly comment took precedence over Indian writing in this otherwise commendable book.

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Tonto's Revenge: Reflections on American Indian Culture and Policy. By Rennard Strickland. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. 154 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

Rennard Strickland is something of a Renaissance man in more ways than one: he not only has enormous expertise in the fields of Indian law, art, film