"Closing the Circle": Native American Writings in Colonial New England, a Documentary Nexus between Acculturation and Cultural Preservation

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Abstract

Handwritten documents as well as printed books and tracts in the indigenous languages of New England's Native Americans in the colonial era enable linguistic scholars to "reclaim" traditional Native speech, "closing the circle" for many Native Americans and providing a solid foundation for group cohesion and cultural identity. In addition, writings by Native Americans and Native voices inherent in documents penned by Euro-American colonials are essential to understanding the details and dynamics of acculturation. A key focus of this article is the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, which relies heavily on linguistic analysis of historical documents scattered throughout repositories in New England. Endangered languages, cultural diversity, and the multifaceted perspectives preserved in archival repositories have much to teach us.

Language Reclamation: "Restoring a Spirit"

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur wrote in 1782 that the Native Americans of New England were headed for "total annihilation" through no fault of their white neighbors. He lamented the tribes that were already "gone," stating that

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"every memorial of them is lost, no vestiges whatever are left."[1] In fact, by the late eighteenth century, the Native populations of New England had been severely reduced from their precontact numbers as a result of disease, migration, forced relocation, and war. But Crèvecoeur was wrong in assuming that Native culture would forever disappear. Like many other colonists and visitors to North America, he underestimated and misunderstood the persistence and adaptability of the indigenous inhabitants. Native peoples continued to live in or on the edges of many New England towns, earning a living by various kinds of labor on land or at sea, making and selling goods needed by the European colonists, and often living together on lands not claimed by whites. They managed to retain many of their ancestral traditions while learning new skills and adapting to new ways of thinking, a process often referred to as "cultural combination."[2]

Some scholars are now taking advantage of available resources to reconsider the Native position in New England after the ravages of King Philip's War (1675–1676). The image that now emerges is far different from the "subjection" and "debauchery" of "dispirited remnants" seen by one influential historian.[3] External pressures from colonists and internal dynamics within Native American cultures resulted instead in a redefinition of Native communities, modification of loyalties, new networks among Native Americans, and readjustments to Native identities.[4]

On any frontier, mutual adaptation occurs. The various patterns of adapting reflect the nature of the cultures thrown together, the conditions of contact, and the power relations in effect.[5] These dynamics have been studied by historians who specialize in *ethnohistory,* a central concept of which is the idea of the frontier (defined differently from the frontier that figures heavily in the "frontier hypothesis" of Frederick Jackson Turner).[6] Ethnohistorians use the term to mean, not a geographical location, but rather a social setting,

[1] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: Penguin, 1981), 119–23.

[2] Laura J. Murray, ed., *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751–1776* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 2–5.

[3] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonists, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 325.

[4] Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 2, 23, passim.

[5] James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 247.

[6] Turner's hypothesis, introduced at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, was published as "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, D.C., 1894). See also John Mack Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

"a culturally defined place where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other."[7] Much of what we know about Native American adaptation to the pressures of the colonial era derives from Native voices found in contemporary documents, publications, and marginalia.

Writings in the Massachusett, Wôpanâak, and Narragansett languages preserved in archival repositories not only contribute greatly to understanding Native culture and acculturation, but also play an indispensable role in the reclamation of endangered languages. A number of language reclamation programs are currently underway,[8] influenced in part by the pioneering work of talented and committed linguists. Most, but not all, reclamation efforts are centered on Native Americans (or First Peoples) in North America and Latin America and on Aboriginal cultures in Australasia. This article focuses primarily on the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project in Massachusetts, which relies heavily on linguistic analysis of historical documents and books scattered throughout repositories in New England. The word *Wôpanâak* (the language) and the name *Wampanoag* (the people) are both pronounced "WAMP-ah-nog." This particular example of Native American experience in New England serves as a springboard for more general perspectives about the importance of cultural preservation and timely issues pertaining to archival practices.

English Perceptions in a Colonial Context: "Come Over and Help Us"

Some understanding of the historical context of the Puritan mission in the New World is a necessary preliminary to the study of patterns of literacy in New England.[9] Conversion of Native Americans to Christianity was the main intellectual rationale proclaimed by the Puritans to justify their

[7] James A. Clifton, ed., *Being and Becoming Indian* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 24. See also R. H. Fossum and J. K. Roth, eds., *American Ground: Vistas, Visions, and Revisions* (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 153–63; and Kathleen Bragdon, "'Another Tongue Brought In': An Ethnohistorical Study of Native Writings in Massachusett," (PhD diss., Brown University, 1981).

[8] Examples of projects in New England related to Native American languages include the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, the Massachusett-Narragansett Language Revival Program, and an initiative undertaken by the Mashantucket Pequot tribe.

[9] On the Puritan mind-set in general, see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1939). On the impact that New England's landscape and environment had on its various inhabitants and the impact that they exerted on the land over time, see William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985). The impact on the human inhabitants included social, economic, and cultural aspects of their lives.

presence in America.[10] The Massachusetts Bay Colony's official seal in the seventeenth century depicted a barely clothed Native American holding an arrow (pointed downward as a gesture of peace), pleading, "Come over and help us."[11]

Rev. John Eliot (1604–1690), known as the "Apostle to the Indians," graduated in 1622 from Jesus College, Cambridge, England. His sympathies resided firmly with the Puritans, but he took orders instead in the Church of England. Nevertheless, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and King Charles I, who strictly enforced religious uniformity, precluded Eliot from working as a minister in the mother country. In 1631, he migrated to Massachusetts Bay Colony and around 1632 secured a job as "teacher" in the church at Roxbury, where he remained until his death some fifty-eight years later. It appears that Eliot conceived the ambition of devoting his life to evangelizing Native Americans soon after his arrival in New England. Eventually, he took the initiative of visiting local tribes for days at a time, proselytizing and attempting to learn the indigenous language.[12] He was the first Englishman to make a serious effort to learn Massachusett, the Native language spoken in the vicinity of the Bay Colony.[13] His teacher in that regard was a Native American servant, or slave, named Cockenoe, who had been captured by colonial forces in the Pequot War (1636–1637)[14] and brought north to work in the household of Richard Collicot of Dorchester, a

[10] George Emery Littlefield, *The Early Massachusetts Press, 1638–1711*, vol. 1 (Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1907), 158; and Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 61. See also Richard Slotkin and James K. Folsom, eds., *So Dreadful a Judgment: Puritan Responses to King Philip's War, 1676–1677* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), 61–62; and Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*.

[11] See website of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/presea/sealhis.htm, accessed 5 March 2008. The words are paraphrased from the King James Bible: "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over unto Macedonia, and help us," Acts 16:9. The present-day Commonwealth of Massachusetts resulted from the combination of separate English colonies established in the seventeenth century. Plymouth Colony (originally known as Plimoth Plantation, in the southeastern and Cape Cod parts of the state, founded by Separatists in 1620) and Massachusetts Bay Colony (in the Boston area and points west, founded by Puritans in 1630) were arbitrarily joined by royal charter in 1692 (1691 old style), made a royal colony, and assigned a royal governor. Rhode Island was settled as a squatter colony by Roger Williams and his followers in 1636, not receiving a charter until 1644. Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, 2nd ed. (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1961), 28–32. See also Alison G. Olson, *Anglo-American Politics, 1660–1775* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

[12] See Herbert Samworth, "John Eliot and America's First Bible," Sola Scriptura, available at http://www.solagroup.org/articles/historyofthebible/hotb_0005.html, accessed 5 March 2009; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, 3rd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 244–52; and "John Eliot," available at GreatSite.com, http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-eliot.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

[13] Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 29.

[14] See Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Rise and Fall of an American Indian Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); and Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1996).

town near Roxbury. Eliot learned the fundamentals of Algonquian speech patterns from Cockenoe, who translated for him and facilitated his interactions with the Native inhabitants.[15]

Puritans placed a high value on reading the word of God directly,[16] a practice called "text-based theology."[17] Eliot determined to translate the King James Bible[18] into Massachusett and teach Native Americans to read in their own language.[19] Eliot's Native informants, John Sassamon, Job Nesutan, and others, assisted him greatly throughout the project, which stretched over eight years. Sassamon, an orphan (probably a Massachusett), was raised in Dorchester by an English family who more than likely converted him to Christianity.[20] He subsequently played a pivotal role in the volatile relationship between colonists and Native Americans that erupted in the ignominious catastrophe known to American history as "King Philip's War."

Eliot described his methodology for teaching Native Americans to read as follows: "When I taught our Indians first to lay out a word into syllables, and then according to the sound of every syllable to make it up with the right letters . . . they quickly apprehended . . . this Epitomie of the art of spelling, and could soon learn to read." His prescription for would-be preachers needing to learn Massachusett indicates a similar approach: "Such as desire to learn this language must be attentive to pronounce right, especially to produce that syllable that is first to be produced; then they must spell by art, and accustom their tongues to pronounce their syllables and words . . ."[21]

England's Puritan Parliament authorized the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England by an ordinance passed in 1649.[22] As the labori-

[15] Dane Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusett Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600–1690* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 237–38.

[16] Lepore, *The Name of War,* 30.

[17] Kathleen Bragdon, "Massachusett," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*: *Native American History, Culture, and Life from Paleo-Indians to the Present,* ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 362–63. Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), an established classic from the 1970s, purports to examine the extent and nature of literacy during the colonial era in New England. It shows that rates of literacy were unusually high in colonial New England, perhaps because of the Puritan emphasis on Bible reading. But, surprisingly, the author does not mention Native American literacy, John Eliot, or the Indian Bible.

[18] The translation of ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts known as the King James Bible was authorized by James I of England in 1604 and completed in 1611. It quickly became the Bible used and relied upon by English Protestants. Its sonorous rhythms and language profoundly affected the subsequent development of English literature. Adam Nicholson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).

[19] Morrison, *A Praying People*, xxvi–xxvii.

[20] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 28–34.

[21] John Eliot, *The Indian Grammar Begun* (Cambridge, Mass.: Marmaduke Johnson, 1666), 4, 6.

[22] Morrison, *A Praying People*, xxvi.

ous translation of the King James Bible into Massachusett proceeded, Eliot corresponded with the society, sending regular reports of his progress with the Native Americans. He also arranged for the publication of tracts in England aimed at raising funds for printing a Bible in the Native tongue.[23] In 1659, as Eliot's translation neared completion, the society agreed to sponsor publication of an "Indian Bible" and dispatched a professional printer, Marmaduke Johnson, to the colony with a printing press, new type, and a much-needed supply of paper.[24] The President's Lodge at Harvard College in Cambridge already contained a printing press brought to New England in 1638 to produce Puritan tracts that were prohibited in England. The need for an additional press speaks to the ambitiousness of the Bible project. The additional trays of new type may have been needed in part to replace worn fonts and in part to accommodate the frequent recurrence of such combinations as "ks," "ms," and "ws" in the Massachusett language.[25]

Johnson's busy wooden press creaked and groaned in a lower room of Harvard's short-lived Indian College,[26] a two-story brick building in Harvard Yard that housed and afforded classrooms for students from New England tribes, who were carefully prepped for entrance by a teacher at the Cambridge Latin School. Native scholars studied side by side with the sons of English colonists from 1655 to 1665.[27] According to a commemorative plaque in Harvard Yard, based on information from the Harvard College Archives, the only five Native Americans to ever attend the Indian College were Joel Iacoomes, Benjamin Larnell, Eleazar (known only by his first name), John Wampus, and Caleb Cheeshahteamuck. The first three died before receiving a degree. Iacoomes, who would have graduated, was murdered by unconverted Native Americans after his ship ran aground on Nantucket Island while he was attempting to return from a visit to his family on Martha's Vineyard.

[23] Eleven of these pamphlets are known, published between 1643 and 1671 and commonly referred to as the "Eliot tracts." The title page of one is sufficient to convey an idea of the rest: *"Tears of Repentance: or, A Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel amongst The Indians in New-England: Setting Forth, Not Only Their Present State and Condition, but Sundry Confessions of Sin by Diverse of the Said Indians, Wrought upon by the Saving Power of the Gospel; Together with the Manifestation of Their Faith and Hope in Jesus Christ, and the Work of Grace upon their Hearts.* Related by Mr. Eliot and Mr. Mayhew, two faithful labourers in the work of the Lord. London: Printed by Peter Cole in Leaden-Hall, and . . . sold at his shop, at the sign of the printing-press in Cornhil, near the Royal Exchange, 1653."

[24] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 34. Paper was a valuable commodity in the seventeenth century.

[25] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 34. See also William Kellaway, "Marmaduke Johnson and a Bill for Type," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 8 (Spring 1954): 224–27.

[26] Morrison, *A Praying People*, xxviii. See also Littlefield, *The Early Massachusetts Press, 1638–1711*, vol. 1, 158; and Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 191–93.

[27] Alvin Powell, "Digging for Harvard's Roots: Ceremony Kicks Off Dig of Old College and Indian College," *Harvard University Gazette,* 4 October 2007, 17. Of special interest is "Digging Veritas: The Archaeology and History of the Indian College and Student Life at Colonial Harvard," an exhibit at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 2008–2009.

Wampus abandoned his studies to become a mariner. Cheeshahteamuck (a Wampanoag) was the only Native American to graduate from the Indian College.[28]

Helped by Samuel Green and James Wowaus, a local Nipmuc, known as "James Printer" because of the work he did,[29] Johnson completed a thousand copies of the Indian Bible before the end of 1663.[30] It was the first Bible printed in America and the first major publishing project in American history.[31] The title page reads: *Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe up-Biblum God naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament.*[32] The words, in order, mean, "Entire Holy His-Bible God both Old Testament and also New Testament."[33] The scale and speed of the project were impressive. The 1663 edition used 353 reams of paper, more than had been consumed by the entire printed output of the English colonies before 1660.[34] Seventeenth-century books were printed in sheets, each sheet containing a number of pages front and back, so configured that when each sheet was folded correctly into signatures the pages would be seen by readers in the right sequence.[35] The Indian Bible was printed in quarto with two columns of text on each page. Production considerably exceeded active demand. Forty copies were sent "in sheets" (i.e., unbound) to England for presentation to members of the society and other dignitaries. But, by 1664, only forty-two complete Bibles had been bound in New England. Eliot and his sponsors apparently wanted a reserve supply of printed sheets, ready for binding if Johnson decided to return to England after fulfilling his contractual obligations in the New World.[36]

[28] Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636–1936* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1936), 38–39, 56. See also John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts*, vol. 2, *1659–1677* (Cambridge, Mass.: Charles William Sever, 1881), 201–4; and Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1936. NB: Sassamon, Eliot's very talented assistant, studied at Harvard College briefly (before the establishment of the Indian College). Lepore, *The Name of War*, 32–33.

[29] Hugh Amory, *Bibliography and the Book Trades: Studies in the Print Culture of Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 114.

[30] Samworth, "John Eliot and America's First Bible"; and "Cultural Readings: Colonization and Print in the Americas," Penn Library Exhibitions, available at http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/kislak/religion/eliotbible.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

[31] "Cultural Readings," Penn Library Exhibitions.

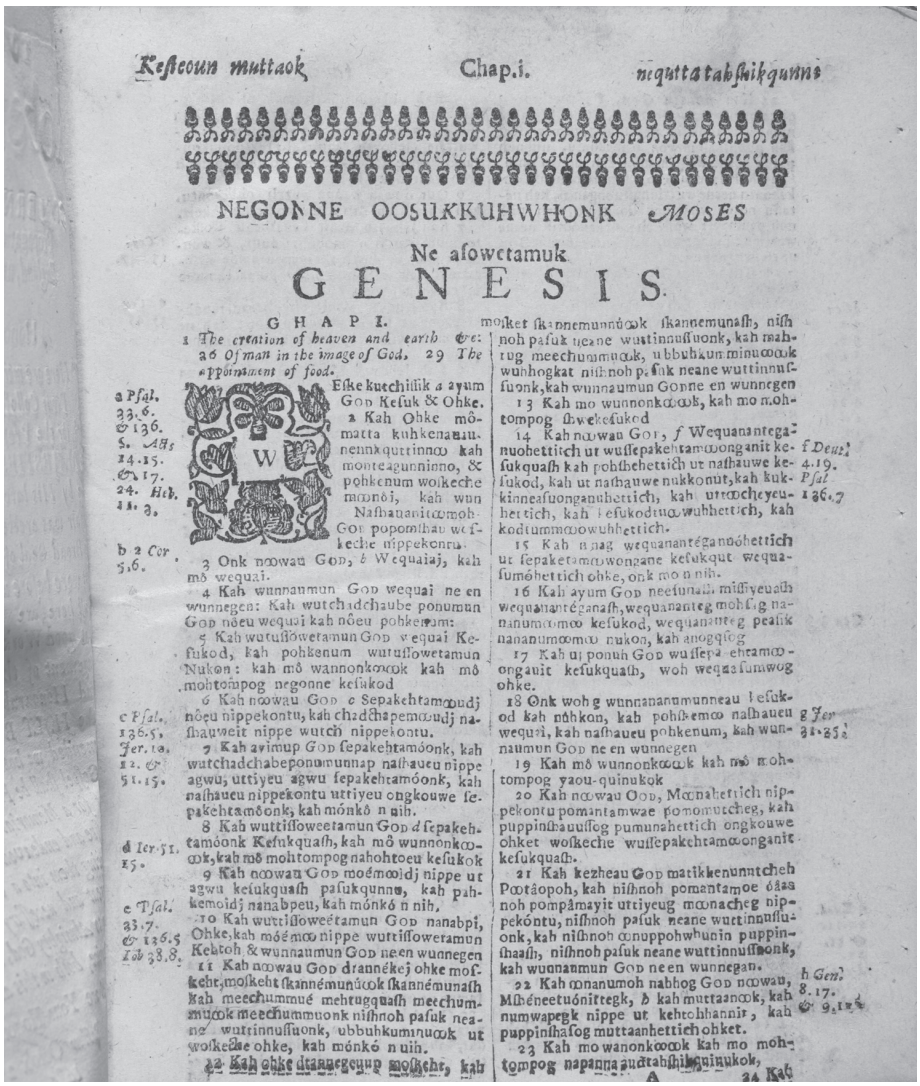
[32] "First Complete Bible Printed in America," American Treasures of the Library of Congress, available at http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm036.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

[33] Norvin W. Richards, interview 16 November 2007. See also Charles Evans, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and Including the Year 1820, with Bibliographical and Biographical Notes,* vol. 1, *1639–1729* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941).

[34] Amory, *Bibliography and the Book Trades,* 114.

[35] Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1995), 40–56.

[36] Amory, *Bibliography and the Book Trades,* 114.



Keſtcoun muttaok Chap.i. nequttatahſhikqunnit

NEGONNE OOSUKKUHWHONK *MOSES*

Ne aſowetamuk

GENESIS.

CHAP I.

1 *The creation of heaven and earth &c:* 26 *Of man in the image of God.* 29 *The appointment of food.*

Eſke kuechiſſik a ayum God Keſuk & Ohke.
2 Kah Ohke mô-matta kuhkenauau-nennkquttinnoo kah monteagunninno, & pohkenum woiketche moonôi, kah wun Naſhauanitoomoh-God popomthau we-ſketche nippekontu.

3 Onk noowau God, b Wequaiaj, kah mô wequai.

4 Kah wunnaumun God wequai ne en wunnegen: Kah wutchadchaube ponumun God nôeu wequi kah nôeu pohkenum:

5 Kah wutuſſowetamun God wequai Keſukod, kah pohkenum wutuſſowetamun Nukon: kah mô wannonkoook kah mô mohtompog negonne keſukod

6 Kah noowau God c Sepakehtamoodj nôeu nippekontu, kah chadchapemoodj naſhauweit nippe wutch nippekontu.

7 Kah avimup God ſepakehtamôonk, kah wutchadchabeponumunnap naſhaueu nippe agwu, uttiyeu agwu ſepakehtamóonk, kah naſhaueu nippekontu uttiyeu ongkouwe ſepakehtamôonk, kah mónkô n nih.

8 Kah wuttiſſoweetamun God d ſepakehtamóonk Keſukquaſh, kah mô wunnonkoook, kah mô mohtompog nahohtoeu keſukok

9 Kah noowau God moémoodj nippe ut agwu keſukquaſh paſukqunnu, kah pahkemoidj nanabpeu, kah mónkô n nih.

10 Kah wuttiſſoweetamun God nanabpi, Ohke, kah móemoo nippe wuttiſſoweramun Keatoh & wunnaumun God neen wunnegen

11 Kah noowau God drannékej ohke moſkeht, moſkeht ſkannémunúook ſkannémunaſh kah meechummué mehtuqquaſh meechummuook meechummuonk niſhnoh paſuk neane wuttinnuſſuonk, ubbuhkuminuook ut woiketche ohke, kah mónkô n uih.

12 Kah ohke dtannegenup moſkeht, kah moſket ſkannemunnúook ſkannemunaſh, niſh noh paſuk neane wuttinnuſſuonk, kah nahtug meechummuook, ubbuhkun minuoook wunhogkat niſhnoh paſuk neane wuttinnuſſuonk, kah wunnaumun Gonne en wunnegen

13 Kah mo wunnonkoook, kah mo mohtompog ſhwekeſukod

14 Kah noowau God, f Wequanantegauohettiich ut wuſſepakehtamoonganit keſukquaſh kah pohthehettiich ut naſhauwe keſukod, kah ut naſhauwe nukkonut, kah kukkinneaſuonganuhettich, kah uttoocheyeuhettich, kah keſukodtuoowuhhettich, kah kodtummoowuhhettich.

15 Kah anag wequanantéganóhettich ut ſepaketamoowongane keſukqut wequaſumóhettich ohke, onk mo n nih.

16 Kah ayum God neeſunnaſh, miſſiyeuaſh wequanantéganaſh, wequanantég mohſig nananumoomoo keſukod, wequanantég peaſik nananumoomoo nukon, kah anogqſog

17 Kah ut ponuh God wuſſepakehtamoongauit keſukquaſh, woh wequaſumwog ohke.

18 Onk woh g wunnananumunneau keſukod kah nôhkon, kah pohkemoo naſhaueu wequai, kah naſhaueu pohkenum, kah wunnaumun God ne en wunnegen

19 Kah mô wunnonkoook kah mô mohtompog yaou-quinukok

20 Kah noowau God, Moonahettich nippekontu pomantamwae pomomutcheg, kah puppinthauuſſeg pumunahettich ongkouwe ohket woſkeche wuſſepakehtamoonganit keſukquaſh.

21 Kah kezheau God matikkenunutcheh Pootâopoh, kah niſhnoh pomantamoe ôâa noh pompâmayit uttiyeug moonacheg nippekóntu, niſhnoh paſuk neane wuttinnuſſuonk, kah niſhnoh oonuppohwhunin puppinſhaaſh, niſhnoh paſuk neane wuttinnuſſuonk, kah wunnamun God neen wunnegan.

22 Kah onanumoh nabbog God noowau, Mûkéneetuónittegk, b kah muttaanoook, kah numwapegk nippe ut kehtohhannit, kah puppinſhaſog muttaanhettich ohket.

23 Kah mo wanonkoook kah mo mohtompog napanna auctahſhikquinukok,

A 24 Kah

a *Pſal.* 33.6. & 136. 5. *Acts* 14.15. & 17. 24. *Heb.* 11. 3.

b 2 *Cor.* 5.16.

c *Pſal.* 136.5. *Jer.* 10. 12. & 51.15.

d *Ier.* 51. 15.

e *Pſal.* 33.7. & 136.5 *Job* 38.8.

f *Deut.* 4.19. *Pſal* 136.7

g *Jer* 31.35.

h *Gen.* 8.17. & 9.1.

Genesis (first page), Eliot Indian Bible (2nd ed., 1685). The translation of ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts known as the King James Bible was authorized by James I of England in 1604 and completed in 1611. It was the Bible read and relied upon by English Protestants. Puritans believed that true conversion could only be attained by individuals capable of reading the Word of God directly. Rev. John Eliot and his Native American assistants translated the King James Bible into the Massachusett language and printed two editions of an Indian Bible(1663 and 1685), the only Bibles published in America until the Revolutionary War disrupted trans-Atlantic trade in the 1770s. ***Courtesy of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections.***

Eliot's ambition was to convince Native Americans to give up the beliefs and customs of their ancestors and adopt those of European Christians.[37] In 1669, he outlined a course of study for Native converts by listing recommended texts in the order in which he thought they should be read: "Catechism . . . Primer . . . Repentance Calling . . . Bible."[38] In his translation of biblical texts, he helped Native Americans relate to unfamiliar terms by devising more easily recognized substitutes, such as "rattlesnake" for "viper" and "mountain lion" for "lion." But he also infiltrated the texts with propaganda against the indigenous religion, for instance, his use of the Native term for *pipe carrier* (referring to a person in charge of indigenous religious ceremonies) as a translation for the English word *witch*.[39] These tactics, as crude as they were, had their effect. Cheeshahteamuck extended fawning thanks to his "Most Honored Benefactors" at Harvard's commencement in 1665 (translated here from the original Latin): "God has chosen you to be our patrons . . . so that you might bring a salvation-bringing aid to us pagans, who were conducting our lives and raising our children in accordance with our ancestors. We were as naked in our minds as in our bodies . . ."[40]

Colonial Debacle in New England: "War Spirit Speaks"

Eliot was only one of many evangelizing colonists intent on eradicating indigenous ways. By 1675, about 20 percent of New England's Native Americans had adopted Christianity, but evidence suggests that missionaries obtained few converts from cohesive, supportive communities with strong leadership. Most of the Christianized Native Americans had little alternative to conversion after being dislocated from their own culture in the wake of devastating epidemics and drifting into a postapocalyptic mentality. Epidemics from 1616 to 1619 (stemming from early contacts) may have claimed 90 percent of the Massachusett population even before European colonists established settlements. The Pilgrims who settled at Plimoth found deserted Native dwellings and extensive fields that had been cleared, cultivated, and abandoned.[41] But even limited Puritan success

[37] Lepore, *The Name of War,* 30.

[38] John Eliot, *The Indian Primer; or, The Way of Training Up Our Indian Youth in the Good Knowledge of God* (Cambridge, Mass., 1669); see also Lepore, *The Name of War,* 34. This sequence of study was an adaptation of the "ordinary road" of reading instruction prescribed by Puritans for the education of white children. E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press in association with American Antiquarian Society, 2005), 81–88.

[39] Richards, interview 16 November 2007.

[40] See "The Indian Bible," available at http://knauth.org/gsk/indian-bible.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

[41] Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare,* 60–61; and Bert Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England," in Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Northeast,* vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians,* gen. ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978),160–76. See also Bragdon, "Massachusett," 362–63.

at spreading European culture and religion infuriated the Wampanoag sachem Metacom (or Metacomet), called "King Philip" by the English. The title *sachem* is derived from the Algonquian term, *sachim,* meaning "chief."[42]

Metacom was the younger son of Massasoit, who had befriended colonists in the 1620s and whose help had been vital to their survival.[43] Although in childhood he had been raised to be generally attuned to the presence of the whites, Metacom bitterly resented their encroachments on Native rights and culture. The sachem was particularly enraged when Eliot asked John Sassamon to convert him to Christianity. Sassamon, who assisted Eliot, also worked from time to time as Metacom's advisor and translator. He may have taken advantage of his position to warn the English at some point that Native Americans were stockpiling arms and preparing for war. During one face-to-face confrontation, Metacom ripped a button off Eliot's coat, spitting out the stinging retort that "he cared for his Gospel just as much as he cared for that Button."[44] Tensions heated. Sassamon's mangled corpse turned up beneath the surface of a frozen pond, apparently concealed there through a hole hacked in the ice.[45]

King Philip's War erupted in 1675 after the trial and execution of three Wampanoags accused of Sassamon's murder.[46] The indictment charged them with "striking [Sassamon] or twisting his necke until hee was dead . . ."[47] There is some suggestion that the jury, which included Native converts as well as colonists, was deliberately chosen by the English to drive a wedge between the "Praying Indians" and their "heathen" counterparts. A contemporary account penned by a Boston merchant purports to read into Metacom's mind, ascribing to him the following motive: "This [the trial and execution] so Exasperated King Philip that from that day after he studied to be Revenged on the English, judging that the English authority have Nothing to do to Hang any of his Indians for killing another."[48]

[42] Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), 702.

[43] Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare,* 60.

[44] Cotton Mather, *The Life and Death of the Renown'd Mr. John Eliot, Who Was the First Preacher of the Gospel to the Indians in America, with an Account of the Wonderful Success Which the Gospel Has Had Amongst the Heathen in that Part of the World, and of the Many Strange Customes of the Pagan Indians in New-England* (London: John Dunton, 1691), 95.

[45] Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougias, *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten War* (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 1999), 22–27.

[46] Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 25–27; and Morrison, *A Praying People*, xxix. The accused were Tobias (a close counselor of Metacom), Mattachunnamo, and Wampapaqaquan.

[47] Plymouth Colony records, as quoted in Eugene Stratton, *Plymouth Colony: Its History and People, 1620–1691* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishers, 1986), 109.

[48] [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "The Present State of New-England with Respect to the Indian War," in *Narratives of the Indian Wars,* ed. Charles H. Lincoln (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 21, 25.

Most of the "Praying Indians" sided with the English, but others allied themselves with the confederation of Natives that formed around the Wampanoag sachem. Eliot's assistant, James Printer, stood with Metacom.[49] Christianized Native Americans found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. Some were pressed into joining rebel war parties. Distrusted by the English, many noncombatants were yanked precipitously from their Praying Town settlements and removed to Deer Island in Boston Harbor, where they suffered severely and lost many from hunger, exposure, and dysentery.[50] Mary Rowlandson, a Puritan minister's wife seized during a rebel raid and held captive, fulminated later about a relapsed Native convert "so wicked and cruel as to wear a string around his neck, strung with Christian fingers."[51]

In a bizarre, reciprocal exchange of cruelties, an appalling amount of decapitation and exhibit of heads by both sides characterized King Philip's War. In part, these gruesome displays were designed to demoralize enemy combatants. But, in Algonquian culture, decapitation had religious significance as well. The soul, or *cowwewonck,* lived in the brain. Separation of the head from a body deprived the deceased of any chance for a blissful afterlife.[52] Native warriors often disinterred buried corpses of the English to lop off their heads. When English soldiers happened upon displays of English heads, they typically took them down and replaced them with Native heads.[53] It isn't clear that the English understood the religious or spiritual import of decapitating Native Americans, but, whatever the motive, it was a common practice.

Colonial militias crushed the Native uprising in 1676.[54] The victors mutilated Metacom's body and sold his wife and young son into slavery in the West Indies (with boatloads of other captives). The sachem's head was displayed on a pole at Plymouth Colony for twenty years.[55] Alderman, the Native American whose

[49] Amory, *Bibliography and the Book Trades*, 114.

[50] Morrison, *A Praying People*, 173–80.

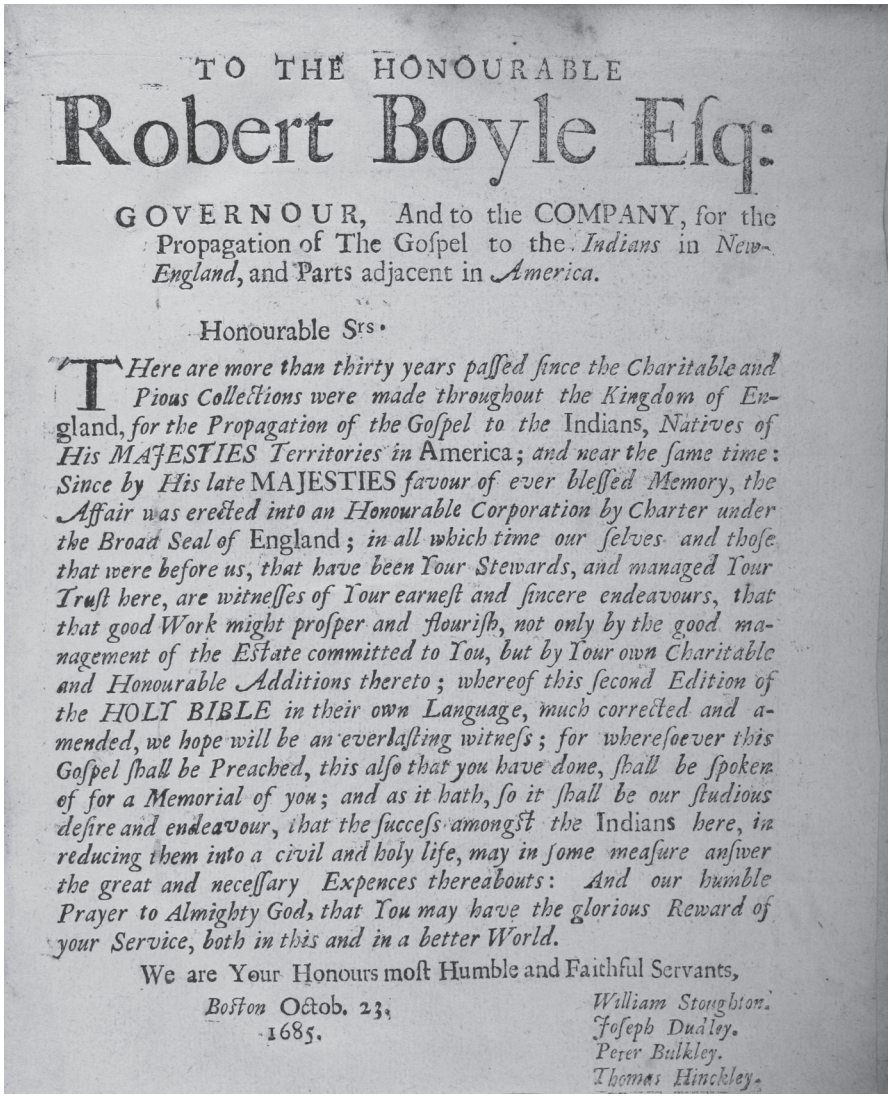
[51] Mary Rowlandson, "Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson," in *Narratives of the Indian Wars,* 152. The original imprint reads "Cambridge, Printed by Samuel Green, 1682." Sawing off their fingers and toes was one of many protracted torments practiced on captives by New England tribes. Lepore, *The Name of War*, 12–17. See also Slotkin and Folsom, *So Dreadful a Judgment: Puritan Responses to King Philip's War;* and Nathaniel Knowles, "The Torture of Captives by the Indians of Eastern North America," *American Philosophical Society Proceedings* 82 (1940): 152–53.

[52] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 179–80.

[53] [Anonymous], *A Brief and True Narration of the Late Wars Risen in New-England: Occasioned by the Quarrelsom Disposition, and Perfidious Carriage of the Barbarous, Savage and Heathenish Natives There* (London, 1675), 5.

[54] Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 64.

[55] See Frederick Webb Hodge, ed., *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1907–10), vol. I, 690–91. For additional information about trafficking in Native slaves in North America, see Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).



TO THE HONOURABLE

Robert Boyle Esq:

GOVERNOUR, And to the COMPANY, for the Propagation of The Gospel to the *Indians* in *New-England*, and Parts adjacent in *America*.

Honourable Srs.

THere are more than thirty years passed since the Charitable and Pious Collections were made throughout the Kingdom of England, for the Propagation of the Gospel to the Indians, *Natives of His MAJESTIES Territories in* America; *and near the same time: Since by His late* MAJESTIES *favour of ever blessed Memory, the Affair was erected into an Honourable Corporation by Charter under the Broad Seal of* England; *in all which time our selves and those that were before us, that have been Your Stewards, and managed Your Trust here, are witnesses of Your earnest and sincere endeavours, that that good Work might prosper and flourish, not only by the good management of the Estate committed to You, but by Your own Charitable and Honourable Additions thereto; whereof this second Edition of the HOLY BIBLE in their own Language, much corrected and amended, we hope will be an everlasting witness; for wheresoever this Gospel shall be Preached, this also that you have done, shall be spoken of for a Memorial of you; and as it hath, so it shall be our studious desire and endeavour, that the success amongst the* Indians *here, in reducing them into a civil and holy life, may in some measure answer the great and necessary Expences thereabouts: And our humble Prayer to Almighty God, that You may have the glorious Reward of your Service, both in this and in a better World.*

We are Your Honours most Humble and Faithful Servants,

Boston Octob. 23, 1685.

William Stoughton.
Joseph Dudley.
Peter Bulkley.
Thomas Hinckley.

Dedication page, Eliot Indian Bible (2nd ed., 1685). Robert Boyle (1627–1691) was a wealthy aristocrat, talented scientist, and enthusiastic promoter of Christianity. His experimental work (resulting, for example, in "Boyle's Law") was highly influential. A conversion experience during an awe-inspiring thunderstorm made him deeply religious. His writing included scientific papers as well as reflections on the relationship between God and the natural world and the potential for human understanding of religion. From 1661 to 1689 he was governor of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England. The dedication expresses the Puritan rationale for colonizing New England. ***Courtesy of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections.***

musket ball killed Metacom, was rewarded with the fallen sachem's severed hand as a trophy. This object, as a contemporary voice recalled, he exhibited "to such gentlemen as would bestow gratuities upon him. And accordingly he got many a penny by it."[56]

King Philip's War caused major disruptions to the culture of southern New England's Native Americans in addition to extensive loss of life. Native military power and political influence came to an end, although Christianized Native Americans living in Plymouth Colony and on offshore islands fared better than others. Of the fourteen "Praying Towns" originally established by Eliot for settlement of Native converts, only four reopened (Natick, Wamesit, Punkapoag, and Hassanamesit), and many who escaped death or slavery were coerced into them. Some Native communities survived the cataclysm intact and continue to exist on Martha's Vineyard, Cape Cod, and elsewhere.[57] New England retains other Native American inhabitants as well, dislocated from ancestral lands and, at least in part, disjoined from their traditional cultures.

Arson and pillage during the war destroyed most copies of the 1663 Indian Bible.[58] No more than thirty-seven are known to have survived, and it seems likely that Metacom's forces attempted to extirpate every copy they could find. With help from John Cotton, Eliot revised a second edition of the Indian Bible between 1680 and 1685, printed at Harvard by Samuel Green. There are at least fifty-three extant copies of the 1685 edition.[59] The Connecticut Historical Society, Harvard's Houghton Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Pilgrim Society, the Archives and Rare Books Collection in the Congregational Library of the Congregational Church, and private collectors own copies of the Indian Bible in the New England area. Some have handwritten annotations in Algonquian languages.[60] The 1663 and 1685 editions of the Indian Bible were the only Bibles published in America until the Revolutionary War disrupted trans-Atlantic commerce years later.[61] English language Bibles before 1775 could be, and were, readily and cheaply imported from England,[62] precluding the need for domestic production.

[56] Benjamin Church, *Diary of King Philip's War, 1675–1676* (Chester, Conn.: Little Compton Historical Society and Pequot Press, 1975), 156.

[57] Laura E. Conkey, Ethel Boissevain, and Ives Goddard, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period," in *Northeast, Handbook of North American Indians*, 177–89.

[58] Lepore, *The Name of War,* 43.

[59] Stephen Skuce (Rare Books Cataloguer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), interview 19 November 2007. See also Evans, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary;* and James C. Pilling, *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Ethnography, 1891).

[60] See Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, 374–464.

[61] "First Complete Bible Printed in America," American Treasures of the Library of Congress.

[62] See http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/, accessed 20 June 2009. The first English-language Bible published in America dates from 1782.

Harvard's Indian College, lacking new students, fell into decay. The only matriculant to graduate from the four-year program contracted tuberculosis and died in 1666 at age twenty, only a year after receiving his degree. The old wooden press and worn types that had printed so many sheets of missionary material were eventually turned to a radically different purpose, printing an indignant explosion of first-person accounts by colonists recounting Native "savagery" during King Philip's War. An entire genre of American literature arose, the "captivity narrative," of which Rowlandson's harrowing story is but one of many.[63] Pieces of seventeenth-century type used for setting the Indian Bible, Puritan tracts, and captivity narratives have been unearthed over the years in Harvard Yard, where archaeologists are currently trying to pinpoint and excavate the exact site of the Indian College.[64]

New England's colonists were determined that King Philip's War would put an end to Native resistance, but Native culture was not defeated, as the "complex stories of Indian survival"[65] after that conflict, and in perpetuity, illustrate.

Native American Literacy: Preserving "Voices"

Native Americans lost or transformed many aspects of their culture as a result of the European invasion of their homelands, but "one of the cultural things they received was the technology of writing as a means of preserving experience and knowledge."[66]Although much has been written about the history of literacy, in-depth study of learning to read and write in the American colonies is relatively recent. Jennifer Monaghan researched and analyzed literacy education in colonial America, including aspects of Native American reading and writing. Instruction in reading, she found, primarily facilitated religious education. Instruction in writing had broader effects (some of which the colonists did not expect), including nonreligious, practical, and self-assertive applications.[67]

[63] Lepore, *The Name of War*, 44–45; and Morrison, *A Praying People*, xxix. See also Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark, *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676–1724* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981).

[64] Gary Graffam, "A Discovery of Seventeenth-Century Types in Harvard Yard," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 30 (April 1982): 229–31; and Powell, "Digging for Harvard's Roots," 17–18. See also "Digging Veritas."

[65] Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxxiii.

[66] Brian Swain and Arnold Krupat, eds., *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 6. See also Bragdon, "'Another Tongue Brought In'"; and Margaret Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607–1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

[67] See Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America,* passim.

Historical interpretation is remarkable for its subjectivity. Eliot's Puritan mission and the interaction between Native Americans and colonists in seventeenth-century New England have been variously portrayed by historians with honest but opposing viewpoints. Alden T. Vaughan, for example, sees Eliot as a saintly figure surrounded by other well-intentioned friends of the Native Americans. Francis Jennings condemns Eliot as a manipulative fiend and excoriates the colonists for their dishonesty and greed.[68] Vaughan, who should have known better, wrote that there are no early Native American documents. His once highly regarded book, first published in 1965, states (in an introduction to the third edition, 1995) that

> The most serious gap in the documentation lies, of course, in the total absence of Indian sources. The native of New England had no written language, nor even a partial substitute for one. The materials, therefore, do not exist for a detailed account of acculturation in seventeenth century New England; by necessity, as well as by inclination, I have concentrated on the acts and attitudes of the Puritans towards the Indians and have not, for the most part, attempted to account for the actions and reactions of the natives.[69]

This is wrong (and wrong-headed) on many fronts. Native documents have survived, and, moreover, Native voices persist in documents and publications created by colonists. We can read (or "hear") them even if they are overlaid by a colonial viewpoint.

What actually happened between colonists and indigenes in colonial America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? How can our study of what happened be influenced by the voices inherent in Native American manuscripts, Puritan tracts, annotated Bibles, and other traces of the colonial past? It is important to examine not only Native writings themselves, but also the contexts (social and political) in which they were produced. Puritan ministers equated the inability to read and write with licentiousness, profanity, and superstition and believed that only through literacy could genuine conversions be effected. Traces of unequal power relations are evident in texts produced by Native Americans or texts in which quotations from them are embedded.[70]

Print culture in New England in the colonial era had a major impact on Native culture. Publications such as *The Indian Primer* (1669) and *The Logick Primer* (1672) were part of Eliot's educational plan to teach Native converts not

[68] Vaughan, *New England Frontier*; and Jennings, *The Invasion of America.*

[69] Vaughan, *New England Frontier,* lxix.

[70] Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 4–9. See also David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991), 6–9.

only to read and write but also how to think according to patterns of perception imported by the colonists, "how to analyze, and lay out into particulars bothe the Works and Word of God, and how to communicate knowledge to others methodically and skillfully, especially the method of Divinity."[71] The printed works helped connect the converts to their newly implanted spiritual authority.

Native converts were caught between two worlds. Their loyalty seemed suspect to everyone involved. To their unconverted Native relatives, they were intermediaries who could read and write but could no longer speak authentically for their people. To the English in the wake of King Philip's War, the converts could never really be English or Christian, no matter how they dressed or lived. In the Praying Towns, they adjusted to circumstances that to modern sensibilities seem self-denying and akin to cultural surrender. When they returned to their original communities, they attempted to resume traditional practices. Their cross-cultural activities "challenged the very basis of English and Indian identity," raising questions about "the mutability of the human spirit."[72]

Writings created by Native Americans include religious "confessions," narratives about (or purporting to be about) personal conversion experiences. Native expression is also found in the form of lengthy quotations embedded in sermons or tracts published by colonial missionaries. Even where such writings use the language and structures of the colonizers, they preserve a picture of Native identity as individuals came to terms with an unfamiliar cultural position in colonial society. Religious tracts published by the dominant culture can also be studied for the changes they reflect in white attitudes toward Native inhabitants. They show, for example, that the colonists gradually lost confidence in the idea that Native Americans were best educated in their own language. Cotton Mather sabotaged initiatives to publish a third edition of the Indian Bible after Eliot's death in 1690. Most seventeenth-century texts avoided overt attacks on Native character, but by 1720, a new version of the *Indian Primer* was replete with "anti-Indian prejudice" and "negative stereotyping."[73]

Many of the extant land deeds in New England's Native languages seem to reproduce earlier oral agreements and serve as a reminder for all concerned that changes in ownership occurred at a much earlier time.[74] The dichotomy between orality (community memory) and literacy (written authority) seems far less rigid than has often been assumed. Many such written documents seem to blend Native ways of talking and remembering with the ways in which colonists wrote and relied on written records, forming "a distinctly Indian literacy." Such

[71] John Eliot, as quoted in Laura Arnold Leibman, ed., *Experience Mayhew's "Indian Converts": A Cultural Edition* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 66–67.

[72] Wyss, *Writing Indians,* 50–51.

[73] Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*, 78–79.

[74] Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*, 75.

documents cannot reproduce the exact effect of speech—the speaker's tone, gesticulation, facial expression, or physical presence—but they incorporate a number of Native speech patterns. Among these are the tendency for repetition and the use of short, easily recalled sentences, which, in oral cultures, are tools that facilitate memorization. Written documents often capture the flavor and rhythm of Native speech in the colonial era.[75]

As extant writings confirm, Native American culture in New England after 1676 was transformed but not shattered. Hilary Wyss studied the writings of Christianized Natives in colonial America and examined ways in which Native converts succeeded in hammering out new identities by combining traditional ways with English culture, seeking a place in society, negotiating power, and reconfiguring Christian theology to meet their own goals.[76] Native owners of the Indian Bible (or borrowers, for Bibles often passed from hand to hand in Native communities) typically created alternative texts in the margins, marking each copy "as an extension of their own particular identities." These marginal annotations record "a wealth of information that sometimes responds to the text of the Bible itself and often converses with an entire community of Native Christians." Any bare space seems to have been suitable for written expression. Some converts practiced their penmanship, inscribing the alphabet or practicing numbers repeatedly on the Bible's pages. Others copied out whole passages, the Bible's paper serving as the physical site for these exercises just as its text was the source of the phrases being penned. Marginal entries include ownership claims, warnings, reminders, announcements of upcoming journeys, religious sentiments, and expressions of frustration and despair. The use of marginalia in Bibles to record worldly as well as spiritual thoughts suggests "a different relationship to the sacred, and perhaps even a particularly Native sense of spirituality."[77]

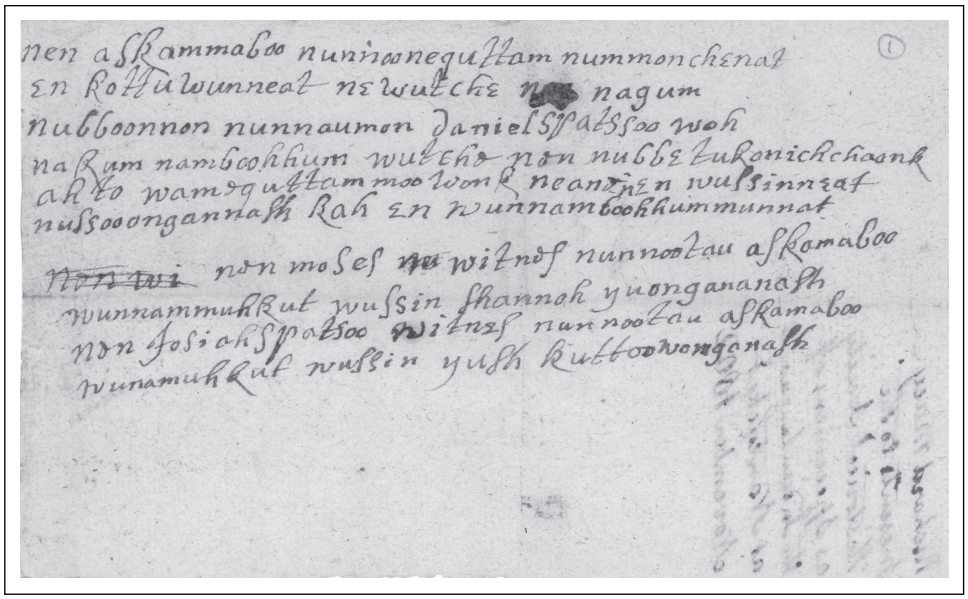
One marginal notation in a copy of the Indian Bible at the Library Company of Philadelphia reads, *"woh kummequantamo wamosuonk micheme wunnegun,"* meaning "you (plural) should remember love is always good." Another marginal note in another hand complains (in translation): "I am a pitiful person. I do not like very much to read this book . . ."[78] Sadly, many copies of the Indian Bible were trimmed at the margins during modern rebinding, thereby eliminating the voices of the Natives who once used them.

[75] Kristina Bross and Hilary Wyss, eds., *Early Native Literacies in New England: A Documentary and Critical Anthology* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 170–73.

[76] Wyss, *Writing Indians,* 50–51, passim.

[77] Wyss, *Writing Indians,* 1–3. See also Leibman, ed., *Experience Mayhew's "Indian Converts": A Cultural Edition,* 65.

[78] As quoted in Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett,* vol. 1, 428–39.



Power of attorney from Askamaboo to her son, Daniel Spatssoo. The Massachusett text reads in English translation: "I Askammaboo am unable to go to court. Therefore him I appoint, My son Daniel Spatssoo. He may answer regarding the accusation against me. He has the power just like me to say my words and to answer. I Moses am a witness. I heard Askamaboo truly say those words. I Josiah Spatsoo am a witness. I heard Askamaboo truly say these words." Askamaboo, daughter of the sachem Nickanoose, dictated to a scribe to create a legal written record, witnessed in writing, of the power of attorney she granted to her son. The document illustrates Native American recognition of the importance of written documents for negotiating their status and asserting their rights under New England's colonial society. ***Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms S-798, doc. 1. Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.***

Those Native Americans who learned to write as well as read often applied their knowledge in ways not contemplated by their teachers, transcending "the narrow religious context within which literacy had initially been introduced."[79] Natives sometimes rejected the roles that they had been intended to assume by those who taught them to read and write, using the skills they acquired to compose petitions in support of Native rights, draft speeches, and put together political tracts. Writing became for them an important weapon that aided their resistance to colonial domination.[80] A petition at the Massachusetts Historical Society reads, in partial translation:

> We beseech you that you would make known our words, of us poor Gayhead Indians. We say truly we need a judge at this place of ours at Gayhead. And we have heard, however, that you have appointed as a judge the person called

[79] Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*, 79.

[80] Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxvi–xxvii.

> Elisha Amos . . . This Elisha Amos has robbed us of our gardens and also of our fresh meadows and our land. And if then this person were to be a magistrate among us we shall lose all our land . . .[81]

Documents such as land transfer agreements and legal papers in New England's indigenous languages open windows on everyday life, attitudes, and interactions. Consider the following fragment, translated from a Native arrest warrant:

> Be[fore the justice] I, Isaack Simon, ruler, order you, constable: Arrest Joshua Pakelid by authority of Queen Anne, and hold him (and) bring him before the justice, and he (shall) not be free until he has answered concerning his robbing of John Rassen—of a coat. I, Isaak Simon, this is my mark. This was done September 15th, 1713.[82]

The same Pakelid was, at almost the same time, named in another warrant, accused of "bending" Joseph Kinnogkohqusson's gun.[83]

Some of the more commonly preserved documents pertain to real estate transactions or disputes. A record of the decision of the Native townspeople of Christiantown (Okokame) on Martha's Vineyard to grant land and specific rights to a Native American named Elisha Amos in exchange for his taking care of another Native American, Jonathan Sumannan, speaks volumes, but raises unanswered questions as well:

> We, the townspeople of Okokame, promise that Elisha Amos (shall) have no trouble, regarding this land which we give him, or to his posterity. If then anyone . . . troubles Elisha Amos concerning this land . . . the troubler shall lose his money because of his foolishness. And moreover we give to Elisha liberty to cut wood and liberty to sell trees or wood . . . We the townspeople make this bargain because the relatives of Jonathan Suman[nan] are unwilling to look after him.[84]

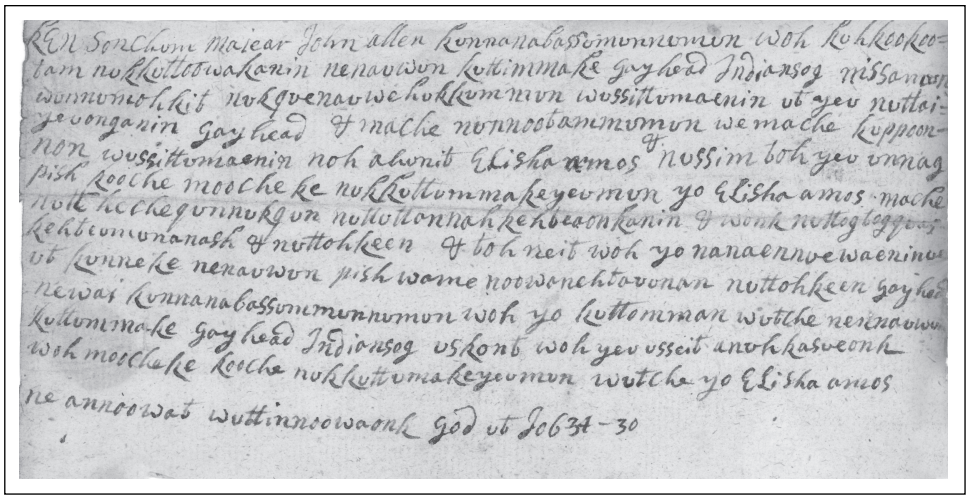
Other insights into Native perceptions in colonial New England as the English endeavored to change them can be gleaned from observations made by missionaries like Roger Williams, whose notes often incorporated verbatim conversations. Speaking about the Narragansett in 1643, Williams wrote:

[81] Massachusetts Historical Society (Misc. Unbound, Gay Head, Zachary Hossueit); reproduced and translated in Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, 224–25.

[82] Rhode Island Historical Society, Indian Manuscripts I-39, document 136 (fragment), as quoted in Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, 348–49. Simon was the Native American "ruler" at Dartmouth, southwest of Plymouth.

[83] Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, 354–55.

[84] Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, 152–53. The name Elisha Amos appears in a number of Native American documents pertaining to legal matters or land use on Martha's Vineyard, ca. 1735 to 1744. The references may or may not be to the same person.



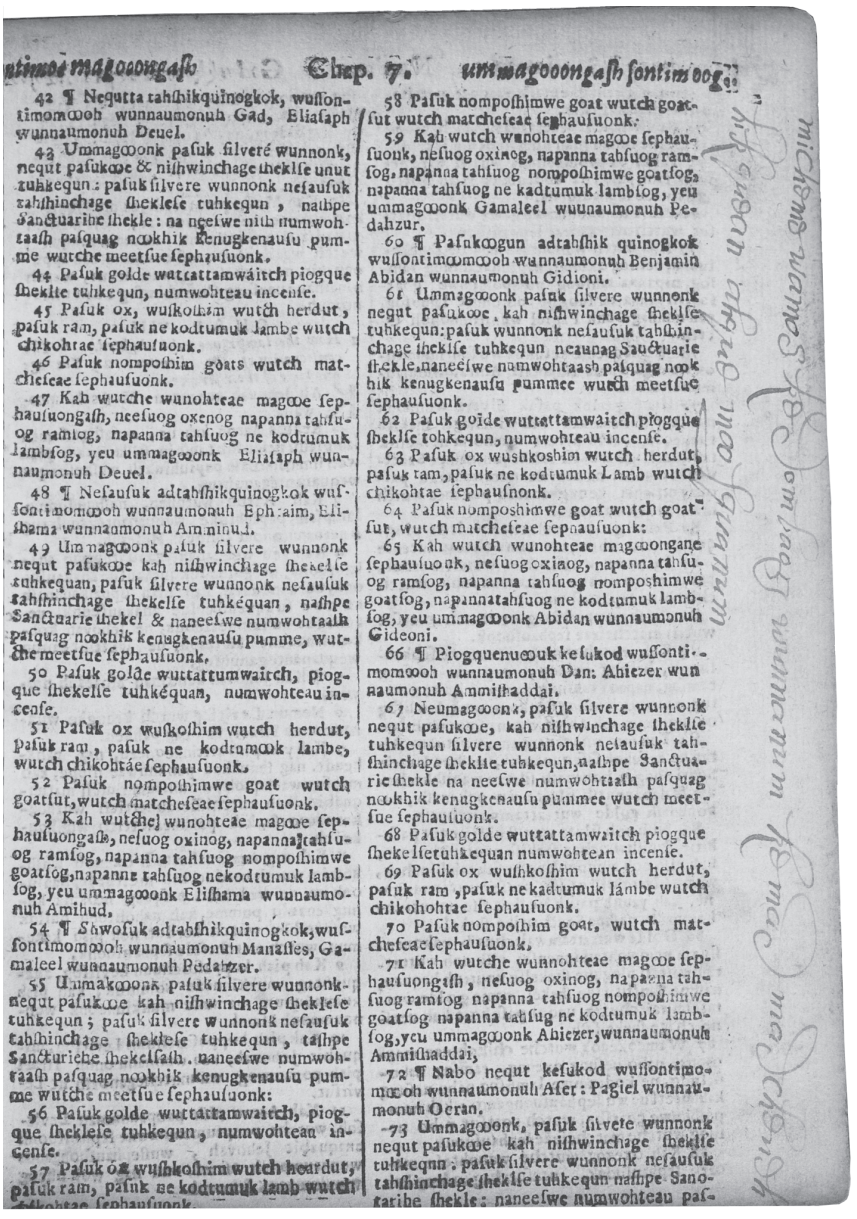
Petition to the Commissioners of the New England Company. The Massachusett text reads in English translation: "You Mr. Major John Allen, we beseech you that you would make known (?) our words, of us poor Gayhead Indians. We say truly we need a judge at this place of ours at Gayhead. And we have heard, however (?), that you have appointed as a judge the (person) called Elisha Amos. And we say if this should be done we shall be much more miserable. This Elisha Amos has robbed us of our gardens and also our fresh meadows and our land. And if then this (person) were to be a magistrate among us we shall lose all our land at Gayhead. Therefore we beseech you that you would take away this (person) from us poor Gayhead Indians, lest if he should do this work we would be much more miserable because of this Elisha Amos, just as the word of God says in Job 34:30." Note the repetition characteristic of oral transmission in oral cultures, employment of scripture to reinforce a point, and use of written documents to assert rights. The passage in the Book of Job at 34:30 is "let not the hypocrite rule." ***Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms S-798, doc. 7. Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.***

> I argued with them about their Fire-God [Yotáanit]: Can it, say they, be but this fire must be a God, or Divine power, that out of a stone will arise . . . a Sparke, and when a poor naked Indian is ready to starve with cold in the House, and especially in the Woods, often saves his life, doth dresse all our Food for us, and if he be angry will burn the House about us, yea if a spark fall into the drie wood, burnes up the Country?[85]

Algonquian languages are imbued with references to the interface between the spirit world and human activities. Narragansett, for example, has many phrases such as the following: *Nippe-anit auntau* ("Water Spirit speaks"), *Wompatokqussand auntau* ("White Cloud Spirit speaks"), and *Matwaûquand auntau* ("War Spirit speaks").[86] Perceptions about the way the world works and the

[85] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America: or, An Help to the Language of the Natives in that Part of America, Called New-England, Together with Briefe Observations of the Customes, Manners and Worships, &c., of the Aforesaid Natives, in Peace and Warre, in Life and Death. On All Which Are Added Spirituall Observations, Generall and Particular by the Authour, of Chiefe and Speciall Use (Upon All Occasions) to All the English Inhabiting Those Parts: Yet Pleasant and Profitable to the View of All Men* (London: Gregory Dexter, 1643), 117.

[86] See Frank Waabu O'Brien, "Spirit Names and Religious Vocabulary," available at http://www.bigorrin.org/waabu10.htm, accessed 5 March 2009.



ntimoo magoongash Chap. 7. ummagooongash sontimoog

42 ¶ Nequtta tahshikquinogkok, wussontimomoooh wunnaumonuh Gad, Eliasaph wunnaumonuh Deuel.

43 Ummagoonk pasuk silveré wunnonk, nequt pasukoe & nishwinchage shekese unut tuhkequn: pasuk silvere wunnonk nesausuk tahshinchage shekelse tuhkequn, nashpe Sanctuarihe shekle: na neeswe nish numwohtaash pasquag nookhik kenugkenausu pummee wutche meetsue sephausuonk.

44 Pasuk golde wuttattamwáitch piogque shekste tuhkequn, numwohteau incense.

45 Pasuk ox, wuskoshim wutch herdut, pasuk ram, pasuk ne kodtumuk lambe wutch chikohtae sephausuonk.

46 Pasuk nomposhim goats wutch matcheseae sephausuonk.

47 Kah wutche wunohteae magoe sephausuongash, neesuog oxenog napanna tahsuog ramiog, napanna tahsuog ne kodtumuk lambsog, yeu ummagoonk Eliasaph wunnaumonuh Deuel.

48 ¶ Nesausuk adtabshikquinogkok wussontimomoooh wunnaumonuh Ephraim, Elishama wunnaumonuh Amminud.

49 Ummagoonk pasuk silvere wunnonk nequt pasukoe kah nishwinchage shekelse tuhkequan, pasuk silvere wunnonk nesausuk tahshinchage shekelse tuhkequan, nashpe Sanctuarie shekel & naneeswe numwohtaash pasquag nookhik kenugkenausu pumme, wutche meetsue sephausuonk.

50 Pasuk golde wuttattumwaitch, piogque shekelse tuhkequan, numwohteau incense.

51 Pasuk ox wuskoshim wutch herdut, pasuk ram, pasuk ne kodtumook lambe, wutch chikohtae sephausuonk.

52 Pasuk nomposhimwe goat wutch goatsut, wutch matcheseae sephausuonk.

53 Kah wutche wunohteae magoe sephausuongash, nesuog oxinog, napanna tahsuog ramsog, napanna tahsuog nomposhimwe goatsog, napanna tahsuog nekodtumuk lambsog, yeu ummagoonk Elishama wunnaumonuh Amihud.

54 ¶ Shwosuk adtabshikquinogkok, wussontimomoooh wunnaumonuh Manasses, Gamaleel wunnaumonuh Pedahzer.

55 Ummakoonk pasuk silvere wunnonk nequt pasukoe kah nishwinchage shekelse tuhkequn; pasuk silvere wunnonk nesausuk tahshinchage shekelse tuhkequn, tashpe Sancturiehe shekelsash. naneeswe numwohtaash pasquag nookhik kenugkenausu pumme wutche meetsue sephausuonk:

56 Pasuk golde wuttattamwaitch, piogque shekelse tuhkequn, numwohteau incense.

57 Pasuk ox wushkoshim wutch heardut, pasuk ram, pasuk ne kodtumuk lamb wutch

58 Pasuk nomposhimwe goat wutch goatsut wutch matcheseae sephausuonk.

59 Kah wutch wunohteae magoe sephausuonk, nesuog oxinog, napanna tahsuog ramsog, napanna tahsuog nomposhimwe goatsog, napanna tahsuog ne kadtumuk lambsog, yeu ummagoonk Gamaleel wuunaumonuh Pedahzur.

60 ¶ Pasukoogun adtabshik quinogkok wussontimoomoooh wunnaumonuh Benjamin Abidan wunnaumonuh Gidioni.

61 Ummagoonk pasuk silvere wunnonk nequt pasukoe, kah nishwinchage shekelse tuhkequn: pasuk wunnonk nesausuk tahshinchage shekelse tuhkequn neaunag Sauctuarie shekle, naneeswe numwohtaash pasquag nookhik kenugkenausu pummee wutch meetsue sephausuonk.

62 Pasuk goide wuttattamwaitch piogque shekelse tohkequn, numwohteau incense.

63 Pasuk ox wushkoshim wutch herdut, pasuk ram, pasuk ne kodtumuk Lamb wutch chikohtae sephausnonk.

64 Pasuk nomposhimwe goat wutch goatsut, wutch matcheseae sepnausuonk:

65 Kah wutch wunohteae magoongane sephausuonk, nesuog oxinog, napanna tahsuog ramsog, napanna tahsuog nomposhimwe goatsog, napannatahsuog ne kodtumuk lambsog, yeu ummagoonk Abidan wunnaumonuh Gideoni.

66 ¶ Piogquenuoouk kesukod wussontimomoooh wunnaumonuh Dan: Ahiezer wunnaumonuh Ammishaddai.

67 Neumagoonk, pasuk silvere wunnonk nequt pasukoe, kah nishwinchage shekste tuhkequn silvere wunnonk netausuk tahshinchage shekste tuhkequn, nashpe Sanctuarie shekle na neeswe numwohtaash pasquag nookhik kenugkenausu pummee wutch meetsue sephausuonk.

68 Pasuk golde wuttattamwaitch piogque shekelse tuhkequan numwohtean incense.

69 Pasuk ox wushkoshim wutch herdut, pasuk ram, pasuk ne kadtumuk lambe wutch chikohohtae sephausuonk.

70 Pasuk nomposhim goat, wutch matcheseae sephausuonk.

71 Kah wutche wunnohteae magoe sephausuongash, nesuog oxinog, napanna tahsuog ramiog napanna tahsuog nomposhimwe goatsog napanna tahsug ne kodtumuk lambsog, yeu ummagoonk Ahiezer, wunnaumonuh Ammishaddai,

72 ¶ Nabo nequt kesukod wussontimomoooh wunnaumonuh Aser: Pagiel wunnaumonuh Oeran.

73 Ummagoonk, pasuk silvete wunnonk nequt pasukoe kah nishwinchage shekste tuhkequn, pasuk silvere wunnonk nesausuk tahshinchage shekste tuhkequn nashpe Sanctarihe shekle: naneeswe numwohteau pas-

Marginal annotation, Numbers, 7:42–73, Eliot Indian Bible (2nd ed., 1685). The Massachusett text reads in English translation: "Always wish all men well. If your brother treats you badly, do not get mad at him." These comments on brotherly love raise questions about the Christianization of New England's Native Americans in the seventeenth century. Did the Native writer feel a need to record the sentiment as a hedge against the temptation of anger? Was he repeating (and preserving) words inculcated by an English (or Native) preacher? Did he see the irony of preaching brotherhood in the wake of the bloodbath known as King Philip's War? Or was the war an object lesson on the need for mutual tolerance and understanding? *Library Company of Philadelphia. Bible, Algonquian, Eliot, 1685. (Numbers 7:42–73). Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.*

realities of the past vary significantly from one culture to another. "History" in the more conventional sense of the word is not the only narrative considered to be history by many Native Americans. Clifford Trafzer, a Wyandot historian, refers to indigenous oral tradition as "the first history of the Americas." It is, he contends, "history in the native sense," also reflecting "actual incidents that occurred in world history." Some such incidents include people falling from the sky or emerging from within the earth.[87]

Arnold Krupat, a non-Native scholar of Native American studies, argues that types of "Native American historical narrative that Our history calls myth because We can show them to be factually inaccurate, or, simply, not historical . . . can and should be called both true and historical apart from their factual accuracy." He points out that traditional Native Americans also distinguish between myth and history, but that the "distinction does not depend upon a judgment as to the greater factual accuracy of one of the two types of story." Historical stories tell about events closer to the present, while mythical narratives recall far distant events that occurred before the world was fully formed.[88]

Some of the Native phrases collected by Williams in seventeenth-century New England now seem hauntingly evocative when considered in the cultural context of colonial relations: *Pequttôog paúquanan* means "The Pequots are slaine," and *Npenowauntawâumen* translates as "I cannot speak your language." The question *Táwhitch peyáhetrit* ("Why come they hither?") has a poignancy that speaks across the ages.[89]

The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project: "Like Taking Care of Family"

Language "reclamation" is the revival of lost or unusable languages in situations where they are no longer spoken and little about them is known

[87] Clifford Trafzer, "Grandmother, Grandfather, and the First History of the Americas," in *New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism,* ed. Arnold Krupat (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 474–87. Native American writer Scott Momaday believes that the source of reality is a vision created in the human mind, vision that enables the coherence upon which all society and all art are based. "We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves." Scott Momaday, "The Man Made of Words," in *Literature of the American Indian: Contemporary Views and Perspectives,* ed. Abraham Chapman (New York: New American Library-Meridian, 1975), 103. Black Elk (Oglala Sioux) told John G. Neihardt in *Black Elk Speaks* (first published in 1932) that "Sometimes dreams are wiser than waking." Quoted in Peter Nabokov, ed., *Native American Testimony*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1991), 15–17.

[88] Arnold Krupat, *Red Matters: Native American Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 48–49.

[89] More quotidian phrases collected by Williams include *Anamakéesuck sókenun*, meaning "It will raine to day," and *Quttáunemun,* meaning "To plant corne [maize]." See Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, 55, 59, 83, 100, 180, passim.

within the affected communities. The term refers to attempts to relearn a language from documentary evidence recorded in an earlier era at a time when the language was still spoken. Such reclamation research (in concert with follow-through educational programs) is also a way of "reclaiming identity and culture from which a people have been dissociated."[90] According to James Clifton:

> Originally, no Native American society subscribed to the idea of biological determination of identity or behavior. Indeed, the most common identity question asked of strangers was not, "What nation do you belong to?" [but rather] "What language do you speak?"[91]

Loss of language is often tied to the usurpation of indigenous lands, destruction of indigenous habitats, and incorporation of indigenous peoples into a dominant society, usually at the lower margins.[92] As of 2009, about 7,000 languages are still being spoken in the 250 or so countries of the world. "Indigenous languages" are those that can trace a long existence in the area where they are currently, or were formerly, in use. Languages belonging to minority groups in countries or locales dominated by speakers of a different language are typically in danger of falling into disuse and becoming extinct because of cultural stress, or economic or military pressures. When an indigenous group stops speaking its language, the language disappears (unless keys to it are preserved elsewhere). Some cultural preservationists object to phrases like "extinct language," or "dead language," preferring instead to describe languages that have no speakers "as sleeping."[93]

Linguistics, a branch of cognitive science, investigates how the brain works. When we lose a language, we lose evidence that helps us understand how the brain "manipulates the symbols that give rise to natural language." Linguists estimate that as many as 3,500 "endangered languages" could be extinct before the end of the twenty-first century. [94]

Linguistic scholars today do not distinguish between "dialects" and "languages." The Algonquian family of languages (numbering thirty or more, depending upon how "language" is defined) once spread across a wide area, including the eastern seaboard of North America, and, interspersed with non-Algonquian

[90] Rob Amery, *Warrabarna Kaurna!: Reclaiming an Australian Language* (Lisse, Neth.: Swets and Zeitlinger, 2000), 17.

[91] Clifton, *Being and Becoming Indian*, 11–12.

[92] The issue of language retention appears frequently in reports published by advocacy organizations such as the Minority Rights Group. Repression has included flagrant abuses such as the following: The 1964 Political Parties Act in Turkey prohibited parties from acknowledging the existence of different languages within Turkey. The singing of a Kurdish folk song, or possessing a record of such a song, became grounds for legal prosecution. See *The Kurds, MRG Report No. 23* (London: Minority Rights Group, n.d.), 8.

[93] See Leanne Hinton, "Language Revitalization: An Overview," in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, ed. Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001), 3–4.

[94] Samuel Jay Keyser, "The Tragedy of Language Death," *Technology Review* 111 (July/August 2008): M3.

languages, as far west as the Rocky Mountains.[95] Tribes living near one another in the East spoke nearly the same tongue. Languages more distantly separated showed greater divergence.[96] Massachusett, Wôpanâak, and Narragansett, because of the proximity of the peoples who spoke them, are remarkably similar.[97]

Much of the Wôpanâak reclamation effort involves (or will eventually entail) a careful perusal of all available texts in Wôpanâak and Massachusett. Extant texts consist of several hundred documents, including the Indian Bible and a number of religious tracts published by Eliot between 1654 and 1689 (constituting his "Indian Library"),[98] as well as letters, petitions to the government, wills, depositions, records of town meetings, notices of banns, marriage records, gravestones, arrest warrants, handwritten marginalia in books, and other materials dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cross-linguistic comparison with other languages within the Algonquian family is also an essen-

[95] A linguistic map of Native North America, Native American Languages, available at http://www.cogsci.indiana.edu/farg/rehling/nativeAm/ling.html, accessed 5 March 2009; and Richards, interview 16 November 2007.

[96] Richards, interview 16 November 2007. Algonquian languages spoken or once spoken on the East Coast of North America, as identified by American anthropologists in the early twentieth century, included Pennacook, Massachusett, Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc, Montauk, Mohegan, Mahican, Wappinger, Delaware, Shawnee, Nanticoke, Conoy, Powhatan, and Pamlico. See Hodge, ed., *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico,* vol. I, 38–43. A more modern view devised by linguists puts Algonquian languages into three regional groupings: plains languages, such as Blackfoot and Cheyenne; central languages, such as Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Sauk-Fox-Kickapoo, and Shawnee; and eastern languages, such as Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Etchemin, Eastern Abenaki (represented now by Penobscot), Western Abenaki, Loup A and Loup B, Massachusett or Wôpanâak, Narragansett, Mohegan-Pequot, Montauk, Quiripi, Unquachog, Mahican, Munsee, Unami, Nanticoke, Powhatan, and Carolina Algonquian. Kathleen Bragdon, "Algonquian Languages," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, 21–22.

[97] The name *Wampanoag* means "People of the East" or "Easterners" or "People of the First Light." See http://www.bigorrin.org/wampanoag_kids.htm, accessed 20 June 2009. The name *Massachusett* means "Big Hill People" or "People of the Great Hills," referring to the Blue Hills in Milton, Massachusetts, just south of Boston. George R. Stewart, *Names on the Land: A Historical Account of Place-Naming in the United States* (New York: New York Review of Books, reprint edition, 2008), 37; and "The Blue Hills Reservation," available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/blue.htm, accessed 5 March 2009. The name *Narragansett* means "People of the Small Point." See "Narragansett History," available at http://www.dickshovel.com/Narra.html, accessed 30 March 2009. *Pokanoket,* a name sometimes used by writers instead of Wampanoag, means "Place of the Clear Land." Helen Vanderhoop Manning, "Wampanoag," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, 661–62. Because of cultural and linguistic similarities among various groups of Native Americans in southern New England, Kathleen Bragdon, an anthropologist, refers to them collectively as *Ninnimissinnuok,* from the Narragansett word for "People." Kathleen Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1500–1650* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), xi.

[98] Eliot's translations and other published works (the so-called Indian Library) include *A Primer or Catechism* (1654), *Genesis* (1655), *Gospel of Matthew* (1655), *A Few Psalms in Metre* (1658?), *A Christian Covenanting Confession* (1660? and 1670), *The New Testament* (1661), *A Primer or Catechism,* 2nd ed. (1662), *The Holy Bible* (1663), *The Metrical Psalmes* (1663), *Baxter's Call to the Unconverted* (1664), *Bayly's Practice of Piety* (1665), *The Indian Grammar Begun* (1666), *The Indian Primer* (1669), *The Indian Dialogues* (1671), *The Logick Primer* (1672), *The New Testament,* 2nd ed. (1680), *The Holy Bible* (1685), *Bayly's Practice of Piety,* 2nd ed. (1685), *The Dying Speeches of Several Indians* (1685), *Baxter's Call,* 2nd ed. (1688), and *Shepard's Converts* (1689). Only the English-language short titles are given here. *The Indian Grammar Begun* was never completed. Eliot was also instrumental as an editor of *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640), the first book printed in America, and founded the Roxbury Latin School, now known as Boston Latin School. Edwin Tunis, *Colonial Living* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 64.

tial strategy.[99] A particularly fertile reference tool is a two-volume compilation of all known writings by Native speakers of Massachusett in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with linguistic, historical, and ethnographic glosses.[100] Essential to the reclamation effort is a painstaking comparison of the Eliot Indian Bible with the King James Bible to recover lost vocabulary and grammar.

Little did Eliot know that, more than three centuries after his death, his translations, publications, educational initiatives, and evangelical outreach would help a group of linguistics experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology[101] revive a dormant language that was nearly extinguished by the spread of the mind-set he wanted to promote. Wôpanâak[102] had not been used for 159 years when Jessie Little Doe, a Mashpee Wampanoag, had her first thought-provoking and inspiring visions about language in 1992.[103]

[99] Jessie Little Doe, telephone interview by author, 29 February 2008. Many Native American speakers of Massachusett and Wôpanâak lived in settlements that were mostly self-governing in local affairs (although colonial authorities oversaw their dealings with the English) and generated documents in the native language. These Native communities had literate populations that included magistrates, preachers, schoolteachers, etc. See Anna Ash, Jessie Little Doe Fermino, and Ken Hale, "Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration," in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, 32. (NB: Jessie Little Doe, Jessie Little Doe Fermino, and Jessie Little Doe Baird are the same person. This article generally refers to her as Little Doe, but many of her published writings have been cataloged under the surnames Baird or Fermino.)

[100] Norvin W. Richards, email 26 February 2008. The book referenced is Goddard and Bragdon, eds., *Native Writings in Massachusett*. Documents of various types came to light in sundry locations, including land records on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, arrest warrants in the Rhode Island Historical Society Library, and petitions and letters at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Massachusetts State Archives. Other repositories holding Massachusett documents include the American Antiquarian Society (Worcester, Mass.), Clements Library (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), Huntington Library (San Marino, Calif.), Pilgrim Society Library (Plymouth, Mass.), Congregational Society Library (Boston), Connecticut Historical Society (Hartford), and the Library Company of Philadelphia. In some cases, manuscripts that have crumbled at the edges were compared with photographs of them (taken over a hundred years ago) to fill in lacunae. Other documents once known to exist have now disappeared. For example, the Bristol Historical Society in Bristol, R.I., sold a collection of Native American texts years ago to a dealer, who dispersed them by sale to private collectors, leaving no records of where they went. Some Native manuscripts and annotated Indian Bibles remain in private hands.

[101] MIT, in Cambridge, Mass., is a leader in the field of linguistics in addition to being preeminent in science and technology.

[102] Goddard and Bragdon refer to Wôpanâak and Massachusett as a "single language, though with a moderate amount of dialectal diversity." See *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vol. 1, xv. But, as others have noted, "Despite the variety of names by which the language has been known, it is properly termed Wampanoag [Wôpanâak] given the geographical provenance of the majority of the native written source material and the fact that three of the Wampanoag communities which contributed to the corpus of the material are still surviving today as Wampanoag communities in Massachusetts." They are the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe on Martha's Vineyard, the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe at Plymouth, and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe at Mashpee. These are "the only surviving tribes which have shown continuous cultural community since the dates of the native written documents . . . The Massachusett people became part of a larger Wampanoag confederation just prior to the period of King Philip's War." See Anna Ash, Jessie Little Doe Fermino, and Ken Hale, "Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration: A Reason for Optimism," in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, 28. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island (home of the Narragansetts), to the southwest of Plymouth Colony, wrote that "there is a mixture of this Language North and South, from the place of my abode, about six hundred miles." Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, unpaginated prefatory letter [ii].

[103] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008. Wôpanâak's last documented use before its reclamation was in 1833.

In Little Doe's visions, she saw people who seemed to be her ancestors conversing in ways that she couldn't understand. She recognized that this language was Wôpanâak, which her progenitors had spoken before the Pilgrims landed in 1620 near what came to be known as Plimoth Plantation.[104] It continued in use for many years despite the efforts of English colonists to eradicate indigenous ways and acculturate Native Americans to the language, religion, and customs of white men. According to an ancient Wampanoag prophecy, the Wôpanâak language, considered by Native Americans to be a living thing, would go away and return at a time when it would be welcomed back by its people. The descendants of those who had broken the circle would participate in "closing the circle" again. The "circle" was the common language linking each new generation of Wampanoags to earlier generations. Little Doe's visions led her to believe that she was the one destined to find out if her people were ready to welcome back the ancestral tongue.[105]

The essential "nexus" for Wampanoag culture may have been these visions that provided channels through which modern Wampanoags were able to connect with their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ancestors. Little Doe's visions led to meetings of the modern Wampanoag community, which decided to reclaim the ancestral language. "Nexus" in this sense is related to, but different from, the main sense intended in the title of this article, which refers more particularly to the connection between past actions and present potential afforded by the survival of Native American writings.

In 1993, the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project got underway as a collaborative venture undertaken by the Mashpee and Aquinnah tribes of the Wampanoag Nation in Massachusetts. Little Doe (of Mashpee) and Helen Vanderhoop Manning (of Aquinnah) were the catalysts.[106]

MIT's legendary linguistics professor Ken Hale (1934–2001) met Little Doe about a year later under unpropitious circumstances when he spoke at a joint meeting of the two tribes, attended by people interested in exploring ways to reclaim the ancestral language.[107] Hale, who spoke more than fifty languages and had an uncanny ability to absorb new ones quickly, believed that letting a language slip into extinction was tantamount to dropping "a bomb on the

[104] The first contact between Europeans and Wampanoags might have occurred as early as 1524, when Giovanni da Verrazano encountered "two kings," who may have been either Wampanoag or Narragansett. The first confirmed contact was with Englishman Bartholomew Gosnold in 1602. See Laurie Weinstein-Farson, *The Wampanoag* (New York: Chelsea House, 1989), 91; and Salwen, "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Early Period," in *Northeast, Handbook of North American Indians,* 160–76. The English referred to the Wampanoag as "Pokanoket," the term used most frequently in the Smithsonian Handbook. Other early contacts came about in 1603 (Pring), 1605–1606 (Champlain), and 1609 (Hudson). The names "Pakanokick" and "Wapanoo" appear in European usage for the first time following publication of John Smith's 1624 *Generalle Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles.* John Smith, *Works, 1608–1631,* ed. Edward Arber (Birmingham: English Scholar's Library, 1884).

[105] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[106] See Ash, Fermino, and Hale, "Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration," 30.

[107] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

Louvre."[108] Throughout his career, he advocated tirelessly for the preservation of endangered cultures and cultural expression,[109] activities well documented by his papers at the MIT Archives and Special Collections.[110] Hale announced at the 1994 Wampanoag meeting that he could help bring back the traditional language. But Little Doe confronted him about an absent-minded error he made when speaking about Wôpanâak,[111] and he apologetically withdrew. She was later seized by remorse, realizing that she had broken a fundamental tenet of Wampanoag etiquette by being inhospitable to a guest.

Little Doe received a fellowship to study linguistics at MIT in 1995. Hale remembered her well and apologized again for what he considered to be his own rudeness for barging in on a private Wampanoag gathering.[112] The two became fast friends. Their collaborative effort to restore Wôpanâak to its seventeenth-century richness started immediately, fulfilling, as Little Doe notes, a key component of the ancient prophecy related to "closing the circle." Hale was descended from Roger Williams, the seventeenth-century founder of Rhode Island, who researched and wrote *A Key into the Language of America.*[113] Little Doe is descended from Nathan Pockneet, a seventeenth-century Wampanoag who opposed the missionary practices of the colonists.[114]

[108] Theresa Pease, "Endangered Languages," *Soundings* (Spring 2009): 24-30; and Sean Gonsalves, "Linguist Kenneth Hale, 67, Helped Revive Wampanoag Language," *Cape Cod Times,* 25 October 2001, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/hale/cct.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

[109] "Saving Endangered Languages: Preserving the Work of Kenneth Hale," *Bibliotech* 19 (Fall 2007): 7.

[110] MC 523. Kenneth Locke Hale Papers. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections.

[111] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008. Hale absent-mindedly forgot that Wôpanâak was an "n-dialect," reflecting nonfinal Proto-Algonquian *l and *θ as /n/ instead of /r/, /l/, or /y/, as in other Eastern Algonquian languages. See Ash, Fermino, and Hale, "Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration," 28.

[112] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[113] The language in question was Narragansett, a close relative of Massachusett and Wôpanâak. See Williams, *A Key into the Language of America.*

[114] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008. On the Wampanoag at the time of early encounters with the English colonists, see Cathy Marten, *The Wampanoag in the 17th Century, an Ethnohistorical Survey* (Plymouth, Mass.: Plimoth Plantation, Occasional Papers in Old Colony Studies, no. 2, 1970). For classic firsthand descriptions of English aspirations and struggles during the period of early cross-cultural interactions, see William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647,* ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, reprint edition, 1996); and John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649,* ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). The original Bradford manuscript has a curious history. Colonial historians used it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was known to be in Boston's Old South Church Library in the 1760s, but disappeared soon thereafter. It turned up in England in the 1850s in the library of the Bishop of London. Repeated requests for the repatriation of the manuscript were not honored until 1897, when a proposal by George Hoar, U.S. senator from Massachusetts, supported by the Pilgrim Society, the American Antiquarian Society, and the New England Society of New York, was favorably received. The journal is now ensconced in a vault among the Special Collections of the State Library in the Massachusetts State House, Boston. See Stacy Wood, Jr., "Purloined, Found, and Recovered: The History of Bradford's History," available at http://www.sail1620.org/history/articles/107-bradfords-history.html, accessed 5 March 2009.

MIT's associate professor of linguistics, Norvin W. Richards, a specialist in Native American and Aboriginal Australian languages, trained under Hale and considers him a mentor. Hired to replace Hale at the time of the latter's retirement in 1999, Richards continued MIT's contribution to the Wôpanâak project by collaborating with Little Doe and another Wampanoag linguist, Nitana Hicks, on a dictionary. "I don't remember promising Ken that I would continue with it," Richards recalls. "We both just assumed that I would. I remember bringing one of the first drafts of the dictionary to show him at his home after he got sick."[115] The Wôpanâak dictionary has since burgeoned to about 10,000 words.[116]

Little Doe received her MS in linguistics from MIT in 2000. She visited Hale in 2001 when he was bedridden and dying from cancer. On his deathbed, he told her that helping the Wampanoags bring back their language was one of the accomplishments in his life of which he was most proud.[117] Guests at Hale's memorial service in 2001 delivered eulogies in Navajo, Hopi, and Warlpiri. Little Doe's offering was a prayer in Wôpanâak.[118]

Richards first became passionate about endangered languages when he accompanied Hale to Australia in 1996 to help create a dictionary of Lardil.[119] He recalls that

> Ken was a remarkable fieldworker . . . He had an amazing memory and ability to spot patterns, which probably [enabled] his prodigious ability to learn languages. But I think one of the keys to his success was his philosophy. He didn't see himself as better, or more important, than anyone else. It's because of him that Jessie [Little Doe] was able to get an advanced education, and the type of partnership that Jessie and I have now is the kind of thing he worked his whole life to build.[120]

Richards identifies the two main tasks of a linguist doing language reclamation as "dictionary work" and "grammar work."[121] "Dictionary work" using the Eliot Indian Bible involves searching through it for words that are not yet in the lexicon. "Grammar work," he continues, "is harder to describe, but, basically, it

[115] Richards, interview 16 November 2007.

[116] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[117] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[118] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[119] Richards, interview 16 November 2007. See Ngakulmungan Kangka Leman, *Lardil Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Language of the Lardil People, Mornington Island, Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland, with English-Lardil Finder List* (Mornington, Aus.: Mornington Shire Council, 1997). Hale and others conducted fieldwork related to the dictionary in 1960, 1967, 1981, and 1996.

[120] Richards, email 26 February 2008.

[121] Richards, email 26 February 2008. See also Jessie Little Doe, "Report on the Wampanoag Dictionary Project," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Algonquian Conference, Boston, 1998.

involves looking at the whole Bible for patterns."[122] He finds it convenient to study an electronic copy of the Eliot Indian Bible on the World Wide Web at Early English Books Online,[123] but periodically checks lists of unclearly scanned words and phrases against print copies owned by MIT's Archives and Special Collections and Harvard's Houghton Library.[124] The Bible tends to preserve English word order, so, when Richards wants to study word order, the *Native Writings* compilation is usually more helpful. After working through the Indian Bible, he plans to concentrate on another of Eliot's publications, *The Logick Primer*,[125] originally intended for use as a training manual for Wampanoag Christians who aspired to the ministry. "It was designed to teach them how to construct logical arguments to help convert their own people," he reflects. "It's full of interesting words like 'syllogism,' 'subject,' and 'predicate.'"[126]

The intertwined activities described in this article, and the people who promoted them, are a fertile study in contrasts. Consider the respective motivations of Rev. Mr. Eliot and Professor Hale, their lives inextricably linked despite the separation of three centuries. Both recognized the importance of a language and how mastery of that language could be used either to change or preserve a culture. Eliot proselytized Native Americans, teaching them to read in their own language to convert them to Christianity and acculturate them to European ways.[127] Hale's aspiration was to reclaim a dormant tongue, giving back to the Native Americans who owned it a vital piece of their culture that was merely sleeping after years of being suppressed.

[122] Richards, email 26 February 2008. For further details on Richards's methodology, see Jeffrey Mifflin, "Saving a Language," *Technology Review* 111 (May/June 2008), M16–M17; and Mifflin, "Language Reclamation 101: How MIT Linguists Are Working to Revive Wôpanâak," *Technology Review* (May/June 2008), available at http://www.technologyreview.com/article/20664/, accessed 5 March 2009.

[123] See Early English Books Online, available at http://eebo.chadwyck.com/about/about.htm#, accessed 5 March 2009.

[124] Richards, interview 16 November 2007. (The volume's uniform title is *Bible. Massachuset. Eliot. 1685.* The uniform title of the 1663 edition is *Bible. Massachuset. Eliot. 1663.*)

[125] John Eliot, *The Logick Primer: Some Logical Notions to Initiate the Indians in the Knowledge of the Rule of Reason and to Know How to Make Use Thereof: Especially for the Instruction of Such as Are Teachers Among Them* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.J. [Marmaduke Johnson], 1672). Other invaluable print resources include "Letter of Experience Mayhew, 1722, on the Indian Language," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 39 (1885): 10–17; Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st ser., vol. 1 (1806): 141–227, originally published in 1796; Josiah Cotton, "Vocabulary of the Massachusetts (or Natick) Indian Language," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd ser., vol. 2 (1830): 147–257; and *The Massachusett Psalter, or Psalms of David with the Gospel according to John* (Boston: B. Green and J. Printer, 1709). Cotton's "Vocabulary" dates from 1707.

[126] Richards, email 26 February 2008.

[127] Compare Eliot's motivation to the aspirations (in 1643) of Roger Williams, who also studied Native American language and culture to clear a path for conversion: "This Key respects the Native Language . . . and happily may unlocke some Rarities concerning the Natives themselves, not yet discovered." Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, unpaginated prefatory letter, [i–ii].

Little Doe now spends much of her time teaching Wôpanâak to citizens of the Wampanoag Nation (and only to them). She is raising her four-year-old daughter, Mae Alice, to be bilingual. Mae Alice Baird, as her mother points out with optimism and pride, is the first Native speaker of Wôpanâak in seven generations. Little Doe has written seventeen books, including Wôpanâak storybooks, phrase books, workbooks, and prayer books, some of which are accompanied by compact disks. An estimated two hundred Wampanoags (from a total population of about 4,000) now speak at least some of the language, but at this juncture, according to Little Doe, only seven are fluent. Wôpanâak is very complex, much more so than English,[128] but "it's very good about obeying rules," she says. For her, teaching Wampanoags to speak and read Wôpanâak is "like taking care of family." Different people have different skills and different ways of showing care, she explained. Her métier is language.[129]

Wôpanâak, intoned eloquently by Little Doe, has a haunting and beautiful ring. Complex ideas in the language are often compressed into a single word. Algonquian nouns consist of stems to which both prefixes and suffixes can be added to indicate number, person, gender, and possession. Verb stems can be inflected to indicate number, person, gender, and "direction."[130] Puritan minister Cotton Mather (1663–1728), referring to the language's sesquipedal characteristics, joked that the words were so long that they must have been gathering syllables since the Tower of Babel.[131] Linguist/anthropologist Edward Sapir describes Algonquian words as resembling "tiny imagist poems."[132]

Meaning for Indigenous Peoples: "A Human Rights Issue"

Richards defines the importance of preserving endangered languages as follows:

> Telling a linguist that we're going to lose at least half of the world's languages is like telling a biologist that we're going to lose half or more of the world's species . . . It's a devastating blow . . . For the communities involved, linguistic

[128] New England's colonists thought that Native tongues were very "hard to learn" and that few Englishmen were even capable of the "right pronunciation, which is the chief grace of their tongue." William Wood, *New England's Prospect* (London, 1634; reprint edition, Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), 109–10.

[129] Little Doe, interview 29 February 2008.

[130] Bragdon, "Algonquian Languages," 21–22.

[131] Mather, *The Life and Death of the Renown'd Mr. John Eliot,* 76–78.

[132] As quoted in Bragdon, "Algonquian Languages," 21.

> loss is one piece of a greater loss of overall culture, of the things that allow a group of people to distinguish themselves . . . And for the rest of us, the loss of a language means the loss of a literature (oral or written) and a set of verbal habits that can only remain available to future generations through inevitably flawed translations. There are jokes that are only funny in Maliseet, and there are stories that only make sense in Lardil, and there are songs that are only beautiful in Wôpanâak. If we lose those languages, we lose pieces of the beauty and richness of the world.[133]

Most modern anthropologists[134] and linguists echo these concerns. Historians and others who study "clash of cultures"[135] typically find encroachments upon and disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples who have lost, or are in danger of losing, their lands and traditional livelihoods as the pressures of world or national economies and politics are imposed on them.[136] Loss of indigenous language, culture, and identity are the predictable results. Scholars involved in language reclamation repeatedly emphasize that language retention is a human rights issue.

In the United States, the National Alliance to Save Native Languages was founded in 2006 to promote the revitalization of Native American languages. Its president, Ryan Wilson (Oglala Lakota), testified before the Committee on Indian Affairs of the U.S. Senate that "approximately ninety-five percent of Native youth today do not speak or understand their heritage languages" and that the decline in Native language acquisition among Native youth "was hurting [them] academically, culturally, socially, and physically." He went on to state that the government, which once had a policy of eliminating

[133] Richards, email 26 February 2008. See also Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007), 262–64; and Strong Woman and Moondancer, "Bringing Back Our Lost Language," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 22, no. 3 (1998): 215–22.

[134] Some formerly condoned anthropological practices have been justly criticized for exploiting indigenous peoples. Examples include raiding and looting burial grounds, publishing notes on private ceremonies, and appropriating sacred objects, leaving an unfortunate legacy of distrust. Many Native Americans and other indigenes have reconsidered their relationship with anthropology, questioning whether or not non-Native outsiders have the right to interpret Native culture. See Henry F. Dobyns, "Anthropology and Indians," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, 23–25; Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd. and Dunedin, N.Z.: University of Otago Press, 1999); and Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, eds., *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008). Edward Said wrote that anthropology has over the years been a persuasive articulation of Western imperialism, serving the administrative and educational purposes of the dominant culture. Edward Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry* 15 (Winter 1989): 205–25.

[135] See Brian Fagan, *Clash of Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1998).

[136] See Hinton, "Language Revitalization: An Overview," 5. See also Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Ross and Wyss, eds., *Early Native Literacies in New England*.

Native language, should now "invest in the revitalization of these American treasures."[137]

The concept that a people's thought processes and culture can be understood only by means of its language was suggested as early as 1772 by Johann Gottfried Herder in his "Essay on the Origin of Language."[138] Cultural studies doyen Walter Benjamin insisted that his country was German (the language), not Germany.[139] Wampanoags have similarly expressed their intense emotional attachment to Wôpanâak, which they believe was given to them by their creator as one of numerous gifts and responsibilities. The language reflects their beliefs and relationships with ancestors and fellow members of the Wampanoag Nation as well as the surrounding world. They believe that Wôpanâak is the language that their creator wants them to use for ceremonies and prayer,[140] and some Wampanoags can now speak, write, and pray in the reclaimed tongue. "Chills . . . overtake you," said Tobias Vanderhoop, a member of the Gay Head Aquinnah Wampanoags. "[Y]ou know your ancestors can understand it. So it is a very powerful thing."[141]

No one worldview is common to all Native American cultures, but they share some underlying aspects. The Native way of thinking is reflected in such things as the belief that animal totems represent the power sharing between people and wildlife, the attitude that the earth is "alive and sacred," and "the use of the circle as a symbol of unity."[142] The idea of wholeness in one's connection to another is important. As a recent collection of Native American essays notes:

[137] Ryan Wilson, Testimony before the Committee on Indian Affairs, U.S. Senate Oversight Hearing on Proposals to Create Jobs and Stimulate Indian Country Economies, 15 January 2009. Congress appropriated federal funding for Native American language restoration, programs, or schools in the 2009 budget through the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act as well as an overall budget for language revitalization. See "National Native Language Revitalization Summit," available at http://www.culturalsurvival.org/node/8278 and *Cultural Survival March (e-news) Newsletter,* accessed 24 March 2009; and U.S. Senate, *Native American Languages Act of 1992* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1992).

[138] A translation of Herder's essay is included in John H. Moran and Alexander Gode, trans., *On the Origin of Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

[139] See Clive James, *Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories from History and the Arts* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2007), 48.

[140] See Ash, Fermino, and Hale, "Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration," 31.

[141] Greg Sukiennik, "Wampanoags Revive Language," available at http://archive.southcoasttoday.com/daily/11-00/11-19-00/a03sr014.htm, accessed 5 March 2009.

[142] Richard Hill, "Pathways of Tradition: Indian Insights into Indian Worlds," exhibit at the National Museum of the American Indian, New York City, 15 November 1992–24 January 1993, as cited in Gerald McMaster and Clifford E. Trafzer, eds., *Native Universe: Voices of Indian America* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, in association with National Geographic, 2008), 24.

> Our identity has many aspects. Some of our deepest connections are with the places and people associated with home: where we come from; the family that nurtures us; the community that cements its relationships through tradition and ceremony; and the languages we speak . . . We take these elements and weave them together into a life that makes sense for us and keeps our cultures alive. Above all, our identities persist as an important part of everyday life against the backdrop of a constantly changing world: We continue to be Indian.[143]

It seems likely that "identity" in all human situations is produced and negotiated among people more than within an individual. It becomes embedded in social relationships and is firmed up by the encounters and interactions of everyday lives.[144]

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (a Maori scholar) elaborates on the situation of indigenous peoples in today's world:

> A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history . . . and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts . . . It is not simply about giving an . . . account . . . of the land and the events which rage over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying.[145]

Richards and Little Doe hope that the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project will engender enough fluent speakers of Wôpanâak to make the language self-perpetuating. They are deeply concerned (as are other scholars of endangered languages) about the fate of indigenous peoples and their cultures in addition to taking an intellectual interest in how lesser-known languages inform our understanding of the acquisition and function of speech.[146] As Hale warned, "The loss of a language is part of the more general loss being suffered by the world, the loss of diversity in all things."[147]

[143] McMaster and Trafzer, eds., *Native Universe: Voices of Indian America*, 233.

[144] See Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

[145] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 28. Questions related to the construction of "national identities" and territorial expansion by dominant groups (usually to the detriment of indigenous cultures that are surrounded or displaced) are discussed at length in David Maybury-Lewis, Theodore Macdonald, and Biorn Maybury-Lewis, *Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). David Maybury-Lewis was the cofounder in 1972 of Cultural Survival, a nonprofit organization dedicated to defending the rights of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. See http://www.culturalsurvival.org/home, accessed 20 June 2009.

[146] Richards, interview 16 November 2007. See also Pinker, *Language Instinct*, 262–64; and Keyser, "The Tragedy of Language Death."

[147] As quoted in Pinker, *Language Instinct*, 264.

Implications for Archives and Archivists: "Mutual Respect"

Philosopher Paul Ricoeur wrote that archives often contain information that is "silent" because no one has listened to it or understood its "testimonies." Archivists should be able to "question" and "defend" the documents for which they are responsible, administering their uses in ways that encourage accurate interpretations.[148] Archival potentials change over time as new interests arise and new questions are presented. How should we, as archivists, preserve and promote responsible use and understanding of voices pertaining to Native Americans and other indigenous cultures?

A mundane but practical first step would be to create digital "user copies" of original documents pertaining to indigenous peoples to promote wider and more accurate study of materials. Poor quality microforms should be replaced by digital images based on original documents if they are still available. Original sound recordings of indigenous speech, songs, vocabulary lists, and so on should also be carefully preserved. The physical safety of fragile or fading originals must be considered, but a balance needs to be struck, especially as interest in the contents of such documents is likely to increase. Some important records pertaining to the Native American experience in New England are no more than 50 percent legible on available microfilmed copies. User copies of written documents and sound recordings should be made available for research under controlled circumstances in accordance with donor agreements, exercising due concern for sensitivity, as determined through consultation with representatives of the affected cultures.

History in its truest light must consider incidental records as well as more deliberate and imposing materials. Some records that may have been considered worthless by earlier generations can now be seen differently.[149] Archivists should look at documents from multifaceted perspectives through a variety of lenses. Working in cooperation with researchers, we can serve as a corrective to biased and mistaken assumptions. The same will, marriage contract, or annotated Bible can speak with different voices depending upon who approaches it and how it is considered. This should affect how materials are described in finding aids or metadata.

We should lament (and learn from) past vandalism, such as the rebinding of Indian Bibles that trimmed off Native American commentaries. Such marginal annotations represent a windfall of intimate information that should not be neglected. Literary critics often speak of "reading between the lines" or "reading

[148] Paul Ricoeur, *History, Memory, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 169.

[149] Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin's Archive: Images, Signs, Texts* (London and New York: Verso, 2007), 251–53.

the margins" to extract extra meaning, or the most authentic meanings, from a document or book. This should be one of the key exercises of historians and the archivists who guide them when dealing with Native American texts or other indigenous materials. Recent attention has turned to legal documents, marginalia, and other written expression in Native languages as a way of gleaning insight into the Native experience under early American colonialism. Important areas of inquiry should include such questions as: How did individual Native Americans respond to the imposition of unfamiliar laws, customs, and attitudes? What did the imported religion, Christianity, mean to their lives? How did these changes affect their thoughts and emotions?

Early Native American writings can help us recover information about how Native nations "adopt and adapt new technologies, new social frameworks, new epistemologies":

> What traditions did they draw on in responding to, incorporating, or rejecting new instruments and ideas? How were new people incorporated into extant political networks? What tools and tales were used to adapt to the new conditions brought on by colonization?[150]

Little Doe increased her understanding of Wampanoag acculturation simply by thinking about changes in word form. She contemplated, for example, changes over time to the Wôpanâak term for *land*. When European colonists first arrived in New England, the word, as spoken by Native Americans, incorporated the idea, "I am physically the land, and the land is physically me." Native Americans grew from the land like all other living entities, and it was linguistically inconceivable that the land and the people could be separated. Prefixes and suffixes are added to Algonquian nouns to specify such concepts as *person* and *ownership*. After years of colonization, the word signifying land changed. Its new form acknowledged the possibility that the people and the land could be separated,[151] suggesting an adjustment to Native American mind-set as well as to language.

Archivists should routinely evaluate the silences (i.e., the gaps in documentary evidence) inherent in archival collections and bring these to the attention of researchers. Non-Native museum curators, historians, librarians, and archivists in the past have not consistently recognized the importance of records created by Native Americans or other indigenous cultures. Consider

[150] Brooks, *The Common Pot*, xxxii–xxxiii.

[151] Jessie Little Doe, commentary, in "After the Mayflower," episode 1, *We Shall Remain* series, *American Experience,* Public Broadcasting System, WGBH TV, aired 13 April 2009.

lacunae such as those in the "Indian" volumes at the Massachusetts Archives, which owns a number of documents pertaining to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Native Americans, the bulk of which are now concentrated in four artificially compiled volumes.[152] These consist mostly of letters referring to interactions between colonists and Native Americans, agreements between them, and petitions written by or for Native Americans for presentation to the General Court. Their contents are indexed by volume and document number on approximately 13,000 index cards. The published volumes of *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* contain printed versions of laws passed pertaining to Native Americans as well as printed transcripts of some Native petitions. The originals of many of these documents can be located in the archives, but some are missing. Although it seems unlikely that the missing items were deliberately alienated or sold, their loss serves as a reminder to us that archivists should be firm in the principle that collections should not be sold, even when budget cuts loom and radical solutions to financial problems seem unavoidable.

In the late 1980s, ownership of knowledge and artistic creations by indigenous cultures became a social issue that archivists, museum curators, anthropologists, and others need to face. Ideas have circulated and convictions have grown about the proper place and acceptable use of both tangible and intangible cultural materials. Such materials are regarded by many indigenous nations as group property that should be returned to its place of origin, just as Amerindian and Australian Aboriginal human remains dug up in previous eras have been de-accessioned from museums or laboratories and repatriated.[153]

"Protocols for Native American Archival Materials," a document created by the First Archivists Circle, is a work in progress designed to promote dialogue and encourage archivists and librarians "to consider Native American perspectives on professional policy and practice issues." The document grew out of a meeting of nineteen Native American and non-Native archivists, librarians, museum curators, historians, and anthropologists in April 2006. Its "proposed

[152] Massachusetts Archives Collections, vol. 30, Indian, 1603–1705; vol. 31, Indian, 1705–1750; vol. 32, Indian, 1750–1757; and vol. 33, Indian, 1757–1775.

[153] For U.S. law on repatriation of human remains and an example of the Society of American Archaeology's commentary, see the Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) at National NAGPRA, http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra/, accessed 5 March 2009; and "The Society for American Archaeology's Comments on the Development of NAGPRA Regulations Regarding Unclaimed Cultural Items," Presented at the NAGPRA Review Committee Meeting (20 April 2007), available at http://rla.unc.edu/saa/repat/RevCom/SAAcomment.2007-04-20.pdf, accessed 13 May 2009. For related perspectives in Australia, see, for example, the website of the Australian Archaeological Association, http://www.australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au/node/1925, accessed 13 May 2009; and the Australian government site, http://dl.screenaustralia.gov.au/module/1356/, accessed 13 May 2009.

standards and goals . . . are meant to inspire and to foster mutual respect and reciprocity." The SAA's Native American Roundtable asked the SAA Council to endorse the Protocols, the Council asked membership for comments, and a lively discussion ensued. Among the key points for consideration are the following: How should cultural sensitivity be defined? Who is entitled to speak for or make decisions on behalf of a Native American nation? What Native American cultural documents or intellectual property should be restricted or repatriated and by whose authority? Could access to some Native American materials in archival repositories be open to some and closed to others under current standards of ethical practice? Are traditional Western norms of study and knowledge the only legitimate ones, or should archivists formally acknowledge that in a postmodern and pluralistic world there is more than one route to historical truth? The Protocols correctly emphasize that positive changes are best accomplished through human connections and cooperation. "Collecting institutions and Native communities are encouraged to build relationships to ensure the respectful care and use of archival material. Meaningful consultation and concurrence are essential to establishing mutually beneficial practices and trust."[154]

Sharing or dissemination of some cultural elements can be very disturbing for the cultures involved. Uncontrolled replication of them via the World Wide Web, television, or print media can "strip [indigenous peoples] of their history and undermine their authenticity."[155] Archivists need to be sensitive to "cultural property rights" and related concerns about privacy. The flow of cultural elements from indigenous societies to the larger world is often referred to as "cultural appropriation." But it has been also been described in more emotional terms as "consum[ing] somebody's spirit, somebody's past or history . . ."[156] Archivists, museum curators, and others need to adjust to a changing climate. Indigenous peoples may demand restrictions on access to cultural records, including some materials that were formerly available for public use. It may not be appropriate or necessary to accede to all such demands, but all such demands must be respectfully considered.

[154] See "Protocols for Native American Archival Materials" at http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html, accessed 20 June 2009; see also "Comment Sought on Protocols for Native American Archival Materials" at http://www.archivists.org/news/2007-NatAmerProtocols.asp, accessed 20 June 2009.

[155] Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), ix, 3–6.

[156] Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1995), 18.

Likewise, it is important to ask how an institutional setting (e.g., an archival repository, a historic house, or a museum) might affect the indigenous voices inherent in collections. Documents created by individuals and preserved in different contexts can become "absorbed" by "institutional agendas of description, function, and usage."[157] There is no real neutrality in either historical research or archival science. Mediation inevitably occurs when researchers come to an archival repository to study materials. Access policies, the level of detail and characteristics of finding aids, the physical condition or format of materials, the helpfulness of staff, and the specialized insights of archivists are all variables. How should this affect archivists who administer Native American or other indigenous collections? There are no ready answers, and perhaps the most honest and sensitive approach would be to confer with representatives of the cultures most affected before devising (or revising) policies and procedures.

Two opposing trends are at odds in the twenty-first century. On one hand, globalization and acculturation undermine the differences that distinguish one culture from another. On the other hand, movements are afoot to preserve dissimilarity, especially among advocates for preservation of disappearing homelands and endangered languages. A new "Other" may be born from this struggle, consisting of individuals who can engage effectively with the larger world while maintaining firm roots and intact identities within their indigenous cultures. Referring to this phenomenon, journalist/traveler/historian Ryszard Kapuściński asked in a reflective mood, "What will our encounter be like? Will we . . . understand each other?"[158]

Language reclamation serves an invaluable purpose for academic scholarship in linguistics, but its immediate and most important significance is in the protection and promotion of human rights. Handwritten documents as well as printed books and tracts in the indigenous languages of New England's Native Americans in the colonial era have allowed linguistic scholars (Native and non-Native) to "reclaim" traditional Native speech, "closing the circle" for many Native Americans and providing a solid foundation for group cohesion and cultural identity. The resiliency and ability to adapt of indigenous peoples is the cornerstone of cultural preservation.

Native American writings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as other documents preserving the voices of indigenous peoples, have an eloquence of personal testimony that transcends time. Finding

[157] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 30.

[158] Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other* (London: Verso, 2008), 92.

and bringing attention to unheard voices in the archives should be among the core responsibilities of archivists. The interest and cooperation of a well-versed archivist may be the greatest asset available to researchers. As Roger Williams wrote in a different context, "A little Key may open a Box, where lies a bunch of Keyes."[159] Endangered languages, cultural diversity, and the multifaceted perspectives preserved in archival repositories have much to teach us.

[159] Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, [i–ii].