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Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip's War. By Billy J. Stratton. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013. 224 pages. \$45.00 cloth; \$26.95 paper; \$45.00 electronic.

As the residents of Lancaster, Massachusetts slept, a group of Indians descended upon the dormant town. Suddenly, gunfire shattered the silence. Settlers awakened to find surrounding houses ablaze like the approaching dawn. A chorus of whooping cries erupted from the Indian attackers, who resisted futile attempts at defense and whisked over forty Puritan settlers into the woods. In fulfillment of their devious designs, the captors led the entourage away from their comfortable Christian community into a physical, cultural, and spiritual wilderness. So began *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, the account of Mary Rowlandson's eleven weeks in captivity during King Philip's War. In *Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip's War*, Billy J. Stratton attempts to "untangle" the hegemonic systems that determined the contents of the Rowlandson narrative (5). In doing so, he challenges the historical legitimacy traditionally afforded to the text and exposes its enduring function as a vehicle of minimalistic historical portrayals of Native Americans.

Within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, Stratton conducts extensive primary source analysis to argue that influential Puritan minister Increase Mather acted as the actual author of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, effectively co-opting the captivity narrative to perpetuate Puritan power structures and the dispossession of New England Indians. While scholars regard *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* as the prototypical Indian captivity narrative of the American canon, the details of its production are shockingly opaque. A Boston-based printing press first published the manuscript in 1682, six years after the reported attack on Lancaster and the eventual "ending" of King Philip's War with the death of Pokanoket sachem Metacomet, "the superlative leader of the confederacy [of Indian combatants]" (6-7). Copies of the first edition no longer exist, and discrepancies in later printings create confusion as to which version represents or most closely resembles the original account. Further, the narrative is the only surviving written work credited to Mary Rowlandson, an obstacle that prevents scholars from verifying an authentic authorial voice. These issues challenge the assumption of Rowlandson's authorship, and prompt Stratton's investigation into the exterior influences that shaped such a trusted and renowned text.

Other scholars have previously suggested that Increase Mather played an editorial role in the production of the Rowlandson account, but Stratton is unique in asserting that the minister was the primary composer of the text. Stratton begins by locating Mather's suggested involvement within a transatlantic literary tradition that deployed the captivity narrative genre as a "long-range tactical weapon" to justify European imperialist enterprises (18). Scouring geographically and chronologically diverse travel, exploration, and captivity narratives that date as far back as the thirteenth century, he traces the origins of Puritan psychological and emotional appeals of European supremacy over Native Americans to late sixteenth-century barbarizations of Ottoman Turks and Moors. These considerations expose the rooted lineage of the "dialectic of culturally defined binary oppositions" that Increase Mather and fellow Puritan leaders

such as John Winthrop, William Bradford, and John Cotton utilized to validate their claims to Indian territories (29).

In the chapters that follow, Stratton frames his argument with a thoughtful consideration of the concept that literary theorist Julia Kristeva referred to as “intertextuality.” His dissection of Puritan writings and their imperialistic precedents reveals the “direct and intentional interplay of specific literary elements” that propelled *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and commenced a persistent marginalization of American Indian subjectivities in historical discourse (48). He contextualizes the belated publication of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* within a period of Puritan leaders’ exacerbated commitment to “maintaining the social and political order established in the preceding generation” (95). In the wake of King Philip’s War, a growing population of settlers began to move away from hubs of authority and diplomatic relations with the English Crown grew increasingly tense. At a time when deepening social and political rifts threatened the communal solidarity that had long bound Puritan settlers, Stratton suggests that the Indian captivity narrative of a minister’s wife served as a tool with which Mather could ideologically congregate settlers through a stark comparison of their Christian civility with the supposed pagan animism of their indigenous adversaries.

Within the text, Rowlandson searches Scripture for the cause of her providential punishment, and finds solace in verses that promise redemption to the repentant. Stratton traces stylistic and structural connections between selections from the corpus of Increase Mather’s written work and *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, including biblical references addressing redemption and the narrative’s division into “removes.” Rowlandson’s Native captors are presented as demonic “instruments of divine retribution” that threaten to expedite hellish damnation and simultaneously enforce the repentant demeanor that was so central to Puritan theological discourse (106). Perhaps even more indicative of authorial intention than biblical inclusion was biblical omission. Stratton’s vast literary knowledge reveals that the author of the Rowlandson narrative truncated scriptural verses that might elicit sympathy for American Indians and thus “contribute ambiguity to the distinction being drawn between Puritan settlers and Native ‘heathens’” (62).

The twenty “removes” that comprise the Rowlandson narrative thematically and theologically correspond with the conditions for relocation from divinely ordained lands that John Cotton proposed in a 1630 sermon entitled *God’s Promise to His Plantation*. Consistent with one of the “evil” pretexts outlined by Cotton, Rowlandson’s captivity emerged as an indicator of repeated sinfulness, and simultaneously served as an “anchor of geographical claiming that [was] paid for by Puritan suffering” (61). Hence the very structure of *The Sovereignty of the Goodness of God* posits cultural and religious rationalizations for the “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” of the New England landscape. Stratton frequently cites this terminology, introduced by philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, to highlight the cultural impetuses connected to physical dislocation and repossession.

Even those readers who remain unconvinced of Increase Mather’s supposed orchestrated “charade” can benefit from Stratton’s criticisms of the trust generally afforded to

older texts, as well as the subsequent dilution of the historical presence of American Indians (120). Stratton questions historians' enduring reliance on such texts as accurate portrayals of early intercultural interaction, and criticizes misguided modern attempts at renewed analysis that continue to minimize Native American agency. He attributes this problem to the unquestioned privilege granted to written sources of European authorship, and the invalidity automatically assigned to the accounts of Native oral tradition. In a familiar flourish of archival finesse, Stratton presents the accounts of Rhode Island official John Easton and Pequot minister William Apess to challenge these common conceptions of legitimacy. While many waves of critics have dismissed Apess's nineteenth-century recounting of Metacomb's grievances for its basis in Indian orality, Stratton shows how Easton's well-respected contemporaneous documentation of the sachem's causes for dissatisfaction corroborated the "spirit" of the charges relayed in the preacher's later version of events (91).

Stratton concludes his intensive textual exegesis with a condemnation of the "striking timidity of critics and historians" in their considerations of the dispossession and demonization of Native Americans (131). He implies that these writers are complicit, usually unwittingly, in the same strain of Euro-American exceptionalism that flowed from Puritan quills. Though American Indian subjectivities have traditionally been marginalized or eliminated in order to emphasize European agency, Stratton largely bases his contemporary criticism on dated scholarship. For example, he cites Perry Miller's *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956) as an "example of the type of cultural blindness that pervades the field" (137). Therefore, though Stratton's thematic interpretations are not without merit, he fails to acknowledge the modern push to amplify Native voices that have long been silenced. Linford Fisher's *The Indian Great Awakening* (2012) provides one example of a recent historical work that draws upon Indian oral tradition to testify to Native American cultural resiliency in the face of land disputes and Christian evangelization in New England.

This oversight does not detract from the ultimate value of *Buried in Shades of Night*. In the opening pages, Stratton humbly expresses his intent to be "responsive to the importance of the Native perspectives that are undeniably buried within all Indian captivity narratives" (14). The product of his efforts surpasses this goal, and equips readers with critical tools to resist assumptions and uncover Native American subjectivities silenced within and beyond the confines of a single genre. Stratton's dissection of the structural and stylistic elements of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* presents a case study that brilliantly illuminates the role of intertextuality in historical sources, and challenges readers to be more "culturally responsive" in their interpretations (121). *Buried in Shades of Night* serves as a first step in this collective process, and cautions readers against interpreting a work's persistent prominence as an authentication of its factual accuracy.

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