

**W**illiam Bradford makes his first substantial reference to the Pequots in his account of the 1628 Plymouth Plantation, in which he discusses the flourishing of the “wampumpeag” (wampum) trade:

[S]trange it was to see the great alteration it made in a few years among the Indians themselves; for all the Indians of these parts and the Massachusetts had none or very little of it, but the sachems and some special persons that wore a little of it for ornament. Only it was made and kept among the Narragansetts and Pequots, which grew rich and potent by it, and these people were poor and beggarly and had no use of it. Neither did the English of this Plantation or any other in the land, till now that they had knowledge of it from the Dutch, so much as know what it was, much less that it was a commodity of that worth and value.<sup>1</sup>

Reading these words, it might seem that Bradford’s understanding of Native Americans has broadened since his earlier accounts of “barbarians . . . readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise.”<sup>2</sup> Could his 1620 view of them as undifferentiated, arrow-hurling savages have been superseded by one that allowed for the economically complex diversity of commodity-producing traders? If we take Bradford at his word, the answer is no. For “Indians”—the “poor and beggarly” creatures Bradford has consistently described—remain present in this description but are now joined by a different type of being who have been granted proper names, are “rich and potent” compared to “Indians,” and are perhaps superior to the English in mastering the

economic lay of the land. There are “Indians,” it seems, and there are “Pequots.” The picture is more complicated—there are also “Narragansetts”—but Bradford’s sudden naming cautions us against any account of contact setting Europeans against an undifferentiated Indian Other. Specificity matters, and we might ask when, how, and why the Pequots in particular assumed importance for New Englanders.

The Pequots had in fact been the subject of intense theorizing in New England, most of it casting them as grand New World conspirators. It is this characterization that is my focus here, for the figure of the Pequot conspirator disrupts the conventional portrait of early American conspiracy thought, focused as it is on the conspiratorial logic of revolutionary rhetoric or postrevolutionary alarms about Jesuits, Freemasons, and Illuminati.<sup>3</sup> This tradition has focused almost exclusively on what Bernard Bailyn concisely calls “ministerial conspiracy”—plots within or against the state.<sup>4</sup> But the figure of the Pequot conspirator complicates this genealogy, suggesting a broader and longer tradition of conspiracy thought in which non-European adversaries take center stage early in the seventeenth century. This earlier moment of conspiracy rhetoric has been recently intimated by Peter Charles Hoffer, who notes a critical change in the legal definition of conspiracy in the 1661 revision of the Barbados Slave Code. If English common law had defined conspiracy as “a combination or discussion among men whose purpose was to bring a false prosecution in law,” he writes, the New World colonies “entirely transformed the older conception of conspiracy in order to apply it to slaves.”<sup>5</sup> “A conspiracy of slaves was an entirely different offense,” Hoffer writes, and the resultant slave code, “unparalleled in scope, coherence, and completeness,” took as its premise “that slaves would commit crimes and plot rebellion,” while mapping out the avenues by which owners would “ferret out slave crimes and uncover slave plots.” This “obsessive concern with conspiracy . . . would find its way into the law of almost all the colonies.”<sup>6</sup> Hoffer himself traces this genealogy to the New York slave conspiracy of 1741. From a broader perspective, however, the Barbados Code not only announces a new conspiratorial cipher, expressed in legal form and with reference to the enslaved, but also a broader seventeenth-century dynamic whereby conspiracy is bound up with the Other as *ethnos*.

The clearest signs of this development are found in the opening paragraph of the Barbados Code, which insists that “Negroes and

other Slaves” are “of Barbarous, Wild, and Savage Natures,” making them “wholly unqualified to be governed by the Laws, Customs, and Practices of our Nations.”<sup>7</sup> If the code merely verges on a full ethnography, it nonetheless makes extensive references to weaponry, music, homes, gatherings, diet, and “Clothes, Goods, and any other Things and Commodities” (§ 11), standard domains of ethnographic writing from Thomas Harriot onward. In the Barbadian context, explication of such details is minimized but also profoundly polarized. Musical instruments, which might otherwise serve as evidence of cultural backwardness or paradoxical creativity, are now secret means of communication; could the Code’s authors say more about this covert medium, the danger of violent rebellion would not be so great (§ 2). Homes, clothing, and other domestic commodities become a pool of potential evidence to be searched fortnightly for signs of improper trade and accumulation (§ 3, 7).<sup>8</sup> If earlier ethnographies depicted static, primitive societies, this is more of an interactive map, signaling points of danger, surveillance, and intrusion. In acknowledging the dynamic, adaptable, and creative qualities of adversarial populations, conspiracy becomes for authors such as the Code’s nothing less than the core concept in the transcendence of ethnography’s artificial stasis: the view of indigenous societies as timeless, predictable systems. To prevent slave conspiracies, masters must undertake the ethnography as a continuous project of information gathering about the savages in their fields. And because slaves have their own form of life, fundamentally opposed to that of their masters, the totality of slave society is conspiratorial.

Something like this logic underlies the distinction between “Indians” and Pequots. Reconstructing the Puritan ethnography of the Pequots from accounts of the Anglo-Pequot War of 1637, we find a portrait of the Pequot conspirator, which maintains that, far from *being* savages, the Pequots functionalized their purported savagery for strategic purposes. Violence is no longer primitive in the whizzing-arrow sense but instead functions something like wampum, a product of more advanced indigenous peoples set apart from “Indians” and colonizers. A similar functionalism would be implied in the postwar banning of the name “Pequot,” which constituted not only the erasure of cultural identity but confiscation of an ethnographic tool.

In its most extreme formulations, the conspiratorial use of Indian-ness is figured as terrorism, inspiring a new modeling of Puritans as

meta-Pequots, using “the Terror of the English” (Puritan commander John Mason’s phrase) against the Pequots and their neighbors.<sup>9</sup> This essay examines four narratives through which we can trace this new American formulation of conspiracy theory. The first of these are two basic narratives—of Philip Vincent and Mason—here contrasted to define the basic parameters and dynamics of nascent New World conspiracy thought. These contours are further clarified by John Underhill’s narrative, in which we find unexpected connections with another emergent tradition, that of the Puritan captivity narrative. Finally, Lion Gardiner’s retrospective narrative shows the portability of the new conspiracy theory, insofar as it transfers mastery from Pequots to their imaginative and imagined heirs, the Narragansetts. I begin, however, with a diagnosis of current historiographic debates about the conflict, within which conspiracy and ethnography constitute a defining antinomy.



As New England’s first large-scale military conflict, the Anglo-Pequot War occupies a polemically charged position in the historiography of English colonization and contact. Assessment of the war’s motives, execution, and consequences takes on the overdetermined significance of a hermeneutic guide to subsequent Puritan–Native American relations. Even within the larger British North American context, in which conflicts in Virginia must be accorded prior significance, the war stands as the emblematic, inaugural moment of English conquest. As Alden Vaughan puts it, the conflict raised “the eternal question, attendant upon every military conflict, of the identity of the aggressor.” The answer, he adds, “inevitably sheds light upon the basic nature of the Puritan experiment, upon the whole problem of Indian-white relations during the first century of English settlement in New England.”<sup>10</sup> There is little debate about the central event of the conflict, the 26 May 1637 attack on the Pequot fort at Mystic, where English forces torched the fort and killed between four hundred and seven hundred people, including women and children. Nor is there much dispute about a series of smaller campaigns by New Englanders and their Native American allies—Narragansetts and the breakaway Mohegans led by the sachem Uncas—to crush the remaining Pequots, many of whom were either killed in minor operations or distributed as slaves to Native American and English populations. The Hart-

ford Treaty of 21 September 1637 ratified these distributions, mandated that all intertribal conflicts be overseen by the English, exiled the Pequots from their native country, and even outlawed the name "Pequot." Finally, there is little dispute that as many as seventy-five percent of the remaining Pequots survived, reestablishing themselves during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The dispute, rather, has focused almost entirely on the two ostensible provocations of the conflict, the killings of Captain John Stone and the trader John Oldham. In the winter of 1633–34, Stone and his crew captured and bound two Indians, intending to use them as guides to trade in the region. Indians in the area attacked and killed Stone and his crew on the Connecticut River. Almost three years later, on 20 July 1636, the body of John Oldham, "his head cleft to the brains, and his hands and legs cut as if they had been cutting them off," (John Winthrop's description) was discovered on a pinnacle off the coast of Block Island.<sup>11</sup> The pinnacle had been manned by Indians killed or driven away before the discovery, and some New Englanders maintained that the killers received sanctuary among the Pequots. From Oldham's murder to the burning of Mystic, events escalated rapidly. The Pequots, who according to Winthrop had once admitted participating in the Stone murders, later denied involvement. A Massachusetts expedition led by John Endicott landed at Block Island and subsequently attacked the Pequots; no Englishmen died, but one Pequot was killed by the Massachusetts sachem Cutshamekin. The trader John Tilley was captured and ritually executed by Pequots. And in April 1637, Pequots attacked colonists at Wethersfield, Connecticut, killing nine and carrying off two girls as captives. In May, the full-scale attack on the Pequots was mounted from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

In his narrative, Captain John Mason writes that "[t]he Beginning is the Moiety of the Whole" (*H*, 11), and this statement has been more than true for historians. Interpretations of the conflict inevitably return to Stone and Oldham and the dispute over their murders. Were the Pequots directly involved in either of the killings or—through tributaries—indirectly? Writing in 1965, Vaughan believes it "indisputable that [Stone's] assassins belonged either to the Pequots or to a tribe subservient to them" (*NEF*, 123). But a decade later, Francis Jennings, inaugurating the revisionist argument, insisted that the death of the "West Indian trader-cum-pirate" was hardly a "casus belli."<sup>12</sup> Proof of Puritan insincerity about Stone would be confirmed by a Dutchman's

encounter with Stone's killer in 1639; Jennings explains that Stone "had served the Puritans' purpose, and they were now giving their energies to interests that had all along lain behind their voluble concern over Captain Stone" (*IA*, 227). Other revisionists, such as Neil Salisbury, would accept Jennings's view that the Stone murder case provided "the flimsiest of pretexts."<sup>13</sup> But Alfred Cave, writing in 1996, suggests that Stone had been killed by "western Niantics" on a war party with "a band of Pequots" (*PW*, 59). Conflicting Pequot versions of the event reflected different perspectives of the Pequot land party and of the Niantic boarding party, though the crucial point was that "in none of their repeated efforts to explain Stone's death . . . did the Pequot leaders deny their complicity" (*PW*, 60). They may have considered Stone's killing a justified practice of "[b]lood vengeance," and they almost certainly did not anticipate subsequent problems with trade or diplomacy. But they had been involved (*PW*, 60).

As for Oldham, Vaughan asserts that the surviving members of the Block Island attack party had "sought refuge with the Pequots," confirming the complicity of the tribe (*NEF*, 127). Jennings just as confidently states that Oldham's murder "occurred at the hands of Narragansetts rather than Pequots"—perhaps even "a state execution"—and that, when conflicts arose with Puritan authorities, the killers fled to the Eastern Niantics, Narragansett allies (*IA*, 207–9). Here Cave concurs: not only does the evidence suggest that the Narragansetts or their tributaries were responsible, but he finds that "[t]here is neither evidence nor likelihood that Oldham's killers took refuge among the Pequots" (*PW*, 108). Yet reports of Oldham's death coincided with the Pequots' refusal to comply with the demands of a 1634 treaty, and Puritan leaders naturally "interpreted both Oldham's murder and Pequot recalcitrance as evidence of Indian conspiracy" (*PW*, 109). "Given the Puritans' general distrust of Indians," Cave suggests, "their anxieties about Pequot-Narragansett collusion are understandable" (*PW*, 124).

In these assessments we find the three interpretations of the Anglo-Pequot War that have dominated scholarship. One view largely accepts the official Puritan interpretation that Pequot conspirators provoked the conflict, however extreme the subsequent response. Vaughan writes that "[m]ost of the blame for the war must fall on the Pequots, who, according to the testimony of all the whites and most of the Indians, were guilty of blatant and persistent aggression" (*NEF*, 136). A second, revisionist view insists that the Pequots had nothing to do with

Stone or Oldham, and that the English, knowing this, used the episodes as excuses to eliminate their major adversary and acquire territory. Massachusetts and its Connecticut offshoot had been competing for Pequot territory, and the Pequots were caught in the middle as the Bay colony attempted “to strengthen its nebulous controls over the Connecticut colonists by establishing firm controls over the Pequots.” Complicit too was Uncas, leader of the Mohegans, who had sought “to embroil all the English in war with the Pequots” to the end of “ruling over the whole Pequot nation after its anticipated defeat” (*NEF*, 203). Cave’s interpretation thus ventures a resolution of the historiographic debate through a claim of cultural miscommunication:

The Pequot War in reality was the messy outgrowth of petty squabbles over trade, tribute, and land among Pequots, Mohegans, River Indians, Niantics, Narragansetts, Dutch traders, and English Puritans. The Puritan imagination endowed this little war with a metahistorical significance it hardly deserved. But the inner logic of Puritan belief required creation of a mythical conflict, a cosmic struggle of good and evil in the wilderness, and out of that need the Pequot War epic was reborn. (*PW*, 178)

The “messy” war resulted from cultural misunderstandings, with the Puritans’ view clouded by the sense “that their actions were driven by their own security needs, and by divine providence” in battling “an anti-English conspiracy” (*PW*, 177).

So the historiographic debate returns to the two analytics frequently used to describe Native Americans in this period: a conspiratorial rendition of the conniving volitional Other and, conversely, the ethnographic account of systemic attitudes and practices.<sup>14</sup> This return should not be surprising if we accept that historiographic narratives collect and reactivate the generic encodings of their sources; in other words, historiographic verdicts express their own reading methods. Jennings, for example, read his sources to show how participants deliberately distorted facts: Mason had asserted that 150 reinforcements had arrived at Mystic, justifying the full-scale assault, but his own account of the slaughter provided no evidence of these warriors. Nor had Underhill mentioned them, and while Winthrop did, this detail was likely to affirm Mason’s official rationale (*IA*, 222). Steven Katz, the historian who has most carefully discussed revisionist reading methods, asserts that Jennings selectively ignores Underhill’s

references to warriors, refuses to take Mason at his word, and uses Winthrop's purportedly dishonest account as a kind of negative evidence. Katz argues that Mason's rhetoric was "not at all unusual," elsewhere countering Jennings with "Underhill's crucial and disarming testimony" or what "Mason indicates."<sup>15</sup> If Jennings searches texts for contradictions, silences, and cancellations—markers of conspiracy—Katz instead assumes the ethnographic integrity, and therefore factuality, of the primary texts. Thus the conspiratorial and ethnographic interpretations are linked with mutually exclusive textual hermeneutics for assessing the archive. This is not to imply that the historiography of the conflict is irredeemably tainted by its sources, but rather that it needs to be more attuned to the question of archival genres. For all his insistence on the Puritan conspiracy, Jennings never examines Mason's narrative as conspiracy theory, reading it merely as part of the conspiracy. Meanwhile, ethnographic critics typically mine the narratives for evidence about cultural attitudes, fitting select pieces into a larger ethnographic portrait of the Puritans yet never reflecting on the hermeneutic dimension of the narratives' presentation of ethnography, either of Pequots or of Puritans. Why and how did the narratives offer ethnographic formulations, and do such moments provide information other than their ostensible content? Only such an examination, treating ethnographic elements generically—as a processing of information, rather than as archival stores—will help us break the ethnographic-conspiratorial deadlock expressed in the historians' debate and examine the developing relationship between conspiracy and ethnography.



New England's critical shift to conspiracy thinking emerged through a dialectical activation of traditional ethnographic thinking, in which the Pequot conflict played a critical role. To illustrate this basic process, we may examine the two most antithetical narratives of the Anglo-Pequot conflict: Philip Vincent's, the only major narrative written by a non-New Englander, and John Mason's, the closest to an authorized version of the conflict. Vincent's narrative, *A True Relation of the Late Batell Fought in New-England between the English and the Pequot Savages*, published in London in 1638, was the first to appear after the event. We know little of Vincent, though he apparently made his own stab at New World colonizing in the 1630s, journeying to Guiana



before returning to England in 1637. His narrative suggests that he passed through Boston on his return, perhaps as John Underhill's force returned to the city.<sup>16</sup> What makes Vincent's narrative most fascinating is that it is at once the most overtly ethnographic of the narratives and the text presenting the most explicit argument of a Pequot conspiracy.

First, the conspiracy claim. Vincent endorses, even lauds, the destruction of the Pequots, repeatedly insisting upon the inverted parallel of Virginia and points south. "The long forbearance and too much lenity of the English towards the Virginian salvages [*sic*]," he writes, "had like to have been the destruction of the whole plantation" (*H*, 103). Elsewhere he moralizes that "[w]oful experience had too evidently instructed New England's colonies in the precedents of Guiana, the Charibe islands, Virginia, and Novania or New-found-land" (*H*, 109). The critical reference is to Virginia, the experienced "mother plantation" of English colonies (*H*, 111), where an estimated four hundred colonists had been killed in 1622.<sup>17</sup> Alert to Indian conspiracies after the Virginia disaster, the New Englanders acted preemptively and were "assured of their peace, by killing the barbarians, better than our English Virginians were by being killed by them" (*H*, 109–110). In New England, as in Virginia, Indians conspired. But where Virginians were slaughtered, New Englanders, in their "careful preventing and punishing of furtive congression," saved themselves and guaranteed their increase. "Doubtlesse there was no other way better to chastise the insolencie of these insulting homicides," Vincent concludes, "than a sharpe warre pursued with dexterity and speed" (*H*, 111).

This endorsement of the English war is interestingly interwoven with ethnographic details. The third paragraph offers a compressed ethnography relating Indian physique, clothing, and arms, followed by the cliché that "as soil, air, diet, and custom, make oftentimes a memorable difference in men's natures, so it is among these nations, whose countries there are like so many shires here" (*H*, 99). Later, describing the fire at Mystic, Vincent offers a detailed account of indigenous construction, architecture, and design for the "fortress" at large and the individual dwellings within:

These huts or little houses are framed like our garden arbors, something more round, very strong and handsome, covered with close-wrought mats, made by their women, of flags, rushes, and hempen threads, so defensive that neither rain . . . nor yet the wind . . . can

enter. The top through a square hole giveth passage to the smoke, which in rainy weather is covered with a pluver. This fort was so crowded with these numerous dwellings, that the English wanted foot-room to grapple with their adversaries, and therefore set fire on all. (*H*, 105–6)

The progression of this description—from analogy (with “our . . . arbors”) to description (of dry flammables) and back to narrative (the fire)—aptly illustrates the connection between ethnographic detail and the war. Ethnography expresses the stable objective field upon which a universalized humanity acts, like fire on hemp. Or to shift metaphors, ethnography is the stage upon which conspiratorial and counterconspiratorial actors perform.

Vincent himself uses this framework to explain how he may confidently offer an ethnography of the New England settlers as well as the Pequots: “This is the stage,” he writes, “Let us in a word see the actors” (*H*, 97). He describes “a faculty that God hath given the British islanders, to beget and bring forth more children than any other nation of the world,” adding that “[t]he air of New England, and the diet, equal, if not excelling that of Old England: besides, their honor of marriage, and careful preventing and punishing of future congression, giveth them and us no small hope of their future puissance and multitude of subjects” (*H*, 110). Thus the “stage,” but what motivates the “actors”? They are all, Indians and English alike, “sons of Adam” with “the same matter, the same mold,” a basic “correspondency of disposition” that “argueth all to be of the same constitution” (*H*, 98). What explains the Pequot captive who defies the English on the eve of his torture? Vincent concludes that “[s]ome will have their courage to be thought invincible, when all is desperate” (*H*, 101). The English incineration of hundreds of Pequots? “Mercy mars all sometimes; severe justice must now and then take place” (*H*, 103). Actors act according to general human laws, though they do so on the stages where they find themselves.

Vincent’s narrative may indicate the near impossibility of writing about New World conflicts without recourse to the language of ethnography or conspiracy. Yet it also indicates how the two discourses may remain comfortably separate. The humanistic maxims dotting Vincent’s narrative and the related, repeated use of familial metaphors (“sons of Adam,” “sister,” “mother”) serve as a firewall separating the ethnographic description of these two cultures from

the conspiracy that erupts as a full-blown military conflict. Indeed the familial tropes swirl together in the narrative's most striking depiction of that charged element, fire:

But nature, heaven's daughter, and the immediate character of that divine power, as by her light she hath taught us wisdom, for our own defence, so by her fire she hath made us fierce, injurious, revengeful, and ingenious in the device of means for the offence of those we take to be our enemies. . . . We have in us a mixture of all the elements, and fire is predominant when the humors are exagitated. All motion causeth heat; all provocation moveth choler; and choler inflamed becometh a phrensy, a fury, especially in barbarous and cruel natures. (*H*, 99)

One inevitably thinks of the notorious Mystic fire, as we are told that such a spark burns in all of us, a basic element of "heaven's daughter," nature. In the face of exagitation on the stage of mankind, it bursts into "a phrensy, a fury." In this view, many of Vincent's details, which were omitted from the New England narratives, become contingent embellishments. We are told that wild rumors flew prior to the expedition; that the "[c]ouncil ordered that none should go to work, nor travel, no, not so much as to church, without arms"; that "drum beating" filled the English settlements with the changing of the guard; that a "day of fast and prayers was also kept"; and that a Pequot captive was ritually tortured by the English, who "tied one of his legs to a post, and twenty men, with a rope tied to the other, pulled him in pieces" (*H*, 101). We are told, too, that the English achieved security through the "terror of victory" that "changeth even the affection of the allies of the vanquished" (*H*, 107). "For having once terrified them, by severe execution of just revenge," Vincent concludes, "they shall never hear of more harm from them, except, perhaps, the killing of a man or two at his work" (*H*, 110). Each of these details speaks to a fundamental transformation of New England cultures during the conflict, though here they are so many flammables burned by the "predominant humor" of the New World.

Read against Vincent's narrative, then, John Mason's *A Brief History of the Pequot War* may begin to show us how ethnography and conspiracy begin to mix in the Anglo-Pequot conflict.<sup>18</sup> Mason refuses comparisons with Virginia and returns to the standard New England rationale for this singular conflict, the murder of Stone. He writes that Stone had encountered "several Indians belonging to that Place whom

the Pequots Tyrannized over, being a potent and warlike People, it being their Custom so to deal with their neighbour Indians" (*H*, 16). Stone had "procured some of those Indians to go as Pilots with two of his Men to the Dutch," but in the night these two "were both Murdered by their Indian Guides." Twelve Indians, "who had in all probability formerly plotted their bloody Design," then killed Stone and his men (*H*, 17). In sum, the very Indians who are "procured" (kidnapped) had been plotting "their bloody Design" and consequently murdered Stone and his men. Hence Mason's fundamental thesis: the Indians used their value as guides to plot the murder of the English and the seizure of their goods, later given to the Pequots. The Indians, aware that they would be "procured," used their knowledge of the English to entrap them. Then the Pequots, tyrannical and "potent" masters of the region, used their knowledge of tributary Indians *and* of the English to exploit this episode. If they hadn't exactly staged it, they had clearly manipulated it.

This analysis guides Mason's assessment of the Oldham killing. The expedition under Endicott was

designed on a Service against a People living on Block Island, who were subject to the Narragansett Sachem; they having taken a Bark of one Mr. John Oldham, Murdering him and all his Company: They were also to call the Pequots to an Account about the Murder of Capt. Stone; who arriving at Pequot had some Conference with them; but little effected; only one Indian slain and some Wigwams burnt (*H*, 17-18).

Mason doesn't suggest that the Block Islanders sought refuge with the Pequots, yet they are still indicted by his syntax. From the English point of view, the Pequots may have orchestrated the murders of Stone and Oldham, but even if they didn't, they profited from such events in their political sphere. Both "Indian" and English violence were manipulated and used by a new order of being—that of the Pequots. With their politically motivated, ethnographic sense of white-indigenous conflict, the Pequots had used such conflicts between "Indians" and Englishmen to consolidate their "potent and warlike" situation. They had pursued "their malicious Courses, with their engaging other Indians in their Quarrel against the English," and would have "Espoused all the Indians in the Country in their Quarrel, had not God by more than an ordinary Providence prevented" (*H*, 19).

“[I]f a War be Managed duly by Judgment and Discretion,” Mason writes, “the Shews are many times contrary to what they seem to pursue: Whereof the more an Enterprize is dissembled and kept secret, the more facil to put in Execution” (*H*, 22–23). Thus he announces a conspiratorial answer to the Pequots. Mason’s encounter with the Narragansetts is probably the clearest instance of English mimicry. At Nayanticke, where the Narragansetts “carryed very proudly towards us; not permitting any of us to come into their Fort,” the English turn their exclusion into a means to contain “the Falsehood of Indians.” They “caused a strong Guard to be set about their Fort, giving Charge that no Indian should be suffered to pass in or out.” The message sent to the Indians is clear: “[A]s they would not suffer any of us to come into their Fort, so we would not suffer any of them to go out” (*H*, 24). The next morning reveals the success of this containment strategy, when the Narragansett leader Miantonimo rallies his warriors against the Pequots. Mason describes them “suddenly gathering into a Ring, one by one, making solemn Protestations how galliantly they would demean themselves, and how many Men they would Kill” (*H*, 25). This is no simple image, for the Narragansetts and Mohegans later form a supporting ring around Mystic during the assault. The episode thus operates on several levels. Insofar as the Narragansetts enclose themselves in the fort, they recall the English besieged by the Pequots at Saybrook, Connecticut, while anticipating the deadly enclosure of the Pequots at Mystic. Inasmuch as the Narragansetts encircle the English, they resemble the Pequots (around the English) and the English (around them), while anticipating their own more aggressive encircling of the Pequots. Within this semiotically charged episode, then, one discerns parallels between Pequots and Englishmen, with Narragansetts as the critical mediators of the English imitation of the Pequots. The Narragansetts function as crypto-Pequots, another “potent” and “haughty” collective the English set above “Indians.” As such, they prove critical to the English imitation of the Pequots, as the English mimic the Pequot siege against the English, make the Narragansetts their tributaries (as the Pequots had done with the region’s “Indians”), and finally turn the crypto-Pequots against the Pequots themselves. The Narragansetts serve double duty: they are the ethnos revealing the fundamentally conspiratorial nature of potent Native Americans, and they become an ethnographic element of the English conspiracy against the Pequots.

Today's readers cannot but feel the oppressive weight of Mason's providential references, and they often use such terminology to confirm the cultural distance of Puritans from Pequots. But the meta-ethnographic project resonates through this terminology, as in Mason's assessment of the Mystic massacre's cultural achievement. "They who were ere while a Terror to all that were round about them," he writes, "who resolved to Destroy all the English and to Root their very Name out of this Country, should by such weak Means . . . bring the Mischief they plotted, and the Violence they offered and exercised, upon their own Heads in a Moment: burning them up in the fire of his Wrath, and dunging the Ground with their Flesh" (*H*, 35). The biblical trope of the burnt sacrifice and the dunging of the earth stresses the notion that although the Pequots have used their meta-ethnographic savvy to terrorize all those around them, the English escalation of violence has rendered them ethnographic raw material—so much meat and fertilizer. The deployment of the biblical trope of reversal—those who attempt to "[r]oot their very Name" find their own name banned—similarly confirms the English strategy of mirroring. Even Mason's reference to "the Terror of the English" has biblical precedents (see Joshua 2:9). But it would be Underhill, embroiled in the antinomian controversy, who would clarify the theological encoding of the ethnographic activation, at the same time inaugurating the Puritan tradition of the captivity narrative.



Underhill's narrative was published in London in 1638, in response to Vincent's, and it anticipates many of the motifs found in Mason. Its title, *Newes from America; or, a New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England, Containing, a True Relation of their War-like proceedings these two yeares last past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palizado*, immediately blurs the parties in question. Does "their" in "their War-like proceedings" refer to the New Englanders or to the Pequots? The mirroring of the Pequots is further evident in the defensive justification of Underhill's title as captain. "I would not have the world wonder at the great number of commanders to so few men," he writes, but since they "most commonly divide themselves into small bodies . . . we are forced to neglect our usual way, and to subdivide our divisions to answer theirs" (*H*, 51). Underhill's defensiveness is motivated by a London audience that confuses the cultural valence of "honor" with

the practice of “power,” a confusion transcended by the Pequots. Hence the English also rearrange themselves for greater corporate functionality and self-reflexivity.

Three other anecdotes illustrate the dialectic of mirroring in Underhill’s work. The first describes a 1636 encounter between a Block Islander and the New Englanders’ “interpreter,” Cutshamekin: “[B]eing in English clothes, and a gun in his hand, [he] was spied by the islanders, which called out to him, What are you, an Indian or an Englishman? Come hither, saith he, and I will tell you. He pulls up his cock and let fly at one of them, and without question was the death of him” (*H*, 54). The force of the query, and the uncertainty of an answer—what is an Indian in English garb?—is reinforced by a parallel episode in which Endicott’s expedition encountered Pequots along the Connecticut coast. “The Indians spying of us came running in multitudes along the water side, crying, What cheer, Englishmen, what cheer, what do you come for?” The English “forbear to answer them,” this silence provoking another round of cries, this time in broken English: “What, Englishmen, what cheer, what cheer, are you hoggery, will you cram us?” Underhill translates: “That is, are you angry, will you kill us, and do you come to fight?” (*H*, 55). The question of identification, established by the earlier question to Cutshamekin, is now recoded as a reverse interpellation. The first question, significantly narrated in perfect English, assumes a properly English “cheer” confirmed by the Pequots’ “cheerfully” running along the coast. But the English refusal to answer as “Englishmen” invites the part-Pequot, part-English echo, after which the Pequots “made most doleful and woful cries all the night . . . fearing the English were come to war against them” (*H*, 56).

In the first episode, an indigenous ally stands apart when he demonstrates his greater ethnographic complexity—his clothing—and therefore his power. This power is manifest not simply in the gun, but in the mystery of his identity. It is the shock evoking a question—narratively significant as a hesitation during a conflict—that offers as much advantage as the gun. Cutshamekin kills not because he is a hybrid, but because his hybridity is unclear. He is a one-man ethnographic conspiracy, a deadly combination of elements that he conspiratorially invites his Indian adversaries to explore: *Come hither, and I will tell you*. The narrative immediately restructures this situation, next presenting transformed Englishmen. They have added silence, an element of “Indian” culture, to their arsenal. Once again, the mys-

tery of the ethnographically unexpected evokes questions through a conspiratorial evasiveness while exposing the Pequot conspiracy. For the point of the degeneration of perfect English to the broken tongue of savages is not, as it might at first seem, to expose the Pequots as primitive, but to expose the strategy of playing English. The nature of the Pequots' conspiracy is to conform to the expectations of the English (cheerfully calling greetings); but when the reverse occurs and the English don't answer, the Pequots' tactic is exposed as an imperfect use of English culture.

The third episode describes the Anglo-Pequot clash of 1636, a year before Mystic, as the English treat with the Pequot "ambassador" over Stone's murder. The Pequots had traded peacefully with "a certain vessel," says the Pequot, until "our sachem or prince coming aboard, [Stone's men] laid a plot how they might destroy him." Seizing the sachem, the traders "gave us leave to stand hallooing ashore, that they might work their mischievous plot" (*H*, 56). The frustrated Pequots send a ransom and the traders return the sachem, "but first slew him. This much exasperated our spirits, and made us vow a revenge," the ambassador states, and when Stone arrives in the area, the murdered sachem's son "knocked him in the head" while he drunkenly slept. Stone's men, discovering the "treachery" of "[t]hese devil's instruments," set fire to their gunpowder to blow up the Indians. The Indians "leaped overboard . . . and saved themselves; but all the English were blown up." "Could ye blame us for revenging so cruel a murder?" the ambassador asks, "for we distinguish not between the Dutch and English, but took them to be one nation . . ." The English reply that the Pequots "were able to distinguish between Dutch and English, having had sufficient experience of both nations" (*H*, 57-58).

This version of the Stone murder offers an interesting gloss on the earlier anecdote of the "hallooing" Pequots. Again Pequots are calling from the shore, and their greeting is met by English conspiratorial silence as their sachem is murdered and a ransom stolen. The Pequots find revenge in the comic transformation of conspiratorial silence, Captain Stone's drunkenness. The English are left to respond with brute violence, a reversion to their technological advantage: burn gunpowder and blow them up. The outcome—the noncultural weapon destroys the English, while the Pequots escape—reveals a persistent English disadvantage which is then reenacted in Endicott and Under-



hill's frustrated military response as they are left to their old brutal tactics of destroying property. It is not enough to expose the Pequots' conspiratorial use of ethnographic knowledge (exploiting Stone's drunkenness) with the insistence that Pequots can "distinguish between Dutch and English." The English have not yet learned their lesson, despite their earlier experiment with unnerving silence. It is not enough to baffle the Pequots (as did Cutshamekin) or to expose them. The lesson of conspiratorial presentation means nothing without a corresponding modification of praxis: violence itself—repeatedly understood in terms of fire—must progress from its brutal forms (exploding gunpowder, burning of property) to a more conspiratorial deployment.

These lessons help us appreciate Underhill's narration of Mystic's burning, which stresses how "we devised a way how we might save ourselves and prejudice them" (*H*, 80). Mason seizes a "fire-brand," and "set fire on the west side, where he entered; myself set fire on the south end with a train of powder," and the "fires of both meeting in the centre of the fort, blazed most terribly, and burnt all in the space of half an hour" (*H*, 80). Gunpowder and fire are now brought to the heart of Pequot culture, and the narration rages through ethnographic kindling: "the fire burnt their very bowstrings," "women, and children" are consumed, and even evasion in the form of fleeing leads to death at "the hands of the Indians that were in the rear" (*H*, 80–81). The English order their allies to kill the Pequot reinforcements, and Underhill speaks condescendingly of Pequot violence stripped through burning of its conspiratorial advantage, now the stuff of brute ethnography, "more for pastime, than to conquer and subdue enemies" (*H*, 82). The military details that follow thus stress the "distracted condition" of Pequots as well as English allies. "Our Indians," Underhill insists, "admired the manner of Englishmen's fight," crying out "Mach it, mach it; that is, It is naught, it is naught, because it is too furious, and slays too many men" (*H*, 84)—a fascinating translation, as if two words expressed the insight of the English self-transformation into killers. These words are translated yet again as Underhill narrates the imagined Pequot conference, in which Sassacus "was all for blood," but "the rest" assess their inferiority:

We are a people bereaved of courage, our hearts are sadded with the death of so many of our dear friends; we see upon what advantage the English lie; what sudden and deadly blows they strike;

what advantage they have of their pieces to us, which are not able to reach them with our arrows at distance. . . . To what end shall we stand it out with them? (*H*, 85)

The crucial point (attributed to the Pequots and thus powerfully asserted by Underhill) is that the burning of Mystic is not the real battle itself, a point traditional historiography misses in reifying this slaughter as the war's crucial episode. The burning is undoubtedly an act of violence, but it is primarily a strategic message of a new, culturally informed "advantage," a violence capable of incinerating the Pequots' cultural weapons (fort, bowstrings, people) and, more importantly, their cultural confidence. Gunpowder is now more than a killing tool; it is a terrorist device signaling the full English adoption of Pequot understanding. Thus one is tempted to read the massacre itself as the "New and Experimentall Discoverie" announced in Underhill's title.

But Underhill ventures a second narrative strand that recodes this English transformation in spiritual terms, in what may be the earliest Puritan captivity narrative. Much is made of "two captive maids" redeemed by the English and presented to the commanders for "examination" (*H*, 70). The oldest girl, "about sixteen years of age," testifies

that they did solicit her to uncleanness; but her heart being much broken, and afflicted under that bondage she was cast in, had brought to her consideration these thoughts—How shall I commit this great evil and sin against my God? Their hearts were much taken up with the consideration of God's just displeasure to them, that had lived under so prudent means of grace as they did, and had been so ungrateful toward God. . . . (*H*, 71)

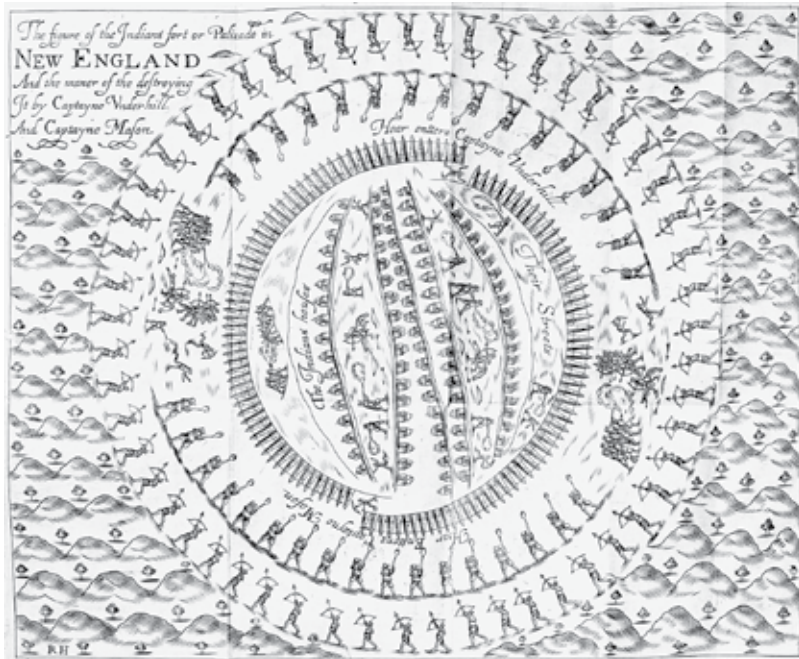
The girls are invited "to be merry," but "the poor souls, as Israel, could not frame themselves to any delight or mirth," and seek solace in prayers of despair and hope. Underhill paraphrases the oldest girl's words as he launches into pages of commentary: "I will not fear what man can do unto me, knowing God to be above man" (*H*, 72). He first celebrates captivity for its clarifying power: "The greater the captivities be of his servants, the contentions among his churches, the clearer God's presence is amongst his, to pick and cull them out of the fire" (*H*, 73). We should not wish for captivity, but if it comes, it is the Lord's way of asking "whether a soul would not do as the foolish young man in the Gospel, cling more closer to his honor, or profit,

or ease, or peace, or liberty, than to the Lord Jesus Christ" (*H*, 74). You "cannot have Christ" without "his cross," he continues, which in Jesus's case meant no "house to put his head in," no delicious feasts, no "gold or silver," in short no "habit . . . answerable to the course of the world" (*H*, 75). If Christ is stripped of the blinding elements of this world, his disciples face the command to "[c]ontend for the truth," the "troubles and contentions" resulting in "light out of darkness, good out of evil" (*H*, 76). As for the English, they will find their cross in the plight of the soldier who is "the most courageous . . . that sees the battle pitched . . . and yet is not afraid to join the battle" (*H*, 77).

Later versions of the Puritan captivity narrative have been interpreted as signaling the decisive formation of a discrete Puritan subjectivity, as when, in Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse's words, Mary Rowlandson becomes "a whole world unto herself" in opposition to "mass man."<sup>19</sup> But the antinomian Underhill describes a different scenario, in which the captive girl becomes analogous not to a chastised Puritan community or a contemplative bourgeois subjectivity, but to a soldier in battle.<sup>20</sup> The resulting narrative takes a form very different from Rowlandson's, for, far from becoming a "world unto herself," Underhill's girl, like Christ, has her "world" stripped away: honor, ease, homes, food, wealth, even "habit" are radically defamiliarized. Now God expresses his truths through the adversary, a point reiterated with a telling reference to fire: "The bush may be in the fire, but so long as God appears to Moses out of the bush, there is no great danger" (*H*, 77). Provided Moses can discern the layers of God, bush, and fire, the inner truth of the violent fire cannot harm. The Pequots have undergone the same scorching defamiliarization, their repeatedly emphasized complexity now burned away in battle. This does not mean that they stand revealed as undifferentiated "mass man," for they have been aggressively dedifferentiated through contention. "Light" emerges from "darkness," and translated more directly into conspiratorial terms, the antinomian captivity describes a clarification through revelations of the others' evils, a strengthening through perception of the others' layered existence.

All the elements of Underhill's narrative—call and response, captivity, the burning of the fort—converge in the well-known engraving of the Mystic battle (see fig. 1).

As the notations of "the Indians fort," "The Indians houses," and "Their Streets" remind us, the ethnographic bird's-eye view serves to



**Figure 1** Indians' fort, or Palizado, in New England. From John Underhill, *Newes from America; or a New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England* (London: I. D[awson] for Peter Cole, 1638), 12–13. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

show not a timeless way of life but a synchronically captured and carefully structured military engagement.<sup>21</sup> The two other notations identify the entry points of Captains Mason and Underhill. Two concentric rings of fighters, the first of uniform New Englanders, the second of equally uniform Native allies, are broken only by two skirmishes with fleeing Indians. The symmetry is perfect, the line between the skirmishes bisecting the line traversed by Mason and Underhill as they meet in the fort's center. Even the hills and trees neatly dot the countryside, and matching Pequots flee to their carefully engineered deaths at the two exits. In fact, the only disorder in the picture comes from what should otherwise be the very embodiment of order—the slightly irregular Pequot streets, the tiny arrows, and the scattered fleeing Pequots—now broken into disorderly fragments. The image is an ethnographic depiction of conspiracy, or a conspiratorial depiction of ethnography, the rings of the military assault matching and

now containing the walls of the Pequot Palizado. The massacre, read as event or structure, has transcended the lesser organization of the Pequots, visually capturing Underhill's oddly detached remark that "[o]ur end was that we might see the nature of the Indian war" (*H*, 82). Underhill provides the large-scale embellishment and correction of the image of torture in which Pequots take "One Master Tilly" and "tied him to a stake, flayed his skin off, put hot embers between the flesh and the skin, cut off his fingers and toes, and made hatbands of them" (*H*, 66–67). The parallels are unavoidable: the Pequot community burned at its own stake, hot embers smoldering it into its layers, extremities lopped off. If Pequots turn their violence into ethnographic decoration—skin become hatbands—the New Englanders have at last achieved the same, giving their violence a decorative order as well.



Lion Gardiner's *Relation* is the most unusual of the first-hand narratives on several counts.<sup>22</sup> It consistently criticizes the execution of the war, mentions the Mystic attack only in two passing sentences, gives the most detail about individual Native American participants, and devotes almost half its pages to criticizing Indian policies *after* 1637. Gardiner's prefatory comments, developing the conceit of author as carpenter, is more than an apology for crude prose, for the "splinters" that "prick some men's fingers" denote "the truth [that] must not be spoken at all times" (*H*, 21). The uncomfortable truths are numerous. Promised three hundred men to build a fort at the mouth of the Pequot River, Gardiner is only given two assistants. Arriving at the site, he learns of the Puritans' growing plans for war and believes he is being left "at the stake to be roasted" in an Indian war, "or for hunger to be starved" (*H*, 123). Not only does he push "to persuade the Bay-men to desist from war a year or two" (*H*, 124), but he struggles to maintain commercial contact with the Pequots. When in August 1636 an English force arrives to challenge the Pequots, Gardiner complains that they have "come hither to raise these wasps about my ears, and then you will take wing and flee away." Seeing the expedition's commission, he "wondered, and made many allegations against the manner of it" (*H*, 126). About the alleged origins of the conflict he has nothing but skepticism. Captain Stone's death was no cause for war, for "if they will now make war for a Virginian and expose us to the Indians, . . . they love the Virginians better than us" (*H*, 123). Oldham's

death had nothing to do with the Pequots, leaving Gardiner wondering “that the Bay doth no better revenge the murdering of Mr. Oldham . . . seeing they were at such cost for a Virginian” (*H*, 139). What then was the true cause of the war? During the failed 1636 expedition, the “Bay-men killed not a man, save that one Kichomiquim [Cutshamekin], an Indian Sachem of the Bay, killed a Pequit; and thus began the war” (*H*, 127). He later reiterates this point, that “so many honest men had their blood shed, yea, and some flayed alive, others cut in pieces, and some roasted alive, only because Kichamokin, a Bay Indian, killed one Pequit” (*H*, 139).

The criticisms don't stop there. Gardiner repeatedly describes his attempts to minimize violence and prevent escalation of the conflict. When a Pequot attempts to resume trade with an Englishman, Gardiner advises the latter to station armed guards for an easy retreat. The guards ignore this advice and barely escape to their vessel when warned by a Pequot woman of an impending attack (*H*, 125). A group of men go to gather corn, Gardiner ordering three to serve as sentinels; they wander off “fowling,” and two are tortured to death by Pequots (*H*, 128). One Mr. Mitchell attempts to gather hay from a nearby island, and Gardiner advises him to “scour the meadow” with dogs; “this was also neglected,” and three men are killed, and one “roasted . . . alive” (*H*, 128–29). After an antagonistic parley with Pequots, in which they threaten to attack English settlements, Gardiner sends warnings upriver, but “received back again rather a scoff, than any thanks”; days later he sees Pequots heading downriver, “many of them having white shirts” from their victims (*H*, 133). The sharpest conflict is with one Tilly who is heading to trade at Hartford. Gardiner had posted a notice requiring all traders to stop in order for him to “see whether they were armed and manned sufficiently.” Gardiner advises Tilly to turn back, insisting, “[’T] is my duty to God, my masters, and my love I bear to you all which is the ground of this, had you but eyes to see it; but you will not till you feel it.” Of Tilly’s response, he writes, “[He] gave me ill language for my presumption, (as he called it),” and on his return “the Indians fell upon him . . . and carried him alive over the river in our sight” (*H*, 134–35). Gardiner also details how he personally arranged to redeem the captive maidens, and “though the redemption cost me ten pounds, I am yet to have thanks for my care” (*H*, 134).

It is tempting to read these details (and there are others) as so many I-told-you-so’s of a detail-obsessed engineer. But they are better

read as indicators of Gardiner's deeply ethnographic sensibilities. Did Gardiner not believe that the Pequots were conspiring against the English? Undoubtedly: he writes, "I saw they plotted our destruction" (*H*, 126). Yet he insists that war could have been averted had the English taken pains to avoid violence and maintain trade. Let us be clear on this point: Gardiner consistently argues that normal English behavior—because it is characteristically selfish and individualistic—invites and provokes Pequot violence. The English, like Tilly, are responsible for their deaths, unable to grasp how their forays from their proper ethnographic sphere virtually necessitate Pequot violence. This lack of ethnographic self-understanding is matched by ignorance about the Pequots, about whom the English learn nothing until they "feel it." To make this point, Gardiner finds the corpse of a "man shot through, the arrow going in at the right side, the head sticking fast, half through a rib on the left side, which I took out and cleansed it, and presumed to send to the Bay, because they had said that the arrows of the Indians were of no force" (*H*, 130). This ethnographic message, dismissed by its recipients, sheds light on Gardiner's assessment of the conflict twenty-three years later.

Gardiner, unlike Mason and Underhill, emphasizes the ethnographic blindness of the English. But he finds a similar ignorance among the Pequots, with whom he also ventures some ethnographic advising. In a discussion with Pequots, Gardiner is told that they are heading upriver to "kill men, women, and children" and "take away the horses, cows, and hogs." Gardiner answers that "it would do them no good, but hurt, for English women are lazy, and can't do their work; horses and cows will spoil your corn-fields, and the hogs their clam-banks, and so undo them" (*H*, 132). The Pequots ignore this analysis and are implicitly condemned in Gardiner's explanation for the origins of the war. Only from a comprehensively ethnographic perspective could the deaths of Stone and Oldham be dismissed, the responsibility falling instead on the clash with Cutshamekin. Neal Salisbury suggests that this killing was significant as the beginning of official English violence toward the Pequots—Cutshamekin was the expedition's official translator—thus forcing a Pequot response.<sup>23</sup> Gardiner's assessment differs slightly: the Pequots should have avoided entanglement, but like the English they rushed to escalation. The English and the Pequots mirror each other, yes, but more in their inability to achieve a proper ethnographic distance from events.

Where, then, does the kvetching engineer fit in this view of things? Gardiner sets himself up as an ethnographic adviser, though given English and Pequot obstinance, his proper audience is with the other Native Americans of the region. One important episode involves the Mohegans under Uncas, who accompany the Mason expedition against Mystic. Gardiner asks Mason and Underhill “how they durst trust the Mohegin Indians, who had but that year come from the Pequits,” and finding the answer unsatisfactory, he comes up with a solution. He commands Uncas and his men to attack six recently sighted Pequots, and “fetch them now dead or alive, and then you shall go with Maj. Mason, else not.” The Mohegans do as asked, killing four and bringing “one a traitor to us alive, whose name was Kiswas,” and Gardiner is satisfied (*H*, 136). Gardiner’s greatest successes, however, are in his interactions with the Montauk sachem Waiandance, who enters the narrative after the Pequot slaughter, coming to ask “if we were angry with all Indians.” “No,” Gardiner answers, “but only with such as had killed Englishmen” (*H*, 137). May the Montauks then trade with the English? “No,” he again argues,

nor we with them, for if I should send my boat to trade for corn, and you have Pequits with you, and if my boat should come into some creek by reason of bad weather, they might kill my men, and I shall think that you of Long Island have done it, and so we may kill all you for the Pequits; but if you will kill all the Pequits that come to you, and send me their heads, then I will give to you as to Weakwash, and you shall have trade with us. (*H*, 137)

The Montauks accordingly send twelve Pequot heads, reinaugurating the trade with the English. Gardiner thus establishes his relationship with Waiandance by ethnographically advising him about English practices, behaviors, and assumptions. Amazingly, he includes himself in this analysis, warning that if trade conditions are unclear and unsafe, he himself might be a danger to them. In return, Waiandance makes explicit what Gardiner is only suggesting, namely that the English are analogous to the Pequots; “[I]f we may have peace and trade with you,” he says, “we will give you tribute, as we did the Pequits” (*H*, 137–38).

This relationship between Gardiner and Waiandance develops throughout the second half of Gardiner’s narrative, which increasingly suggests that the real threat in the region is the Narragansetts. Several times Waiandance discovers Narragansett plots against the



English. In one episode, Narragansetts offer Montauks an analysis of the Pequot conflict that is close to Gardiner's: "the Pequits gave [the English] wampum and beaver, which they loved so well, but they sent it them again, and killed them because they had killed an Englishman." To remain safe, Montauks must not trade with the English or give them any wampum. Waiandance immediately tells Gardiner of these complaints, asking him to "tell me what I shall say to them" (*H*, 141). When Gardiner maneuvers to keep the wampum trade open, another conspiracy emerges. Asserting an ethnographically defined pan-Indian unity, Miantonomo tells the Montauks to wait for three fires, at which point all Indians "from east to west, both Moquakues and Mohauks," will "fall on and kill men, women, and children" (*H*, 142–43). Again Waiandance informs Gardiner, who thwarts the plot. But Gardiner's real counsel to the Montauks concerns the prevention of violence. When Montauks are suspected in the murder of an English woman at Southampton, they resolve to resist any English questioning, expecting summary execution. Gardiner advises the Montauks to cooperate, using him as a hostage; if any Montauk is killed, they shall kill him as well. The Montauks duly cooperate, even capturing the culprit (*H*, 144–45). Waiandance becomes ever more proactive, later executing the Indian killer of two Englishmen (*H*, 146).

The advisory role of Gardiner and Waiandance is most clear in the *Relation's* unique scriptural references. At one point Gardiner compares himself to Jeremiah, the prophet unheard by his own people (*H*, 140). But three subsequent allusions complicate this predictable reference. The Narragansett leader Miantonomo, we are told, "did as Ahab at Ramoth-Gildead.—So he to Mohegin, and there had his fall" (*H*, 143). The reference is to Miantonomo's English-sanctioned execution by Uncas on Mohegan territory, though the Narragansett is here compared with the Israelite king Ahab (1 Kings 22). There is also an unusual reference to "honest Abraham" who "thought it no shame to name the confederates that helped him to war when he redeemed his brother Lot" (*H*, 147). The reference is to Abraham's acknowledgment of his non-Hebrew allies (Genesis 14:24), here contrasted with "Uncas of Mistick, and Waiandance," both "forgotten, and for our sakes persecuted to this day with fire and sword" (*H*, 147). But the most developed reference is to the Book of Esther. In Waiandance, Gardiner argues, "we have found an heathen, yea an Indian, in this respect to parallel the Jewish Mordecai" (*H*, 146). Mordecai was the

leader of the Jewish captives in Babylon, persecuted by King Ahasuerus's scheming adviser Haman. Shortly before Mordecai's scheduled execution, Ahasuerus has the historical scrolls read to him and learns of Mordecai's earlier service exposing the conspiracy of two of the king's treacherous "chamberlains." The repentant Ahasuerus stays the execution, elevates Mordecai to chief adviser, and executes Haman. But Gardiner, playing out the parallel, writes that the "Ahasuerus of New-England is still asleep. . . . Awake! awake Ahasuerus, if there be any of thy seed or spirit here, and let not Haman destroy us as he hath done our Mordecai!" (146-47). In this anecdote, Waiandance has become the ethnographic adviser, removed enough from his own culture to anticipate and thwart conspiracies by insiders and conflicts with outsiders. But if Waiandance, like Miantonomo, is cast as a Jew, the New Englanders, by contrast, are Babylonians without a leader wise enough to appreciate the Native American Mordecais in their midst.

If Mason and Underhill had vaunted the English as meta-Pequots, Gardiner condemned both groups. The Pequots had plotted against the English, but the true schemers were the ascendant Narragansetts. Mason had seen them as shadow Pequots, but had erred in his inflection; they were not potential Pequots halted at Mystic, but the true meta-Pequots, watching as the English brought on Pequot violence and as the rival Pequots brought on their own annihilation. In the aftermath, they took their ethnographic wisdom to the next level, articulating the pan-nativism that would obsess Anglo-American conspiracy theorists for the next century and more, from King Philip to Pontiac, Tecumseh, and beyond. Thus Gardiner's *Relation* is less a departure from the conspiratorial-ethnographic thought of Mason and Underhill than a sign of the next stage in New England's conspiracy thought. If such thought reverts to notions of "Indian" conspiracy, it is in part because of this earlier moment when the Pequots, and then Narragansetts, are understood as transcendent Indians. This raising of the stakes is most powerfully expressed in Gardiner's detailed fantasy of his own torture:

And now I am old, I would fain die a natural death, or like a soldier in the field, with honor, and not to have a sharp stake set in the ground, and thrust into my fundament, and to have my skin flayed off by piecemeal, and cut in pieces and bits, and my flesh roasted and

thrust down my throat, as these people have done, and I know will be done to the chiefest in the country by hundreds, if God should deliver us into their hands, as justly he may for our sins. (*H*, 140)

It is tempting to read this passage as a displaced description of the ritual torture of the Pequot Kiswas, perhaps carried out at Gardiner's insistence as he ethnographically confirmed the loyalty of the Mohegans. But it is now a fantasy haunted by Narragansett pan-nativism and English stupidity. With the great mediators passing away, it is only a matter of time before the "Indians" confirm their ethnographic loyalty to themselves by taking Gardiner apart, piece by piece.

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### Notes

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All references to the Bible are to the King James version.

- 1 William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647* (1952; reprint, New York: Modern Library, 1981), 224–25.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 270, ellipses in original.
- 3 The most influential works in this tradition include David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205–24; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967); and Gordon Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (July 1982): 401–41.
- 4 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 138.
- 5 Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2003), 24.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 18, 22.
- 7 No full text of the code is currently in print, but significant portions appear in *Slavery*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman, Seymour Drescher, and Robert L. Paquette (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 105–13, citation from 105. Further references to the code are given parenthetically by clause number.
- 8 Two significant elements of the traditional ethnography are missing in the Barbados Code: an account of the political system of the group and a survey of its religious beliefs. Of course, the slave code itself constitutes

an imposed “Governing of Negroes,” and in the code’s fantasy the religion of the slave is seemingly one of “desperate Lives” and the drive to terrorize whites (§ 20).

- 9 *History of the Pequot War: The Contemporary Accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent, and Gardener*, ed. Charles Orr (Cleveland, Ohio: Helman-Taylor, 1897), 37. All citations from Philip Vincent, John Mason, John Underhill, and Lion Gardiner are from Orr and will be cited parenthetically in the text as *H*.
- 10 Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, 3rd ed. (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 122–23. Further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text as *NEF*.
- 11 John Winthrop, *Winthrop’s Journals, History of New England 1630–1649*, ed. James K. Hosmer, 2 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1908), 1:184; quoted in Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 105. All further references to Cave will be cited parenthetically in the text as *PW*.
- 12 Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1975), 189–90. Further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text as *IA*.
- 13 Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500–1643* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), 211.
- 14 These two positions reappear in another area of contention: the question of total war, even genocide, in the conflict. Richard Drinnon identifies an intentional Native American conspiracy of total destruction (*Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* [New York: Schocken, 1990], 55); and Jennings similarly stresses a “prior intent to massacre and plunder,” later “squeamishly” denied by the Puritans and their apologists (*IA*, 220–21). By contrast, Adam J. Hirsch argues that the Stone and Oldham killings were seen as “infractions of English common law” justifying all-out war against “*internal* foes”; the ensuing levels of violence resulted from incompatible military cultures (“The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England,” *Journal of American History* 74 [March 1988]: 203). Steven T. Katz’s argument that the Puritans fought “a defensive war” and that both sides “acted to defend what they perceived as rightly theirs” complements Hirsch’s ethnographic view; see “The Pequot War Reconsidered,” in *New England Encounters: Indians and Euroamericans ca. 1600–1850: Essays Drawn from the New England Quarterly*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1999), 115.
- 15 Katz, “Pequot War Reconsidered,” 118–19.
- 16 Vincent writes, “Captain Underhill with his twenty men returned, and gave this account of those exploits of the New Englanders,” and his details

confirm contact with participants (*H*, 106). For instance, he recounts the English torture of a Pequot captive, a detail missing from the other narratives but confirmed in Winthrop's journals. For biographical information, see Louise K. Barnett, "Philip Vincent," in *American Writers before 1800: A Biographical and Critical Dictionary, Volume 3: Q-Z*, ed. James A. Levernier and Douglas R. Wilmes (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1983), 1499–1500.

- 17 See Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997), 148–58.
- 18 Mason's history first appeared in Increase Mather's *Relation of the Troubles* (1677), attributed to John Allyn; in 1736, Thomas Prince reprinted the narrative with correct attribution. The date of composition remains unclear. In 1660, Gardiner mentions a moment "two years and a half ago" when he and Mason were urged to write their narratives (*H*, 121), but given Mason's address to "the Honorable the General Court of Connecticut," it was likely composed after 1662, when Connecticut received its charter from Charles II.
- 19 Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1992), 207.
- 20 Associated with Anne Hutchinson, Underhill returned from the war to find himself excommunicated; it was in his flight to England that he wrote his narrative.
- 21 Underhill's one textual reference to the image of the battle elaborates this ethnographic slant: "This fort, or palisado, was well nigh an acre of ground, which was surrounded with trees and half trees, set into the ground three feet deep, and fastened close one to another, as you may see more clearly described in the figure of it before the book" (*H*, 78).
- 22 Gardiner's narrative, probably composed in 1660, was left untitled. The manuscript later published by the Massachusetts Historical Society added the title "Leift Lion Gardener his relation of the Pequot Warres." For ease and clarity, I refer to the narrative as *Relation* but adopt the modern conventional spelling of the author's name.
- 23 Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 218.