

TRANSATLANTIC TRAVEL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN THE EARLY
COLONIAL ERA: THE HYBRID AMERICAN FEMALE
AND HER NEW WORLD COLONY

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of KEELY SUSAN KUHLMAN find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

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Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the British transatlantic community of the eighteenth century, with special emphasis on formulations of native assimilation with colonial British and American culture, through the lens of a close analysis of *The Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield*, to cite the subtitle of *The Female American*. The crucial contexts for this analysis are relevant English travel narratives, most importantly the legend of Pocahontas as well as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Captain Cook's interactions with the Tahitian native Omai. Several critics have categorized *The Female American* as a rewriting of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. *The Female American* certainly reflects Crusoe's wandering spirit, successful individualism, and capitalistic tendencies, but crucial to understanding how it modifies Defoe's vision are Unca's nuanced perspective on the possibility of multiple hybridities, the complex role of religion in the later text, and the significance of interracial love and its representation of British expansionism. Rather than focus on the investment of this transatlantic colonial narrative in dominant colonial ideology, this dissertation is interested in unearthing the ruptures caused by the multiple cultural positionings of Winkfield, who straddles cultures, communities, traditions, religions, and ethnicities. In *The*

Female American, the transatlantic setting and crosscultural identity of the heroine allows Unca to form a new culture that blends aspects of Native American traditions, Christian ideals, and European rationalism.

The first chapter of this dissertation recreates and examines the story that is the heart of the study, the adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield in *The Female American*. Chapter two investigates the treatment of hybridity in the novel specifically and more generally in narratives that imagine an emerging transatlantic culture. Travel, ethnography, religion, and the negotiations that both the colonial and native cultures make in Unca's transatlantic tale serve as the topic of the third chapter. In the final chapter, the well-known story of Pocahontas and her relationships to John Smith and John Rolfe serve as a counterpoint to an exploration of interracial love in *The Female American*.

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For

Henry and Patricia Kuhlman

INTRODUCTION

Wherever I go, I tread in the tracks of the Indian.
--Henry David Thoreau, 1842¹

In the wake of an Indian attack on Jamestown, a handsome Englishman falls into enemy hands. Watching as his five companions are beheaded, the Englishman expects a similar fate. But as the death blow falls, a beautiful Indian maiden intervenes to spare his life. The Englishman and the maiden become companions, bonding as they investigate each other's language and culture. They soon marry and are blessed with a child before the Indian woman succumbs to an early death.

This fictional colonial love story from the opening pages of *The Female American; or, the Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield* (1767) echoes the traditional legend of Pocahontas. The first part of the novel borrows and blends Pocahontas's experiences, from her purported rescue of and friendship with John Smith to her marriage to John Rolfe and her untimely death. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the story of Pocahontas has endured much scrutiny; however, for the eighteenth-century readers of *The Female American*, the truth of Pocahontas's story would have been historical, not debatable. This pivotal myth—the existence of affection between a colonist and a not-so-savage Indian girl—has stimulated the American consciousness for the last four centuries. In 2006, Terrence Malick wrote and directed the most recent installment of the Pocahontas legend. His film, *The New World*, depicts what one reviewer for the Associated Press calls “the sensual dance of discovery” between Smith and Pocahontas. Though the film has been hailed for its efforts toward historical accuracy, the potential for romance between the settler and the “natural,” as the

Indian is called in the film, can't be overlooked. "It's not romantic love" between Smith and Pocahontas, film critic Christy Lemire acknowledges, "but it's not just friendship either—more like a bond that transcends labels and deeply touches them both." Another review, however, insists that the film creates a "sense of raw true love" between Smith and Pocahontas. When Smith exits Pocahontas's life and Rolfe steps in, Lemire argues that although Rolfe "means well . . . there just isn't the same chemistry she felt with Smith."² The continued fascination with this early colonial myth is significant for contemporary scholars. And for its positive depiction of a historically-inspired interracial love relationship as well as its innovative approach to colonial hybridity, travel, and religion, *The Female American* deserves more careful analysis than it has received to date, especially from the perspective of the novel's eighteenth-century reading public.

The Female American debuted in London in 1767 with hardly a splash, let alone the continuous ripple effected by another of its prototypes, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the celebrated colonial adventure narrative of 1719. A cursory notice in Britain's *Critical Review* suggested that *The Female American* was a story better left unread, or at least better left to the inhabitants of the American wilderness:

Mrs. Unca Eliza Winkfield is a most strange adventurer, and her memoirs seem to be calculated only for the wild Indians to whom she is so closely allied. We could therefore have wished as well for her sake as our own, that this lady had published her adventures at the Fall of Niagara, or upon the Banks of Lake Superior, as she would then, probably, have received the most judicious and sincere applause from her enlightened countrymen and princely relations, and have saved us six hours very disagreeable employment.³

Until recently Unca Eliza Winkfield's narrative has garnered only cursory notice by scholars exploring early European contact with Native Americans, with Tremaine McDowell in 1929 mocking the novel as a specimen of the "literary poverty of eighteenth-century America."⁴ However, the narrative gains new significance for the modern reader when recognized as a founding interracial myth. It is one of the earliest works of literature to incorporate a Pocahontas-inspired storyline. And as a noteworthy specimen of Anglo-American literature's transatlantic origins, *The Female American* presents a formulation of European imperialism in the Americas.

Unca's transatlantic tale negotiates the long-contested intersections between England and America—both native and colonial—confounding traditional political and social representations of imperial, colonial, and indigenous peoples and movements. *The Female American* rejects many eighteenth-century cultural perceptions of race, gender, and religion. The product of a traditional world blended with American exoticism, both Unca and her text represent a dynamic dialectic between what the era would label the Old World and the New, the masculine and the feminine, the civilized and the savage: the character of Unca Eliza Winkfield blends Anglo, native, and colonial heritages and her narrative is a representation of modes of negotiating these intercultural factors in her travels. The story reflects the complex reality that colonization affected the existing natives while at the same time influencing the arriving colonizers. Unca is exposed to cultural interactions on two continents and an island. While many depictions of intercultural relations in the early British colonies seek to establish "cultural harmony through romance,"⁵ Unca's story assumes that this harmony already exists in her person. Her narrative moves the discourse traditions it uses a step further, then, by exploring the ideal possibilities that could have been open to a Crusoe figure who

was a mixed race woman of faith rather than an English sailor alienated from his family and religious heritage.

This dissertation investigates the British transatlantic community of the eighteenth century, with special emphasis on formulations of native assimilation with colonial British and American culture, through the lens of a close analysis of *The Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield*, to cite the subtitle of *The Female American*.⁶ The crucial contexts for this analysis are relevant English travel narratives, most importantly the legend of Pocahontas as well as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) and Captain Cook's interactions with the Tahitian native Omai (1769-1774). Several critics have categorized *The Female American* as a rewriting of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). In fact, Michelle Burnham suggests that Unca's tale can be interpreted as a female Robinsonade.⁷ *The Female American* certainly reflects Crusoe's wandering spirit, successful individualism, and capitalistic tendencies, but crucial to understanding how it modifies Defoe's vision are Unca's nuanced perspective on the possibility of multiple hybridities, the complex role of religion in the later text, the significance of interracial love, and the novel's representation of British expansionism. Rather than focus on the investment of this transatlantic narrative in dominant colonial ideology, this dissertation is interested in unearthing the ruptures caused by the multiple cultural positionings of Winkfield, who straddles cultures, communities, traditions, religions, and ethnicities. In *The Female American*, the transatlantic setting and crosscultural identity of the heroine allows Unca to form a new culture that blends aspects of Native American traditions, Christian ideals, and European rationalism.

The first chapter of this dissertation recreates and examines the story that is the heart of the study, the adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield in *The Female American*. The

heroine of the 1767 adventure-fantasy is the daughter of a British colonist and an American Indian princess. After her Native American mother is murdered by a jealous sister, Unca is reared in England and educated in the European tradition by her uncle, an Anglican priest.⁸ Later Unca is abandoned on an isolated island in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of North America. Unca learns to survive on the remote island, though she is indebted to a hermit who has penned a survival manual for island life. Unca insinuates herself into the island's native culture by hiding in the temple's statue of a sun god and posing as an oracle, speaking to the Native Americans in their native tongue, in which she is conveniently conversant thanks to her mother's instruction in her youth. Immediately Unca begins to convert the natives to Christianity, a key step in her evolving plan to save and protect the Indians. When her English cousin finally locates her, Unca refuses to return to England and leave her "dear Indians"; the cousin, whom she marries, and a reformed pirate elect to sever their ties to England and join her in ministering to the island natives. The novel culminates in Unca's successful creation of a Christian society on this New World island when she "collect[s] all the gold treasure" from the Native American sun god's temple and blows up the sun god statue so "the Indians might never be tempted to their former idolatry."⁹ Unlike Crusoe or Prospero and Miranda in *The Tempest*, Unca stays on her island, sending only her narrative "back" to her father's people.

Unca survives and thrives throughout the novel largely because of her ability to transition between and adapt to the cultures she encounters on both sides of the Atlantic. Chapter two investigates the treatment of hybridity in the novel specifically and more generally in narratives that imagine an emerging transatlantic culture. The chapter also explores important intersecting influences represented in *The Female American*, an anonymous—both authorially and nationally—text. Examining the complex "cross-

articulation of gender, empire, and race” in this early transatlantic novel, Burnham has suggested that *The Female American* offers an intriguing glimpse into the “extraordinary possibilities of being both female and American.”¹⁰ This chapter expands the critical understanding of Unca’s narrative by examining in particular the implications of hybridity—in terms of race, culture, religion, and gender—that the narrative enacts.

Travel, ethnography, religion, and the negotiations that both the colonial and native cultures make in Unca’s transatlantic tale serve as the topic of the third chapter. *The Female American*’s hybrid heroine transitions between societies throughout the novel. Born and raised on her father’s colonial plantation, Unca also becomes acquainted with her native relatives through regular visits, gifts, and other communications. When her father returns to England following her mother’s murder, Unca quickly adjusts to English customs. On the island, Unca borrows from her native, colonial, and British experiences in order to survive among the Indians. But she isn’t the novel’s only traveler. In fact, transatlantic voyages seem quite common in *The Female American*. Unca, her father, and her cousin are all colonial jetsetters, racking up at least ten Atlantic crossings between the three of them. This traveling mindset permeates Unca’s tale. *The Female American*, itself firmly situated in the travel narrative genre, is a precursor to the coming wave of travel literature. In 1767, at the cusp of the more-than-half-century-long period between 1770 and 1835 that Tim Fulford terms the “age of the exploration narrative,” Unca demonstrates herself to be a pioneer, with a tale that anticipates the coming exploration narrative but enacts an intercultural dialogue with its historical and literary ancestors, especially the Pocahontas-Smith story and *Robinson Crusoe*. Similarly, Unca’s religious mission to convert the American natives anticipates the “Evangelical Revival” in England during the Romantic period, a movement that can be traced

to the formation of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1794.¹¹ Of course, many of the early British North-American colonies were themselves ostensibly carrying out Protestant missions of conversion to native peoples. For example, Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, and Pennsylvania were all earlier models for LMS enterprises, if only more explicitly imperial.

In the final chapter, the well-known story of Pocahontas and her relationships to John Smith and John Rolfe serve as a counterpoint to an exploration of interracial love in *The Female American*. The multiple debates surrounding the Pocahontas story continue to captivate scholars. Despite significant scholarship on Pocahontas, Smith, Rolfe, and the colonial legend, “it is,” as Peter Hulme has said, “difficult to see that the question of authenticity could now be settled one way or the other.”¹² For the present study, however, the actual events of 1607-1608 are less significant because the eighteenth-century reading public didn’t question Smith’s veracity. For eighteenth-century readers—the audience of Unca’s *Female American*—Pocahontas, her rescue of Smith, and her willing assimilation into the colony’s Christian culture were historical realities. The Pocahontas story is central to *The Female American* both as a narrative model and as a cultural frame. An understanding of the transatlantic community’s fascination with natives but dread of miscegenation also helps to contextualize Unca’s narrative. Despite a history of reluctance on the part of British explorers and colonists to marry native women, many in the eighteenth century blamed the early policies against miscegenation for the later cultural conflicts. These commentators argued that intermarriage between settlers and natives should have been encouraged. As a symbol of the lost opportunity of more friendly relations, the story of Pocahontas and her ability to transition into English society was significant for readers and thinkers. For many in

the eighteenth century, Pocahontas stood as “the one single exception to the rule of cultural crossing in early Virginia,” a historical model of their unrealized “ideological expectations.”¹³

While *The Female American* begins with a version of the Pocahontas story, the narrative of the 1767 novel rewrites key aspects of its prototype. Unca’s tale is significant on many grounds, including its assumption that intercultural contact between natives and Europeans in the Atlantic colonies was best engineered by a woman. Unca’s narrative, and specifically her use of “magic,” stands in sharp contrast to Shakespeare’s arguably colonialist drama, *The Tempest*. Prospero’s Mediterranean island, his magic, and ultimately his daughter Miranda are all staged steps for restoring his power at home, securing succession via Miranda’s marriage but notably not “redeeming” the symbolic native Caliban. *The Female American*, in contrast, uses her power to establish herself on the natives’ island, where she intends to live, working to save the natives through her hybrid religion. Unca’s innovative narrative introduces a hybrid heroine into the colonialist enterprise, one who travels the ocean, enters multiple cultures, is as proficient with a bow and arrow as she is with classical literature and languages, chooses her own husband to further her Protestant missionary effort, and engineers a transition to the “true faith” by fusing European and native religious symbols.

CHAPTER ONE

Unca Eliza Winkfield: *The Female American*

The following extraordinary History will prove either acceptable or not to the reader. . . . I found it both pleasing and instructive, not unworthy of the most sensible reader; highly fit to be perused by the youth of both sexes, as a rational, moral entertainment; and, as such, I doubt not, but that it will descend to late posterity, when, most of its contemporaries, founded only in fiction, will have been long forgotten.

--"The Editor," *The Female American*

Set in the early seventeenth century during the founding of Jamestown, the "true" account of *The Female American; or, The Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield* was published first in London in 1767 with the author listed as Unca Eliza Winkfield. Only in recent years have scholars begun to acknowledge that the fictional Winkfield didn't pen the account. To date, the author remains unidentified, and there is little evidence to ascertain either the author's gender or nationality. Ultimately, "whether female or male, American or British, the author of *The Female American* articulated for readers on both sides of the Atlantic an often radical vision of race and gender through an account of a biracial heroine who is able to indulge in a kind of 'rambling' mobility and 'extraordinary' adventure precisely because she is, as the title declares, an American female."¹

The events of *The Female American* begin during the reign of King James of England.² In 1607 the first successful British settlement was established at Jamestown in the colony of Virginia, an area known to the Virginia Algonquian-speaking tribes as Wingandacoa.³ The first president of this colony was Edward Maria Wingfield, a man that the heroine of *The Female American* claims as her grandfather.⁴ By placing herself as heir to the "first

titular head”⁵ of England’s American colonies, the heroine establishes her connection to Britain’s original colonial endeavors in native American lands. As the novel’s title suggests, Unca Eliza Winkfield is the first truly “American” female, a claim that the novel’s further events will confirm. In addition, the author attempts to legitimize the “wonderful, strange, and uncommon . . . events” of her life by firmly situating herself in the well-known Anglo-American history of British colonization along the eastern seaboard of North America.⁶ In the ensuing years up through the period in which the novel was written, both the historical and fictional Jamestown colonies experienced the traumas of famine, disease, and war with the Indians.⁷ However, amid the turbulence, Unca Eliza’s grandfather has established a large, successful plantation that he has willed to his son William Winkfield, whose story opens the door for his daughter’s own fantastic adventures.

In this fictionalized version of Jamestown history, Edward Maria Winkfield is killed during the 1622 Indian attack on the English colonists at Jamestown.⁸ During the massacre, William Winkfield and five other Englishmen are captured by the Indians, whom they fear are cannibals.⁹ After the native Indian king eloquently links the colonial endeavor with religious beliefs in a speech somehow miraculously translated and recorded (none of the colonists understand his Indian language¹⁰), he declares that his native god has delivered the six colonists into his hands to atone for the death and devastation that the British invasion has caused the American natives. Therefore, the king concludes, the Englishmen deserve to die. Watching while each of five companions is beheaded, William Winkfield expects a similar fate when, “just as the executioner was about to give the stroke, a maiden, who stood by the king, and whose neck, breast, and arms, were curiously adorned with jewels, diamonds, and solid pieces of gold and silver, and who was one of the king’s daughters,” intervenes

by touching William “with a wand . . . the signal for deliverance.”¹¹ In a dramatic gesture that evokes comparisons to John Smith’s rescue by Pocahontas, William is miraculously spared from execution. The author suggests that romance is responsible for William’s deliverance. Describing William before his capture as a “well shaped,” twenty-year-old man with “a remarkable fair complexion for a man, with brown hair” and “black eyes,” the author notes that his pleasing appearance is significant because it is responsible for “his future preservation” during his brief captivity. Apparently, William attracts the princess’s eye because she “conceive[s] an affection for him” and thus spares him with the touch of her wand.¹²

Liberated by “his black deliverer,” the Native American princess, William lives comfortably and soon learns to speak the Indian language. After adjusting to her dark complexion, William falls in love with the princess, whose name is Unca. She is, he insists, “not inferior to that of the greatest European beauty,” plus “her understanding was uncommonly great, pleasantly lively, and wonderfully comprehensive.” She has both beauty and brains. However, in order for William’s conscience to allow him to marry a pagan, he teaches her his Protestant beliefs and converts her to Christianity, a traditional step even in contemporary accounts of intercultural love relationships. But before they can marry, the princess’s sister Alluca confesses her own love for William. When he rejects her overtures, affirming his engagement to her sister, Alluca attempts to avenge her shame over his rejection by poisoning William. Luckily, Unca finds her lover in time and immediately administers an antidote, thus sparing his life a second time. The Indian king, to prevent future difficulties, marries William to Unca, offers them a wealthy inheritance, and sends them to live on William’s plantation.¹³ The Indian king is even willing to “enter into a treaty of friendship”

with William and his fellow settlers. The king's gestures suggest a new kind of racial economy while simultaneously echoing an old imperial fantasy of colonized others welcoming and loving their colonizers. Living peaceably on the Virginian plantation, William and Unca seem to enjoy the benefits of English colonial comforts. William's plantation boasts an "elegant house," and his wife Unca wears clothes in the European fashion. However, they maintain an amicable relationship with Unca's tribe, who often send them gifts. Eventually they have a daughter, named Unca Eliza, who is to become the novel's heroine.¹⁴

When Unca Eliza is six years old, Alluca's rage against the lovers, William and Unca, still remains unquenched. Now queen after her father's death, Alluca sends two Indian messengers to murder the pair. The Indian assassins arrive on an idyllic scene of familial warmth: William Winkfield and Unca are seated in a small garden with their daughter Unca Eliza "playing at their feet." When the Indians enter the garden, no one senses the coming betrayal. William manages to deflect the dagger aimed to kill him, but his wife, the princess Unca, perishes when she is stabbed in the heart. William vows to avenge his wife's death, but before he can act on his anger, Queen Alluca dies "of grief." On her deathbed, she melodramatically orders that her heart be delivered to William with the following message: "Receive a heart that, whilst it lived, loved you, and had you received it, it had never been wicked. Forgive my revenge, and let my heart be buried with you when you are dead; but may the sun give you many days!" After this trauma, William and his now seven-year-old daughter Unca return to the Winkfield family in England to escape the scene of their grief in Virginia. William has become a rich man due to the success of his plantation and generous gifts from his wife's tribe.¹⁵

During this period in England Unca becomes the focus of the narrative. Unca boasts a rich, transnational heritage, and she revels in her hybridity. A child adored by both family and friends, she proudly blends aspects of native and European tradition. Unca's choice of clothing is particularly illustrative:

My tawny complexion, and the oddity of my dress, attracted every one's attention, for my mother used to dress me in a kind of mixed habit, neither perfectly in the Indian, nor yet in the European taste, either of fine white linen, or a rich silk. I never wore a cap; but my lank black hair was adorned with diamonds and flowers. In the winter I wore a kind of loose mantle or cloak, which I used occasionally to wear on one shoulder, or to cast it behind me in folds, tied in the middle with a ribband, which gave it a pleasing kind of romantic air. My arms were also adorned with strings of diamonds, and one of the same kind surrounded my waist.

In addition, Unca stands out from the average British citizen by being constantly accompanied by several slaves, by having a fluent command of the Indian language, and by being skilled at using the Indian bow and arrows. She has even been offered the crown by her mother's tribe so her royal treatment seems justified.¹⁶ Though Unca can pass in British society, she prides herself on her Native American roots.

While Unca thrives in England, her father cannot mend his broken heart. After a year with his brother's family, William returns to his plantation in Virginia, leaving Unca in her aunt and uncle's care. Unca's uncle John, a priest in the Church of England, provides her with a careful education, including lessons in Greek and Latin, thorough instruction in "polite literature," and a comprehensive grounding in religion. In fact, his theological instruction is as complete as if Unca herself was intended for the priesthood. Unca's aunt augments her

book learning with tutoring in the “female” aspects of knowledge, rounding out her education with a kind of gender hybridity.¹⁷ Despite—or perhaps because of—her exotic appearance, Unca has many suitors, but she sets almost unattainable standards for marriage. The man she will marry, Unca determines, must be as dexterous with a bow and arrow as she is. She adds that she will happily marry a man who can shoot a bow and arrow whether he is “ugly or handsome.” In addition, Unca wants to marry for love. Of the English men who court her, she declares that “none touched [her] heart.” Even her cousin John is rejected when he presents his suit. In response to his pleadings, Unca only laughs, brushing him off by answering his address in her Indian dialect, which he of course can’t understand.¹⁸

When Unca turns eighteen, she decides to return to her father’s Virginia plantation. She admits her American allegiance, confessing that she “secretly long[s] to see [her] native country.” After a handful of years with her father in Virginia, William’s sorrow sends him to an early grave. Unca decides to cut all ties with her native homeland and prepares to return to England with her father’s fortune. After purchasing a boat to carry her treasures, her attendants, and herself across the Atlantic, Unca hires a captain and promises to give him the boat upon their safe arrival in England. Twenty-four years old and the mistress of an immense fortune, Unca embarks on a fateful voyage. Within a day of leaving the Virginian coast, she becomes the target of the ship captain’s greed. Refusing the captain’s extortion attempts offering her the choice between marrying his son or paying him thirty thousand pounds, Unca incites the captain’s ire, and he threatens to abandon her on an “uninhabited island” that the ship is approaching. Two of Unca’s Indian attendants try to save her by throwing the evil captain overboard, but because the captain can swim, he doesn’t drown. Instead, his sailors rescue him. Then ensues a standoff between Unca’s slaves and the captain with his crew.

In the skirmish, three of Unca's four male attendants are killed. The fourth of Unca's slaves is wounded as are Unca's two female attendants. Though Unca escapes injury, she is soon marooned on an isolated island somewhere off the coast of Virginia.¹⁹

While Unca's island is located in the Atlantic Ocean supposedly near North America, the attributes she describes more closely resemble traits of South America or the Caribbean rather than anything near North America. Recent scholars suggest that this imaginative conflation is typical of eighteenth-century portrayals of American natives. Fictional representations of the Americas as well as its inhabitants were commonplace in early ethnographies and travel narratives, including depictions in the works of Baron Lahontan, Jonathan Carver, and John Dunn Hunter. While many of these fantastic portrayals included inventions of unnatural deviances including unipeds, giants, and dog-headed natives, the introduction of the South American native into the North American landscape is another consequence of this climate of misinformation. Europeans first became acquainted with the New World Indians in South America so, when confronted with what they perceived to be similar aboriginal peoples on the northern continent, they tended to turn to their knowledge of the south to inform their understanding. William Sturtevant has termed this the "Tupinambization" of North America's natives. This "Tupinambization" process entails the "direct transfer of representations of particular South American tribes" to North American Indians.²⁰

Alone on an Atlantic island with only her bow and arrow and a chest of clothes to supply her needs, Unca finds herself in a situation that would elicit fainting spells in most eighteenth-century European ladies of her status. At first she is terrified at her "deplorable condition" and convinced that she is destined to become the "prey" of "some wild beast." But

her uncle's religious training and the rich experience of her mixed-race upbringing revive her to a rational state of mind.²¹ Priding herself on being unlike traditional British women, Unca learns to survive on the remote island. She is, however, indebted to a man for her continued existence. Conveniently, a hermit has inhabited the island for forty years and has left behind a house filled with furniture made from rocks so Unca has a place to live; in fact, it is stocked with supplies, including shells full of fresh water, a "heap of Indian roots . . . which serve instead of bread," and some wine made from wild grapes. But more importantly, the hermit has penned a survival manual full of detailed instructions for life on the island: the first line of the manual reads, "How you may subsist, you may learn from the history of my life." By reading the hermit's manual, Unca learns that the island is safe; it is free from prowling beasts and savage natives. She notes, however, that the "savages" do visit the island once a year; luckily, according to the hermit's calculations they won't arrive for two months so Unca has time to make preparations. In addition, by following the hermit's instructions she learns how to make candles from shells with reeds for wicks, how to trap small lark-like birds by smearing little berry trees with a sticky sap, and how to catch goats for milk and meat by luring them with tree branches covered with a particular yellow fruit.²²

So for her physical survival, Unca is indeed indebted to the hermit. She uses her own ingenuity and a little help from nature to solve her problem of what to wear, however. Her locked chest of clothes has become partially buried in the sand from resting on the seashore. Troubled "at the thoughts of going naked," Unca is determined to "break open [her] chest." Unable to open it with the knife she carries in her pocket, Unca contemplates setting fire to it but instead decides to wait for a better plan. Finally, a storm comes along, and the waves—wild in the stormy weather—relocate her chest atop some rocks along the shore. After some

effort to climb to the top of the rocks, Unca shoves the chest off the rocks. When it shatters on the ground below, she is able to retrieve her clothing and linens from the remains.²³

Despite early misgivings about her ability to survive on the island, Unca soon depicts the island as a fertile land providing for her needs. With the hermit's manual as a guide, she turns the island's natural inhabitants into an endless buffet. She describes herself as "rich in provisions" as she learns that, in addition to the Indian roots, goat meat, and birds on which she has been surviving, there are countless edible creatures in the sea: shellfish, oysters, lobsters, and crabs. "What a plentiful table was here," Unca writes, "furnished only at the expense of a little trouble!" This idyllic depiction of Unca's newfound island and its natural bounty reflects the contemporary tendency to depict natives as noble savages occupying a bucolic utopia. By the late eighteenth century, expedition narratives had popularized the image of the islands of the Caribbean and the South Seas as incredibly fertile, offering an abundance of food for little labor. Unca's bounteous New World island is reminiscent of Tahiti's image in the English mind as an "exotic garden" populated with "noble savages living in freedom, so plentifully supplied by nature with breadfruit that they did not need agriculture." Similarly, Unca's description of minimal exertion to feed herself echoes the journal of Sir Joseph Banks, who wrote of the Tahitians that the "happy" edenic natives "may almost be said to be exempt from the curse of our forefather [Adam, whose original sin caused God to curse the earth in Genesis 3:17-19]; scarcely can it be said that they earn their bread with the sweat of their brow when their chiefest sustenance Bread fruit is procurd with no more trouble than that of climbing a tree and pulling it down." In this prelapsarian setting of plenty, survival is soon no longer Unca's primary concern; she can even boast about her

food-gathering proficiency: “I can, with little difficulty, or rather amusement, supply myself with fish, flesh, and fowl.”²⁴

With the hermit’s ethnography as guide, Unca has transitioned from bare survival to a comfortable subsistence. Upon her arrival on the island, she insisted that she “was not fond of rambling” and could barely venture out from the hermit’s cell; however, she soon masters her fears and the island as well, declaring, “I spent what leisure time I had; in walking up and down the island.” She becomes a naturalist of sorts, recording her observations of the island geography as well as details of its flora and fauna. In particular, Unca describes one very peculiar island denizen: a “four-footed” animal “of a most extraordinary kind.”²⁵ As big as a large dog with unnaturally long and slender legs, the creature is incredibly slow, yet its enormous eyes and threatening rows of teeth give it a menacing appearance. Fascinated but terrified, Unca watches as the animal lies down as though dead in a field. Within minutes hundreds of field mice are covering the animal, chewing on long tufts of fur. But somehow the mice become attached so that when the creature stands and shakes himself, they can’t escape. With his very long neck, the animal turns and eats “near three hundred” of the trapped mice within a few minutes. Unca speculates that the animal’s hair follicles are filled with an unusually “glutinous kind” of liquid: “as the tufts formed by the extremities of these hairs are pretty big, a large quantity of this glutinous matter being lodged there, the nibbling of the mice breaking the hairs, this glutinous matter may so fasten the hairs to the inside of their mouths, as to render it exceeding difficult for them to disengage themselves, at least soon enough to prevent their being devoured.”²⁶

Marveling over nature’s method of providing for even this strange creature’s sustenance, Unca decides that God is good because he lets animals sustain themselves

by killing other animals, even though it wasn't God's original design to allow such death but rather "one of the unhappy consequences of the general corruption of nature." Unca is familiar with both sides of this degeneration theory debate: that some animals aren't formed to eat plants or fruits so how could they be created except to eat animals? To this objection, she finds it "highly reasonable to suppose" that originally carnivores "were so formed to prey upon dead animals." In this way these creatures would actually have performed a sort of ecological service by removing "what would otherwise be an hurtful nuisance, in more senses than one." She neglects dealing with the presence of death in a prelapsarian world and disengages from the debate by saying she's not a naturalist and doesn't intend to act like one; interestingly she claims that even though she's just a woman, she thinks she could argue successfully with Aristotle and Pliny, both famous naturalists.²⁷

Turning from Unca's anxiety over her immediate survival, she soon focuses on what seems to be the core of the novel: not her efforts to provide herself with food or her struggle to open the locked chest of clothes but rather her use of religion to colonize the Native Americans she encounters on the island. With her indoctrination in Protestant Christianity under her uncle's tutelage, Unca is morally prepared for her yet-unseen mission project, the pagan natives. Throughout her trials to survive, Unca repeatedly turns to her Christian God in prayer or comforts herself by reading passages from the copy of the "Greek Testament" that she carries in her pocket. She even offers the reader practical instruction about proper spiritual conduct. For example, when she first lands on the island, she is understandably beside herself with fear and despair. But she instructs her reader that when a human is in emotional distress, it is easy to get "so taken up with a sense of our miseries, that we forget that we have any mercy to be thankful for." So Unca recommends that we should always "sing

a *Te Deum* before we sigh a litany; for our sighs will sink before they reach heaven, unless raised thither by the wind of praise.”²⁸ A short time later, when Unca “accidentally” opens her Greek copy of the New Testament to Hebrews 13:5,²⁹ she discourses at length against bibliomancy, the practice of “deliberately opening the Bible and relying upon God to direct the fingers and eyes to the appropriate page and verse.”³⁰ Though she is comforted by her own fortuitous discovery of the verses in Hebrews, she remembers her uncle’s injunction to avoid using “the word of God literally” as “an oracle.”³¹

The hermit’s practical manual helps Unca become proficient at providing the corporeal necessities, and her uncle’s spiritual guidance has fortified her spiritually and emotionally. However, Unca must endure an ordeal that tests both her physical and her mental determination. Despite her growing knowledge and comfort on the island, Unca begins to agonize about the future, wondering if she will be able to endure the inevitable changing seasons. She asks herself:

How shall I, during the inclemency of [winter], procure the means of subsistence? There will be less plenty of birds; the gum, which now spontaneously issues from the trees, will then fail, the sands on the coast being more frequently and violently agitated, will be unsafe, and my supplies from thence less, perhaps none; the goats will also yield little or no milk; and the rain perhaps may continue for many days, nay weeks, and confine me entirely to my cell.

Indulging in these “melancholy” thoughts, Unca soon literally makes herself sick with worry. She becomes delirious with a “violent fever,” which lasts for three days. On the third day, having drunk all the water in the shells, Unca crawls to the river for a drink, but she falls in and nearly drowns.³² After this “inadvertent baptism,” Unca slowly regains her strength with

the nourishment of a goat who lets Unca nurse from her.³³ A typological reading underscores the significance of this event. While it echoes a similar episode in *Robinson Crusoe* and even brings to mind the founding of ancient Rome with Romulus and Remus suckling from a she-wolf, Unca's bout with the water calls to mind several significant biblical accounts, including the baby Moses floating in a basket among the reeds in the Nile River as well as the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.³⁴ Reflecting on her illness, Unca concludes that her sickness was the result of her own "folly" because she allowed herself to be overwhelmed by "those anxious corroding cares . . . concerning [her] future subsistence." She repents of her transgression and, following her habit of lecturing herself in the voice of her uncle, she begins to reflect on her situation. While her life on the island may seem bleak, Unca reminds herself, she has been blessed throughout her life. In fact, when her trials are contextualized against the misfortunes of others, especially the plight of slaves, Unca has much to be thankful for. "Though the cloud of affliction now hangs over your head," she hears her uncle telling her, "the sun of mercy behind may dispel it, and once more show his glorious face. Believe, obey, and trust, and be saved, blessed, and delivered."³⁵

From this point on, Unca focuses on the coming of the Indians and the mission that she will soon undertake. To discover more about what to expect when the natives visit her island, Unca determines to read the hermit's manual in its entirety. While she exclaims that the history of the hermit's life is "wonderfully extraordinary, highly entertaining, and full of improvement," she hardly takes the time to highlight the hermit's early years of vice, his imprisonment, and his subsequent release from prison in exchange for his exile on the uninhabited island. After living on the island in solitude for forty years, the hermit writes that he feels death beckoning so he has moved to another cell in the temple to die. But Unca

hardly remarks on his exceptional existence. Instead she rushes ahead to his revelation that his cell, the room she now occupies, is part of “some very ancient palace, or rather temple” that he concludes belongs to “an ancient idol sacred to the sun, which the Indians adored.” Immediately obsessed with the temple and idol, Unca determines to investigate these ancient surroundings.³⁶ Though Unca employs European methods in her exploration of the Indian temple, she’s also discovering her own roots—despite the imposture, this is in essence a hybrid endeavor.

On the first day of her temple explorations, Unca prepares for her adventure by packing some supplies: a shell for water, some Indian roots for food, and a shell lamp for light. Beginning from the hermit’s cell, she finds that there are numerous small rooms identical to her current abode, although some are in perfect condition and others completely dilapidated. Working toward the center of the temple where the hermit has indicated the idol to the sun god stands, Unca eventually discovers “several hundreds” of mummies lining the walls of many rooms. Aided by her knowledge of Egypt and the lucky coincidence that she understands “the Indian languages perfectly,” Unca determines that the mummies are “priests to the sun”: “Each mummy had on it the name of the priest, his age, and the time of his death; by which I found that most of them had been there at least on thousand years.” In addition, Unca makes the gothic, backward-looking discovery that the island temple is really an enormous graveyard when she finds more temple rooms filled with “many hundreds” of coffins with the ashes of temple virgins. These tombs lead her to an enormous group of “about five hundred” mummies that turn out to be high priests to the sun god. Detailing the high priest’s exquisite gold crowns and golden figures of the sun on their chest, Unca catches herself from being too greedy, reflecting, “I had too much gold before to be happy.”³⁷

Returning from her explorations and from one more discovery—a mysterious gold lamp that burns perpetually—Unca is startled to find a man at the door to her cell. Waking from a swoon, she discovers that the man she mistook for an apparition is actually the “dead” hermit. He explains that he had removed to another cell to die as recorded in his writings. However, he was overcome with a delirium and has spent the past weeks wandering the island. Pleased with their mutual discovery of companionship, Unca and the hermit exchange many stories before retiring for the night. However, Unca’s reprieve from solitude is short-lived when the hermit dies in the night. Rather than move his body, she relocates her few belongings to one of the other cells she has discovered on her previous explorations, and she seals up the room with the dead hermit inside by placing loose stones in front of the door so “no creature could enter.”³⁸ Implicitly, the hermit needs to die so Unca can fully spread her wings and complete her mission on the island. Burying him herself, she assumes the first of her priestly roles in the novel.

Alone once more, Unca returns to her temple explorations. On her second day, she learns that the temple is only one story tall but more than a mile long. Moving from her cell toward the temple statue, Unca finds larger rooms and apartments that she imagines used to house the priests. Finally, “at the distance of about a mile from the place of [her] abode, as near as [she] could calculate,” Unca locates the object of her fascination, the idol to the sun god. Here she finds the remains of a wall that used to surround the idol. In the middle of the ruins stands the idol:

Round it was an ascent of twenty stone steps. The image itself, of gold, greatly exceeded human size: it resembled a man clad in a long robe or vest; which reached quite down to the pedestal-stone or foundation on which it stood, and lay in folds

upon it. This image was girt about the waist as with a girdle, and on each breast gathered to a point, fastened as it were, with a button; the neck and bosom quite bear like the manner of women; on the head was a curiously wrought crown, and between the two breasts an image of the sun carved in gold, as was all the rest of it. The right hand supported the figure of a new moon, and the left held a cluster of stars. On the back part of the idol was written in large Indian characters to this purpose, THE ORACLE OF THE SUN. I ascended the steps, and threw a stone at the image, and found it was hollow.

Satisfied with her discovery, Unca decides to return to her cell when she inadvertently stumbles on a trap door that leads to a subterranean tunnel under the temple. With the light of three shell lamps, Unca discovers a narrow but tall passageway lined with niches full of gold treasures, including “a great number of rings, bracelets, lamps, and crowns.” This corridor leads to a large room filled with ornate garments belonging to the ancient high priests. The vestments, cassocks, crowns, staffs, rings, and bracelets are all exquisitely fashioned out of gold and ornamented with diamonds and other precious stones. In a second foreshadowing of the role she will appropriate, Unca decks herself out with a huge crown, a ring, and “two of the richest bracelets, beset with precious stones.” Again the novel takes up this theme of fashion and ethnicity as Unca literally self-fashions, and refashions, herself from a mixed-race child to an intercultural, international, hybrid priestess. However, she ends her game of dress-up when she finds another set of stairs; this staircase leads directly into the golden statue of the sun god.³⁹

One of the most prominent symbols of the ancient native religion is this giant “oracle of the sun,” a hollow statue towering above the single-story temple on its stone pedestal.

It is through this idol—androgynously depicted for Unca as a boundary-crossing woman to fit into—that she eventually implants herself into the island’s native culture so her European exploration leads her to become the Indian oracle. From inside the statue, Unca can look out through holes in the mouth, eyes, nose, and ears. She notes that she can clearly see the entire island, all the way to the ocean. But perhaps her most remarkable revelation is the discovery of the statue’s unique acoustics: “This image, particularly the head of it, it seems, was so wonderfully constructed as to increase the sound of even a low voice to such a degree as to exceed that of the loudest speaker.” Marveling over the skill of the ancient minds who constructed so magnificent a structure, Unca comes to the “natural” conclusion that “this image was anciently used to give out oracles.”⁴⁰ Unca’s amazing discovery leads directly to her next adventures.

With the Indians’ annual visit to worship the island statue looming in the near future, Unca begins to plan her strategy for surviving the event without detection or bodily harm. The hermit’s manual reveals that for forty years he simply hid out in his cell. However, Unca suggests that her feminine nature craves more safety. So she determines to conceal herself in the newly discovered subterranean passage beneath the sun god’s temple. Then she has a better idea: “I had no sooner made my fixed determination to retire to this place [the subterranean passage],” Unca records, “but a very strange thought arose in my mind. It was nothing less than this, to ascend into the hollow idol, speak to the Indians from thence, and endeavour to convert them from their idolatry.” Admitting the audacity of this “bold attempt,” Unca weighs her choices. Her knowledge of “several of the Indian dialects” gives her confidence that she will be able to converse with the natives. Plus, she reasons, the Indians’ surprise at hearing her speak combined with their “generally . . . docile disposition” leads her

to believe she can be successful in what she knows is “an opportunity of doing abundantly more good” with her life than merely surviving on a deserted island. Well-schooled by her uncle in religious doctrine, she is prepared for the task, and her “tawny complexion” will no doubt be of benefit if she should need to live among the natives. With much vacillation in the remaining days before the Indians’ arrival, Unca eventually concludes to proceed with her plan: “I was a heroine. The consciousness of the purity of my intention, and the goodness of my design, prevailed over every other thought, and I became calm and determined.”⁴¹

The night before the natives are to arrive, Unca secrets herself inside the subterranean passage, anxious to carry out her plan. She is, as always, prepared: before entering the passage, she hides her few possessions under rocks outside her cell so no one will be able to discover her presence. In addition, she takes supplies with her to the tunnel, including roots to eat, limes to quench her thirst, and several lamps along with her tinder box to provide light. But rather than the expected arrival of the Indians, Unca is trapped underground by a violent storm. “A sudden clap of thunder” ushers in a powerful hurricane that is followed, finally, by an earthquake. Thinking herself buried alive by the storms and earthquake, Unca despairs until she realizes that the door won’t open because it is still partially bolted, and she isn’t trapped at all.⁴² Unca’s ordeal in the womb-like passage suggests several interpretive parallels. A typological reading would cast her burial and reemergence as a biblical rebirth. On the other hand, this experience could be Unca’s test in the underworld, a vital step in a hero’s journey, according to Joseph Campbell.⁴³

On the appointed morning “a great number” of Indians arrive, led by a high priest and six subordinates. Safely concealed but with a commanding view of the whole island, Unca watches the extraordinarily stately and ceremonial procession to the statue. In silence, the

Indians march toward the statue in order of hierarchy: an ancient man, the high priest, walks first, followed by six priests to the sun god. Behind the priests come the older then younger men, followed by the older then younger women, and finally by a group of children. Before the statue, the assembly throw themselves “prostrate on the ground” before singing a hymn to their sun god. While the priests beg the sun god to end the “long silence of the oracle,” Unca delivers her own oration. Speaking through the oracle, Unca tells the Indians that by worshipping the sun, they’re worshipping the wrong god. In dialogue with the high priest while the entire tribe listens in awed silence, Unca describes her God as “He who always was, is, and ever will be.” Responding to the question of where this “God” lives, Unca outlines the Christian God as omnipresent and omnipotent, suggesting a significant contrast to the natives’ own seemingly deaf sun god. God lives, Unca explains, “in heaven, though indeed he is present every where; for he filleth heaven and earth with his presence – He sees all things; knows all things; for he made all things, and supports all things, by his power, which is boundless.” Displacing their native sun god, Unca informs them that the object of their worship is a creation of the Anglican God, an orb to provide “light and heat,” simply a created object that “can neither understand, nor see, nor hear” as sentient beings do. Unca continues her explanation:

“God made all things; the sun is one of those things which he hath made by his great power, and hath fixed it in the air, but it cannot move from place to place, by any power that it hath in itself, as you can, but is moved as God pleases. It can neither see, hear, speak, nor think as you can, who therefore art a more excellent creature than the sun, and therefore must not worship him, for he was made for your use, any more than you should worship that tree, because it does you good by bearing fruit for you to eat:

nor must you worship any other creature you see, for the same reason; because they are all made by God for your use, and he hath given them to you.”⁴⁴

Satisfied with her first day’s work, Unca sends the Indians home but asks them to return for more instruction the following week.

However, the following week, Unca—again concealed in the oracle—is dismayed to see only the seven priests without the rest of their tribe approaching the statue. When queried, the priests explain that their occupation in the tribe is to disseminate knowledge so they want Unca to teach them about this new Christian God and they in turn can educate the people. “It is our business to instruct the people,” they inform the oracle. Fearing that they’ll lose their place of stature along with their livelihood, the priests can’t afford to let Unca speak directly to the natives anymore. However, Unca distrusts the priests’ motives and insists on instructing the natives herself. “I will not teach you only; I will teach them also. . . . Hear me then, and if you fear me, observe my command,” she declares. Unca consoles the priests’ egos and stills their misgivings by promising to ensure their continued support from the tribe members.⁴⁵

While Unca discourses at length about her religion, she is unwilling to reveal herself and her mortal nature to the natives so she refuses to answer the high priest’s query as to her identity. Instead she procures herself a favored position in their community by informing the Indians that the true God will send them a messenger who will live among them and teach them how to worship him. Delighted that the oracle has finally broken its silence, the Indians gladly accept Unca’s terms. Returning in another week as instructed, they find Unca dressed in the finery of a high priest to the sun god complete with golden crown and staff and waiting for them on the steps to the oracle. Armed with a basketful of golden rings—intended as

gifts for the Indians—that she’s pillaged from the temple’s subterraneous passage, Unca has securely locked and concealed the doorway to the passage so no intruders can get inside. In addition, she’s packed her bow and arrow along with her regular clothing and the few books she has on the island.⁴⁶

Upon her entry into the native tribe, Unca immediately begins to convert them to Christianity, and through Christianity she begins to create a new kind of hybrid society on the island, a mixed space not fully retaining its original Indian structure nor completely replaced by Unca’s introduction of European beliefs. She revels in her newfound authority: “How greatly was my situation changed! From a solitary being, obliged to seek my own food from day to day, I was attended by a whole nation, all ready to serve me; and no care upon me but how to discharge the important business of an apostle, which I had now taken upon me.” Apparently following the program for converting Indians as set up by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), Unca begins with a discussion of natural religion.⁴⁷ To this discussion she adds instructions for how to pray: Christians pray before and after meals, Christians kneel to pray, Christians don’t pray to statues like the sun god. Unca’s notion that the Indians are eager to adopt her Anglo ways is reminiscent of Thomas Hariot’s suggestion that the “poore soules”—the natives he encountered near Roanoke in 1585—were “verye Desirous to know the truthe” about the colonists and their God. “For when wee kneeled downe on our knees to make our prayers unto god,” Hariot continues, “they went abowt to imitate us, and when they saw we moved our lipps, they also dyd the like.” This willingness leads Hariot and countless other missionary-minded Europeans to believe that the American natives might be easily converted.⁴⁸ With her natural insight into native peoples, Unca knows how to modify her “discourse to their [the Indians’] own way of reasoning” by

steering clear of “all such terms, and modes of speech, as are intelligible only to Europeans.”⁴⁹ She effectively invents a new way of speaking.

Lingering only momentarily to admire her new abode, furnished with “a dozen Indian maids” to serve her as well as being stocked with “dried fish and flesh, fruits and flowers, and different liquors,” Unca immediately begins her mission work on the island. The morning after her arrival she meets with the priests and begins to teach them as much as she can of her religion. In addition, she also begins to hold weekly worship services: “besides my daily instructing the priests in the knowledge of Christianity, I once a week taught the people in public; who I found very ready, and tolerably capable, to receive my instructions.”⁵⁰ One of Unca’s primary goals is to indoctrinate the tribe’s youth, and to this end she enlists the assistance of the priests. Though she presents her plan as though it were simple, Unca has undertaken an enormous task, an overhaul of the Indian’s entire belief system. First, Unca translates the Anglican Book of Common Prayer into the Indian language, adding her own “short and plain” commentary to it. She then teaches the priests to read. Next, she instructs the priests on how to help the Indian children memorize these prayers. Finally, having set the priests to this assignment, Unca undertakes an Indian translation of the entire Bible.⁵¹ During her first two years with the island natives, Unca proudly asserts that she “happily brought them off their idolatry, to the knowledge of the true God, and to a tolerable idea of the christian religion.” While Unca admits that she has “no right” to lead communion with the Indians, she claims to be justified, considering her extraordinary situation, in performing baptisms. But, she maintains, she never baptized without being “satisfied that the party had a tolerable notion of the christian religion, and earnestly desired to be baptized.”⁵²

The natives love and respect Unca; they happily embrace the new Christian religion that she teaches. They even offer to crown her as their queen. But despite her favorable position in the Indian community, Unca continues to mislead the natives about her true identity: “though, in every respect, they could not but observe that I was like them; yet it was easy to discover, that they conceived me more than a mere mortal. However, I did not think it my duty, any more than my interest, to undeceive them, as this opinion secured to me that respect and authority which were necessary for me to preserve, in order to carry on the great work among them.” Among the Indians, Unca takes on the role of prophet or apostle, becoming a colonial Jesus figure. Performing a kind of hybrid religion, she mixes the symbols of the native religion with the teachings of her Protestant faith. In addition, she continues to bribe the tribespeople with rings looted from the temple to the sun god, to which she alone retains access. Unca doesn’t seem to view the rings as bribes and is convinced that the Indians’ willingness to embrace Christianity can be credited simply to the religion’s compelling nature. She argues that while some religious thinkers in England claim that the Christian faith is “repugnant to plain uncorrupted reason,” her island conversions demonstrate that “whenever any unprejudiced person tries the religion of Christ by his reason, though he may find it in some measure above his reason, he yet will not find it contrary to it, and that it is worthy of his assenting to it.” Based on her “true experience,” Unca argues in favor of her method of proselytizing.⁵³ This appeal to reason is one of many examples of Unca’s—and the narrator’s—awareness of her potential European audience as well as her awareness of English literary conventions.

During the third summer of her stay with the Indians, Unca returns to visit her old island. Resting inside the sun god statue as is her habit, she is busy surveying the island when

she is astonished to discover a group of Englishmen approaching the oracle. At first she fears the invaders are pirates who might threaten her hybrid-Indian community and enslave her new converts; even Unca, it seems, understands that European discovery of native lands leads to appropriation and imperialism. However, she soon recognizes her cousin John Winkfield among the group. Led to the island by a reformed sailor, John has located the island on which Unca was marooned in the hope that he might find Unca's bones if nothing else. As John bemoans the supposed death of his cousin, Unca decides to play a prank on the men, again using the sun god to gain power for herself. She begins a conversation with the men, who speculate that the disembodied voice they hear is that of an evil spirit. This episode, of course, recalls the mysterious music and other noises on Prospero's island in *The Tempest*. However, *The Female American* substitutes a female Prospero figure who somewhat blends aspects of Miranda, Ariel, and Caliban, the latter cleaned up and Christianized, of course. In addition to Unca's voice, the men hear the strange sounds of a stringed instrument, a kind of harp that Unca has fashioned and hung in the statue where the movement of the wind makes the strings produce "certain soft pleasant notes." From inside the statue, Unca's voice and the wind's strumming of her homemade harp are magnified "like thunder;" so to calm the men Unca begins to sing a special hymn composed by her uncle and cousin. Soon she reveals herself; however, she is decked out in her priestly robes, staff, and crown. Though John Winkfield's companions continue to warn him against conversing with the spirit, John recognizes Unca to be his flesh-and-blood cousin. However, the crew is terrified by Unca's "tawny complexion, and strange dress." Fearing the "enchanted island" and the "devil's wife" that inhabits it, the men, threatening mutiny if John returns to the boat with the evil woman,

abandon him on the island with Unca.⁵⁴ Again, Unca's description evokes *The Tempest*, as the sailors see Unca, the "devil's wife," as a succubus or witch, recalling Caliban's mother.

In another instance of providence at work, accompanying John Winkfield is a sailor, formerly a relatively moral pirate who robbed but vowed to never kill, named Captain Shore. On the same day that the wicked captain of Unca's ship left her abandoned on the Atlantic island, the pirate Captain Shore and his crew overtook Unca's ship, intending to raid it. "Naturally abhorring cruelty," Captain Shore is alarmed to find Unca's slave tied to the mast. At first Shore intends to hang the captain for his offenses, but instead he realizes he too is sinful and therefore is in no position to judge anyone else: "Is such a wicked wretch as I am a proper person to set in judgment upon another?" Shore asks himself. Taking the wicked captain prisoner, Captain Shore sends him to England to be tried. He also sends Unca's ship on to England and ensures that the ship and all the Winkfields' New World wealth is safely delivered into the patriarchal hands of her Old World family. Shore himself then sails on to England, makes reparations for his years of piracy, locates Unca's uncle and cousin who work to gain Shore a pardon for his crimes, and then returns to the Atlantic with John in hopes of finding the island where Unca was deserted. When John's crew refuses to let him back aboard with Unca whom they fear to be the devil in disguise, Captain Shore again sails back to England, promising to return within a year. True to his word, the captain reappears, bringing news that Unca's evil captain and crew have been convicted and punished for abandoning Unca and murdering her slaves. Captain Shore then renounces his ties to England, confessing his desire to be free of "worldly affairs": "therefore if you think me a true convert," he addresses Unca, "let me join in your society."⁵⁵ Unca's island becomes a truly multicultural

community populated by a tribe of Indians, a couple of Europeans, and one mixed race, “international” woman.

Cousin John also chooses Unca’s island over England’s comforts. Unca warns her cousin that, though she is satisfied with her situation, he would find her “manner of living” among the Indians “very disgusting.” However, John is excited by her mission. In another of the novel’s amazing providential acts, John reveals that he has taken orders to become a priest in the Church of England. He then vows to learn the Indian language so that he can “fulfil the duties” of priesthood “among a plain, uncorrupted, honest people.”⁵⁶ Unca refuses to return to England and leave her “dear Indians.” Because her cousin the priest can perform all the proper sacraments for her new island church, the pair remain on the island with the natives and their new community after John finally convinces Unca to marry him. Combining familial obligations with moral delicacy, John tells Unca that they need to marry: his parents would be delighted to have Unca as “their daughter” plus their union is necessary in order for them to “enjoy those hours of privacy together . . . without offense to those around” them. John concludes his proposal by asking to join Unca on “the path that leads to glory and happiness by well doing”: “Let us then be united in the glorious work you have begun.” For two months Unca puts off John’s advances while she enjoys “all the ordinances of the church, and the constant company of a religious and sensible companion.” Although Unca accepts John’s proposal of marriage, she holds onto her position as ultimate authority for a bit longer by stalling the inevitable. Finally, Unca and John are married, once “according to the church rites” and then again “according to the custom of the Indians.”⁵⁷

To aid in their work on the island, John has come prepared. In addition to clothes and books that he brought for himself, John has a stash of apparel and linens to (re)dress

her as European. He had expected to find her “naked,” or at least certainly not clothed in the rich priestly garments he finds her wearing. John also has other practical supplies, including an array of “live fowls, cocks and hens” with which “the island was soon stocked.” Though unfamiliar to the natives, Unca records that the livestock was “very pleasing to the Indians.” A gun and gunpowder, a telescope, and “many other European curiosities” are also among John’s provisions, but Unca notes that the Indians were just as happy without these modern innovations. While the islanders happily accept Unca’s religion and some innocuous improvements to their society, Unca attempts to shield them from civilization’s less wholesome aspects, including slavery and weapons. This idealistic characterization of Indian society, suggesting nostalgia for the days before European contact and acquaintance with western technology, reflects the novel’s temporal positioning in the first rays of European romanticism.⁵⁸

In addition, John’s presence lends legitimacy to Unca’s island religion. John performs the “divine service every Lord’s day,” with Unca serving as his interpreter until he masters the unfamiliar language. With a proper priest, the Indians could now be baptized and married “properly” as well as participate in communion. John also helps teach the native children: “he the boys and [Unca] the girls.” With all these improvements, Unca marvels at the rapid advancements in her church: “What with catechising, and his preaching twice a week, we had greatly the appearance of a christian country.”⁵⁹

Supplied with many of England’s physical and spiritual comforts as well as reinforced with Captain Shore and her cousin as companions, Unca is well on her way to recreating a colonial version of British society on her New World island. However, in order to ensure her continued success, Unca must cut the natives’ ties with their old sun-worshipping habits.

When John and Captain Shore decide to make a final voyage to England for John to make a proper farewell to his family as well as procure their blessing, Unca collects “all the gold treasure” from the Native American sun god’s temple and sends it back to England. She directs John to use half the treasure to buy books and other supplies that are to be sent back for their use on the island; the other half of the treasure is given to Unca’s relatives and to other vague “charitable uses.” Resolving to “never . . . have any more to do with Europe,” Unca also sends along the manuscript of her adventures, which is then supposedly misplaced until the editor publishes it many years later. Finally, Unca climactically blows up the statue to the sun god along with the temple to keep the Indians from being “tempted to [return] to their former idolatry.”⁶⁰

Throughout her remarkable story, Unca claims her narrative is the culmination of a few simple notes she’s taken to record her unusual life, but she demonstrates an awareness of self and of audience that suggests broader intentions for her story. Contemplating her island environment and the nature of a solitary human being’s mental reflections, Unca asserts that such speculative observations lie outside her expertise: “my province is not that of a philosopher,” she emphasizes, “but historian.” Apologizing for her theoretical musings, Unca returns to her story, noting, “if my reader has travelled thus far with me, I doubt not but he is impatient to hear again of my late visitors [the island Indians], perhaps more so than I was.” Her confidence in the appeal of her transatlantic adventures to a contemporary European audience is revealed when she anticipates her narrative’s European publication. The events of her life, especially of her escapades on the New World island, are “so extraordinary” that, once her narrative is discovered, she envisions its induction into literary immortality. “If ever they [her adventures] should be published in any country,” Unca declares, “I doubt not but they

will soon be naturalized throughout Europe, and in different languages, and in succeeding ages, be the delight of the ingenious and inquisitive." In fact, so engaging does she believe her own exploits to be that she imagines their inevitable fictionalization at the hands of a later gentleman writer, who will introduce a male hero to trace her already traveled footsteps. Unca predicts that "some future bold adventurer's imagination, lighted up by [her] torch, will form a fictitious story of one of his own sex, the solitary inhabitant of a desolate island." Although this future writer may offer some amusement to readers, Unca determinedly distinguishes between the truthfulness of her experience and the inventions he will pen. Thus *The Female American* continues to carefully couch itself as the authentic narrative of the seventeenth-century Unca, discovered, edited, and published by an eighteenth-century relative. These layers of authorship reveal the anonymous author's careful ploy to avoid any accusation of imitation; indeed, the "Editor" from the retrospective viewpoint of the narrative's 1767 publication adds a note suggesting, "Our authoress here seems to please herself, with the thoughts of the immortality of her history, and to prophesy of that of Robinson Crusoe, which only is inferior to her own, as fiction is to truth." Ultimately, Unca remains confident that "such imaginary scenes" will "have a temporary effect, but not permanent, like the real ones of mine."⁶¹

CHAPTER TWO

Part English, Part Native, Constructed American: Unca's Transatlantic Hybridity

Tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits. It is always more than an inert historicized segment; indeed it is the most powerful practical means of incorporation. What we have to see is not just "a tradition" but a *selective tradition*; an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.

--Raymond Williams¹

If hybridity is heresy, then to blaspheme is to dream.

--Homi Bhabha²

The figure who under his red paint wears a white heart and exhibits white manners is a sorry spectacle, with the half-breed, embodying the worst traits of both races, the least poetic and the least attractive of all.

--Albert Keiser, 1933³

While traditional histories have produced a dichotomous narrative of Indian-European relations in England's North American colonies suggesting that cultural conflict resulted in either widespread defeat and assimilation or in vestiges of native perseverance, this transatlantic encounter generated a much more complex reality. Initially, the discrete worlds of the American natives and the European immigrants intersected, engendering a common arena of cultural exchange. In this overlapping "contact zone"⁴ between the Old World and the New, civilizations commingled, mixing to create a unique third culture that was a "joint Indian-white creation." It is in this new culture, or "middle ground" to reference Richard White's term, that *The Female American* finds space to create an international

narrative with its multicultural heroine.⁵ An exploration of the British–Native American contact zone in *The Female American* reveals the fluid border between native and colonial societies, a mutability often glossed over in other “historical” accounts. For Unca, the convergence of cultures—English, colonial, and native—in the contact zone of seventeenth-century America offers an escape from the traditional colonial binaries. Instead, Unca draws on her biracial and multicultural identity in realizing a “middle ground.” In this middle ground, a “place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages,” Unca discovers the possibilities created by cultural contact.⁶ In negotiating intercultural encounters, the example set in *The Female American* explores the mutations that colonial contact introduced into both cultures and suggests the possibility for coexistence in the contact zone between the Europeans and the American natives.

Sites of cultural contact, as was the Atlantic arena in the golden age of exploration, have often resorted to what has become a standard polemic to preserve the imagined distinction between native and European. This dichotomy, according to Homi Bhabha, is articulated through the “invention of historicity, mastery, [and] mimesis” on the one hand and of “displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an ‘open’ textuality” on the other. *The Female American*, as a cultural text, resists such stereotyping, instead offering the possibility of a third space. The author of *The Female American*, as does Stuart Hall in the twentieth century, argues that ethnicity is traditionally situated in terms of difference: “We are all . . . ethnically located.”⁷ Postcolonial scholarship rigorously reconsiders issues of representation and resistance in terms of a contested nationalism often characterized by ambivalence. Identity—both cultural and national—is necessarily an imagined construction in Bhabha’s model, articulating a liminality—or a space between contending ideologies and cultural traditions—

between the colonizer and the colonized, the inscriber and the inscribed. This liminal space is underscored by the colonizer's ambivalence regarding his subject positioning in relation to the colonized Other, an ambivalence revealed in literature in a confused or hollow representation as in works by Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard. In "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha argues that in the postcontact construct, the indigenous can never again return to their precolonial-contact selves, to what they were, yet they can never fully transition to become the colonizer, British, European. However, Hall finds power in this complex hybridity: "Understood in its global and transcultural context, colonization made ethnic absolutism an increasingly untenable cultural strategy." Within this context, a new kind of hybrid cultural identity emerges, an identity that can negotiate cultural differences in a "new process of identity formation" that moves beyond the "us" versus "them" dichotomy. According to Nikos Papastergiadis, if the model of the hybrid is "marked positively—to solicit exchange and inclusion—then the hybrid may yield strength and vitality" instead of "danger, loss, and degeneration." For Bhabha, hybridity holds similarly optimistic power: "If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. The ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention."⁸

Bhabha's concept of liminality is especially useful for examining *The Female American's* representations of hybridity. Somewhat reminiscent of Pratt's "contact zones," Bhabha's theory of liminality suggests the interconnectedness of the colonizer and the

colonized and argues against ahistorical constructions of cultural identities in what he calls “the hybridity of imagined communities”:

It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed “in-between,” or in excess of, the sum of the ‘parts’ of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender,etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared stories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?⁹

This complex issue of hybridity offers much to an examination of Unca’s transatlantic, early colonial sphere. The nature of racial and national identity has been a pivotal issue in the Atlantic world for hundreds of years, and the concept of racial purity is an invention that has been widely accepted, and disputed, around the world. Before the dawn of Romanticism and its attention to issues of ethnicity, Europeans generally subscribed to the theory that Greek civilization was “indebted to the Afro-Asiatic civilisation of Ancient Egypt for its ideas and achievements.” However, Romantic scientific interests led to a new notion of European cultural and racial superiority. When *The Female American* appeared in 1767, it debuted in a country well-acquainted with the intricacies of referencing one’s skin color as a marker of identity. As an international imperial power, England had already been enmeshed in colonial endeavors in the Americas for more than 150 years. The British colonies had suffered through the early hardships, through the ambiguities of the initial Anglo-Indian relations, and had

eventually multiplied, gaining dominance over their red-skinned neighbors. White, European civilization had evidently triumphed over dark, native “savagery”—thanks, however, not to its “superiority” but rather the greater savagery of its methods and especially the violence of the diseases it spread. Having turned much of their attention south to the West Indies and east to the South Seas, the English were again encountering the complexities of racial markers. In the minds of many British, the Pacific islands—like the shores along America’s eastern seaboard just two centuries earlier—represented a new Eden populated with prelapsarian innocents. Others in England, however, offered less noble characterizations of these warm islands. Moral depravity was rampant, these critics argued, with free love in the bowers as common as the breadfruit that thrived there. In the accounts of the voyages of Captain Cook, for instance, Tahiti’s native women are depicted as “artless nymphs’ who [are] as spontaneously and naturally sexual as the groves in which they disported.”¹⁰ While the complexion of the South Sea natives symbolized sexual promiscuity to some Europeans, the black skin of the imported Africans populating England’s sugar plantations in the Caribbean told the dark tale of tyranny and slavery. Unlike the West Indies where the existence of mulattos threatened to topple racial boundaries, in the early colonial interactions with the North American Indians, there was no easy dichotomy of slave and master. While skin color on the islands signified the distinction between freedom and slavery, color on the continent demarcated civilized from savage.¹¹

With English thinkers struggling to negotiate the place of the European identity within the context of global expansion, *The Female American* offers an alternative to the traditional binary of civilized white person versus savage native two hundred years before the inception of postcolonial criticism. In “White Ghosts, Red Shadows,” Jean-Jacques

Simard makes the argument that the terms “Indian” and “White” exist only as a means to define oneself in contrast to what one is not: “Indians and Whites are *false faces* peering into a mirror, each reflecting the other.” According to Simard, “*Indians* and *Whites* do not exist. These words do not mean real people.” “Indian and White represent fabled creatures,” he continues, “born as one in the minds of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European thinkers trying to make sense of the modern experience.”¹² *The Female American* introduces a distinct perspective on traditional models that positioned the monolithic categories of Indian and White in absolute opposition and conflict. Set during the first years of England’s colonial presence along North America’s Atlantic seaboard, the novel blurs traditional national boundaries and establishes a more open racial categorization. As the mixed-race heroine of the novel, Unca is in many ways the first “real” American. She is, as she titles herself, *the female American*, simultaneously distanced from yet romanticized by English women while rendered exceptional to the average American in her native hybridity. Even though she refers to Virginia as her “native country,” it is not purely Powhatan’s Virginia nor is it truly colonial Virginia that she references. Her focus blends the English colonization with America’s native civilization. Unca herself is a true blend of English and Indian blood and of the societies on both sides of the Atlantic. She lives a transnational life—she is American, British, and native. No single society can truly claim her. In this early period of transatlantic colonialism, to be American is to be like Unca, to escape from the monoculturalism that is England. There is a ring to her writing, to her awareness, that the newly developing culture of Anglo-America—a *mélange* not fully contained by the British or the American natives—is her land, her inheritance as the product of these two races and multiple cultures. Unca is truly transnational, feeling herself at home wherever she goes, whether in England or America,

with natives or Europeans. She encapsulates the previously unrealized concept of English-American hybridization. This phenomenon of cultural hybridization is, for M. M. Bakhtin, “a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor.”¹³ While traits of both the native and the European remain discernible in Unca, these cultural characteristics blend naturally into each other.

The heroine of *The Female American* is an idealized example of a successful transatlantic hybrid. Because this character’s identity—like all identities—is thought to be “coded by gender, ethnicity, class, and race”¹⁴ among other factors, it would be helpful to examine the author’s complex description of Unca, an eighteenth-century protagonist. A free-thinking woman who can shoot a bow and arrow better than any man or woman she knows, Unca is evidently little restrained by her gender. But rather than outright breaking gender conventions, Unca freely blends traditionally feminine and masculine traits to become an exceptionally capable eighteenth-century woman. In contrast to many of her female contemporaries, Unca enters the masculine world of exploration and transatlantic travel, voyaging freely and regularly between England and Virginia. Notably, however, she is protected by her entourage of slaves, her mother’s people who willingly and loyally attend to their native princess. She repeatedly demonstrates bravery in the face of danger and uncertainty when her mother is murdered before her eyes, when circumstances force her to abandon her familiar surroundings for a new home in England and then again to return to Virginia, when confronted with a deadly skirmish before the ship captain maroons her, and when she finds herself alone on an island and must fend for herself. On the island, she enters

the traditionally masculine world of religious priesthood and actively engages in regulating political and social stability among the Indians. However, Unca never loses her femininity. She simply becomes more “womanly,” if that’s possible. This freedom to expand beyond traditional gender lines is enabled through her unusual ethnic heritage. Her ethnicity conjures up a familiar cross, that of colonist and native, as Unca hails from a mixed race marriage between a (presumably) Algonquian woman and an English-born immigrant. Endowed with significant wealth inherited from both her paternal and maternal families, Unca is even a social class hybrid who combines American Indian royalty and English aristocracy, just as she embodies the darkness of the native Indian merged with the whiteness of the European continent.

The similar complexity of defining Unca’s nationality is evident as her narrative pieces her identity together in an intricate, sometimes tangled, pattern. Unca refuses to saddle herself with the label “English,” “Indian,” or even “American.” With her New World roots and Native American blood, Unca cannot be contained by the designation of English. Though the general appellation Indian accounts for half her blood, it fails to adequately represent her transatlantic birthright. From Unca’s “tawny complexion” and “lank black hair . . . adorned with diamonds and flowers” to her “dextrous” skill as a “shooter”—the heroine brags, “[W]hen very young, I could shoot a bird on the wing”—Unca readily self-identifies her inherited native characteristics, notably aligning herself with her princess mother and others of Native American ancestry. And despite the broader implications of the more recent American label, even this expansive moniker is inadequate. To many eighteenth-century contemporaries, the term American had already become a convenient lumping of old and new, of established natives and recently arrived transplants. The reviewer in the *Critical Review* reveals the

distance between the New World and the English homeland, with the charge that Unca's tale should have been reserved for her American readers both colonial and native—for, as the reviewer puts it, Unca's "enlightened countrymen and princely relations." Designated in the title as "the female American," Unca most closely embodies this new nationality. However, the nature of Unca's American characteristics is without parallel. While others like John Smith and Powhatan may both be termed American, only Unca blends the traits of the Anglo and American civilizations to represent a modern breed of transcultural individuals. Though Unca's complexly hybrid identity remains relatively stable throughout her adventures, she transitions effortlessly between nationalities and nations, her location and residence determined by personal and familial circumstance rather than civic allegiance. Early in the novel, Unca acknowledges that America is her motherland—she calls it her "native country." However, the association of Virginia as her native land is predicated on family connections—her bonds with her mother's Indian tribe and her father's colonial plantation—and, after the untimely deaths of her mother and father, Unca admits that she no longer feels a connection to the land of her birth. Though she intends to make her home in her fatherland among her paternal relations in England, Unca is, of course, waylaid on the New World island, and in the end she establishes a new homeland among the natives, who, she declares, are her "dear Indians."¹⁵

Like her hybrid character, Unca's transatlantic tale also resists any tidy categorization. Though literature is often thought to represent the particular ideologies of a nation-state or, more generally, a national or even continental culture, Unca's novel cannot be so easily labeled. We know that *The Female American* was published in London in 1767; however, the novel purports to recount the transatlantic adventures of a transnational woman. With

its London publication, it is tempting to classify the tale as an eighteenth-century British novel. Burnham argues that Unca's narrative is a specimen of the "trans-Atlantic origins of the English language novel." However, the title and transatlantic positioning of the story complicate the matter. The title self-categorizes itself and its supposed author, Unca Eliza Winkfield, in the problematic category of American literature. In fact, the narrative has been hailed by one critic as the earliest American-penned imitation of a British novel and its existence held up as a counterpoint to the charge of eighteenth-century America's "literary poverty."¹⁶ With no knowledge as to the author's identity, all we can verify with certainty is that *The Female American* is an English-language novel published in London. More interesting than these publication details, however, is the transatlantic nature of the novel: as we have seen, it is the story of an interracial woman whose adventures find her crisscrossing the Atlantic as she interacts with various peoples in multiple cultures. The narrative is replete with multiple passages across the Atlantic. Intercultural exchanges are at the plot's core, including the contact between the Jamestown colonists and Virginia Indians, between the mixed blooded American and her family and friends in England, between the transatlantic traveler and the natives of the American islands. *The Female American* makes use of European, which then of course were adopted as American, literary conventions and forms—the autobiography, the ethnography, the travel narrative, the adventure tale; however, the content explodes English values. The quasi-Pocahontas rescue story culminates in an interracial marriage and the birth of a mixed race daughter, who is more successful than either of her ill-fated, purebred parents. The American colonial venture of the heroine's family ultimately fails with both parents perishing in the New World, the plantation sold to another aspiring immigrant, and the wealth shipped back to England. All the supposedly

heathen and savage Indians turn out to be religious and friendly. A mixed race woman surpasses a European man, succeeding in converting an entire island community in two years compared with the man's forty-year failure. The heroine opts to protect rather than exploit the island's human and natural resources and ultimately chooses native society over European civilization.

In contrast to the average eighteenth-century Indian or European woman, Unca enjoys the privilege of being able to articulate herself throughout her life and to represent herself to the world by recording her story in her own words. The "history" that Unca constructs—from "loose memorandums" she has sporadically compiled fleshed out with her own memories of her escapades—suggests a rather informal approach to recording her narrative. However, at times her story still references English literary conventions. For example, the anonymous author launches *The Female American* with a rather conventional, apologetic prologue, typical of many literary pieces of the age who, from Elizabeth Ashbridge to Olaudah Equiano, have cast this customary nod toward the patriarchal powers, the elite, educated, white, European male citizenry. "The following history of my life I never completely related but to one person," Unca writes, "and at that time had no intention of committing it to writing: but finding the remembrance of it burdensome to my memory, I thought I might, in some degree, exonerate myself, by digesting the most material events in the form of an history." Though she seemingly dismisses any grand notions of publication, she engages in the contemporary rhetoric of printed narratives, both authentic and fictional. First, after earnestly declaring through "solemn professions of veracity" the authenticity of the "true history" she intends to record, the narrator sets forth two goals for her narrative: "Here are two ends they cannot fail of answering, rational entertainment, and mental improvement." Later in the narrative

Unca anticipates her tale's publication when she reflects on the extraordinary nature of her adventures. As noted in chapter one, Unca clearly establishes herself as a pre-Defoeian Crusoe when she muses, "if ever they [the story of her travels] should be published in any country, I doubt not but they will soon be naturalized throughout Europe, and in different languages, and in succeeding ages, be the delight of the ingenious and inquisitive; and that some future bold adventurer's imagination, lighted up by my torch, will form a fictitious story of one of his own sex, the solitary inhabitant of a desolate island." Directly alluding to Defoe's fictional adventure tale, an annotation in the original edition marked as the "Author's/ Editor's note" asserts, "Our authoress here seems to please herself, with the thoughts of the immortality of her history, and to prophesy of that of Robinson Crusoe, which only is inferior to her own, as fiction is to truth." As in most travel texts of the period, including Unca's fictional narrative, the issue of truth is both critical and nominal. In an era mindful of the "dangerous fascinations of novels," travel reports—whether presented as an embellished tale or an accurate account—tended to represent themselves as truth. To establish the authenticity of Unca's story, the advertisement that precedes the novel draws on another convention of Anglo-American literature by introducing the narrative as a "curiosity" that was discovered "among the papers of [the editor's] late father."¹⁷

Though the person behind the novel remains anonymous, Unca herself continues to fascinate readers. The rich interracial name William and Unca bestow on their daughter emphasizes her biracial, transatlantic status: Unca Eliza Winkfield. As "Unca," *The Female American's* heroine is prominently marked as the royal descendent of an American Indian tribe, yet the more traditional English middle name "Eliza" ventures to tame this designation. Finally, the familial name of "Winkfield" signals the girl's established European ancestry

while once again linking her to an American, though this time colonial rather than native, aristocracy in the person of Edward Maria Wingfield. The novel identifies this Wingfield as Unca's paternal grandfather—and alludes to the authentic historical figure who acted as the Virginia colony's first president but was later replaced by John Ratcliffe and John Smith successively after being ousted of a government marked by discontent, especially over a “severe shortage of food.”¹⁸

Despite the relevance of Unca's story for the Anglo-American world, *The Female American* was largely ignored on both sides of the Atlantic, its British debut recognized by only two reviews, both rather dismissively contemptuous. The notice in the British *Critical Review* (1767) demonstrates an earnest aversion for the anonymous novel, an antipathy that is, however, almost eclipsed by the British reviewer's mockery of America. The potential American audience of “enlightened countrymen and princely relations,” however ironic the reviewer's tone, had limited access to Unca's narrative until two successive editions of *The Female American* were published, first in Massachusetts around 1800 then in Vermont in 1814.¹⁹ Notably, these editions outlining an alternate model for transatlantic hybridity follow several historical instances of European-Americans appropriating aspects of Indian culture—dress, military strategy, idealized notions of Native American “independence, courage, and defiance of authority in devotion to principle” twisted to suit Anglo-American purposes—in nationalistic displays of patriotism. For example, the tale of colonists costumed as rioting natives during the Boston Tea Party of 1773 and the militia's adoption of Indian tactics of war at Concord and Lexington remain traditional emblems of America's colonial heroism to the present day. Similarly, 1794 witnessed a Whiskey Rebellion in which the American rebels once again assumed what they perceived to be representative hallmarks of

native determination and bravery in the Native American “war paint” they wore to present their imitation of an “Indian Treaty.”²⁰ This appropriation of native characteristics—whether physical or psychological—is reminiscent of Winkfield’s piecemeal appropriation of the native language and customs as well as the bow and arrow whenever these cultural conventions served to further her colonial objectives. A notable example is when Winkfield dons the holy garb of the sun god priest’s vestments when the islanders arrive to take her to live among them and teach them the Christian beliefs. Obviously clothing is an important symbol of identity. When Unca first arrives on the island, she is desperate to break into her clothing trunk so she can cover herself in her familiar English garments. While European clothing signifies one of her identities, Unca readily abandons it—as she had earlier described her exotic fashion tendencies that mixed traditional English dress with some Native American influences—when it benefits her. This may be a trait of the hybrid, not savage greed or consumer greed, just opportunistic. By taking on the priestly robes, Winkfield not only dons a more masculine and authoritative appearance, but she also emulates many New World explorers, like Hernando Cortez for example, who fused force and religion in subduing the natives.

Just as Unca’s physical characteristics mark her as other in the British society in which she is raised between the ages of seven and eighteen, her youthful dress reveals this cultural blending. Noting the hybrid mixture of garments in which her native American mother dressed her, Unca seems to revel in her singularity. Contrasting her own style to that of other women in the early seventeenth century, Winkfield accentuates her individuality. Her unusual appearance in English society is based on her departure from European fashions: “My uncommon complexion, singular dress, and the grand manner in which I appeared, always

attended by two female and two male slaves, could not fail of making me much taken notice of." Unca's costumes fascinate her English neighbors:

My tawny complexion, and the oddity of my dress, attracted every one's attention, for my mother used to dress me in a kind of mixed habit, neither perfectly in the Indian, nor yet in the European taste, either of fine white linen, or a rich silk. I never wore a cap; but my lank black hair was adorned with diamonds and flowers. In the winter I wore a kind of loose mantle or cloak, which I used occasionally to wear on one shoulder, or to cast it behind me in folds, tied in the middle with a ribband, which gave it a pleasing kind of romantic air. My arms were also adorned with strings of diamonds, and one of the same kind surrounded my waist.

In fact, Unca admits that her exotic appearance increased her status among Britain's elite: "I was accordingly invited by all the neighboring gentry, who treated me in a degree little inferior to that of a princess, as I was always called." These early examples reveal Unca's hybrid self-identification as she flaunts her native roots by incorporating Indian elements in her dress and conduct, but this ambiguous representation of national identity is later complicated. Her youthful tendency of donning a "mixed habit" is notably replaced by her desperation on the island to open the locked chest containing her European gowns. In her Anglo-American experiences, native pieces of clothing including strings of jewels and a romantic cloak distinguish Unca as special. They mark her as an exotic American princess. However, on the island, nakedness is the mark of the native, and Unca shrinks from any identification with this more vulgar variety of Indian. Sounding very much like a proper English lady, Unca is startled by the "thoughts of going naked" if she can't access her clothing. Interestingly, however, the island presents a solution.²¹

During her time on the island, Unca transitions from a marooned Englishwoman into a religious heroine. This evolution is facilitated by the island's native religion. First, Unca hides herself in the statue to the sun god in order to gain a place in the Indian society. After clothing herself in the identity of the oracle, she chooses to again mask her true identity. In preparation for joining the Indian tribe, she bundles up her traditional clothing, wrapping her gowns in golden priestly vestments. As a physical symbol of her new role as religious leader, Unca dresses up in the ornate robes and jewels of the island's temple priests. Over a white robe, Unca dons a gold and diamond cassock. She adds another jeweled robe on top along with a huge crown. She covers her fingers and wrists in golden rings and carries a "golden staff" in one hand. It is in this "strange rich dress," which Unca admits becomes her regular costume, that her cousin finds her two years later when she emerges from the oracle.²² As a mark of civilization and civilizations, clothing for Unca is very significant. Covering herself variously in the garments of Indian, English, and religious peoples, Unca symbolizes her personal progress from childhood to maturity, from dependence to independence, from simple to complex identity.

In *The Female American* clothing may also be seen as a symbol of civilization. According to Eric Cheyfitz the progress toward civilization is reflected in the twinned transitions from nakedness to clothed and muteness to speech. For Cheyfitz, the process of civilization is "evolutionary" as the uncivilized, or the symbolically mute, gain the ability to speak and then become civilized, master orators who are no longer subject to translation. This pattern mirrors another evolutionary process: "The movement from muteness to eloquence is translated as the progression from nakedness, through the bare necessity of clothing as protection, to the pinnacle of clothing as a sumptuous sign of social rank." In

New World narratives, physical nakedness is often equated with “either the absence of or a deficiency in language.” It is, as Peter Hulme has put it, “clothed and armed Europe” meeting “naked America.”²³ In Unca’s narrative, the Indians are represented in an edenic state of physical nakedness that is paired with an equal innocence. “Indians of both sexes” are described as completely “naked, except [for] a small covering of foliage about their middle, which decently covered the distinction of sexes.” For the women, this “local covering” is “composed of beautiful flowers.”²⁴ Although the Indians both among Unca’s mother’s people and on the island are endowed with the ability to speak, their lack of civilization is indicated by their ignorance of Protestant Christianity. Though Unca’s Indian grandfather is depicted as naive in his assumption of a single, universal language, his belief in a single, universal sun god is more indicative of his primal state. On the island, Unca speaks to the Indians in their own language and translates her Christian message in easily comprehended terms and concepts. It is significant that the oracle has been silent for many years. This silence indicates a perceived deadness in the Indians’ native religion. It seems that the priests have lost the power of speech (religion); however, Unca recovers this, resurrecting the power of the native religion by fusing the symbols of the old with the power of Christianity, when she dons the elaborate garb of the high priest to the sun god. However, the translation and learning go both ways. Unca later teaches the priests to speak English, and she and John seem to communicate with the Indians in a mixed language. In effect, Unca emphasizes her own liminality enacted especially in speech and her elaborate dress. Unca is eloquent both orally and physically.

Language and the power of speech are significant factors in the politics of racial identity. As Cheyfitz points out, the transition from dark to white, from savage to civilized, is not a question of physical transformation. It is “the problem of mastering the master’s

language, of speaking the language of the capital. It is a problem of the difference in power between the center and the periphery. That is, it is a problem of who determines what is proper speech."²⁵ Though ever conscious of her mixed heritage, Unca passes for white because she has inherited the dominant language and the powers of education and religion. Notably, however, in the early part of the novel much of her power stems from the material wealth of both her native mother and her colonial father. Is it, then, a matter of location as to what kind of power she employs? During her youth in Virginia, Unca finds power in her identity as an Indian king's granddaughter, but later in England the author emphasizes her father the plantation owner's wealth and her new position as a priest's niece and student. However, on the American island it is Unca's knowledge—of languages, cultures, religions—and her dual racial identity rather than her father or mother's wealth that lends her authority and, arguably, success. In addition, Unca's transnational background leads one to wonder about the liminality of racial identity. Although Unca recognizes and celebrates her biracial pedigree, it seems that her English acculturation outdoes her native roots. It is her education and privileges in both cultures that civilize her enough so that she can function in European society. Her native origins lend an exoticism that Unca maximizes to her benefit; however, without the benefits of multiple cultural influences, she would perhaps just be another savage. Unca has the language of both the native and the colonizer; she is of both races. While parts of her native identity are preserved and give her power, the British and imperial aspects of her identity seem to take over in many ways.

Among the island Indians, Unca uses her racial and oral power to create a new way of speaking. Familiar with the native Indian culture, she determines the most effective way of communicating European values and concepts, but the vehicle she uses is the Indians' own

language. Positioned in the middle, between the two opposing civilizations, Unca blends aspects of each culture to create a better hybrid language. During her first prayer among the Indians, Unca utters a Christian prayer in the natives' language. Her biggest act of translation, however, is rendering Christian concepts intelligible to the Indians. Unca's narrative records: "[I] endeavoured to level my language, as well as I could, to their understandings." One of Unca's first official undertakings among the Indians is to translate the catechism followed soon after by her translation of the entire Bible. As she begins to teach the biblical message to the natives, Unca reads from her newly translated Bible. This endeavor again calls for Unca to interpret the message: "I from to time read the Bible in public to them [the Indians], and, as I was able, explained it. I cannot but say I found myself very happy, among these plain, illiterate, honest people." When John later joins Unca among the Indians, Unca takes up another interpretive role, this time as linguistic mediator between her English-speaking cousin and the Indians. As John performs the "divine service every Lord's day" in English, Unca translates. However, John soon masters the native language, and the Indians continue to pick up "a little English" from both Unca and John.²⁶

As in many travel texts, translation figures prominently in Unca's tale. Unca is literally an orator: she is translating the Indians into Christian Europeans. Unca appears to enthusiastically promote England's civilizing mission when she introduces European religion to the Indians through her translation of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. This act, according to Bhabha, is a method used to institute "a measure of mimesis and a mode of civil authority and order" in the chaos of colonial uncertainty.²⁷ Although translation is often a one-way street from colonizer to colonized, Unca translates the Christian message—orally through her teachings as well as in written form through the Bible and the Book of Common

Prayer—into the Indian language so the native can understand her mission. Acceptance of Protestant Christianity is often equated with being civilized; perhaps because western society often claims it stems from Christian precepts, a heathen who understands and believes in the Christian religion enters civilized society with baptism. This baptism and Christianizing, then, is often part of the process of rationalizing conquest. Under Unca's leadership, the island Indians become converted and worship her God; however, it seems that Christianity is incorporated into the island's existing society rather than simply replacing it. Unca's goal is to save the Indians' souls, not to civilize them in European fashion. Unca is unlike many New World colonists, including the inhabitants of Jamestown, in that she has no intention of pushing the Indians to the societal fringes. These natives are her society. In fact, Unca herself has been "baptized" and "reborn" in this new land. So instead of using Christianity as a forced method of assimilation—a process that would "civilize" the natives, which the example of the eastern Indians of North America reveals led to the adoption of European modes of dress, ways of living, occupations, and eventual obliteration of native culture—Unca fuses the old with the new. She doesn't murder or exile the former priests to the sun god as has been so common in other religious takeovers. Instead she puts them to work in helping to lead her new religion. She befriends the priests; she invites them into her home as dinner guests or to engage in conversation; she teaches them to speak the English language; she places them in positions of authority in the newly founded island religion as they help her teach the precepts of the Christian message to the Indian tribe. She reenergizes the tribe and its lifeless religion.

While Unca rescues the Native Americans from their "misguided" religious practices, she represents herself as a missionary and a protector, even as a fellow island resident, all stances enabled by her hybrid Anglo-American nationality. Endowed with a mixture of

English religion and education, Indian language and cultural skills, and transatlantic mobility, Unca puts her mixed Anglo-Indian heritage to work in order to emancipate the island Indians from their idolatry to the sun god. Employing April London's assertion that "[f]emale power is identified with pagan America and masculine repressiveness with Europe," it becomes apparent that Unca skillfully combines aspects of her transnational heritage to expedite her religious mission.²⁸ Utilizing her feminine inheritance of the American Indian language from her native mother—as unlikely as it is to imagine that the native dialect spoken by the Virginian tribe would be spoken on a remote Caribbean island—to insinuate herself into the Native American community, Unca employs her European, masculine characteristics, which tend toward acquiring power, to establish herself as an authority figure. Ultimately, Unca's religion is itself hybrid. Unca takes symbols from the Indians' sun god worshipping, including the priestly rings, robes, and crowns that she wears from the temple, and blends these native icons with symbols from her Christian background, including the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as well as holy religious services. Her religious methods demonstrate how hybridity breaks down and dissolves differences.

Unca is caught in the middle of an interesting contradiction. Though her hybrid identity generally allows her greater mobility as she crosses societal borders, on the island she is caught between her native and European sensibilities. While her Indian blood and upbringing allow her access to the Indians—by sharing a language and an identity she can effectively communicate with them—her Anglo-American training has instilled her with a fear of the stereotyped, vicious Indian savage. Although she is half-native, she is also rather Anglicized, so much so, in fact, that her greatest fear on the island is a violent death at the hands of the Indians. She is terrified of the "savages" on the island. Employing traditional

stereotypes from other exploration narratives, Unca records her fear that the island Indians might be inclined to kill her or eat her. Unca's fears mirror the apprehensions of any other white European of her day. As the day approaches for the Indians' annual pilgrimage to the island temple, Unca records her desperate urge to hide. The hermit's manuscript suggests that he eluded the Indians for forty years by simply laying low in his cell during the hours of their visit; however, Unca is "more timorous." In fact, though she eventually overcomes her fear and converses with the Indians, before their visit she is tortured by her imagination. Even as Unca plots to enter the idol to the sun god in order to convert the visitors, in her mind she imagines that she can hear "their dreadful yell," and she sees an "enraged multitude" of savage Indians tearing down tree limbs to build a bonfire around the statue, burning her alive inside.²⁹ Again, Unca forges a unique path for herself. While her fear of the Indians mimics the hermit's, she overcomes her terror and enters a new, better relationship with the natives. Significantly, for Unca, as opposed to many Europeans of her day, civilization is not solely a racial marker. Though she herself is part Indian, she is fully educated in western culture. But these island Indians, though they share her blood, are depicted as savage. If race doesn't determine one's social identity, then what does? For Unca as "author" of *The Female American*, it seems that religion is the crucial determinant.



The Female American constructs a singular, intercultural adventure for this unprecedented transnational heroine. From the novel's beginning, even the author acknowledges Unca's unusual liminality as an eighteenth-century female character. "The lives of women being

commonly domestick,” the anonymous author writes, “the occurrences of them are generally pretty nearly of the same kind; whilst those of men, frequently more vagrant, subject them often to experience greater vicissitudes, many times wonderful and strange.” Comparing the common experiences of English men to those of their women, the author blurs the gender lines, saying that even though Unca is a woman, her life is filled with amazing adventures more akin to those of a man. In fact, the adventures in Unca’s life are “so wonderful, strange, and uncommon,” the author continues, “that true history, perhaps, never recorded any that were more so.” While Unca participates in this traditionally masculine world of transatlantic travel and native interactions, she is indebted to her transcultural origins for her unusual adventures. As Burnham notes, “Those actions and abilities that seem most unusual or surprising for a female”—like Unca’s mastery of shooting with a bow and arrow, for example—“are invariably explained and legitimized by her status as a female *American*.” Thus, the author can titillate the readers with exotic adventures while Unca participates in “what would otherwise be, for an *English* woman, transgressive acts and adventures.” Notably Unca’s “Native American cultural upbringing and identity as the daughter of an Indian princess . . . enable her to engage in activities and to fashion an identity that would be unavailable to an ordinary English heroine.” The author exoticizes the heroine’s American adventures, carefully constructing Unca as a hybrid woman blessed with a remarkable combination of civilized, time-honored British and noble, indigenously American characteristics. Thus, while it might be considered inappropriate for an elite British dame to hunt goats, produce candles, and dwell as an unchaperoned, unmarried female with a savage tribe, Unca’s native blood implicitly entitles her to a freedom denied her would-be peers. Significantly, however, the author of *The Female American* enjoins the English-speaking audience to

participate vicariously in her heroine's American exploits. Early on, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the significant gap between the daily, "domestick" experience of the leisured European woman and the "wonderful, strange, and uncommon" escapades of Unca's adventurous existence.³⁰

Although Unca establishes a pseudo-feminist—if perhaps unintentionally—Christian utopia, she conservatively resorts to traditional authority figures for guidance in the island's isolated wilderness. Recovering from an illness which almost claims her life, she nearly succumbs to fear, dreading the approaching winter and the sure starvation it will bring. So Unca comforts herself by reflecting on her "dear uncle"—who has not only directed her education but also, as a priest, instilled her with religious counsel—and his Christian exhortations. She confesses that throughout her life her uncle has acted as a moral agent, unveiling truths and leading her to repent her transgressions. And, in the midst of her despair, Unca speaks to herself "in the imagined person of [her] uncle." While challenging aspects of European culture, Unca simultaneously invites her uncle, the parochial representative of England's "masculine repressiveness," into her domain, allowing him to perpetuate the "moral injunctions [which] still issue from a masculine center," a cultural center Unca duplicates on her island.³¹

While Unca may rely on her memories of her uncle for spiritual advice, she forges her own unique path when it comes to romance. According to Paula Backscheider, "The narrow path which is the eighteenth-century novel by and for women has the ideal of a happy marriage as its central subject," featuring a "fixed" ideal: "[T]he bases were strong physical attraction, mutual esteem, and steadfast companionship. Upon esteem rested the other two." While William Andrews maintains that marriage in the early American era

became nearly obligatory due to the potential financial difficulties and the stigma attached to living alone—or even with another unmarried female—as a single woman, Unca’s mixed heritage and fortune allow her to construct a character who can resist allegations of her “nonconformity” that might lead to a tarnished reputation. An atypical eighteenth-century woman, Unca does not escape patriarchal tyranny just to submit to “an equally subservient status with regard to her husband.” She continually refuses to submit to various marriage proposals, including her cousin John’s repeated entreaties and, of course, the captain’s greedy blackmail.³² Instead, as in the sentimental novels of the day, Unca insists on marrying for love. In fact, Unca seems to set unusual standards for marital acquiescence, confessing to her cousin that she “would never marry any man who could not use a bow and arrow as well as [she] could.” So, one might question, why does she eventually marry her cousin? The novel avoids the traditionally accepted eighteenth-century avowals of esteem, at least as directed from Unca to John, although John is rather vocal in his love for his cousin. Burnham’s analysis suggests that Unca ultimately encloses herself in a “traditional marriage plot that threatens to erase the fantasy of unrestricted female freedom” she has created on her island respite from European power. However, Unca’s apparent conformity to a traditional union is no capitulation but, instead, another controlled move on Unca’s part. Admitting that she cares for John “as a friend and relation,” Unca confesses that she has never imagined him in the role of “lover.” When Unca finally weds John, her marriage is an extension of her own endeavors. As a priest, John adds legitimacy to Unca’s campaign to bring Christianity to the island natives, and together she and her cousin perform the “divine service every Lord’s day” as well as conducting other religious services, including proper Christian marriages, baptisms, and communion services.³³ In this way Unca’s consent to a traditional marriage arrangement

serves to perpetuate her own mission rather than symbolizing any capitulation to European cultural norms although it does make her cooperative work with John respectable by giving it the stamp of marriage.

It seems that Unca understands that life in the Americas could offer frontier women liberation from many constraints imposed by the European patriarchal system. So when faced with a choice between her would-be rescuers intending to return her to England and her native following, Unca, not unlike so many colonial captives who favored the native tribes over a reunion with their European culture, chooses to continue with the island Indians in order to retain her newfound status as a female apostle. Similarly, Unca's father, a former prisoner, chooses to live with the Virginian natives. Soon after the elder Unca saves her later husband from losing his head to the Indian king's executioner, she leads him by a grass chain to an audience with the king. William, who has been gifted to Unca as her captive, is released from his bondage when Unca, breaking the grass chain and throwing it at his feet, gestures for William to step on the chain to symbolize his freedom. With his liberty restored, William chooses to remain with Unca until they are eventually forced to return to English society. Though William and Unca establish a peaceful life on William's plantation, married life among the colonists' isn't the couple's initial choice. Only after William's life is threatened by Unca's jealous sister does the Indian chief send Unca and William back to the English colony. In fact, William had become so accustomed to living with Unca in the Indian tribe before Alluca poisoned him that he had accepted the reality that he might not see England again although he thought himself requited for that loss of homeland by the joy of his love of Unca. "So happy was my father with his princess," Unca's narrative records, that he began "to look

upon the country he was in [native America] as his own.” Because of his love for Unca, she continues, William “was therefore willing to make her and her country his for ever.”³⁴

In *The Female American's* positive depiction of a colonial interracial marriage, Unca and William create a multicultural home that anticipates and makes possible their daughter's international experiences. Their union is sealed with two weddings, first in the tradition and religion of the Indians and then, after their return to Jamestown, a second ceremony following the rites of the Church of England. After taking an “affectionate leave” of the Indian chief and his tribe, the newlyweds journey in canoes to William's plantation. However, they haven't come emptyhanded. Not only has Unca's father sent Indian men and women for companionship and domestic help, he has also gifted them a considerable dowry of riches, including “a great quantity of gold dust and precious stones, and many curiosities peculiar to the Indians.” Though the couple blend European and American conventions, their domestic life in many ways resembles the situation of wealthy Anglo colonists residing in Virginia. Unca agrees to set aside her native coverings to dress according to the European fashion in “cloaths more suitable to her dignity.” Unca has already converted to the English church so she and her husband can together worship the Christian God. Living comfortably in a newly built colonial house furnished with all the customary European furniture and conveniences, the couple thrive on their Virginian plantation, which grows to become “by far the best and largest of any” plantation in the area. When their daughter is born, exactly nine months from their wedding night, William and Unca have her baptized in the Anglican tradition. However, the couple never loses their contact with the Indians. In fact, the Indian king is portrayed as a doting father and grandfather, who “frequently sent a messenger to inquire after his children” and always sent along “some present of fruit, flowers, or something more

valuable.” And, unlike the earlier iteration of interracial love in the marriage of John Rolfe and Pocahontas, neither William nor Unca have any intention of leaving their home in America. The suggestion of dwelling in England is “highly disgusting” to Unca, and William confesses that even if he had desired to return to his roots, he would gladly have suppressed his own wishes to his wife’s, “whom he passionately loved.”³⁵

While Unca and William present a successful interracial marriage, their daughter is a complex cultural hybrid, a complicated character with at times seemingly contradictory values and impulses. The narrative employs a similarly complex fusion when it comes to Unca Eliza’s interactions with the natives she encounters. For example, though she can be charged with imperialist tendencies, Unca is not portrayed as a colonist. In fact, at times she critiques the evils of imperialism, most notably through the voice of her English uncle, an Anglican priest and a vital influence on her both morally and rationally. Lecturing Unca’s father on the eve of his departure from England to participate in the colonial venture in eastern Virginia, Uncle John offers a didactic discourse against English colonialism in the Americas, a viewpoint that is defended throughout the novel. “We have no right to invade the country of another;” Unca’s uncle argues, “and I fear invaders will always meet a curse.” Though Unca supports her uncle’s stance, her own position in the colonial debate is complicated. As a child of a mixed union between an Indian and a colonist, her very existence is indebted to the English incursion on American soil. Ironically, even while acknowledging the corruption of these colonial endeavors, on the island Unca seems to assert her own brand of religious imperialism. She even endeavors to protect her imperial claims from the power of other potential colonizers with less religiously-grounded motives, as when she spies a European ship anchored off the islands and fears that “pirates” might capture her “poor

Indians” as “slaves.” Recognizing the colonial paradigm assuming a right to property over New World peoples repeatedly demonstrated in the practice of piracy, Winkfield envisions its expansion into a corrupt imperialism, which her own humanitarian motives challenge: “Nor might the evil stop thus; their country might be discovered, and probably invaded, and numbers of the people carried away into slavery, and other injuries committed.”³⁶ The irony, of course, lies in the fact that although Unca introduces Christianity to the island Natives, she is, in fact, a pirate and a slave owner herself. She herself has discovered and invaded the Indian community; she has seized moral (and effectively political and social) control. She has appropriated the native treasure from the sun god’s temple. Arguably benevolent and certainly much less violent, Unca’s piracy is nevertheless a colonial (though religious) takeover. However, one can argue that this takeover mutually benefits both Unca and the Indians. Unca’s island itself is transformed into a hybrid society. A native island off the Anglo-American coast of North America, it is inhabited by a tribe of Christian Indians peacefully coexisting with three European immigrants. Significantly, the merger allows the survival of both the English and the native. Neither culture nor people is subsumed by the other; the Europeans don’t truly become Indians, and the Indians don’t morph into Europeans. This suggests the possibility of a third kind of society beyond the stereotypes of the Indian or the constraints of the English.

Bhabha writes that “the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity.” “Even the same signs,” he continues, “can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew.”³⁷ *The Female American* unfetters the rigid designations of Indian and European with the introduction of a hybrid Anglo-Indian heroine. Unca succeeds as a multicultural character largely because of her capacity to transition between cultures.

Negotiating the Atlantic zone of native-European contact, Unca understands the symbols of both cultures, including physical appearance, education, language, and religion. Until her marooning on the island, she generally uses her indigenous Indian knowledge and talents to augment her success in European society. However, at times, even before encountering the island Indians, she chooses to abandon the dominant European model to play with both sides. In England, for example, Unca favors a unique style of dress, and she stands out as an exotic American. While in England Unca's "tawny complexion" sets her apart as special and lends her an exotic appeal. On the island, however, this native complexion gains her access to and acceptance among the natives. In addition, though her education in England is traditionally western and European, she employs it to further her own endeavors with natives. Finally, Unca uses her knowledge of Indian language and religion to trick the Indians into thinking she's the sun god and then to completely overhaul their religion.

Unfortunately, though Unca generally enjoys an unusual range of freedom thanks to her cultural multiplicity, sometimes this same liminality backfires. One notable instance occurs directly after she exits the oracle to reveal her corporeal self to her cousin John and his companions. After her antics in the statue, the men are more than a little wary of this woman who suddenly materializes on the otherwise deserted island. As one sailor flees the figure he is convinced must be a "devil," Unca admits she's "at a loss" as to the men's "great amazement" at her appearance. John, the least skeptical of the Englishmen, reveals his companions' consternation when he questions Unca about the mysterious island and the seemingly supernatural episode:

"Pray my dear Unca, what mean the huge statue; the monstrous voice, loud like thunder, that talked to me and sung; this loud musick, which I still hear; the strange

rich dress I see you in, and how have you subsisted in this strange uninhabited place? or say whether it is not the abode of invisible spirits, who have wrought the wonderful things I have heard, and whether they have not been your guardians?"

Unca attempts to explain that the cause of the men's terror has been the combination of a hoax on her part augmented by other "natural causes," but they remain unconvinced. It soon becomes apparent that the same guise that gained her admission to the native tribe as well as securing her a position of authority among them—the supernatural voice emitted from the oracle combined with her interracial skin tone and priestly get-up—has nearly caused a mutiny aboard the European vessel. Hearing the strange music as the wind continues to sound the harp, which the men are convinced are the "devil's bagpipes playing as loud as thunder," the sailors balk upon seeing Unca's "tawny complexion, and strange dress" and refuse to come closer to the "she-devil there wrapt in gold" and her "enchanted island." In fact, while Unca stands conversing with her cousin onshore, the sailors on board their ship anchored just off the island are busy exchanging yarns about the eerie island. One man returning to the ship said that "he had seen a monster as tall as the moon, that it talked and sang louder than thunder, and that if he had not run away, a she-devil would have run away with him." Another told a fanciful account of having seen Unca and John ascend into the clouds accompanied by "a hundred devils" while another "great devil play[ed] upon the bag-pipes, and he [this sailor] said, that for that matter he [the devil] played much better than ever he heard a Scotchman in his life." Afraid that Unca—who is, they conclude, undoubtedly either herself a devil, the devil's consort, or a witch—would bring calamity to them and their ship, the sailors refuse to admit her or her cousin onboard. Ultimately, however, this obstacle proves irrelevant because Unca reveals that she has no intention of leaving the island or the

Indians.³⁸ This scene reveals that in the eyes of simple racial purists like the European sailors, to be mixed race like Unca is to be monstrous.

Set in a time of significant intercultural contact, *The Female American* explores the racial blending that can occur whenever cultures are in transition. Though the eighteenth-century English, like so many societies throughout history, often held a prejudice against racial hybrids, believing them to be inferior or fearing that their “savage” blood might taint their own moral and ethnic purity, Unca is a paragon of possibility. *The Female American* recommends a new interracial ethnicity, which commingles the traits of English, Anglo-American, and native Indian cultures in a single woman, an American mestizo, as a progressive alternative beyond the borders of the conventionally patriarchal European identity, which obliterates and supplants the native civilization. While Unca transitions almost effortlessly between native and western cultures, she often privileges the European. Her classical education and religious instruction are clearly employed in her colonial mission to convert the Indians to Christianity. However, this imperial stance is complicated by her tendency to play both sides. In fact, there are many notable examples of Unca willingly setting aside the Christian, European paradigm if another approach better suits her purposes. Depending on the situation, Unca seems regularly to dig in her bag of cultural tricks to find a solution to the various obstacles she encounters. So not only is Unca herself a hybrid character of mixed-race descent, but she also participates in a multicultural arena, carving a new sphere not fully native nor truly European. As will be seen in the following chapters, Unca’s hybridity becomes especially significant as she transitions between cultures and religions.

CHAPTER THREE

Embarking: Religion, Travel, and Ethnography in Unca's Tale

From its beginnings, the American literary tradition has been characterized to a remarkable and peculiar degree, by narratives and images of journeys. It has been a literature of movement, of motion.

--Janis Stout, 1983¹

The goal of Christian conversion has long swayed political policy in the history of European relations with American natives. Once considered the dawn of Indian-western relations in the Americas, Christopher Columbus's early interaction on October 12, 1492, with natives he believed to be Asian islanders begins with Columbus's decision to distribute "red caps and some glass beads" along with "many other things of little value." During this early encounter, Columbus and his entourage clearly indicate their mission to befriend the islanders in order to later convert them. Bartolomé de las Casas's translation of Columbus's lost journal characterizes this contact between Columbus and the natives in terms that blend the political with the religious, the imperial with the holy. From the first, Columbus expresses his conviction that the islanders "were a people to be delivered and converted to our holy faith rather by love than by force." However, despite his positive reaction to the natives' physical attractiveness, Columbus characterizes the natives as inferior by European standards, observing, for example, that America's native people are "very deficient in everything." In particular, the Europeans are critical of the natives' ignorance of European weapons and their lack of iron. Based on these observations, Columbus first declares that the islanders would be

“good servants” and second that they could “easily be made Christians” because, during his short exchange with them, he noticed that they appeared to follow no particular religion.²

The Christian mission to civilize and save barbarians has remained a central tenet of the Christian faith since the second century. In the conquest of the New World, the Christian mission played a central role, as it had throughout much of history. According to Wilcomb Washburn, “The status of the American Indian was locked into Catholic doctrine and Spanish legalism almost from the moment of discovery. The relationship was not to be merely that of conqueror and conquered. The Indian was condemned by a preexisting theory to a status by which he served as a material resource to be exploited and as a spiritual object to be saved.” In 1584 Richard Hakluyt assured Queen Elizabeth that the American Indians “were very desirous to become Christians.” And in *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), Thomas Hariot claims the natives were awed by Protestant Christianity. However, in *The Poetics of Imperialism*, Cheyfitz reminds us that Christianity wasn’t introduced in America without a significant struggle. The disappointingly low numbers of Indians that the Puritans were able to convert is just one example of this native resistance and of the relative lack of commitment to such conversions in the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies. Another illustration of this conflict occurred later in the seventeenth century when the Spanish colonists’ efforts to gain control in New Mexico were foiled by the Pueblo Indians’ revolt in 1680. Cheyfitz notes a pattern in European colonialism in the Americas of continued refusal among the natives to accept Christianity. When the Indians could no longer resist, they often accepted the faith under duress. Considering this turbulent history, “the meaning of such adoption often remains ambiguously embedded in complex forms of syncretism.”³ In light of the complicated relationship between the American natives and the

European religions, the centrality of religion in *The Female American* calls for thoughtful consideration. The Protestant faith figures prominently even on the novel's early pages as William Winkfield labors to win the heathen Unca to Christianity. However, the narrative's religious themes become even more significant when Unca Eliza lands on an island with a temple to the Indian sun god at its heart. While both the Indian and Unca's Christian religions undergo transformations on Unca's island, the native religion—in fiction and often historically—is ultimately subsumed by the European import. Nevertheless, the natives' Indian religion livens up Unca's uncle's Anglican religion, and the island and the native religion allows Unca in particular and women more generally some noteworthy power. This chapter examines these intercultural interactions and investigates the hybridity and middle grounds that result from the conflation of native and European religions while considering the possibility that a new religion or culture is formed from the two faiths.

In *The Female American* Unca is empowered by the customs of the Church of England; however, that power is latent until she begins her quest to christianize the inhabitants of the remote New World island. In many ways, Unca seems convinced that European religion and civilization are innately superior. She lectures at length on the benefits of regular prayer and worship. However, though Unca displaces the islanders' religious and cultural heritage to further her own Christian agenda, she blends symbols of both systems of faith in the performance of a new hybrid religion. Winkfield establishes herself and her religion in the island society by supplanting the natural social and religious hierarchy—she replaces the priests and the oracle with herself and her holy books.

Throughout *The Female American*, the author demonstrates Unca's intent to turn the islanders "from their idolatry, to the knowledge of the true God, and to a tolerable idea

of the christian religion.”⁴ With her uncle’s strong religious instruction, Unca is endowed with religious faith coupled with her seemingly innate moral sense, and her desertion on the island inaugurates a spiritual rebirth, transforming this transnationally-identified woman into a female interracial messiah. Facing her lonely situation on the island, Unca turns to her Christian god: “I fell on my knees, and thanked God, who had delivered me out of the hand of the wicked, and that now I was in his only.”⁵ Stripped of both European and American social expectations, Unca is transformed, trained first in the elemental skills of survival before learning to renew her dependence on Christian faith.

Unca’s description of the island natives and their religious beliefs is particularly illuminating. Endowing the Indians with very Christian-sounding religious habits, Unca describes their worship of the sun god in terms evocative of Egypt’s Akhenaten, who established what is historically recognized as the first monotheistic religion—a tactic often interpreted as a means of consolidating power, much as Unca’s implementation of Christianity allows her almost unlimited authority over the islanders. As she watches, masked inside the oracle, the Indian high-priest offers a rather Christian-sounding prayer to the sun god “to acknowledge him as the author of all things, the support of all, and the giver of all things, with praises naturally resulting from such acknowledgments.” However, the relative impotency of the islanders’ religion is revealed when Unca compares the sun god’s priests to the biblical priests of Baal, who “cried as loud as they could, as if their God was a great way off, or deaf, and could not hear them.”⁶

Though Unca constructs her actions as that of a heroic apostle for the Christian mission, this idealistic representation is complicated by markedly imperialistic intrusions. Preparing to conceal herself in the oracle for the natives’ annual visit to the sun god’s temple,

Unca envisions them in a state of appalling subjugation: “I imagined hundreds of Indians prostrate before me with reverence and attention, whilst like a law-giver, I uttered precepts, and, like an orator, inculcated them with a voice magnified almost to the loudness of thunder.” This image is tempered with Unca’s expressions of fear and dread, yet it is apparent that she has convinced herself that the “purity” and “goodness” of her plan to Christianize the savages elevates her to heroic status.⁷

Establishing herself as an extraordinary spiritual leader sent to the natives by their sun god’s oracle, Unca immediately displaces the Native Americans’ ancestral religious beliefs with a foreign system which only she can access and disseminate. While she critiques the native priests for their avarice in “preserv[ing] their superiority among” their people, she strategically establishes herself and subsequently perpetuates her preeminent status among the natives through similar methods. Refusing to respond to “any questions but as [she] see[s] proper,” she imposes Christianity on the natives by preying on their superstitious fears. For instance, while addressing the Native Americans from within the statue of the oracle, Unca threatens to “destroy” them if they “provoke” her, the holy oracle ordained by “He who always was, is, and ever will be.” When she, in the voice of an oracle, introduces herself into their midst, she candidly admits to her reader that she can’t let the islanders know that she is a mere human. Clearly her strategy for survival is imperial; she confesses her desire to “preserve a superiority over them, sufficient to keep them in awe, and to excite their obedience.”⁸ In fact, Unca deviously plays off the natives’ fears, coercing them into accepting her by threatening them with the oracle’s eternal silence if they don’t invite her into their community.⁹

Significantly, Unca even lays material claims on the Native Americans’ spiritual inheritance, imperialistically claiming the island of the sun temple as her exclusive domain

by capitalizing on the natives' superstitions: "I now and then went to visit my old island; but whenever I did so, I always ordered the Indians who rowed me over, to wait with the canoe by the sea-side; or to return home and fetch me in the evening, whilst I roamed about at my own pleasure." Though she masquerades throughout her narrative as a humble apostle, Unca is reluctant to expose her own humanity to her island hosts, for fear that she might lose her authority. But she easily enough fabricates a pretense to retain her mythic status in the tribe: "[I]t was easy to discover, that they conceived me more than a mere mortal. However, I did not think it my duty, any more than my interest, to undeceive them, as this opinion secured to me that respect and authority which were necessary for me to preserve, in order to carry on the great work among them, in which I was engaged."¹⁰

Appropriating the accumulated "pagan" wealth to bolster her acts of Christian benevolence, Unca preserves her preeminence among the tribe members by distributing golden rings that she pillages periodically from the temple. This representation is reminiscent of the myth perpetuated by James Fenimore Cooper, among others, that renders the Native Americans' relinquishment of their land as a voluntary act.¹¹ The fiction of the voluntary is further developed when the natives extend the opportunity for her to exercise complete control over them by offering to make her their queen. Finally, in a dramatic flourish—though mentioned only offhandedly in the narrative—Unca destroys the idol of the sun god, decisively underlining that colonial conquest informs her mission of spiritual conversion. She evidences her God's ascendancy, as well as her own, insuring that the natives will no longer be tempted to return to their sun god since she has destroyed their god's mouthpiece.

Though the religious beliefs of the Indian natives depicted in *The Female American* both in Virginia and on the island are conspicuously misplaced—according to the author's

Anglo-Christian perspective—onto an astrological object rather than a personal yet omnipotent deity, this overview of the tribe’s beliefs clearly reflects many tenets of the Christian church. While the Native Americans’ monotheism might be cited as a justification to convert them—because their religion so closely resembles European Christian doctrines—Unca’s narrative, revolving around an insistently moral paradigm, translates the island natives as in need of proper religious traditions.¹² Justifying her establishment of Christianity and destruction of the islanders’ native religion and national artifacts, this representation of the native faith as nearly Christian also serves to exculpate Unca’s “savage” lineage. While a civilized European reader might condemn her mixed blood, Unca constructs her familial history as notably religious. Her paternal, European ancestry evidences a strong Anglican tradition, while her Native American mother, a longtime monotheist, converts to Christianity when she meets Unca’s father. However, the author solves the potentially problematic issue of Unca’s extended Native American family’s religious beliefs—her grandparents are presumably sun worshipers and are never depicted as converting—by establishing the American Indian religion as monotheistic and almost Christian. Unca’s grandfather, the Indian chief, summarizes the natives’ religion when he offers his prisoners a short speech about the sun god. Pointing to the sun, the chief declares, “He is our god, is he yours? He made us, he warms us, he lights us, he makes our corn and grass to grow, we love and praise him; did he make you?”¹³

Unca seems to contract the “English eye” when it comes to religion, an eye that Hall says “becomes coterminous with sight itself.” In fact, Unca appropriates her own biracial heritage in her “resolution . . . to teach the knowledge of the true God to those who know him not.” Concocting a strategy for inserting herself—and her religion—into the island society,

Unca recognizes that her own “tawny complexion would be some recommendation.” And when the natives arrive to take her as an apostle—a convenient guise she devises and carries out by hiding in the temple statue and ventriloquistically suggesting that the sun god will send his people a messenger to lead them to the truth, an emissary who the oracle declares “shall be “like yourselves [the Indians], and that [they] may be the less fearful or suspicious, that person shall be a woman, who shall live among [them]”—Unca dons native dress procured from one of the temple’s “subterraneous apartments.” Notably, however, Unca appropriates the elaborate robes of a high priest, visually demonstrating her rank, a gesture which she justifies in the hopes that her “extraordinary appearance . . . might procure [her] a more favourable reception.”¹⁴

Unca portrays her religious mission in terms of a savior sent to deliver the natives who have been led astray by pagan myths, myths notably perpetuated by their own oppressive priests. In fact, the priests to the sun god have commodified their religious practices into a “business to instruct the people.” They earn their living “by teaching” their fellow natives and fear that Unca’s new religion might supplant their status, but Unca promises to ensure that the natives continue to support the priests. Burnham argues that in the Christian imagery her narrative employs Unca projects herself both as a Christ figure—reborn in her sickness, she crawls to her accidental baptism and later is “entombed alive” by the earthquake before bloodying her palms in her attempts to free herself—as well as a “female apostle whose gender, racial, and class identity all facilitate [the natives’] acceptance of her and of her spiritual teachings.”¹⁵ Notably, however, this savior—one among many such self-proclaimed deliverers in Europe’s imperial heritage—is both female and (part) native, as opposed to the traditional male Christ figure so often represented with Europeanized features.

While Unca is enmeshed in patriarchal tradition, she fashions her own discursive space, illuminating a manifest dichotomy between philosophical and active Christianity. The island hermit serves as a dramatic counterpoint to Winkfield's successful missionary endeavors. While she concludes from perusing the hermit's manuscript that his voluntary eremitic lifestyle stems from "his extraordinary piety" in self-prescribed penance for his previous immorality, and even though she deferentially addresses him as "Holy father," she demonstrates her superior spirituality in her active interactions with the natives. While the hermit's manuscript reveals his pious reflections, they prove impotent because they are devoid of practical application. Year after year when the disillusioned natives visit the island in hopes of gaining insight from their silent oracle, the hermit hides in the ruins, effectively concealing Christianity as an alternative for the searching natives.¹⁶ Unca, on the other hand, evidences her faith's vitality in her active perpetration of the gospel mission. Indicative of the tensions implicit in the seemingly contradictory pursuits of Christianity and imperialism, Unca's active missionary work is projected as clearly positive relative to the hermit's ironically "feminized" approach. From many recent perspectives, the hermit is to be praised because doesn't set out to dis/replace the native's religious culture.

Unca's translation of the Anglican Bible and the Book of Common Prayer demonstrates an established assimilationist technique, except that in her religious fantasy she singlehandedly displaces the entire native culture. Power traditionally resides with those European, civilized peoples who possess a written language or history. Though hybrid and female, Unca has been educated in a classical European environment by her uncle, an Anglican priest. She notes that at eighteen years old she has "made a great progress in the Greek and Latin languages, and other polite literature."¹⁷ Perhaps her translations are her

effort to legitimize her new hybrid religion, to translate it into the symbol system of the Europeans.

This move toward translation adheres to British tradition. Historically English Protestants have supported translations of the Bible which allowed the laity access to ecclesiastical truths. In 1663 the Puritan missionary John Eliot published his translation of the Bible into Algonquian, a monumental step in the dissemination of Christianity to the American natives. Certainly Unca rationalizes that if she can colonize the islanders' religious beliefs, she can gain control of their society. By wresting control over religion from the priests' monopoly, she in effect reorganizes the native society with herself at the top. Emasculating the priests by, as she admits, "us[ing]" them to educate their followers for her own Christian agenda, Unca employs the priests "to teach the children, and young people, the church of England's catechism."¹⁸

Though set in the early seventeenth-century, Unca's narrative was published in an era that saw the implementation of religious-based organizations designed to legitimize and protect Britain's colonial interests abroad. Established in 1698 to preserve imperial England's dominance, especially in colonial territories where a Christian agenda might be threatened, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was soon followed in 1701 by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an outreach of the Church of England specifically designed for proselytizing Native Americans. Nearly a century later these religious manifestations of England's imperial zeal continued to spread with the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews.¹⁹

While Unca's "superior" spiritual acumen no doubt allows her to rationalize her religious takeover of the native tribe, what legitimates her right to the islanders' material possessions? In a narrative technique which effectively mythologizes the islanders' wealth, the heroine of *The Female American* displaces the native fortune, isolating the capital from any depictions of labor or production. Depicted as simply the possessors or protectors of an inherited wealth—a misplaced treasure buried in the pagan temple and of which the natives are seemingly ignorant—the native Indians are easily sidestepped in Unca's rationalization. Through her part-Indian heritage, Unca becomes heir to the pagan wealth along with the other islanders. However, how might she justify secreting the wealth from her fellow inheritors? Perhaps she defends her acquisition in terms of the religious calling which seems to dominate most of her other actions. In this scenario, Unca as the disseminator of Christianity—the "true" religion—"naturally" assumes possession of the indigenous wealth when her religion displaces the indigenous pagan system.

In addition, Unca utilizes the islanders' own wealth to finance her imperial venture. The "high-priest's vestments"—complete with "gold," "diamonds," "precious stones," "a crown of the most exquisite make," and "a rich bracelet"—which she wears to "procure . . . a more favourable reception" on her first day among the islanders, along with her rich gifts, convince the people that she is "more than mortal." She continues to periodically distribute golden rings that she pillages from the temple to bribe the natives to submit to her religion. To her readers, though not to the natives, Unca acknowledges her meticulous subterfuge: "Every time I made this visit [from the island the natives inhabit to the island where the temple to the sun god is], I always went into my subterraneous apartments, to get some rings to distribute among the Indians. I suppose they wondered how I came by them, but never asked me. And,

that they might have no suspicion that I brought them from the island, I never gave them any on my return to them; but always a few days before I intended a visit to my old habitation.”²⁰

John Winkfield, who during his cousin’s exotic adventures on the island has become an Anglican priest, poses an equally formidable threat to the island’s native culture. Lending legitimacy to Unca’s island congregation, John offers reinforcements to her religious practices: “We now had divine service every Lord’s day.” Although her cousin represents England’s national (patriarchal) religious doctrine, Unca—though female and hybrid—retains ultimate control. Unca acknowledges the augmented authority her cousin’s position as a priest lends to her own religious observances, but more importantly, to her own project for converting the tribe: “I passed my time happily enough, before my cousin’s arrival, but more so afterwards; for from his presence I enjoyed a new advantage. . . . I had now the great pleasure of once more enjoying all the ordinances of the church, and the constant company of a religious and sensible companion.” Together Unca and her cousin—whom she marries within a few months—extend her ecclesiastical colonialism to further indoctrinate the natives in Anglican and Anglicized customs. She celebrates their success at instituting the traditional services, observing, “From the time of my cousin’s settling here . . . the Indians were properly baptized, married, and many of them, at their earnest desire, admitted to the Lord’s supper.” As a result of their “catechising” and twice-weekly services, Unca and her cousin/husband note that their island soon assumes “the appearance of a christian country.”²¹

Notably, Unca’s religious dominion extends beyond her island domain, as evidenced in her indirect conversion of the pirate ship’s crew. Captain Shore in particular even elects to submit to the apostle Unca’s government, humbly requesting to join Unca’s natives: “[I]f you think me a true convert, let me join in your society.”²² Shore requests Unca’s permission—not

the natives who implicitly own the island—to join the company of converts and return to the island after delivering Unca’s pilfered treasure to England. Shore also acknowledges Unca as his spiritual superior, inviting her to judge whether his religious transformation merits her approval.



Throughout her interactions with the island natives, Unca repeatedly masks herself as a god. First she conceals herself in the idol as the oracle to talk to the Indians and convert them to her religion. Then she bribes the natives to accept Christianity with rings from the sun god’s temple. Later she masquerades even in front of the Europeans when she hides inside the oracle and scares her cousin and his shipmates. In his narratives Smith, like Unca, claims that the Powhatans were in awe of him. In fact, in his 1612 *Map of Virginia*, Smith asserts that they “admired him as a demi-God” and in his 1624 *Generall Historie*, he declares that “those salvages admired him more than their own Quiyouckosucks [native priests].” Fashioning a divine identity for himself, Smith, like Unca and other European explorers encountering New World natives including Hernando Cortez and Captain Cook, replicates the colonial fabrication of posing as the “bearer of supernatural power.”²³ Unca also mirrors the conquerors’ practice of destroying significant religious monuments when she blows up the Indians’ temple to the sun god. Historian Tzvetan Todorov points out that in the European conquest of Mexico the Spaniards demolished the indigenous religious “monuments in order to abolish any memory of a former greatness.” Also like Cortez, Unca insists that the Indians respect both the new religion and herself as their new religious leader. “The respect and

welcome that they give to the friars is the result of the commands of the Marqués del Valle, Don Hernando Cortés, for from the beginning he ordered them to be very reverent and respectful to the priests, just as they used to be the the [*sic*] ministers of their idols.”²⁴

Dominican Diego Durán (1537-1588), whose account of the world before Columbus is recorded in *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y Islas de la Tierra Firme* but wasn't published until the nineteenth century, offers some interesting insights into native American religions. In *Historia*, which focuses on Aztec religion and history, Durán suggests that for western societies to effectively convert the New World's natives to Christianity, two factors must be addressed. First, the Christian evangelizers must fully understand the native religion; and second, the Christians must eliminate any trace of that religion. However, a total conversion, according to Durán, is unrealistic. Comparing the Aztec native religion to Christianity, Durán concedes, “the ancient beliefs are still so numerous, so complex, so similar to our own in many cases, that one overlays the other.” In fact, Durán concludes there are so many amazing similarities between ancient Aztec religious beliefs and Christianity—including certain holy days, penances, baptism, and even a version of the Holy Trinity—that the Aztecs were in actuality the “lost tribes of Israel.”²⁵

With the advent of transatlantic explorations, European Christians in the New World used religious instruction in their attempts to tame the Indian natives. Christianity has historically been coupled with a western mission to civilize foreign “barbarians.” In more recent centuries, as many scholars have observed, “Early European explorers considered Native American Indians the essence of what people would be without Christian and civilized behavior. The terms beast, savage, and heathen were used to describe Native American Indians.”²⁶ Interestingly, however, the converse was another popular stereotype of America's

natives. While many scorned the Indians as a primitive, godless people, others regarded the natives as edenic innocents. As Cheyfitz has argued, “In the mythology of European New-World ‘discovery’ of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Indians were conceptualized, among other fantasies that Europeans fashioned of them, as the lost tribes of Israel.”²⁷

Just as history and literature have probed at the American natives and their spiritual practices, the mythology surrounding the Pocahontas legend has similarly been revised by some who choose to privilege the religious elements of her dramatic story. In the Virginia Company’s Jamestown experiment, religious conversion was an acknowledged policy of intercultural interaction. Twice a day the colonists, following their king’s orders, repeated a special prayer for their “pagan neighbors.” The following prayer, recorded by the historiographer of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia Reverend G. Maclaren Brydon, reveals the colonists’ conception of their religious obligation toward the American natives:

Almighty God, . . . seeing that thou has honoured us to choose us out to bear thy name unto Gentiles, we therefore beseech thee to bless us and this plantation which we and our nation have begun in thy fear and for thy glory . . . and seeing Lord, the highest end of our plantation here is to set up the standard and display the banner of Jesus Christ, even here where Satan’s throne is, Lord let our labour be blessed in labouring for the conversion of the heathen. . . . Lord sanctify our spirits and give us holy hearts, that so we may be thy instruments in this most glorious work.”²⁸

In reference to a colonial society advocating evangelism among Indians, David Stymeist finds that in John Rolfe’s letter to Governor Dale about marrying Pocahontas “an anxious tension develops between fear of God’s curse on miscegenation in the Old Testament and the proselytizing imperative of the New Testament.”²⁹ In seventeenth-century Virginia,

Pocahontas stood in the juncture of this conflict. Not only was she rescued from her heathen ways, she also became the wife of a prominent colonist. As the Virginia Company's earliest, or at least most widely publicized, Christian convert, Pocahontas embodied a "living hope" for the colonists and their supporters back home in England. She substantiated their claim that even Indians could understand the Christian message and be saved.³⁰ Just as many interpret Pocahontas's story in ways to support some pet theory or enforce an ideology, some Christian groups to the present day choose to remember Pocahontas solely as Rebecca Rolfe, the first Christian convert among America's natives, a perspective that elides her early relationship with the Englishmen and her subsequent imprisonment at Jamestown.³¹

There are many ways to understand Pocahontas's conversion experience. One wonders, for example, if Powhatan's daughter would have accepted Christianity if she weren't being held hostage in the Jamestown colony. Though Pocahontas was no doubt exposed to the religious aspects of British culture through her visits with the colonists, until her abduction there are no indications that she intended to adopt the English ways as her own. Helen C. Rountree suggests that Pocahontas, ever seeking to be the center of attention whether among the English or her own people, recognized that just as her spirited personality helped her stand out in her tribe, becoming "formall and civill after our English manner" would put her in the spotlight among the colonists. Hailed as a "potential convert" to the Englishmen's Christian religion—with evangelism of the American natives an ostensible priority for the Virginia Company—Pocahontas drew special notice, especially the attention of those bent on "saving" her.³²

Another approach to Pocahontas's baptism points out that even without a formal understanding of the catechism or other Anglican tenets, the young Indian was already a

Christian at heart. Hariot, a scientist among Raleigh's expedition to Roanoke Island in 1585, summarizes a popular perspective of the early colonial period in his *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* in 1588. Hariot suggests that though the Indians' religious beliefs are "farre from the truth," he holds out the hope that they "may bee the easier and sooner reformed" since they already possess some modicum of a spiritual system. Similar to western Christianity, Hariot's natives accept "one onely chiefe and great God, which hath bene from all eternitie," although they also accept various other, lesser gods. Perhaps most importantly, however, is the Europeans' perception that the Amerindians were eager to learn and adopt their foreign religion. After conversing at length with the Indians as to their religious convictions, Hariot asserts that he has shaken the native's faith: "through conversing with us they were brought into great doubts of their owne [religion], and no small admiratio [*sic*] of ours, with earnest desire in many, to learne more than we had meanes for want of perfect utterance in their language to expresse."³³

According to Cheyfitz, Anglo depictions of American natives as edenic denizens usually lead to contradictory representations. On the one hand the colonizers depict the Indians as "utterly innocent" so the English have no reason to doubt their kind intentions, but the English cannot overcome their suspicions and usually continue to doubt the natives. For example, in Arthur Barlowe's narrative of the Roanoke voyages, the English have previous knowledge that the Indians "maintaine a deadlie and terrible warre." So if these edenic people have experienced war, or as Cheyfitz writes, if "these innocent Indians know bloodshed," then this new American paradise isn't a Eden at all. It is, in fact, a flawed paradise. It is "Eden after the Fall." This inconsistent portrayal of the American tribes as alternately savage and saintly

reinforces the tendency of early European writers to vacillate between the “simultaneous sacralization and demonization of the Indians.”³⁴

Reflecting the popular notion that American natives were Christians at heart and in their actions—though without formal creed or title—even before their interactions with the evangelizing colonists, there seems to be a steady history of representing Pocahontas as innately Christian even before her capture and formal conversion to Rebecca. John Gadsby Chapman’s painting *The Baptism of Pocahontas* suggests that Native Americans had the capacity to accept Christian salvation; however, because survival in the era of European invasion often necessitated “adoption of Anglo-American Christian culture, the Manifest Destiny dimension” of Chapman’s painting is prominent: “Chapman makes clear what will happen to those Indians who do not abandon their cultural heritage and adopt a white way of thinking.”³⁵ In a discussion of Chapman’s painting, Tilton makes the claim that Pocahontas’s brave rescue of Smith indicates her “apparently quite Christian, self-sacrificial” attitude:

If one believes Christianity to be action-based, can her accomplishments up to the moment of her official baptism be explained by her having been at heart a Christian already? If, on the other hand, Christianity is believed to be institution-based, then her saving of Smith, though certainly an example of her bravery and her faith in her father’s love, cannot provide a moral exemplar because at the time Pocahontas had not yet been initiated into God’s chosen people. Chapman’s painting, then, because of the power of her other, better-known persona, is able to ask its viewers to reconsider what they believe to be the fundamental tenet of their religion by raising the inevitable question of what was the most important event in the life of Pocahontas. . . . Does her

rescue of Smith pale in comparison with the moment of her baptism, during which her eternal salvation was made possible? Chapman would almost certainly have said yes.

Along a similar vein, New England orator Edward Everett made the case that Pocahontas was the Powhatan lady's "truly 'Christian' name" because through her selfless efforts to rescue John Smith and aid the vulnerable and hungry English settlers she had already "become a Christian before she was formally baptized."³⁶

In a more fanciful reading, one scholar has suggested that Pocahontas "willingly embraced her conversion" to Christianity, "renouncing the pagan gods and rituals of her former life, as a way of grieving for Smith," who she was led to believe had perished. According to this interpretation, Pocahontas's anguish over Smith's death may have inspired her willingness to learn about and adopt aspects of Smith's culture, including his religious customs. In this way her "behavioral pattern" during her captivity might indicate the attempt to "reunite with the foreigner whose loss she mourned" rather than the desperate acquiescence of a hostage.³⁷ Along the same vein, however, another scholar has credited romantic attachment as the impetus that Pocahontas embraced Christianity—in this reading, though, the object of her affection is not the elusive Captain Smith. Instead, Rountree suggests that Pocahontas's conversion can in part be credited to her affection for one special teacher, the "warm-hearted, earnest widower, the twenty-eight-year-old John Rolfe." The successful religious conversion of a heathen native to Protestant Christianity is a necessary component in interracial love stories like that of Pocahontas and Rolfe or Unca and William. Like William whose love for Unca aroused the necessity of her conversion, Rolfe fell for Pocahontas before she was converted. The biblical stigma of being "unequally yoked" to an unbeliever would be significant to a pious European. In addition, Reverend William Symonds

had strongly warned the colonists as they were leaving England against taking “strange wives,” citing the biblical example in Nehemiah. In fact, Rolfe writes that he is familiar with God’s warnings to the “sonnes of Levie and Israel” against “marrying strange wives” and he is even cognizant of the “inconveniencies” he might face because of his love for Pocahontas. Finally Rolfe stumbles on the answer to quiet his agony, and he asks himself why he’s neglecting his Christian duty: “Why dost not thou indeavour to make her a Christian?”³⁸ With the image of natives as intellectually docile and naturally inclined to accept the obviously superior Anglo religion, this religious obstacle could be overcome, demonstrating the innate ascendancy of western civilization. In addition, religious conversion was generally a native’s first step toward embracing European culture as a whole, as in the cases of Pocahontas and Unca. Both women were converted before marrying a man of Anglo heritage. Soon after, they settled in European, domestic settings—keeping house in their husbands’ Virginian plantations and giving birth to children with their English husbands. However, neither Pocahontas nor Unca were subsumed by their new culture. They both kept in contact with their tribes; in fact, both probably incorporated Indians into their new households to help with the labor as well as keep them company.

Though the motivations for Pocahontas’s conversion continue to be debated, her baptism and acceptance of a Christian name is significant. The name Rebecca brings to mind Isaac’s bride in the Old Testament, the “beautiful and pure foreign girl whose arrival was a sign of God’s blessing of Abraham.” The story of Pocahontas’s willingness to aid the British colonists during their early years of struggle in Virginia echoes the account in the Bible of Rebekah, a woman whose generosity led her to become a wife in a foreign land. Not only was Rebekah a kind woman who welcomed a foreigner at her local well, she became a

prominent character in biblical ancestry. Pocahontas's antecedent was literally the "mother of two nations" through the lineage of her two sons with Isaac, Jacob and Esau. During her pregnancy, Rebekah asked God why her children were wrestling inside her womb. The answer would have been significant to the British colonists. "Two nations are in thy womb," God answered her. He continued, "And two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people. And the elder shall serve the younger." When the twins were born, the older one, Esau, "came out red. . . . And after that came his brother out, and his hand tooke holde on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob." Rebekah's second son, the pale one, was her favorite. Choosing her pale son over her red (and hairy) son, Rebekah eventually helped Jacob rob Esau of his father's blessing and birthright. This parallels the colonists' intentions for Pocahontas. Like Rebekah, Pocahontas would be a bride in a foreign land. Her mixed race children, like Jacob and Esau, would be both pale and red: "If she was like the Rebekah of the Bible, she [Pocahontas] would devote herself to a next generation whom she envisioned as the heirs of Jacob, who were younger in this land than their red brothers."³⁹

Rebekah's red son Esau, who gave up his birthright in exchange for a bowl of pottage, is thought to be a "prefiguration of the Indians selling their land for a few dollars or trading it for whiskey." The pale son Jacob, on the other hand, ultimately became the father of twelve sons and the twelve tribes of Israel. Through her son Jacob, who was an ancestor of Israel's King David and ultimately of Jesus of Nazareth, the biblical Rebekah became the mother of many nations. As Robert Tilton suggests, antebellum Virginians were proud to claim Rebecca Rolfe—the Powhatan savage turned Christian lady—as their biological ancestor. Reflecting on the significance of the biblical Rebekah as a once-foreign matriarch whose family tree

was consecrated with a holy birth, many Americans, while proud of their Powhatan blood, thought that their connection to Rebecca Rolfe might suggest that they were the new “chosen people” of America’s new era. According to Hulme, this explanation was agreeable to the colonists, who were oblivious to the paradox that their own survival in the New World was due to “constant infusions of Algonquian pottage.”⁴⁰

Although Pocahontas’s baptism into and adoption of the Anglican faith is well-documented, it is, of course, impossible to determine the motives for her decision. Western culture has naturally chosen to elide the reality of a strong Indian resistance to Christianity. Jamestown boasted its successful conversion of Pocahontas, but ultimately the British colonies’ holy campaign failed to win a significant number of natives to the church. In addition, it is important to be aware of the complicated nature of cultural blending. While Pocahontas ultimately chose to accept the white man’s religion, “the meaning of such adoption,” according to Cheyfitz, “often remains ambiguously embedded in complex forms of syncretism.” Pocahontas left no written records for herself; she is represented by those who abducted, detained, educated, converted, and married her. However, Camilla Townsend suggests that we can gain a better understanding of Pocahontas’s experience by considering the narratives of other Indians who were converted by the Anglo settlers. The majority of these natives, according to Townsend, who converted to Christianity relatively early in their contact with the Europeans—Pocahontas declared herself a Christian within months of her initial instruction in the foreign religion—“were virtually always incorporating the Christian God into their previously existing pantheon.” Though Pocahontas promised to “forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp, and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, the carnal desires of the flesh” and declared her faith “in God the Father

Almighty, maker of heaven and earth” and “in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord,” Townsend likens her acceptance of the colonists’ religion to the acquiescence of a political prisoner: Pocahontas agreed to abandon “her village’s okee in favor of Jesus Christ; she would have had to do something similar if she had been carried off by Iroquoian Indians or any other enemy.”⁴¹ In this way, Pocahontas, like Unca, is constructing a new space for herself, fashioning a hybrid religion that is no longer fully native nor yet completely European.

Whatever her motivations may have been, Pocahontas did, of course, accept both Rolfe’s religion and his proposal of marriage. In 1616, two years or so after their wedding, Rolfe expressed his zeal to continue spreading his faith by evangelizing his native wife’s people. Like the Israelites of the Old Testament who were led by their God to convert or conquer the heathen in the land of Canaan, the British colonists, according to Rolfe, were commissioned by the Christian God to take control of the native country of Virginia. Echoing Caleb and Joshua’s report of the twelve spies’ scouting mission in Numbers 13, Rolfe suggests that this new invasion would be even easier than the biblical precedent because the American lands aren’t fortified as were the celebrated cities of Canaan: “There are no great nor strong castles, nor men like the sons of Anak to hinder our quiet possession of that land. What need we then to fear but to go up at once as a peculiar people marked and chosen by the finger of God to possess it? For undoubtedly He is with us.” In Rolfe’s optimistic viewpoint, this new world Eden promises to be even better than the Canaan lands Jehovah promised to His chosen people in ancient times. The English have discovered a new Promised Land without the giants.⁴²

Although the Indian natives were no “sons of Anak” in Rolfe’s eyes, they nevertheless occupied the Virginia lands that the English desired. But rather than marching into Canaan

with trumpets blaring to claim their Promised Land, some British tried another method of ousting the country's heathens: religious conversion. On March 10, 1617, Rolfe prepared to follow through on his faith in "this zealous Worke" of converting the American natives.⁴³ While John and Rebecca Rolfe were visiting England, the Virginia Company presented them with the considerable sum of £100 to establish a mission for Virginia's Native American children. After beholding Rebecca, the formerly heathen Pocahontas who was in their eyes a living testament to the success of the colony and the possibility of native conversions, the Virginia Company's British backers hoped to solidify their claims on American soil through further evangelistic campaigns. The monetary grant to the Rolfes coincides with an organized effort by the Virginia Company to encourage Jamestown families to spread English culture and religion throughout the region by taking in and raising Indian children. The company provided the Rolfes with these funds, according to Rountree, with the expectation that they would care for native children in their home and encourage other families to follow their example. As Rountree notes, "the money was granted" "partly in honor of Pocahontas's conversion" and, as the warrant states, "partly upon promise made by the said Mr. Rolfe on behalf of himself and his said Lady his wife, that both by her godly and virtuous example in their particular persons and family, as also by all other good means of persuasions and enducements, they would employ their best endeavors to the winning of that People to the knowledge of God, and embracing of true religion."⁴⁴

However, this plan fell through when Pocahontas became ill just as she and Rolfe were to set sail to return to Virginia. On her deathbed Pocahontas displayed what has been described as a "happy combination of savage fortitude and Christian submission." According to witnesses, her last moments were a "lively and edifying picture of piety and virtue."⁴⁵ Smith

characterized the “unexpected” death of “Lady Pocahontas alias Rebecca” as bringing “joy” to her companions who could “heare and see” that she achieved “so religious and godly an end.”⁴⁶ As we have seen, the process of religious conversion is also a key element in *The Female American’s* latter take on the Pocahontas tale. Unlike her real-life counterpart, Unca, of course, will presumably enjoy a long life on the island, performing religious ceremonies with her husband and working to improve the lives of the natives.



In addition to the prominent religious themes in both the Pocahontas myth and *The Female American*, travel and exploration are also common threads. A consideration of these narratives as transatlantic travel texts raises the question: to what extent are travel writings interrelated with other forms of political and ideological propaganda? For instance, many early travel narratives—especially those by British explorers on expeditions to further European dominance through imperial, scientific, economic, and cultural expansion—were designed specifically to bolster patriotic spirit while obtaining funds (often from national, monarchal, or aristocratic sources) for the explorers’ further endeavors. In casting a specifically British eye on the foreign Other as encountered in travel-exploration, Captain James Cook, Alexander von Humboldt, and Matthew Gregory Lewis among many others provided the British public with continual, vicarious adventure in the journals, novels, and other documents produced from their expeditions. As Tim Fulford notes in the introduction to *Travels, Explorations and Empires*, “The Hudson’s Bay Company instigated the exploration [of America’s Northwest Passage], but the audience for the narrative produced from it was

much wider—in this case the imperial geographers and scientists of London, as well as polite gentlemen wishing for a taste of adventure from the safety of their own homes.”⁴⁷ But the geographers, scientists, and polite gentlemen were far from exceptional in their interest in travel narratives. In fact, Fulford argues that travel writing—for instance, works recounting the exploits of Alexander Mackenzie and the records of the Lewis and Clark expedition—“brought about a race for empire” as England and the newly-established United States vied for contested territories, including the Columbia Valley and the Northwestern areas previously “claimed by Spain and Russia.”⁴⁸

A further purpose—and much more critical for the current study—furnished by such travel texts is their use as literary inspiration. The British Romantics, passionate about images of the far-off and the exotic, devoured travel narratives like Samuel Hearne’s *Journey from Prince of Wales’s Fort in Hudson’s Bay, to the Northern Ocean*, published posthumously in 1795, which described the real-life incident on which Wordsworth based his poem, “The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman.”⁴⁹ Similarly, these travel records aroused authors’ ingenuity as they pioneered literary forms, including the work of William Cowper, who vicariously participates in the travel experience, becoming a mental voyager by imaginatively rewriting travel texts like Cook’s. For Cowper, the attraction of the travel narrative lies in the liminality it affords the reader, an imaginative freedom to voyage alongside Cook that he describes in *The Task*:

He travels and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes,

While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

While safely ensconced at home in England, the Romantic reader could engage in the “virtual reality” of exploration. As Fulford puts it, the reader “feels himself *there* on Cook’s ship, *there* in the newly discovered country sharing the explorer’s feelings and adventures.”⁵⁰ As the average, literate British citizen became, like Cowper, an armchair explorer through the copious pages of travel narratives available, and increasingly fashionable, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the pressure to draw the attention of this avid reading public drove real-life explorers to turn their mundane notes and journals into exciting adventure stories or quests, allowing the audience to “identify with the traveller as hero and vicariously to share his dangers and progress.” While the growing scientific community clamored for exploration narratives full of factual details, the general reading public could often be equally satisfied by the thrills of counterfeit explorers.⁵¹ As writers and editors worked to produce narratives blending information with adventure, others, like the author of *The Female American*, learned to fake their tales. But while much of the content of Unca’s narrative can be chalked up to authorial license, *The Female American*’s representations of Native Americans clearly indicate that the anonymous author was influenced by travel accounts of prominent eighteenth-century explorers and their predecessors while also incorporating aspects of the age’s fascination with classical civilizations, most notably the ancient Egyptians.

An obvious precursor to Unca’s island in *The Female American* is *Robinson Crusoe*. Of the handful of scholars who have treated *The Female American* nearly all of them have noted the later novel’s debt to Defoe’s masterpiece. Jeannine Blackwell, among others, has

called Unca's narrative a "female Robinsonade," a term that Blackwell applies to numerous eighteenth-century European novels depicting a female in a heroic adventure tale clearly in imitation of Defoe's *Crusoe*. In 2000 Betty Joseph concluded that *The Female American* "not only rewrites *Robinson Crusoe* but also tries to replace the original through a complex process of surrogation, rendered all the more complex because it transforms Defoe's castaway narrative into one of female self-fashioning and into a critique of colonialism at the same time."⁵² In a truly transatlantic—bridging British and American—retelling, the author of *The Female American* claims Defoe's tale for the New World by incorporating the characters of Pocahontas and Smith. This foundational myth, despite disputes over its authenticity, adds a uniquely American flavor to Unca's tale. Most notably Unca, unlike the full-blooded British Crusoe, is an interracial, transatlantic woman, yet in many ways she replicates and even improves on Crusoe's accomplishments on his Atlantic island.

Unca seems to be on a sped-up plan on the island. While Crusoe takes ten months to secure his island and make it comfortable, Unca—aided by the hermit's time-saving manual and other physical preparations, including tools and a place to live—isn't required to create anything, but simply to maintain what the hermit has labored on for over forty years. She has a year before she has to deal with the Indians. However, once that obstacle is overcome, she situates herself in their tribe and is well on her way to completing her Christianizing, colonizing plan by the time her cousin arrives three years after the beginning of her isolation. In contrast to Unca's self-appointed mission to save the island Indians, however, Crusoe's own Christian conversion discourse is notably self-centered, almost all related his own concerns with self-redemption relative to violating his father's good advice and to self-definition relative to maintaining identity as "civilized" and Christian.

In addition, it has been noted that women are nearly nonexistent in Crusoe's island world; similarly in Unca's tale it seems that men are absent until they can conveniently be contained and controlled by Unca. Before landing on the island, Unca rejects any overtures by interested men. She is already twenty-four when she is marooned, yet she seems to feel no old-maid syndrome. Then on the island, Unca first establishes the colony that she desires, and only after that major accomplishment can her cousin be admitted back into her tale and into her society. Even then it seems that John would be irrelevant, except that he is necessary to perform a specific function in her plans: she needs a priest on her island, and Unca—or the author—refuses to flaunt convention any further by allowing a female priest. Of course, despite John's late appearance on the island, Unca is such a strong figure that it seems she could have controlled the outcome if he'd been present earlier. However, together Unca and John offer up a husband-and-wife missionary team as a model to the island Indians. Their Protestant model contrasts the celibate Catholic missionary "Blackrobes" who converted many North American Indians. The married missionary couple of Unca and John also calls to mind the Rolfe-Pocahontas partnership, another Protestant model to the New World natives.

While *The Female American* conspicuously references Pocahontas and the Powhatan Indians, locating its transatlantic heroine against the exotic backdrop of pre-colonial Virginia and the Atlantic Ocean, the author is also clearly influenced by British expeditions to the South Seas in the years surrounding the novel's publication. In particular, Unca's narrative evidences the impact of three prominent European fantasies about life in the Pacific: the iconic breadfruit that freed the natives from laboring for their sustenance, the islanders' liberal approach to sexual encounters, and the inhabitants' distinction as noble savages insulated from the crimes and indiscretions that civilization brings.⁵³

In advance of Captain Cook, who in his three legendary voyages between 1768 and 1780 “advanced geographic and scientific knowledge, without, it seemed, colonising, or subjugating native peoples,”⁵⁴ *The Female American* in 1767 introduces a woman who encounters American natives and fuses her world with theirs, translating their native religion into a new Christian hybrid but otherwise preserving the integrity of their society. An examination of Unca, an Anglo-native hybrid, and her encounter with a North American Indian tribe off Virginia’s coast invites a parallel consideration of a Tahitian named Omai, a native of the Pacific islands who, in direct contrast to Unca, temporarily entered the British community in the late eighteenth century. These parallel encounters between Europeans and natives highlight the atmosphere of “mutual influence between Britons and indigenous peoples . . . where centre and periphery both shaped the process of globalisation and, in the process, changed their relationship,” a process of intercultural exchange that characterizes much of British expansion.⁵⁵ This atmosphere is characterized by fluid borders between the established European community and the native societies they were just beginning to encounter. As English interest in native cultures expanded so did the natives’ own desire to discover all they could about British culture.

When Captain Cook’s *Endeavour* arrived off the coast of Tahiti in 1769, Omai was waiting. The young native was on Tahiti as a refugee from the nearby island Raiatea, which had been invaded by the Boraborans. Unlike Unca or Pocahontas, Omai was no noble native, not a prince or other member of the local royalty. However, he was ambitious and resourceful. Inserting himself on the English ship, Omai declared his desire to sail for England. Though a sense of adventure and his own curiosity to experience a wider world no doubt played a role in his decision to undertake the journey for England, Omai also admitted that he hoped

to raise his own status in the South Seas, where he was looked down on for his flat nose and lower-class status and that he, ultimately, intended to obtain guns from the British so he could return to the Pacific and take back his native island by force. Arriving in London on July 14, 1774, Omai found himself an exotic attraction at the center of the English community.⁵⁶ Interestingly, Omai's experience in England had in many ways already been charted by Unca's fictional episode in *The Female American* and by the real-life experiences of other ocean-crossing natives like Pocahontas.

Unca records that in England she is admired by everyone she meets. She is only half native; however, she is still remarkable to those in England's trendy set who are fascinated by all things American. As noted in chapter one, her "uncommon complexion, singular dress, and the grand manner in which [she] appear[s]" cause a great stir among the "neighboring gentry," who vie for the privilege of her company and offer her the royal treatment that a native princess deserves. With her entourage of Indian attendants, her mixed costume, and her exotic physical appearance, Unca causes a stir with her arrival. Even with her inculcation into British society through more than a decade as she lives and studies in her uncle's small village near Windsor, Unca retains the mystical appeal of a foreign royal. Though Unca wonders if her native fortune is the true root of her allure, she admits that she nevertheless gains several suitors among the English men of her acquaintance.⁵⁷ Though *The Female American* doesn't elaborate about Unca's entrance into British society in the first half of the seventeenth century, there is no doubt that she would have been a sensation as the daughter of a true American Indian princess and an English colonist of aristocratic descent.

While Unca enters a family environment that shields her somewhat from the curiosity of her English neighbors, Omai enjoyed the attention that his singularity as the first native of

the Pacific islands to arrive in England attracted. Unlike Unca who is a community favorite in both the native and colonial communities before her appearance in the British homeland, Omai gains special status only after his arrival in England. Among the Tahitians he was a simply a commoner, an immigrant with a wide nose. And the British sailors regarded him as “vulgar” and “unremarkable.” Even Captain Cook called him “dark, ugly and a downright blackguard,” while Joseph Banks’s curator Daniel Solander recorded a similar judgment:

He is very brown, almost as brown as a Mulatto. Not at all handsome, but well made. His nose is a little broadish, and I believe that we have to thank his wide Nostrils for the visit he has paid us – for he says, that the people of his own country laughed at him upon the account of his flattish Nose and dark hue, but he hopes when he returns and has many fine things to talk of, that he shall be much respected.

However, Omai’s arrival in England earned him instant celebrity status as London’s elite, including the king, sought to meet this real-life specimen from the distant seas. With the debut of the pantomime *Omai, Or a Trip Round the World*, the English could even fantasize about an amorous coupling between the Pacific Islander and his fictional Anglo lover. The romanticized plot depicts a woman named Londina falling in love with Omai, who takes her with him back to Tahiti where he reigns over the South Seas island.⁵⁸

In reality Omai returned to Tahiti without an English love or a royal title. He left England on July 12, 1776, almost two years exactly after his arrival, as part of Cook’s third expedition to the South Seas. Though he had no Londina on his arm, he was supplied with an assortment of other European curiosities. Hoping to raise his status among his own people with his own increased knowledge of European civilization, Omai carried with him a variety of contraptions, including “a Bible and a jack-in-the box, port-wine and a hand-organ,

crockery and kitchenware, a bed, table and chairs (all unheard of in Tahiti), a large globe, an electrical machine, and as Omai had always wanted, muskets, shot and gunpowder” as well as a “coat of armour and a horse.” On August 12, 1777, Omai and his goods landed in Tahiti, and Omai eagerly set to work displaying his European wares to the islanders. He used his European furnishings to deck out an abandoned house built by Spanish sailors and slept in an English-style bed.⁵⁹

Pocahontas participated in another kind of mission to gather information about the British when she set sail aboard Captain Argall's *Treasurer* bound for England in 1616. Though she and her entourage traveled to the British island at the invitation of the Virginia Company, which intended to capitalize on Pocahontas's recent conversion to Christianity and subsequent marriage to John Rolfe to gain much-needed publicity for their struggling enterprise at Jamestown, Powhatan's daughter and her Indian companions played dual roles. The daughter of a powerful Indian chief, a native “king” in the eyes of most Britons, Pocahontas was Virginian royalty. She was in Samuel Purchas's words the “Daughter of a King” and as such she was regally treated, but more importantly she was an exotic example of the power of western culture. As an Indian woman who dressed, talked, and acted like a cultured, English woman, she demonstrated the potential for Christian civilization to triumph over native savagery: “The [Virginia Company] officials wanted everyone to hear of the Indian princess who promised friendship to the settlers.”

However, Pocahontas's own curiosity about English society equaled the British interest in her; she too was on a mission of discovery. Powhatan had previously sent Namontacke to gather information about the English: “Namontacke . . . I purposely sent to King James his land, to see him and his country, and to returne me the true report thereof.” With

Namontacke subsequently killed and Powhatan's thirst for information still unfulfilled, a small Indian delegation was sent with Pocahontas to assess the threat of Powhatan's enemy. In the delegation was Uttamatomakin, the husband of Pocahontas's half sister Matachanna, a high priest and trusted adviser who figures prominently in *Pilgrimage* (1617), Purchas's account of the Indians' visit. Uttamatomakin conversed with Purchas about the native Indian religion and complained to John Smith about King James, who offended the Indian by neglecting to offer a suitably regal gift for Powhatan. In their histories, both Purchas and Smith confirm that Uttamatomakin was sent to England to gather information for his leader. A spiritual and political adviser to Powhatan, Uttamatomakin is said to have been given a special assignment; hoping to gain a better sense of the "long-range threat to his people," Powhatan instructed his counselor to use a "long stick" and "cut a notch in it for each person he saw in England," but, upon taking "a look at one of London's bustling streets," Uttamatomakin quickly gave up. Though Townsend argues that the "apocryphal" story is a patronizing invention fabricated from the Powhatan practice of keeping records by notching sticks, she agrees that Uttamatomakin was probably commissioned to take an estimate of the British population. Overwhelmed by the reality of England's vast population, Uttamatomakin also expressed surprise at the Britain's flourishing agricultural system. Apparently Powhatan had hypothesized that the English colonists were claiming land in Virginia to compensate for "an extreme shortage of food" in their own homeland. While Uttamatomakin couldn't number the English people with his stick notches, he also failed to locate the English God. In his 1624 account of the visit, Smith records, "Concerning God, Smith admitted to the Queen, 'I told him the best I could.'"⁶⁰ Uttamatomakin's intelligence-gathering commission reflects a need

for knowledge. This incident calls to mind Omai's own trip and his desire to find information about the Europeans and to bring back European technology for his people's use.

In *The Female American*, after successfully ingratiating herself and her religion into the island society, Unca facilitates further colonization of the natives through the arrival of her cousin and future husband. John Winkfield's arrival affords the natives—who through England's dominant religious practices have become rather receptive to European innovations—the opportunity to become further acquainted with European culture. Unca notes the Indians' "delight" in seeing "a gun and the surprising effects of gunpowder, a telescope, and many other European curiosities." Unca's description of the natives' primitive reactions to European technology invokes a romanticized image of the "noble savage"—a nostalgic representation, which serves to further justify her compassionate colonization. While Unca gains a foothold on the island through the religious tenets she imparts, this seemingly isolated fragment of European hegemony initiates the Indians to various facets of the British national identity, including the sacrament of marriage. So when Unca's cousin appears with livestock, munitions, and "many other European curiosities," these other aspects of the hegemonic whole are sufficient to gain the islanders' approval. Unca alleges that merely "the sight of these [technological implements] raised in [the Indians] an high opinion of [her] cousin." However, Unca retains her elite status, insisting that the Indians' "high opinion" of John Winkfield remains second to the respect they hold for their spiritual savior.⁶¹

In addition to the imported technology, John Winkfield "stock[s]" the island with "about a dozen live fowls, cocks and hens." By importing a new protein source, he introduces a significant, subsequent stage in the traditional imperial process. With a basketful of birds, John Winkfield could effectively restructure the island society. A much more convenient

food source than the “lark”-like birds which Unca—like the islanders—has learned to catch, these imports will likely supplant the native fowl as a major food source. Though the natives are already fairly established in a permanent community, the introduction of these European birds presumably ushers in a more agrarian lifestyle, as the Indians become less dependent on hunting for their meals. In addition, this new commodity presents the issue of ownership—previously irrelevant when the tribe subsisted solely on free-ranging native animals—which could lead to further social stratification due to these mobile symbols of wealth. Along with the Old World technology, the new livestock would then serve to translate the island into the reflection of a proper European or British colony. In this way, Unca and John would restructure the entire island community—the religious system, the means of nutritional production, the social hierarchy—to mimic European conceptions of culture and convenience. Naturally privileging European society as universally appealing, Unca portrays the islanders as childishly delighted with the exotic fowl as well as the other British commodities.⁶² Additionally, John Winkfield’s arrival allows Unca to marry, another act that restructures native customs. Unca’s marriage to her cousin also restructures her way of modeling the Christian life for the islanders as the couple builds a marriage that furthers this transplantation process. This island marriage between the biracial Unca and her English cousin brings together the novel’s central themes: the possibilities of the hybrid, the complexity of religion, and promise of interracial love.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Indian and the Anglo: Interracial Love in the Atlantic

Captain Smith and Pocahontas
 Had a very mad affair
 When her daddy tried to kill him
 She said, "Daddy, oh don't you dare
 He gives me fever with his kisses
 Fever when he holds me tight
 Fever, I'm his missus
 Oh Daddy, won't you treat him right."
 --Peggy Lee, "Fever"¹

When I think of *Pocahontas*, I am ready to love Indians.
 --Herman Melville²

The imperial landscape that Unca's narrative addresses in 1767 is complex at best as commercial and imperial issues continued to frame Europe's colonial relations with the American Indians: the fur and slave trades, the effects of English expansionism, trade goods, and technologies on indigenous peoples, Caribbean struggles with Spain, as well as Protestant and Catholic competition for influence of the American natives. At the same time, however, many Anglo-Americans were rethinking how the colonies could have more satisfactorily negotiated their early interactions with the North American natives. In a time when a handful of European voices both in England and America looked back on what they saw as the now lost opportunity for a more peaceful cultural contact between Anglo colonists and America's Indians, *The Female American* offers a revision of what many viewed as England's colonial failures in America, most prominently through offering the possibility of a successful interracial union between the colonial William and his Indian bride Unca.

The theme of interracial love in *The Female American* and in the eighteenth-century arena of intercultural contact reveals the complicated nature of English and Indian relationships in the New World, a dialectic of dread and desire that is clearly illustrated in the well-known story of Pocahontas. *The Female American* is among the first works of fiction on either side of the Atlantic to resurrect the Pocahontas legend. However, the author of *The Female American* is one of the most innovative in using the famous Indian's rescue of a colonist to further the novel's central themes of hybridity, travel, and religion. And while scholars continue to debate whether Pocahontas truly deserves the credit for rescuing Captain Smith as well as what may have motivated her to save the Englishman's life if she did, *The Female American* leaves no doubt as to Unca's role in saving William Winkfield or in assuring the reader that she acted out of an instantaneous love she had developed for the captive colonist.

The Female American's depiction of romance between an Indian and a colonist, and between the hybrid Unca and her English cousin, reflects the eighteenth-century reader's deep-rooted interest in interracial love stories. The Pocahontas myth was the most celebrated of these cross-cultural love stories; however, it is certainly not the only tale of its kind. During the same time period, a similarly intercultural story of Inkle and Yarico was immensely popular. With at least forty-five versions appearing between 1710 and 1810 in English, French, and German with additional translations throughout Europe, the details of the story vary widely; however, they share a few key episodes. When an Englishman named Inkle is shipwrecked, a native girl named Yarico cares for him, and the pair fall in love. However, after an English ship returns them to European society in Barbados, Inkle betrays his love for Yarico by selling her as a slave. The roots for this story are disputed, but Richard Steele's *Spectator* version in 1711 is generally agreed to be the "most influential of the early versions."

Although the story of interracial love and loss was never developed into a full-length novel, Inkle and Yarico's legend spread quickly across Europe with versions appearing as "prose sketches, 'historical' narratives, poems . . . , plays, ballets, pantomimes and musicals." This widespread popularity, according to Hulme, allows the modern scholar a glimpse into the collective consciousness of eighteenth-century Europe: "English (and European) society chose persistently" to tell and retell the story of Inkle and Yarico.³ However, around 1810, Inkle and Yarico suddenly faded into obscurity, in contrast to the Pocahontas myth, which grew even more popular in the nineteenth century.

Since the Pocahontas story was first told in 1624, the narrative has become an international epic. The few details provided by Smith and his contemporaries provide a "skeletal narrative" that has given rise to extensive speculation in subsequent centuries. Pocahontas's relationships with European men and the notion that romance could lead to "cultural harmony" between colonizers and the colonized stand at the heart of this legend. As Christian Feest writes, Pocahontas "legitimizes the Anglo-American presence in North America" when she saves Smith's life. This epic rescue, however, is just the beginning. With her marriage to Rolfe, Pocahontas seems to legitimate the transfer of the Indians' native land to the newly arrived British colonists and dooms her people to subservience. Finally, she dies while still in her youth, symbolically bowing out of the transatlantic scene and making way for "Euroamerican expansion as all good Indians should do."⁴ The romantic story of a beautiful, young Indian "princess" who rescues a dashing and brave British colonist from certain death at the hands of her bloodthirsty tribe has become a standard myth in America's history. "It is," in one scholar's eyes, "our oldest myth. . . . It is the story of the beginning of our nation,

our tree of life: Pocahontas rescuing John Smith and thereby making the New World safe for Christianity.”⁵

Even without the inevitable mutations that imagine the lovestruck pair living happily ever after, the account is, of course, a fairytale. It is, in the words of Hulme, the story of “an ‘original’ encounter of which no even passably ‘immediate’ account exists, a blank space which has not been allowed to remain empty.” Nevertheless, the narrative has received extensive critical analysis. The legend of Pocahontas has been manipulated to serve various objectives, including the justification of the European colonial project that will eventually be adopted by the United States and rationalized as the workings of Manifest Destiny. As Rountree notes, “the lady [Pocahontas],” and her story, “has been mythologized out of all recognition. And that mythologizing is what most books about Pocahontas really discuss, for historical records about her are scarce.” In fact, Rayna Green, among others, deplores the “intolerable metaphor” of the Pocahontas story, which sanctions white men’s “lust” for native women.⁶ Diversely identified as Powhatan’s daughter, Smith’s savior, Indian informer, English captive, Christian convert, John Rolfe’s wife, Thomas Rolfe’s mother, and transatlantic traveler, the identity of Pocahontas demonstrates the complexity of Anglo-Indian colonial contact. The constant object of misinterpretation, Pocahontas is often portrayed as the “same old white man’s fantasy of an Indian princess.” For example, in Disney’s 1995 animated version, Pocahontas “comes off as a woodland pleasure seeker, an untapped sex object just waiting for a white man to set her passions free. She is also a super Indian woman. She can sing, paddle a canoe, talk with the animals, and save a white man in under two hours.”⁷

Pocahontas’s interconnected roles as John Smith’s savior and John Rolfe’s wife perhaps best illustrate the complexity of interracial love in the colonial American contact zone, an

arena of transcultural exchange that continued to intrigue and influence the Euroamerican reading public well after the primary characters had passed from the transatlantic stage.

At the core of the Pocahontas story lies the “ideal of cultural harmony through romance.”

In the mid-nineteenth century’s fascination with cross-cultural exchange between Indians and whites as witnessed by the Anglo-American popularity of captivity narratives, the story of Pocahontas stands out as the most entrenched and idealized interracial love story, an evocative backdrop against which *The Female American* was written.



The event that has catapulted Pocahontas to such dizzying heights of fame can, of course, never be corroborated. For many, the most troubling aspect of Pocahontas’s supposed rescue is that John Smith’s skeletal accounts do not offer any motive for Pocahontas’s behavior.

This void, according to Hulme, is part of the reason the rescue has garnered such enduring attention: this lack of motive is “what the mythic versions [of the Pocahontas story] always feel the need to supply.” Smith claimed that Pocahontas saved his life during his captivity in late December 1607 or early January 1608. Smith’s account of his near-death experience at the hands of the Powhatan tribe is first, and most completely, recounted in Smith’s *Generall Historie, New-England, and the Summer Isles* in 1624, nearly two decades after the events it purports to cover. Though Smith had made earlier references to Pocahontas as Powhatan’s daughter and as a playful girl who enjoyed participating in lively games with the English children, this 1624 *General Historie* is his first full revelation of his capture in December 1607 by the Powhatans and of his rescue by the girl he termed the “non-pareil” of Virginia.

After several days in captivity, Smith was brought before Powhatan, the leader of the Virginia Algonquians, and he suddenly faced execution:

Having feasted him [Smith] after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before Powhatan: then as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beats out his braines, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper.⁸

Smith's description has ever since lighted the imagination of writers, who have retold his tale with varying degrees of accuracy, but the popularity of Smith's extraordinary adventure and eventual rescue by Powhatan's daughter reached a notable high point during the mid-nineteenth century. Samuel Griswold Goodrich's melodramatic 1843 version of Pocahontas rushing to save Smith's life is worth quoting at length:

And now comes a scene which has never failed to touch the heart and excite the interest of the reader—and one which has few parallels in history. The fatal club was uplifted; one instant more and the wretched victim had been struck dead, when Pocahontas, the young, amiable and beauteous daughter of the emperor, uttered a scream of terror and agony, which arrested the blow. With disheveled hair and eyes streaming with tears, she threw herself upon the body of Smith, clasped his head in her arms, and, by the most imploring looks, directed towards her father, solicited the life of the captive. The royal executioner suspended his blow in amazement,

and looked round upon his warriors. Either a respect for the gallant prisoner, or admiration of the noble behavior of his fair friend, had moved their hearts. Powhatan read in their looks a sentiment of mercy, and spared the life of the doomed victim. Such is the narrative of the most striking and dramatic incident in the whole history of the North American Indians.⁹

The story of Smith's rescue has blossomed into a genre of its own; however, the sensational drama of a dashing hero rescued in the nick of time by a beautiful woman is hardly unique to Smith's account, for which various antecedents have been found, most notably an episode recounted by Richard Hakluyt in his 1609 travel book. Published in London during the same year that Smith returned to England after his gunpowder injury, Hakluyt's narrative recounts the story of Juan Ortiz, a Spanish soldier who was captured in 1529 by Hirrigua Indians near Tampa, Florida. As in Smith's 1624 account, Ortiz was rescued from impending death by an Indian "princess," Chief Ucita's daughter Ulalah. Though Ortiz faced execution by fire rather than clubbing, the parallels of a European man liberated by a native chief's daughter are unmistakable. In a similar vein, another scholar has likened Pocahontas to Doña Marina, the captive Native American who becomes Hernando Cortez's interpreter then his lover during the Spanish conquest of Mexico.¹⁰ However, the rescue tale's roots don't end in the sixteenth century and aren't confined to Europe's newfound lands in the Americas. In *Pocahontas: The Life and the Legend*, Frances Mossiker reveals that the legend of a "hero" who is detained by a "foreign despot" and then freed by the "despot's daughter" is a story that is "not only archetypal but universal, a part of folklore." First citing stone-age customs that required a man to attain a wife via abduction or sale, Mossiker refers to several other examples of this theme throughout history and literature, including interactions

between Medea and King Aetis, Ariadne and Crete's King Minos, Shakespeare's Portia and Shylock, and Rebecca of *Ivanhoe* and Isaac of York.¹¹

This theme, especially the New World rendering of a white man rescued by an Indian princess, has grown to prominence in American literature. By the nineteenth century, the Pocahontas story was already a fashionable literary device and was incorporated into many popular works, including Catherine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*—in which Magawisca rescues Everell from her father's deadly weapon—and E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Three Beauties, or Shannondale*, with its Pocahontas-inspired legend of "Lover's Leap." Southworth's inclusion of the Pocahontas story reveals the widespread appeal of the rescue tale. According to Mossiker, "Southworth, finding no practical way to get an Indian into her plot, inserted an episode in which an old priest tells the legend of Lover's leap." In fact, one scholar contends that Southworth included the Pocahontas-inspired section simply because "the tale of an Indian maiden rescuing a white man was so popular that including it automatically enhanced the novel's appeal whether or not it enhanced the novel's coherent structure."¹²

Since the actual, if contested, events of the early seventeenth century, the mythology of Pocahontas and her companions has evolved. This marked trend begins with Robert Beverly's initial eighteenth century reconstruction of the Smith rescue. At first Pocahontas's marriage to John Rolfe garnered as much attention as her famous rescue of John Smith; however, the ensuing centuries and subsequent retellings have shifted toward subordinating the Powhatan princess's relationship with Rolfe and focusing instead primarily on her rescue of Captain Smith.¹³ The need to find a hero to valorize was balanced by the fear of miscegenation in the retellings. According to scholars, the Pocahontas story's miscegenistic overtones, especially in her seemingly less romantic marriage to Rolfe, gave ethnically sensitive nineteenth-

century readers pause. Eventually the interracial marriage faded from the forefront, initiating the trend toward suppressing Pocahontas's marriage to Rolfe and instead focusing on her melodramatic rescue of Smith. The potential for a love relationship between Pocahontas and Smith is seemingly more palatable to many; in fact, it's been noted that many believe that Smith, rather than Rolfe, actually married Pocahontas. Perhaps this is because the rescue story is potentially more romantic than the pragmatic union of Pocahontas and Rolfe. Or maybe the romance that many invent between Pocahontas and Smith helps explain her motivation to rescue him. It could even be that fabricating a romantic end to Smith's rescue yields simply a neater ending than the narrative complications of Pocahontas's later capture, conversion, and early death in England.

A brief overview of the controversy over the authenticity and precise nature of Pocahontas's supposed rescue of Captain Smith provides one context for exploring the radical narratives of intercultural crossings and interracial love in *The Female American*.¹⁴ As with so many historical events and characters, "The image and story of Pocahontas has consistently been manipulated to reflect the era examining her."¹⁵ Pocahontas and her alleged relationship with Smith have fueled seemingly endless controversy for the past four hundred years. The episode in question is reported to have occurred in the winter of 1607-1608. Some scholars have advanced the theory that any attempts to relate the tale before the 1624 *General Historie*—as in Smith's earlier publications of *A Map of Virginia* (1612), *A Description of New England* (1616), and *New England Trials* (1620 and 1622)—were excised in order to protect England's colonial investment. As J. A. Leo Lemay notes in *Did Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith?*, "for reasons concerning public relations, the Virginia Company officials wanted the Indians to seem friendly" so Smith, or his editors, consciously chose to expunge any incidents

in these accounts that might suggest native hostility. As Smith biographer Philip Barbour puts it, “the famous Pocahontas episode” is an “example of Smith’s politic suppression in 1612 of a hair-raising tale of the rescue of an Englishman from a frightful death.” While the circulation of this frightful tale would have initially been unwelcome to the Virginia Company, which in 1612 was “redoubling its efforts to persuade” emigrants to join its Jamestown colony, by the time Smith’s 1624 narrative was published, Pocahontas’s reputation as the Indian woman who had allegedly saved Smith’s life had grown into a fabled “legend of sorts.”¹⁶ Her popularity—and close relationship to Smith—would by then have been welcome and drawn fresh interest to the American colony. In addition, it is possible that Smith never intended to hide the story. In Smith’s 1624 narrative, he claims to have detailed the rescue in a letter of 1616 to Queen Anne. Supposedly quoting from that letter—which is alternately regarded as lost or fabricated—Smith credits Pocahontas with his salvation: “After some six weeks fattig amongst those Salvage Courtiers, at the minute of my execution, she [Pocahontas] hazarded the beating out of her owne braines to save mine.”¹⁷

Despite what some perceive as inconsistencies in Smith’s accounts, the captain’s version provides our only firsthand account of the events. Detractors—including many who accuse Smith of concocting his dramatic tale in order to “boost his status after Pocahontas had achieved posthumous fame in England”¹⁸—argue that Smith’s belated story indicates a fabrication that neither Pocahontas nor Powhatan could refute since they were both dead by 1624; however, others have noted that several major Jamestown figures were still around to contest Smith’s account if necessary, and none seem to have offered to contradict Smith’s story. Many have pointed out Smith’s frequent claims that native women came to his rescue. His rescue by Pocahontas is one of various similar incidents recounted in his tales—in his

1630 *True Travels*, Smith includes the account of an earlier escape from captivity with the aid of a woman in Turkey¹⁹—and he writes that he is indebted to many noble ladies, including Pocahontas, for his life. Though history has since challenged Smith and his claims, with the appearance of Smith's narrative in 1624, the Pocahontas rescue story was accepted as fact for centuries. It has subsequently been celebrated in countless histories and fictions—Pocahontas's "brave act" is said to have been "recast and retold more often than any other American historical incident during the colonial and antebellum periods."²⁰ Smith's legend enjoyed widespread popularity until the mid-eighteenth century.

In 1860 while preparing an edition of Edward Maria Wingfield's *Discourse of Virginia*, Charles Deane began to raise questions about Smith's account of his capture by the Powhatan Indians and his dramatic rescue by Powhatan's young daughter Pocahontas. Soon Henry Adams, basing much of his reluctance to accept Smith's seemingly fanciful tale on the nearly seventeen-year delay in reporting his rescue by Pocahontas, voiced his own doubts. Arguing that Smith "wanted to exploit Pocahontas' legendary aura for his own selfish purposes" especially since the Powhatan lady was dead and could no longer dispute his claims, Adams accused Smith of being a "vainglorious liar." Though William Wirt Henry refuted Adams's allegations, other historians and scholars joined the debate—leading Adams to assert in an 1867 of the *North American Review* that everyone would soon be called on to take sides either for or against the authenticity of the rescue account. The dispute soon became a "symbol of the civil strife between the states."²¹ In this era of post-Civil War hostility of North against South, historians on both sides of the controversy sought to legitimize their increasingly divergent conceptions of national origins. By challenging Smith's version of events, some sought to undermine the importance of Jamestown by labeling it as a vile, commercial

venture while lauding the later settlement at Plymouth Rock for its more lofty, religious purpose. In addition, Adams in particular has been accused of “South-baiting.” As Mossiker explains, during this “post-Civil War period marked by vicious sectionalism,” Adams gleefully and intentionally attacked the early American legend of Smith and Pocahontas because he recognized that the “Virginia aristocracy [would] be utterly gravelled by it.” In fact, Adams later acknowledged that the political incentive of discrediting such prominent historical figures as Smith and Pocahontas was more than he could pass up. In his *Education of Henry Adams*, Adams confesses, “No other stone that could be thrown by a beginner would attract as much attention, and probably break as much glass.”²² In their critiques of Smith, both Deane and Adams claim that Smith’s tale must be fabricated because of its relatively late publication. However, Lemay argues that Smith’s adventurous life was replete with near-death encounters. In addition, according to Lemay’s relatively recent defense of Smith’s narrative, “Deane’s and Adam’s great anachronistic fallacy was to assume that the Smith-Pocahontas story dominated the history of Virginia’s early settlement in the early seventeenth century as it dominated the imaginative history of Virginia’s early settlement during the mid-nineteenth century. Nothing could be further from the truth.” And the debate continues.²³

While some seem eager to proclaim a truce, making the blanket assertion that “recent scholars are inclined to credit his [Smith’s] story, fantastic though it seems,”²⁴ many others have posited novel hypotheses, including the theories that Smith’s rescue was actually a ritual adoption, a heroic trial, or an utter fabrication. For example, historian Michael Puglisi contends that Smith’s elaborate reception, feast, and impending execution were all part of a pre-arranged adoption ritual. Native women, Puglisi points out, often made important decisions affecting tribal life, including deciding whether a captive should live or die. Tarrell

Portman and Roger Herring second this idea, adding that the women were often involved in tribal politics and advising their leaders on issues “regarding captives, war, and peace.”²⁵ “Bringing the captive to the point of death and then permitting him to live,” Puglisi continues, “represented an adoption ritual in native societies.” Furthermore, allowing a young girl to act as Smith’s rescuer was a calculated move by which Powhatan intended to impress Smith with the extent of his authority. In other words, Puglisi summarizes, Smith’s near-death experience was actually an elaborately staged adoption ritual and an example of Powhatan’s “strong-armed diplomacy.” In another recent reading, Margaret Holmes Williamson suggests that though it is impossible to know for sure whether or not Smith was truly indebted to Pocahontas for his life, “it is almost certain that during his capture he was initiated as a Powhatan *werowance*, or chief.” Williamson suggests that Pocahontas’s “rescue” of Smith was a political act, though Williamson seems more interested in the fact that native women were active in tribal affairs than Pocahontas’s role in Smith’s (real or imagined) ordeal. In a discussion of what Williamson terms native women’s “syntagmatic relationship with men”—when they acted “as agents for their male relatives”—she notes that Pocahontas herself participated in this political arena on another occasion: when she was sent by her father in 1608 “to plead for the release of some Indians held captive there.”²⁶ Therefore, the reasoning goes, it is not unlikely that Pocahontas could have been an active agent in the political performance of adopting Smith, a foreigner, into the Powhatan chiefdom, a move that might lead to an alliance between these two nations.

Most recently, in an in-depth study Rountree has argued against the rescue story as a whole, whether as actual death sentence, adoption ritual, or any other incarnation. Based on her decades-long research of the Powhatan tribes in particular and Woodland Indians in

general, Rountree systematically deflates several rescue theories. First, Rountree contends, there is no evidence that a young Indian girl, even one of Powhatan's many children, would have reason to be present at Smith's supposed execution. For such an important diplomatic occasion, Powhatan would have surrounded himself with many of his most "decorative" and "nubile" wives. "Gratuitously including an eleven-year-old prepubescent girl," Rountree contends, "would not add one whit to Powhatan's mystique in his own eyes (which were the ones that counted), no matter how witty and intelligent that child was." Besides, Pocahontas would have been needed to help the other women in preparing the enormous feast. So, Rountree reasons, it is unlikely that Pocahontas was even nearby during the interview when she is said to have saved Smith's life. In addition, Rountree points out that "the method of killing a foreigner is all wrong" in Smith's account of his near execution. As Smith delineates in his 1612 *Map of Virginia*, and Rountree has corroborated through research, native tribe members might have their heads bashed in as punishment for various offenses, but foreigners like Smith would have been slowly tortured to death. Further, Rountree wonders why Powhatan would have prepared a lavish banquet for a man he presently intended to execute. Lastly, Rountree questions the "intriguing" theories that Smith's mock-execution was intended as a test of courage or an adoption ritual. "In other Woodland Indian tribes where prisoners were thus tested," Rountree continues, "the trial (usually running the gauntlet) occurred immediately upon the captives' arrival in town." Smith's post-meal ordeal would thus be improperly timed. Rountree also dismisses the popular theory that Pocahontas acted as Smith's protector in a ritual adoption. As with the other theories, the details of Smith's "adoption" are inconsistent with the traditional adoption ceremony procedures that have been observed in other Woodland Indian tribes. Noting the absurdity that such a grand myth has

burgeoned from a few lines in Smith's almost cursory account, Rountree dismisses Smith's elaborate tale as his "tendency"—especially in his later narratives, which were published amid intense cultural clashes and widespread Anglo-Indian violence in the Virginia territories—to characterize the Virginia natives as a vicious tribe, "being prone to sudden, murderous treachery."²⁷

Ultimately, as one Smith biographer has declared, "the truth" about Smith's alleged capture and rescue "lies buried with the Captain and his Indian captors."²⁸ For this study, the actual events of 1607-1608 are less important than the fact of the continuing scholarly debates surrounding Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. The legend of Pocahontas, and especially the stories of interracial love with Smith and Rolfe, that continue to invite scrutiny today would have been significant and familiar for the eighteenth-century readers of *The Female American*. Indeed, the well-known Pocahontas story helps illuminate the complicated cross-cultural expectations at work for readers of the 1767 novel. According to one scholar, the Pocahontas story as an American myth has become so "ingrained in the American consciousness that its authenticity" has in many ways lost its significance. "In the eighteenth and for most of the nineteenth century," Tilton states, "the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas was generally accepted as a mythohistoric fact."²⁹ Because the readers of *The Female American* were familiar with and accepted the veracity of Smith's rescue by the young Powhatan girl, the significance of the eighteenth-century author's use of this American tale in her own character's "true adventure" is worth investigation. While drawing significantly on the well-established Pocahontas myth, *The Female American* complicates the traditional story. *The Female American* is a revisionist narrative that certainly acknowledges the

Pocahontas legend even as it rewrites its characterization of cross-cultural contract and the effects of European exploration and colonization on America's indigenous peoples.

The Pocahontas legend reigned in popularity when *The Female American* introduced its evocative revision of the myth. But Pocahontas was already well-known in Anglo-American history as a heroine: "Pocahontas's role as the savior of Smith, whether based on love at first sight, her inherent humanity, or divine intervention, is to this day her best-known persona."³⁰ As we have seen, for the past four hundred years scholars have sought in vain to uncover Pocahontas's motivation for saving Smith. While recent scholars have suggested that she was simply participating in a political drama or playing a prearranged role in an adoption ritual, for many early commentators her otherwise "inexplicable" action could only be rationalized as the "spontaneous gesture of an instant love." Among several early texts that attribute Pocahontas's rescue of Smith to her love for him are Edward Kimber's *Short Account of the British Plantations in America* (1755) and John Davis's *Farmer of New Jersey* (1800). The emphasis on Pocahontas's romantic motivation for rescuing Smith combined with the paucity of actual facts has led to a singular phenomenon of rewriting history in order to couple Smith and Powhatan's daughter. "Every school child knows," as Philip Barbour cheekily reminds us, "that Captain Smith was a hero, a historian, and Pocahontas's sweetheart."³¹

Many believe that Pocahontas married John Smith rather than John Rolfe. Leslie Fiedler, among others, has even remarked that Pocahontas "married the wrong man."³² Smith has been regaled by Stephen Vincent Benét as the "Lover of ladies in a dozen lands." And given Smith's reputation as the "most intriguing personality in the Jamestown colony" and "a dashing young bachelor of twenty-six, with twirled mustache and neatly trimmed beard," Woodward wonders how Pocahontas could resist his charms.³³ According to most other

accounts, of course, Smith was a rather short and none-too-handsome man. And even if Smith were attractive by European standards, that may not have guaranteed his appeal to Pocahontas, who, like many native women, may likely have been repulsed by the unfamiliar sight of a European man. Whether or not there was a physical attraction between Pocahontas and Smith, even some who reject a romantic affair suggest that the Indian and the colonist enjoyed a special bond. Mossiker insists that Pocahontas's assiduousness toward the captain indicates that "she had made a commitment at the altar [the rock upon which she supposedly flung her body to protect him from the bashing], that she had assumed a responsibility for Smith." And Pauline Turner Strong argues that though Smith carefully denies the existence of any sexual relationship with Pocahontas, Pocahontas's initial rescue and subsequent aid of Smith and his countrymen reveals that she felt herself "bound" to Smith "with enduring ties of affection and obligation." Indeed, Pocahontas's early death has been attributed to her shock at meeting Smith, whom she had thought was dead, in England: The reunion between Pocahontas and Smith "at Brentford is therefore a tragic climax, Pocahontas confronting her true love, the man she *should* have married if only she had known he was still alive, a final meeting that would break her heart."³⁴ Whatever feelings there might have been between Pocahontas and the captain, any notion of a romantic relationship between the pair is the uncorroborated product of invention.



Explorers have been motivated by many virtuous impulses. Power, fortune, and reputation may be traditional incentives, but the pursuit of paradise, however one defines it, is often

high on the list. In the early transatlantic expeditions by European men, that vision of paradise often entailed an idyllic setting boasting abundant food, plenty of relaxation, and the company of beautiful natives. Returning voyagers reported that the exotic Indian women couldn't get enough of the irresistible European men. In 1497, Amerigo Vespucci claimed that the Indian women couldn't resist the more civilized European visitors, writing that the American natives "showed themselves very desirous of copulating with us Christians."³⁵ This dream didn't soon die. As Stymeist has noted, the "fantasy" that an English colonist could marry an Indian maiden emerged as a "significant part of the official advertisement for the settling of Virginia" between 1605 and 1622. The Virginia Company, eager to succeed in their transatlantic venture and reap the intended profits, consciously attempted to exterminate the "savage" Indian stereotype and in its place propagated the image of the American natives as "submissive, attractive, and marriageable aboriginal" peoples. Ironically, after allowing several Euro-American marriages with Indians—most prominently, the Pocahontas-Rolfe union—the Virginia Company ultimately chose to discourage such intermarriages as the breaking of cultural taboos. Early in England's colonial history, in a move designed to promote the English version of colonization as superior to the Spaniard's less "moral" approach, Sir Walter Raleigh instituted a prohibition against miscegenation between Englishmen and Native American women:

They [the Arawaks] began to conceive the deceit and purpose of the Spaniards, who indeed (as they confessed) tooke from them both their wives, and daughters daily, and used them for the satisfying of ther owne lusts, especially such as they tooke in this maner by strength. . . . I neither know nor beleeve, that any of our companie, by violence or other wise, ever knew any of their women, and yet we saw many hundreds,

and had many in our power, and those very yoong, and excelently favored which came among us without deceit, starke naked. Nothing got us more love among them then this usage, for I suffered not anie man so much as to offer to touch any of their wives or daughters.

Cementing Raleigh's proscription in 1611, Sir Thomas Gate added an anti-miscegenation clause to his declaration of martial law in Virginia, and Governor Thomas Dale codified Raleigh's injunction in his 1612 "Lawes Divine, Morall and Martial," which protects both European and native women against sexual violence: "no man shall ravish . . . any woman, maid or Indian, or other, upon pain of death."³⁶ Though Stymeist maintains that Governor Dale's regulations were intended to outlaw intermarriage between the settlers and native women, such interracial marriages remained legal in Virginia until 1691. However, notes Stymeist, the primary impetus for this antimiscegenation legislation was the intense anxiety of those in the colony that some of their own might be tempted to "go native." The weight of previous colonial failures—including the Lost Colony of John White, which "lost" its participants to attack and assimilation between 1587 and 1590—as well as the threat of desertion and insurrection combined in Jamestown to culminate in Governor Dale's martial law warning against Anglo-Indian sexual relations.

Despite Rolfe's notorious marriage to Pocahontas, English settlers were reluctant to acquire native brides for various reasons. Many European Protestants chose not to cross the cultural divide because of biblical warnings against marrying heathens. Others refrained from intermarriage due to the possibility of contracting syphilis, their fears about native intentions, the Algonquins' relatively free premarital sexual standards, and their own social aspirations, which were generally not improved with a native marriage. Struggling to survive in a harsh

new land, some of the colonists were determined to maintain their distance from the natives, a means of maintaining their sense of identity as “civilized in contrast to those they perceived as barbaric savages. Finally, many colonists were wary of Anglo-Indian intermarriage because they feared the Indians might use such unions to gain access to their colony.

For their part, most Indian women were themselves disinclined to accept Englishmen as husbands because the natives tended to view the colonists’ hunting skills as inadequate for providing for themselves let alone for a wife and family. According to Portman and Herring, Native American women were “successful agriculturists” who played many important roles in their communities; they “made clothing, reared children, preserved food, did bead and quill work, made birch bark canoes, kept fur traders in snowshoes and moccasins, and trapped small fur-bearing animals.”³⁷ Being responsible for their tribe’s sustenance, native women would understandably be reluctant to depend on an incompetent hunter. Though Powhatan allowed his captive daughter Pocahontas to be wed to Rolfe, he resolutely rejected Governor Dale’s proposal of marriage to another of Powhatan’s daughters in May 1614. There are multiple possible explanations as to why Powhatan was unwilling to consent to this second marriage. The circumstances surrounding his first daughter’s union—her seizure as a political hostage that culminated in religious conversion and then her wedding to Rolfe—suggest that in a different situation, one in which Powhatan’s daughter was safe among her own people, he was less willing to allow an additional marital connection between his tribe and the Anglos. In addition, this time around Powhatan’s daughter, Governor Dale’s intended “wife and bedfellow,” was already betrothed to an Indian chief so she wasn’t available anyway. Additionally, Governor Dale was also already married to a wife in England. Although Powhatan had multiple wives, polygamy was obviously against British moral standards, a

fact that Powhatan certainly would have known.³⁸ Whatever the reason, Powhatan refused Governor Dale's offer, saying he couldn't bear to part with another daughter. Ultimately, Stymeist concludes, the Virginia Company seemed to vacillate in their stance on New World marriages. While "busily advertising the allure of exotic intermarriages," the Company's promoters were also "actively engaged in shipping English women over to Virginia as prospective wives for the colonists. In 1620, for instance, the Company shipped over 180 English women, demanding a price of 130 to 150 pounds of tobacco per bride."³⁹

In this colonial climate that seemed to frown on serious Anglo-Indian fraternization, John Rolfe decided to marry Pocahontas. Speculation has been rampant about what could have stimulated Rolfe's desire for Powhatan's daughter. Was it love, religious duty, or simply loneliness that prompted Rolfe to seek the Indian for his wife? Rolfe represents his motives for choosing Pocahontas as his bride as rather selfless and pragmatic. In a letter to Governor Dale in which he requests the governor's permission to marry Pocahontas, Rolfe denies that his romantic feelings are the result of "unbridled desire of carnall affection." Instead, he outlines his more lofty goals in attaching himself to Powhatan's daughter. His marital desires are, Rolfe contends, "for the good of this plantation, for the honour of our countrie, for the glory of God, for my owne salvation, and for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, an unbeleeving creature, namely Pokahuntas."⁴⁰ Rolfe's attitude seems to be divided: he acknowledges his own feelings but presents himself as selflessly intent on fulfilling a code of communal, as opposed to individualistic, morality. Rountree claims that "all accounts agree" that Pocahontas and Rolfe "fell in love with each other," an assertion that is substantiated largely by Smith's statement that for some time before Rolfe's letter to Governor Dale, "Master John Rolfe, an honest Gentleman, and of good behaviour, had beene

in love with Pocahontas, and she with him.”⁴¹ Popular opinion clings to the romantic belief in an undeniable infatuation between the pair. David Price’s recent journalistic account of the Pocahontas legend imagines Rolfe—a colonist who has endured the loss of his first wife and child and is again lonely among the nearly all-male inhabitants of Jamestown—as attracted by Pocahontas’s “exotic” appearance: “her light brown skin, her dark eyes, and the long hair running down her back” coupled with her “exceptional vitality” and “intelligence” attracted the widower’s attention. Helpless to resist her charms, Price continues, Rolfe was soon “distracted by day with thoughts of her, and sleepless by night. Finally he surrendered to the inevitable and sat down to compose a letter to Sir Thomas Dale explaining that he wished to marry the captive princess.”⁴²

In his letter, Rolfe reveals that it is with Pocahontas that his “hartie and best thoughts are, and have a long time bin so intangled.” He describes his struggles to suppress his feelings for the Indian hostage, including his attempt to escape the situation by taking “some rest.” However, Rolfe admits that he continued to be tormented until he realized that his Christian duty required him to work for Pocahontas’s salvation. Ultimately, Rolfe argues that his desire to marry Pocahontas is not based on improper lust or desperation: “the vulgar sort,” he writes, might “taxe or taunt me in this my godly labour.” However, Rolfe continues, “let them know, it is not any hungry appetite, to gorge my selfe with incontineny.” In addition, Rolfe is aware of the damage his marriage to Pocahontas might do to his reputation: “Nor am I in so desperate an estate, that I regard not what becommeth of mee.” In fact, Rolfe points out, he has a good reputation and good friends. He comes from respectable people and could surely find a more conventional wife, but he loves Pocahontas. He concludes that he is aware of the many objections to his marriage: “I know them all, and have not rashly overslipped any.”⁴³

One of Rolfe's major bargaining points is his self-justification that he can win Pocahontas to the Christian faith through a more intimate relationship with her. In fact, he characterizes his proposed union with Pocahontas as his religious duty. Struggling with his overworked conscience and his sense of Anglo propriety, Rolfe frames his mission as follows:

The holy spirit of God, hath often demaunded of me, why I was created? If not for transitory pleasures and worldly vanities, but to labour in the Lords vineyard, there to sow and plant, to nourish and increase the fruites thereof, daily adding with the good husband in the Gospell, somewhat to the tallent, that in the end the fruites may be reaped, to the comfort of the laborer in this life, and his salvation in the world to come?

Once Pocahontas revealed her willing mind, Rolfe became more convinced of his Christian duty: "Shall I be so untoward a disposition, as to refuse to leade the blind into the right way? Shall I be so unnaturall, as not to give bread to the hungrie? or uncharitable, as not to cover the naked? Shall I despise to actuate these pious dueties of a Christian?" As Woodward puts it, when Rolfe realized Pocahontas's "capacity for adapting to English ways of life, including the Christian faith, the lonely Rolfe began pondering the possibility of marriage to this young, attractive woman." However, Rolfe carefully continued to tread the line. Despite any passion he might feel for his intended bride, he had to represent their union as a colonial experiment. Their marriage would testify to the potential benefits of interracial mingling in this new land. But more importantly it would let the English world know that the Indians they feared could successfully be "converted, tamed, and made into useful citizens of the empire."⁴⁴

In addition to the complexities of interracial attraction and religious duty, the relationship between Rolfe and Pocahontas is also complicated by the issue of social classes

and political hierarchies. It has often been speculated that King James was offended by the audacity of Rolfe, a commoner, in marrying a foreign princess as Pocahontas was assumed to be, given the lack of understanding among the English about the social and political structure of Powhatan's people. Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas would in principle be offensive to the British royalty because he was a commoner presuming to marry someone with royal blood. However, potentially more threatening to England's throne was the idea that Rolfe or his offspring might claim Virginia—and beyond—for themselves. There had been a similar fear among the colonists earlier that Smith might try to claim all of Virginia as his own by wedding Pocahontas, the "princess" of Virginia. In 1612, Smith's contemporaries suggested that "some prophetic spirit calculated [that Smith] had the savages in such subjection he would have made himself a king by marrying Pocahontas, Powhatan's daughter." However, in Powhatan society, in which political power was matrilineally inherited, Smith's marriage to Pocahontas would have gained him little political sway and definitely not the chieftom. Though Smith's 1612 account records that he never entertained the thought of marrying Powhatan's daughter himself—and none of his friends "in honest reason and discretion" thought he had those intentions—they boasted that "if Smith had wanted to marry her, or do anything else he felt like doing, nobody could have stopped him."⁴⁵

Despite the admission that a marriage between the colonists and the Indians would not gain the Englishmen political power, Smith claims that Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas forged a sudden but long-lasting alliance between the Englishmen and Powhatan's people: "Ever since wee have had friendly trade and commerce, as well with Powhatan himselfe, as all his subjects." Though this seems self-congratulatory on the settlers' part, Townsend makes the case that Pocahontas could have engaged in her relationship with Rolfe—from religious

conversion to marriage and a child—as a political act. In an effort to discern why Pocahontas would willingly abandon her own life and culture to embrace the Anglo foreigners, Townsend suggests that Pocahontas, with the approval of her father, decided that for the survival of the Indians and for peace between the striving nations she would build an alliance with the English: “In a time-honored custom, she married with the enemy and bore children who owed allegiance to both sides.” Just as the Indian tribes were allied through intertribal unions, Pocahontas opened the door to the English settlers, inviting these “strangers into the political family.” Daniel Richter concurs with this theory, noting that Pocahontas united the Anglo colonists with the Virginia Algonquians: “Through her, the English and the Powhatans became fictive kin, and the ceremonial, political and economic basis for peace, as the people of Tsenacommacah understood that concept, became possible.”⁴⁶

Rolfe’s marriage to Pocahontas has been termed “the great archetype of Indian-white conjugal union.”⁴⁷ Though some simply emphasize the romance between the colonist and Powhatan’s daughter, others have viewed their marriage as a significant intercultural merger that could have, or perhaps even should have, connected the Europeans to their American neighbors. In the eighteenth century, amid Indian troubles, thinkers such as William Byrd, Peter Fontaine, and Robert Beverly looked back at the model of Rolfe’s marriage to Pocahontas as a lost opportunity to bridge the gap between foreigner and native. As we have seen, this eighteenth-century perspective is critical because it illuminates the audience at the heart of this study, the transatlantic reading public of *The Female American*. If Indian-European intermarriages had been more common, these contemporaneous scholars theorized, “then perhaps the continual animosity between the races, which appeared to

many commentators in the eighteenth century to be an unavoidable legacy to their own descendants, might have been averted.”⁴⁸

Two outstanding examples of this supposition should be noted here. William Byrd, an eighteenth-century Virginian planter, in his 1728 *Histories of the Dividing Line* records three crucial benefits to marriages between Indians and white European immigrants. First, the colonists’ willingness to enter into marriage bonds with the American natives would have contributed to a more peaceful coexistence. Instead, the natives became wary of colonists. In addition, Byrd argues that if the British truly wanted to civilize and convert the Indians, intermarriage was the only feasible solution. Finally, a willingness to marry the Indians would have helped justify the acquisition of native lands. In Byrd’s words, “The poor Indians would have had less reason to complain that the English took their lands, if they had received it by way of a marriage portion with their daughters.” Three decades later while defending the practice of African slavery in Virginia, Reverend Peter Fontaine reiterated Byrd’s claim, adding that if the English had married Indian brides, “it would have been some compensation for their [Indian] lands” and the English would have more clearly been “the rightful heirs” to these Indian lands.⁴⁹ This missed chance to combine the Indian and the European into a unified American race was much bemoaned by those who blamed the early colonists for failing to grasp the potential opportunity. This view is well summarized in Robert Beverly’s *History and Present State of Virginia* (1705):

Intermarriage had been indeed the Method proposed very often by the *Indians* in the Beginning, urging it frequently as a certain Rule, that the *English* were not their friends, if they refused it. And I can’t but think it wou’d have been happy for that Country, had they embraced this Proposal. . . . and, in all Likelihood, many, if

not most, of the *Indians* would have been converted to Christianity by this kind Method; the Country would have been full of People, by the Preservation of the many *Christians* and *Indians* that fell in the Wars between them.⁵⁰

Although intermarriage between colonists and Indian women was frowned on and even a punishable offense as early as the seventeenth century, clearly some thoughtful colonists saw potential benefits, especially to the English, of such commingling. Such social overtures by the Englishmen would help them gain the trust of—and keep the peace with—the Indians. In addition, the Indians might be more willing to part with their land if they saw it as a dowry for their daughters. In fact, Byrd suggests that the English colonists' refusal to intermarry with the Indians offended the natives and raised their suspicions about the white people's intentions—suspicions that were, of course, thoroughly justified.⁵¹ Also, as in Rolfe's religiously motivated marriage to Pocahontas, the colonists had the potential to civilize and convert the heathen Indians one at a time and to fill the American wilds with their Christian offspring. In the Rolfe-Pocahontas marriage between a British colonist and an Indian woman, there is the model of an Indian who, along with her descendents, becomes civilized and Christianized. As Fontaine wrote in 1757 with revealing exposure of his racist distaste for Indians only a bit less severe than his horror of black-white miscegenation, if the model of Anglo-American intermarriage had been followed, English conquest of Indian lands would have appeared more just:

We [European colonists] should become rightful heirs to their [Indian] lands, and should not have smutted our blood [by taking African wives], for the Indian children when born are as white as Spanish or Portuguese, and were it not for the practice of going naked, in the summer and besmearing themselves with bears' grease, etc., they

would continue white; and had we thought fit to make them our wives, they would readily have complied with our fashion of wearing clothes all the year round; and by doing justice to these poor benighted heathen, we should have introduced Christianity amongst them.⁵²

While many contented themselves with lamenting the unfortunate path of Anglo-Indian interaction that rejected the option of intermarriage, the author of *The Female American* rewrote history, employing the familiar seventeenth-century Pocahontas myth to amend, at least fictively, the eighteenth-century reality.



A consideration of interracial love stories like the Pocahontas-Rolfe marriage or *The Female American's* cross-cultural relationships inevitably leads to the related issue of hybrid-ethnic offspring. In Anglo-American writing, the children of interracial marriages are generally depicted in one of two ways. One group is portrayed as vicious characters lurking at the fringes of society. These individuals take pleasure in flaunting their freedom from societal boundaries. As Natty Bumppo, who Cooper (and Bumppo himself) makes clear especially in *The Last of the Mohicans* has no “cross” in his blood even if his clothes and life suggest otherwise, characterizes the nineteenth-century generation of these mixed race individuals in *The Prairie*, “The half-and-halves that one meets in these distant districts are altogether more barbarous than the real savage.” The other group usually depicts an interracial relationship that results in a child of mixed race. This scenario usually culminates in disaster for the Indian parent in an interracial relationship because these socially conservative narratives

are interested in furthering European dominance. In order for the offspring of these Anglo-American marriages to succeed in the dominant society, the children must grow up as part of western culture. Interestingly, because the Indian parent usually faces an early death, and sensitive readers wouldn't want to witness the tragic death of a beautiful Indian like Pocahontas, these narratives generally depict an interracial love affair between an Indian man and a European woman. This scenario is played out most notably in Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* and in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*. In both cases, interracial love is consummated; however, it must be punished. The parents often suffer, presumably for the sin of their miscegenation, but the children are allowed to blossom. Importantly, however, these children of mixed race must live their lives in European society. As one scholar notes, it is imperative to most Anglo writers, especially to Cooper, that "no Indians are left to inherit the land." This land then comes under the possession of the European colonists. In this way, intermarriage that is otherwise a taboo can be legitimized as a "practical and effective method of land acquisition" in mainstream literature.⁵³

Many of these literary representations tend to simplify contact in ways that belie the complexity of real-life interracial relationships. Despite Byrd and Fontaine's eighteenth-century claims that Pocahontas's marriage to Rolfe should have been emulated, history records the existence of few Anglo-Indian marriages in seventeenth-century colonial America. One well-documented case is that of John Basse who married Keziah Elizabeth Tucker, a Nansemond woman, in 1638. As in the earlier of marriage of Rolfe and Pocahontas, Basse's wife was baptized and their wedding followed Anglo tradition in that they were joined "in Holy Matrimonie accdg to ye Canons of ye Church of England." However, unlike Rolfe, who lived with Pocahontas at his Virginian plantation among the other English

colonists, Basse and his wife made their home among the Indians. In fact, in the current-day Nansemond of Southside Virginia there is a Bass family that traces their heritage back to John and Keziah Basse. According to Feest, the difference between the Pocahontas-Rolfe marriage and other Anglo-Indian relationships is that most “elite” Virginians looked down on such interracial unions. To avoid the stigma that a mixed race marriage brought, the English husband in interracial marriages generally left the Anglo settlements to live and bring up their children among the Indians. So, ultimately, these mixed marriages did little to help fuse the “native Virginian and emigrant Virginian identities.”⁵⁴ In “The Hidden History of Mestizo America,” Gary Nash examines the trend of settlers who became “white Indians,” choosing native society over European civilization. This mestizo countermovement, he notes, was expressed not with published pamphlets or public speeches but through the nonverbal choice to rupture traditional racial boundaries. Among those Europeans who embraced Indian life are thousands of hostages who preferred to remain with their native captors rather than return to English society when given the opportunity. Significantly, there are far fewer examples of Indians who, like Pocahontas, chose to take the leap into Anglo society. “There must be in [the Indians’] social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us,” J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur writes in *Letters from an American Farmer*, “for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those aborigines having from choice become Europeans.”⁵⁵

This tendency of English men to join their native families and for biracial offspring to live as natives rather than Europeans is especially relevant to the story of John Rolfe and Pocahontas. Rather than fleeing his roots, Rolfe inducted Pocahontas into his Anglo-American culture. Unlike the typical mixed race child who often grew up among his or

her Indian relatives, Pocahontas's son "chose" the English lifestyle. In the aftermath of the Pocahontas legend, it has often been assumed that Thomas Rolfe's choice to live as an Englishman, despite his half-native blood, proves the superiority of Anglo culture. Essentially abandoned by his father after his mother's death, young Thomas grew up in England among his father's relatives in his father's homeland. It is, then, natural that he would feel at home in European society, that he would marry the Englishwoman Jane Pythress and become active in Britain's colonial affairs. Although history questions how willingly Powhatan gave his blessing to Pocahontas in her decision to marry a foreigner, the Indian leader later acknowledged his daughter's son with Rolfe as his descendent. When Thomas returned to Virginia in 1635, the Powhatan Indians presented him with thousands of acres of land in the Jamestown vicinity, a legacy from his maternal grandfather. This gift of native land, though in many ways the property had already landed in Anglo hands, has been interpreted as the Indian's acceptance of Thomas. Notably, Thomas also inherited Varina, his father's tobacco plantation. It is difficult to imagine the various cultural pulls Thomas Rolfe experienced. Though we know that he petitioned the governor in 1641 to be allowed to meet with his mother's relations, including Opechancanough and Pocahontas's sister Matachanna, by 1644 Thomas had joined the English battle against the Indians, fighting as a military officer against Opechancanough's warriors in their second war of resistance.⁵⁶

Native women like Pocahontas who engaged in various levels of relationship with English men certainly participated in cultural interactions. However, in *The Female American* Unca Eliza, as the offspring of an Anglo-Indian marriage, is situated in even more liminal conditions than her mother, the Pocahontas equivalent. In a study of Indian women who played vital roles during many of the early encounters between Europeans and American

natives, Clara Sue Kidwell theorizes that the children of the resulting interracial relationships occupy a unique position: “The offspring of mixed marriages are the next important mediators of cultural exchange. As products of two cultures, they must find their own places in history.”⁵⁷ Writing in English in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is not notable for complex models of hybrid cultural identities available to interracial offspring in colonial settings. In Child’s 1824 *Hobomok*, for example, Charles Hobomok Conant, a mixed-race child born in seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay Colony, is named “Charles” for his mother’s first, English love and “Hobomok” for his native father. After the supposedly dead Charles reappears, Hobomok heads west, giving up his rights to both Mary and their child. Hobomok’s exit restores social order, with Charles Hobomok Conant being educated at Oxford and eventually dropping his middle name, the last outward symbol of his Indian heritage. In comparison to such figures, *The Female American’s* interracial heroine forges an extraordinary course at cultural borders thanks to her combined English and American blood.

Unlike Cooper’s famously Indianized white frontier scout Natty Bumppo who, according to Elizabeth Hanson, is “too white to be an Indian and too wild to be truly civilized,” Unca is a blend of native and Anglo cultures that fosters, rather than hinders, her ability to transition between New and Old World communities.⁵⁸ Like the descendents of Pocahontas and Rolfe, who were esteemed for their “royal lineage” and “apparently pro-English actions,” Unca—though of mixed descent—is unobjectionable to an eighteenth-century British audience in part because she both comes from America’s native royalty yet has accepted essential elements of European culture. In addition, Unca is different from the mixed race characters in other works because her mixed blood empowers her. The

consequences of interracial love in Anglo-American literature are often devastating for the principal characters: misery and death are, according to Tilton, the “inevitable results of such racial and cultural mixings, whether it be on the microcosmic level of miscegenation, or the macrocosmic level of the often violent, always tragic interrelations between the red and white races on the frontiers of the New World.” In particular, Tilton cites the deaths of the main characters in *Atala* (1801) and *René* (1802) by François-René de Chateaubriand. Considered to be an inspiration for Child’s *Hobomok*, *Yamoyden* (1820) by James Wallis Eastburn and Robert Charles Sands tragically but heroically exterminates both parties in an interracial love affair. In *The Wept of Wish Ton-Well* (1829), Ruth, whom Cooper terms the “ill-requited Pocahontas,” is put to death for her sin of miscegenation. In fact, Cooper suggests that Ruth’s death is retribution for her love for Conanchet: “The Great Spirit was angry when they [Ruth and Conanchet] grew together.” Finally, among William Gilmore Simms’s Ned Blonay in *The Partisan* (1835) and *Mellin Champe* (1836), Edgar Allan Poe’s Dirk Peters in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838), and Walt Whitman’s character Boddo in *The Half-Breed* (1837) only Peters escapes a similarly sad fate.⁵⁹ According to Tilton, miscegenation in this era, “even when it is based on true love or has grown out of the most noble of intentions, must be punished.”⁶⁰ Unca, in contrast to her string of literary predecessors, transcends these customary limitations.

By the nineteenth century, the children of intercultural relationships, like Thomas Rolfe for example, “who once, at least in theory, had represented a step on the road to the dream of assimilation, had come to be most often seen as nightmarish beings, who were dismissed by most white Americans as repulsive and ‘unnatural,’ a term with which many seventeenth-century lawmakers would have agreed.”⁶¹ In *The Female American*, however, the

role of the hybrid offspring is rewritten to transform the “unnatural” into the ideal. A look back at the literary legacy of the transatlantic leads one to wonder if Unca’s utopic narrative is possible because it arrived before the solidifying in the early 1800s of Anglo taboos against interracial marriages. Or perhaps the novel’s relatively limited success in the popular literary market is due to the author’s socially ambitious agenda. In *The Female American* the mother—Unca, the Indian woman who acts as the novel’s “Pocahontas”—dies, which as we discovered is traditional in these interracial texts. Additionally, however, *The Female American* also sacrifices the British father—William, who could either play the role of “John Smith” or “John Rolfe.” While both parents meet early deaths, they place their love and their future in the hands of their daughter. Again, *The Female American* defies convention by allowing the offspring—Unca or “Thomas Rolfe”—to not only survive but to thrive in both the British and native worlds.



Beyond a comparison of the real and fictitious offspring of interracial couples, Pocahontas’s relationships with John Smith and John Rolfe are particularly important to Winkfield’s 1767 narrative. Not simply a source for the early events of *The Female American*, the Pocahontas narrative is, of course, crucial to Unca’s tale for its depiction of a successful interracial union. The cultural clash between the Englishmen and the Indians is key to this plot. First, William Winkfield’s capture and near-execution leads to his rescue by the chief’s daughter Unca, who falls for him at first sight. Consummating their relationship with a marriage that the Indian chief endorses, William and Unca produce a very special child, a mixed race character who is

poised to perform in both native and European arenas. For readers in the eighteenth century this emphasis on a tidy unification—without the messy and uncertain history that Pocahontas embodies—can be considered the product of an early “search for . . . national heritage” on the part of the British American colonies.⁶²

The Female American fulfills the traditional fantasy of passion between Smith and his Indian rescuer and solves her problematic relationship with Rolfe by substituting “Smith” in his place. Vicariously through Unca and William Winkfield, one might say, Pocahontas finally gets to marry the right man. Both leading characters in *The Female American* are represented as physically desirable, but Unca possesses more attractions than her exotic beauty as will be seen. For his part, William Winkfield, a twenty-year-old man with a “fair complexion for a man,” is undoubtedly handsome. Though his seemingly average brown hair and black eyes might not adequately convey what his daughter characterizes as his eye-catching looks, the author adds that William is “well shaped.” In an unconvincing attempt at modesty, the author asserts that the description of William’s physical attractiveness is necessary because his looks save his life. Just as William is about to lose his head to the Indian king’s executioner, Unca falls in love with him and spares him. However, *The Female American* outdoes John Smith because the handsome William captures the heart of not one but two Indian princesses: “Alluca [Unca’s sister] had conceived an affection for him at the same time that Unca had, and at the instant that she touched him with her wand, Alluca was about to have done the same.” In fact, Alluca’s love for William is so fierce that it drives her to attempt multiple murders, first with her poisoning of William and then with her successful assassination of Unca.

The colonial male fantasy that assumes the “irresistible sexual attractiveness of their charismatic leaders” is played out through both Smith and William Winkfield. But while

Smith is retained after his near-demise to make copper knick-knacks and beads, William becomes something of a sex slave to his native savior. “Gently led” from his intended execution on a grass leash—“a kind of chain, formed of long grass, round his neck”—held by a scantily clad Indian maiden, William is conducted to a flowery bower where he receives “tender and extraordinary treatment” from Unca. Refreshed with a tasty liquor served in a coconut shell along with an assortment of fruits, William is likewise rejuvenated by Unca’s “looks of ineffable tenderness.” This is perhaps a tamer—and certainly more Christianized, considering *The Female American’s* religious perspectives—version of one of Smith’s many interesting experiences with native women. Claiming to have once been accosted by thirty or more Powhatan women after a ritual dance, Smith describes his own fantasy: after the dance the Indian women “solemnly invited him [Smith] to their lodgings, where he was no sooner within the house, but all these Nymphes more tormented him then ever, with crowding, pressing, and hanging about him, most tediously crying, Love you not me? love you not me?”⁶³

Given Smith’s historical precedent in wooing native women, perhaps William’s success in winning Unca’s affections is to be expected; however, Unca doesn’t have European male fantasies on her side. William’s love for the Indian princess blossoms more slowly. From the English colonist’s perspective, the appeals of interracial love with an Indian woman are a little less palatable. In European fantasy, there is no question that a native would be attracted to a colonist, but that the sentiment might be reciprocated is less obvious. Though thankful to Unca for his life and freedom, William admits that a European man is at first naturally repulsed by the dark complexion of the American natives. With a tongue-in-cheek reference, the author, who begins to introduce Unca as a fair—in this case meaning beautiful—lady,

notes that the princess is not actually William's "fair" but his "black deliverer." This emphasis on the Indian's darker pigmentation reflects a growing Anglo prejudice in the eighteenth century, an attitude present but less developed in earlier versions of the interracial myth. However, William soon overcomes his initial hesitation: he becomes "insensible to the difference" between native and European until he contends that Unca is "not inferior to that of the greatest European beauty." Unca's attractive qualities run much deeper than her appearance. She is also intelligent, kindhearted, and tractable. However, once William has overcome his hesitation over Unca's appearance, he is confronted by another obstacle to their love, her heathenism. Since Unca is a "Pagan," William warns that his God would be never consent to his union with her. So they engage in a "long conversation" and "in a little time the princess became convinced of her errors." Luckily William is a "sensible man" with a solid education, so even though he finds "it not a little difficult to teach another what he yet firmly believe[s] himself," he soon succeeds. With William's guidance, Unca's fertile mind helps her grasp the difficult concepts of the foreign religion. And she accepts William's foreign, Christian God as her own.⁶⁴

The princess's personality—especially her good-humored disposition and quick intellect—eventually win William's heart as well. Through Unca's easy conversation, which the author describes as a constant stream despite the language barrier, William soon understands her native language. Once they can converse more easily, William realizes the extent of her intellect: "her understanding was uncommonly great, pleasantly lively, and wonderfully comprehensive, even of subjects unknown to her." William takes "extraordinary pains to instruct her," and Unca catches on quickly. In addition to her ability to learn, Unca possesses Indian learning, to which William is indebted for his life and love. As an American

native, the author alleges, Unca has an ingrained “knowledge of poisons,” and when William is poisoned Unca quickly administers the antidote to resuscitate him. In fact, with her “remarkable” expertise in the natural world, Unca even finds William some flowers to sniff and clear his brain, which aches as from the “fumes of wine” from Alluca’s poison. When William finally acknowledges his own love for Unca—the author writes that “he loved in his turn”—he represents himself as unable to withstand her allures any longer. At last he gives in. Noting Unca’s remarkable character and her willingness to learn western ways, especially her willingness to accept William’s Christian God, the author declares that William “must have had a heart strangely insensible if such great kindness, joined with such perfections,” had not ultimately won him over.⁶⁵

Busily occupied with their cultural exchanges, Unca and William pass six happy months. Then one day Unca wants to confirm her love for the white man with a wedding so she proposes to William. However, before they join in marriage, Alluca throws a kink in their plans by declaring her own love for William and then poisoning him when he rejects her in favor of her younger sister. While William’s European charm captures the hearts of both princesses, he is true to love rather than bowing to the potential power that a marriage to Alluca might offer. To prevent further repercussions from the intricacies of love, the Indian king suggests a quick wedding, provides the couple a dowry “worthy of a princess,” agrees to a “treaty of friendship” with the Englishmen in order to honor Unca’s marriage to the former prisoner, and then sends the newlyweds to live among the colonists at William’s plantation. In many ways *The Female American’s* depiction of the Indian chief, who is willing to sanction his daughter’s interracial and international marriage, rescues the Pocahontas story and restores the romance. The chief not only allows the marriage, he supports Unca’s union

with William by providing protection and supplying the couple's financial needs as they flee Alluca's fury. Helping to legitimize the Indian-English union, the chief plays a vital role for *The Female American's* transatlantic audience as he eagerly welcomes the British William into his tribe. This historical revision helps make Pocahontas's imprisonment, conversion, and marriage more palatable while simultaneously endorsing the traditional white fantasy of the colonized natives' willing assimilation. In contrast to Powhatan who refused to attend Pocahontas's wedding to Rolfe, Unca's father figures prominently in his daughter's nuptials. After the wedding, the chief entrusts his daughter to William and his white countrymen. The affection the Indian chief feels for his daughter and new son-in-law is apparent when they bid him farewell and in the fact the chief frequently sends gifts to William's plantation along with messengers to "inquire after his children."⁶⁶

Throughout this early section of Unca's narrative, one notices a prominent characteristic of native women: they candidly declare their love for a man rather than playing coy games. First, with the "simplicity of the uncorrupted Indians," Unca puts into words her love for William, although he confesses that her manners had already revealed her feelings for him. Before he has even allowed himself to fall for her, Unca openly declares her love. And later Unca's older sister, also free to express herself in her native culture, also falls in love with William. Speaking as an Indian and a woman, Alluca makes her affection for William clear:

We [American natives] are of opinion that nature has given us the same right to declare our love as it has to your sex; know, Winca [a nickname for William employed by both Unca and Alluca], then, that I have seen you, and that the oftener I have seen you the more I love you; I know my sister loves you, but I am my father's eldest daughter, and as he has no son, whoever married me will be king after his death.⁶⁷

Both women's openness in expressing the sentiments of their hearts is unusual in Anglo-American eighteenth-century novels as the friends of the title character of Susanna Rowson's *The Coquette* make clear. However, the author carefully couches this departure from convention as normal within the boundaries of Indian custom, thus excusing what might seem to be brazen and unwomanly conduct. However, it seems that this detail could reveal more about the author's intent. The sisters' willingness to throw themselves at William could, of course, be a continuation of the colonial fantasy depicting native women's impassioned desire for European men. However, the sexual and verbal liberation shared by Unca and Alluca could reveal the author's challenge of European standards of womanhood by empowering women—even if they are native and thus in some ways outside the traditional conception of the western lady—to express their passion toward a man. *The Female American's* transatlantic setting and intercultural narrative allow a sequence of events that would be impossible within in a conventional eighteenth-century work of fiction.

In Unca's narrative, it is her parents' relationship that most parallels their historical ancestors in the Smith-Pocahontas-Rolfe love triangle. Unca, their hybrid offspring, seems to step outside the traditional boundaries of interracial relationships. As usual, she is exceptional. And again, it seems that her distinctiveness stems from and is facilitated by her intercultural heritage. Unca claims she will marry for love, whether that man is native or European. Afraid that her fortune might attract men more interested in her money than her personality, Unca tolerates her admirers' diversions but allows none of them to touch her heart. Though she says she is uninterested in a man's physical attractiveness, she stipulates that she will only fall in love with a man who is physically capable. Her repeated requirement is that the man she loves needs to be able to handle a bow and arrow as well as she can.

This is reminiscent of American native women, who carefully chose their spouses based on hunting prowess, a sign of how well they could provide for a wife and their growing family. One scholar suggests that if a Powhatan hunter couldn't provide enough meat and pelts to help "feed and clothe his family . . . he might face a divorce."⁶⁸ Unfortunately, Unca's cousin, John the priest, has not fulfilled the bow-shooting prerequisite before they are married on the island; however, he seems willing to learn from Unca. And being able to shoot a bow and arrow would prove valuable to their continued sustenance in their new island life among the Indians.

Among the island natives, Unca is careful not to be accused of any interracial love between her and the natives. This could indicate her self-positioning as European and against such amalgamation. However, it seems more likely that Unca's aloofness is practical at heart. With conversion her main goal—and her identity as a human, and especially as a woman, still concealed from the Indians—Unca can't allow herself to indulge in an island romance. In conservatively maintaining sexual boundaries by marrying within her culture,⁶⁹ Winkfield enacts postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon's synthesis of "colonial desire." Her gender limitations are apparent in that she—like the authors of captivity narratives before her—insists that the natives have not intruded on her sexual purity. To acknowledge a romantic relationship with a native would undermine the power dynamic Winkfield has established for herself. When John proposes to Unca, she is more concerned with keeping up appearances than with her love for him. Because she wants to work closely with her cousin and will need to spend time alone with him, Unca decides that marrying him will allow her to freely converse with him without feeling any social restrictions. Though she isn't afraid of the natives' censure of her relationship with John—she says the Indians would never

“entertain ill suspicions” of her behavior—her “modesty” would be injured if she crossed that line. Treading the line of English modesty, however, Unca seems to attribute European sensibilities to the island natives when she asks two Indian priests to dine with her cousin and her so “that no offence might be given by being alone with a man.” Perhaps this self-censure reveals more about Unca’s English predisposition toward excessive modesty—and about the narrator’s need to satisfy the eighteenth-century reading audience—rather than providing any specific insight into the island’s social standards. Unca’s fears that the islanders might be offended by the private association of a man and a woman stands in marked contrast to traditional eighteenth-century sexually permissive, free-loving images of the Americas, and especially the Caribbean. And, as Unca admits, her provisions to maintain decorum are probably excessive in the case of the Indians’ “chaste simplicity” because “suspicion reigns most in guilty hearts.” In contrast with Unca’s parents’ romantic courtship and wedding, the novel’s description of Unca’s marriage to her cousin is rather anticlimactic. After two months together on the island, during which John and Unca work together to continue building Unca’s Anglican dream colony, Unca almost begrudgingly weds her cousin. Almost in repayment for the pleasure of his company, Unca decides that her “religious and sensible companion . . . through his constant importunity” should be rewarded. “I was at last obliged,” she confesses, “to give my hand, about two months after his arrival.”⁷⁰

Although Unca’s hybrid lineage is responsible for so much of her success, when it comes to marriage, Unca’s half-native blood is ignored. Unca seems to be positioned as a full-blooded British lady in her union with her cousin. In fact, Unca and John seem to be a natural match. Though their early childhood diverges widely—with Unca raised in a mixed race home in the relative wilds of Virginia and John the son of a clergyman in a steady home in Surry—

the couple, who first meet when Unca joins the English Winkfields' household at the age of seven, share a similar educational background at the hand of John's father. Early in the novel John expresses his affection for his cousin, and this love drives him to locate her on the island a few years later. While Unca displays more of a business-savvy mindset in her agreement to marry John, he brings the romance to the union. But perhaps most importantly, John's vocation as a priest is the perfect complement for Unca's ambition of converting the Indians, a combination that reveals Unca and John as a made-for-each-other couple. In reality, and in England, Unca, as a person of mixed race, would obviously have been a less than ideal match for her cousin. Intermarriage with Indians was frowned on in the colonies, and, as we've seen, biracial children generally joined native society rather than advancing the traditional colonial ambition of spreading the European influence. In this climate the marriage of a daughter of mixed race with an English gentleman would have been unheard of. Perhaps this marital allowance is another way that the island paradise allows Unca to step outside normal cultural mores. Or does this exception to the norm highlight the independence that the New World offers—a freedom to expand oneself and to marry outside of long-established social boundaries?

The Female American offers readers a glimpse into the vanished opportunity for a more equitable model of hybrid cultural identities. In this way Unca's tale reflects many similarities to other culture-crossing stories, like *Tarzan* for example, in that the reader can be entertained by Unca's masquerading as a native, but in the end she demonstrates how ingrained her English roots truly are. Similarly, readers carefully observe Unca's relationships with the Indians and the English before witnessing her selection of an appropriate mate. In *Poetics of Imperialism* Cheyfitz explores a parallel irony that plays out in the *Tarzan*

plotline: “In terms of the racial and class politics that structure the romance [of *Tarzan*], in which readers, knowing the identity of Tarzan, can be titillated by the threat of racial, species, or class miscegenation . . . without ever facing the fact of miscegenation, Jane is safe in any case.” However, while the wild Tarzan is actually the noble Lord Greystoke, the author of *The Female American* throws in a further twist because Unca really is native, at least in part. Perhaps her Indian pedigree is suitably outweighed by her uncle’s care to tutor her in rationalism and religion. But what about the miscegenations. There is no hint of this intercultural transgression in Unca’s case, except that in the end she, the half-native, marries her cousin, the Englishman. Then is she the source of miscegenation? The novel’s author doesn’t present Unca’s relationship as miscegenation because Unca is “civilized.” Her native blood remains vital, but her education and training are at the core of her ethnic identity. This emphasis reflects the transatlantic reading public’s growing fascination with one’s cultural—and class—identity. The *Tarzan* story presents another native-English identity quandary in the love story of Jane and Tarzan: “The irony of Tarzan’s proposal [to Jane] is that to ‘become a civilized man’ he already has to be one, the son of Lord and Lady Greystoke.” Similarly much of tension in Cooper’s *Pioneers* (1823) is solved when the “half-breed” Oliver Edwards is revealed to be “only a figurative Indian (an adopted Delaware) but a literal white man, and a noble one at that.”⁷¹

While Unca successfully negotiates the cultural differences of her hybrid identity in exciting new ways, *The Female American* maintains the status quo. Unca can live among the Indians; she can work to convert them and to better their society. She can even abandon all that she knows—which is considerable since she is so well traveled and has been carefully educated in western scholarly and social traditions—in order to more fully embrace an

ideal hybrid society of her construction. The catch is, however, that she cannot engage in an interracial relationship with the island natives. Whether this is a self-imposed boundary over which Unca herself refuses to step or if this is the author's social mores resisting public censure, the outcome is the same. A mixed race character herself, Unca cannot engage in an interracial coupling with a native though her interracial marriage to her English cousin seems appropriate. In yet another way, this rewriting of the Pocahontas story demonstrates the original myth's powerful influence; however, the eighteenth-century retelling highlights a new, more wary social climate, a setting in which Rolfe could never have married Pocahontas. As Tilton summarizes it, "By presenting Pocahontas-like actions performed by other native women," or half-native women like Unca, "authors could preserve and exploit the more exciting elements of the Pocahontas narrative while providing a resolution that steered clear of the problematic issue of miscegenation."⁷²

In Anglo-American history, Pocahontas is often regarded as an exception, a native woman "who acted contrary to the manner of her people."⁷³ While her contemporaries, Europeans and natives alike, were preoccupied with their political maneuverings, legend has it that Pocahontas befriended the Englishmen. This characterization of Pocahontas as a friend of the white colonists, however, plays into a curiously Eurocentric mindset. According to Portman and Herring, "part of the Indian woman's dilemma" is that in order to be characterized as "good," in Anglo-American society, a Native American female "must defy her own people, exile herself from them, become White, and perhaps suffer death."⁷⁴ Traditional retellings of Pocahontas's life often elide the significant detail that her cultural and religious transformations to "become White" were precipitated by her kidnapping and subsequent existence as a hostage in Jamestown. However, Pocahontas is regularly endorsed,

as Portman and Herring suggest, as a “good” Indian. Though it is difficult to claim that she outright rebelled against her native people, she did, significantly, become an (involuntary) exile, she adapted (at least outwardly) to European standards, and she faced an early death.

CONCLUSION

As we never intended to have any more to do with Europe, captain Shore and my husband ordered a person who came for that purpose, to return to Europe with the ship, by whom, for my father and mother's satisfaction, I sent over these adventures.

--*The Female American*, 1767¹

Pocahontas? She was an Indian we created solely out of our ethnocentric imaginations. She was the shadow in the great forest.

--Charles Larson, 1978²

The colonial lore of a romantic rescue of a white man by a native female has become embedded in the American consciousness. The best-known example of this theme is, as we have seen, the ever-popular story of Pocahontas and John Smith. *The Female American* incorporates a similar rescue and interracial love story in addition to other significant colonial narratives, but the 1767 novel builds on the earlier myth to comment on key aspects of transatlantic colonialism, including hybridity, religion, and intercultural relationships.

The tension between Unca's native and British cultural heritages offers multiple interpretive possibilities. Unca's deviations from traditional European norms are generally attributed to her Indian-inherited instincts, to the foreign. Throughout her narrative, Unca strongly condemns colonial practices, including "invad[ing] the country of another" and the enslavement of native peoples.³ However, Unca never truly resolves this tension herself. In the colonial context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the slave economy specifically involved the moving of slaves from the native lands across the Atlantic to forced employment

in the Caribbean and the Americas. This dehumanizing process stripped the natives of their homeland, their culture, and their identity. In contrast to this traditional concept of colonial slavery, Unca's employment of fellow Indians as "slaves" in Virginia and England and "maids appointed to attend" her on the native island allows her Indian attendants to remain within their culture and to retain their humanity. Her attendants are more like bondsmen, as evidenced by her offer to free them if they wanted to stay in America rather than accompanying her to England. As Unca boards the ship, she describes her entourage: "I [was] attended by my two favourite female slaves, who had sailed with me before, and six men slaves, who begged to attend me; though I had offered them their liberty, if they chose to stay behind."⁴

Though the subtle contrast between forced and willing slavery can perhaps be justified, it is more difficult to resolve Unca's other colonial tendencies. For instance, despite her "holy" intentions, Unca essentially invades the native island and coerces the natives to convert to her "superior," European religion although her zealous methods are somewhat softened by her eurocentric depictions of the natives' inert religion and their eager conversion to Christianity. In the end, though Unca's native roots contribute significantly to her remarkable ability to transition between and adapt to various cultures in the transatlantic colonial scene, Unca privileges her European teachings. She and her cousin-husband remain on the native island, but the island environment has been significantly modified and "civilized."

In the tradition of the travel narrative, Unca's *Female American* participates in multiple dialogues with several significant historical texts, including *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Tempest*, Captain Cook's voyages, and the Pocahontas-Smith-Rolfe saga, all of which would have been familiar to *The Female American's* late-eighteenth-century reading audience. While

The Female American has often been read as a *Crusoe* imitation, Unca's narrative reflects themes from *The Tempest*. Several *Tempest* characters contemplate what they would do if they could rule Prospero's island; however, for Unca this fantasy becomes a reality. The story of Pocahontas also figures prominently in a reading of Unca's story as a revisionist narrative of colonial interaction and provides a valuable context for the middle ground tensions between colonizer and colonized. Notably, however, *The Female American* seems to respond to yet reject each of these models of intercultural contact, offering instead the story of a hybrid missionary woman whose New World island fuses the unscathed beauty and innocence of the native society with the religious and educational traditions of Europe. This island nation embodies the ideal colonialist enterprise, an endeavor best completed by a woman.

While this study has examined the social, religious, and political atmospheres of the time period during which *The Female American* takes place, additional consideration of the complicated interactions between peoples on both sides of the Atlantic at the time of the narrative's 1767 publication could offer further contextualization. During the last half of the eighteenth century when *The Female American* was written and published, Britain was preoccupied with several new arenas of cultural exchange as explorers continued to expand the crown's imperial frontiers. France and Great Britain were at war in the mid-eighteenth century, and both countries were using Indian allies as they attempted to gain control of North America. By 1763, France had lost the Seven Years' War, and the victorious British colonists began rethinking their affairs in America, particularly their relationships with their native neighbors. Many Britons debated whether the Indians, who had formally been in relationships with the French, would most effectively be managed through trade or evangelism. In an era that witnessed many contemplating the creation of utopic Christian-

Indian societies to solve “the Indian question,” Unca’s tale, and especially her ideal island tribe, would have resonated with readers who found themselves newly powerful in the transatlantic arena. Locating *The Female American* in these late-eighteenth century circumstances offers yet another context to which the narrative points.

The Female American illuminates the complicated issue of history, and more specifically history-making and history-telling. Unca’s story sheds light on the much-analyzed and rather problematic subjects of colonialism, of hybridity and the middle ground encounters between American Natives and the Europeans in the eighteenth century, and of the European missionary’s precarious position as both emissary of God’s Word and tool of the imperial hegemony. This novel also points to fluid nature of history-making in a broader sense. *The Female American*, and one eighteenth-century author’s alternative to the traditional colonial perspective, exposes the varied voices that continue to make history even now, two and a half centuries later.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A



An Approximate Timeline of the Major Events in the Story of Unca Eliza Winkfield

- 1607 Unca Eliza's ancestors arrive in Jamestown
- 1622 Unca Eliza's grandfather, Edward Maria Winkfield, dies in an Indian massacre;
Unca Eliza's father, William Winkfield, is taken prisoner by the Indians;
Unca Eliza's mother, Unca, saves William from execution by her father the chief;
Unca renounces Indian paganism in exchange for William's love;
Unca and William are married and live as westerners at William's plantation
- 1623 Unca gives birth to Unca Eliza Winkfield, her daughter with William Winkfield
- 1629 Unca's father, the Indian king, dies, and Unca's sister Alluca becomes queen;
Alluca's emissaries murder Unca and attempt to murder William
- 1630 Mourning Unca, William and Unca Eliza leave Virginia to live in England
- 1631 Unable to recover from Unca's death, William returns to his wife's native land;
Unca Eliza lives with her uncle's family and receives a British, religious education
- 1641 Unca joins her father in Virginia
- 1647 William sells his plantation and plans to return with Unca to England;
William Winkfield dies and is buried in Virginia;
Unca heads for England but is abandoned on a deserted island off America's coast
- 1647-1649 Unca's island sojourn: her early trials and explorations, her contact with the natives, and her efforts to convert the natives to Christianity
- 1649 John Winkfield, now an Anglican priest, finds Unca alive and converting natives on the New World island;
John remains with Unca, but Captain Shore returns to England for supplies;
John and Unca marry in two ceremonies, one Anglican and one Indian
- 1650 Captain Shore, John, and Unca cut their European ties and live with the Indians;
they blow up the Indians' statue to the sun god;
Unca sends the Indian treasure from the temple and her manuscript to England
- 1767 Unca's *Female American* is published in London after its "discovery" in an attic
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APPENDIX B



A Timeline of the Traditional Events in the Life of Pocahontas, Daughter of Powhatan

- 1595 Birth of Powhatan's daughter Matoaka, later Pocahontas, in Wicomico, VA
- 1607 Smith arrives in Jamestown, the first successful British colony in America; Traditional story of Pocahontas's rescue of Smith
- 1608 Pocahontas delivers food to save the starving Englishmen in Jamestown
- 1609 Powhatan orders John Smith's execution, but Pocahontas's warning saves his life; Injured in an unrelated explosion, Smith returns to England
- 1610 Pocahontas probably marries Kocoum, a Powhatan captain
- 1612 English Captain Argall abducts Pocahontas, who is held captive at Jamestown
- 1613 Still captive, Pocahontas converts to Christianity, is baptized, and becomes Rebecca
- 1614 Pocahontas marries colonist John Rolfe
- 1615 Pocahontas gives birth to Thomas, her son with John Rolfe
- 1616 Pocahontas visits England, where she is received by King James I and Queen Anne Smith later claims to have written the queen a letter commending Pocahontas
- 1617 Pocahontas falls ill, dies, and is buried in Gravesend, England
- 1622 Smith first mentions Pocahontas by name in the 2nd edition of his *New England Trials*
- 1624 Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England & the Summer Isles* is published with the first account of The Rescue
- 1634 Thomas Rolfe returns to Virginia, where he lives among the English colonists
- 1767 *The Female American* is published in England with a pivotal Pocahontas-Smith rescue
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NOTES



INTRODUCTION

- 1 Henry David Thoreau, *The Journals of Henry David Thoreau*, eds. Bradford Torrey and Francis Allen (New York: Dover, 1962), 1:337.
- 2 Christy Lemire, "As the 'World' Turns," *Monterey County Herald* (January 19, 2006), www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/entertainment/13661546.htm (accessed January 19, 2006); Thelma Adams, "The New World," *US Weekly Magazine* (January 23, 2006): 77; and Lemire.
- 3 *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature* 23 (1767): 217.
- 4 Tremaine McDowell, "An American Robinson Crusoe," *American Literature* 1.3 (November 1929): 307-9.
- 5 Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 141.
- 6 Unca Eliza Winkfield is considered to be a pseudonym for the novel's real author. The use of this pseudonym was probably intended to lend an air of reality to this "true" moral-adventure story.
- 7 Michelle Burnham, "Introduction," *The Female American; Or, the Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield*, ed. Michelle Burnham (Toronto: Broadview, 2001), 13. Of the many *Crusoe* imitations, a body of narratives emerged with a woman taking the heroic *Crusoe's* place. These "female Robinsonades," as Jeannine Blackwell terms them, include at least 26 texts—a figure that Burnham argues is "almost certainly an underestimate"—that were published "in Germany, Holland, France, England, and America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." Referring to Blackwell's study ("An Island of Her Own: Heroines of the German Robinsonades from 1720 to 1800," *The German Quarterly* [1985]: 5-26), Burnham writes, "Although *The Female American* does not appear on Blackwell's list, it should be included among this group of novels that tell fantastic stories of female shipwreck and island adventuring" (13).
- 8 *The Female American; Or, the Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield*, ed. Michelle Burnham (1767; Toronto: Broadview, 2001), 50.
- 9 *Female American*, 137, 154.
- 10 Burnham, 10, 24.

11 Tim Fulford, “General Introduction,” in *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion, 1770-1835*, vol. 1, ed. Tim Fulford with Carol Bolton (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), xiii. For more on England’s Evangelical Revival and the London Missionary Society, see Fulford, xv.

12 Hulme, 140.

13 Hulme, 143.



CHAPTER 1 – UNCA ELIZA WINKFIELD: *THE FEMALE AMERICAN*

1 Burnham, 24.

2 See Appendix A for an approximate timeline of *The Female American*.

3 There is some dispute over whether “Powhatans” or “Virginia Algonquians” is a more appropriate designation for the native peoples populating Virginia’s coastal plains during early British colonial endeavors in North America. For overviews of the debate over names for the Virginia tribes, see Helen C. Rountree, “Introduction: Who Were the Powhatans and Did They Have a Unified ‘Foreign Policy’?” in *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722*, ed. Helen C. Rountree (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993): 2-7; and Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989): 7-15.

4 *Female American*, 35. In a controversy fueled by political and practical disputes, especially over the food shortage, Edward Maria Wingfield was replaced as Jamestown’s president first by John Ratcliffe, who retained the position only briefly, and later by John Smith. The *Female American* author’s spelling of Winkfield is an alternate of Wingfield.

5 Betty Joseph, “Re(playing) Crusoe/Pocahontas: Circum-Atlantic Stagings in *The Female American*,” *Criticism* 42.3 (Summer 2000): 317-36.

6 *Female American*, 35.

7 George Percy records the deaths of the early Jamestown settlers in 1606 in “Percy’s Discourse of Virginia”: “Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases as Swellings, Fluxes, Burning Fevers, and by warres, and some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of mere famine” (George Percy, “Percy’s Discourse of Virginia,” in *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, by Samuel Purchas, vol. 18 [1625; Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905], 403-19. For Edward Maria Wingfield’s account of these events and a defense of himself, see “A Discourse on Virginia,” in *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter 1606-1609*, 2 vol., ed. Philip Barbour (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society at Cambridge University

Press, 1969), 1:213-34. Other relevant sources on Wingfield and Jamestown include a biography of Wingfield by one of his descendents (Jocelyn R. Wingfield, *Virginia's True Founder: Edward Maria Wingfield and His Times 1550-c.1614: The First Biography of the First President of the First Successful English Colony in the New World* [Athens, GA: Wingfield Family Society, 1993]); and Carl Bridenbaugh's oft-cited study (*Jamestown, 1544-1699* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1980]).

8 In the 1622 attack on Jamestown, the natives were led by a warrior named Opechancanough, who was an uncle of Pocahontas. For more details about the massacre, see Edward Waterhouse, *A Declaration of the State of the Colony in Virginia* (1622; New York: Da Capo Press, 1970). Although *The Female American* depicts Edward Maria Wingfield as dying this attack, the historical Wingfield remained in the colony for less than a year. He returned to England, where he died, although the year of his death remains unclear.

9 Christopher Columbus introduced the term "cannibal" to European languages in a journal entry dated November 23, 1492. While sailing between Cuba and what would become Española, Columbus recorded that the Arawakan Indians onboard with him called the island (later to be named "Española" by Columbus) "Bohio": "They said that this land was very extensive and that in it were people who had one eye in the forehead, and others whom they called 'Canibals.' Of these last, they showed great fear, and when they saw that this course was being taken, they were speechless . . . because those people ate them and because they were very warlike" (*The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. Cecil Jane [London: Anthony Blond, 1968], 68-69). The actual linguistic roots of *can(n)ibal* are contested, but following Columbus's use the term carries an unambiguous meaning: a person who eats the flesh of another human. After Columbus, the ensuing stereotype of American natives as uncivilized savages is closely linked to the image of the "bad" Indian, who is a cannibal and resistant to European expansion (see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*, expanded ed. [1991; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997], 41-44). Like William Winkfield, John Smith also worried that his native captors intended to eat him: he feared "(as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) every houre to be put to one death or other: for all their feasting" (*The Generall History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, 3 vols., ed. Philip Barbour [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986], 2:198-99). For further discussion of Columbus and cannibalism, see Peter Hulme, "Columbus and the Cannibals," in *Colonial Encounters*, 1-43.

10 This is typical of the era as Smith and many other colonists record "conversations" with the natives.

11 *Female American*, 39. Compare William Winkfield's seizure and rescue to John Smith's account of his own capture, his interview with Powhatan and the queen of Appomatox, and his romantic description of Pocahontas's daring move to save his life and restore his freedom in *Generall History*, 2:150-295. In an excerpt from a letter that Smith claimed in 1624 he had written to Queen Anne in 1616 asking that Pocahontas be received at the English royal court, Smith provides this account of his narrow escape from death: "After some six weeks fattening

amongst those Salvage Courtiers, at the minute of my execution, she [Pocahontas] hazarded the beating out of her owne braines to save mine, and not onely that, but so prevailed with her father, that I was safely conducted to James towne” (*Generall History*, 2:258-59).

12 *Female American*, 37, 45.

13 This land is presumably located near Jamestown as William Winkfield’s historical prototype, John Rolfe, owned land “directly across the river from Jamestown, along what is now Powell’s Creek in the vicinity of Smith’s Fort” (Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005], 167).

14 *Female American*, 40, 41, 43-45, 45, 46-47.

15 *Female American*, 47-48.

16 *Female American*, 49, 50, 49.

17 *Female American*, 50, 51, 52.

18 *Female American*, 50, 54, 50, 51.

19 *Female American*, 51, 52-53, 54, 54-55.

20 Christian F. Feest, “Europe’s Indians,” in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 314-15. For Sturtevant’s article on “Tupinambization,” see William C. Sturtevant, “Le Tupinambization des Indiens d’Amérique du Nord,” in *Les figures de l’Indien*, ed. Gilles Thérien (Montréal: UQAM, 1988). For the transatlantic travel narratives see Louis Armand de Lom d’Arce Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (London, 1703); Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North-America, in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (London, 1775); and John Dunn Hunter, *Memoirs of a Captivity among the Indians of North America* (London, 1823).

21 *Female American*, 56, 55, 56.

22 *Female American*, 57, 58, 59, 60-64.

23 *Female American*, 60, 61-62.

24 *Female American*, 64; Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 110; *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*, ed. J. C. Beaglehole, 2 vols. (Sydney, 1962), 1:341; and *Female American*, 66. Coincidentally, breadfruit was discovered by Captain Wallis in Tahiti in 1767, the year *The Female American* was published.

For more on eighteenth-century British depictions of Tahiti as a “fertile Eden,” see Alan Moorehead, *The Fatal Impact: The Invasion of the South Pacific, 1767-1840* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 51; and Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Arts and Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 24-25.

25 *Female American*, 60, 101.

26 *Female American*, 101, 102, 104, 103.

27 *Female American*, 103. “Among his other works, the Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote several biological treatises, including *The History of Animals*, *On the Parts of Animals*, *On the Progression of Animals*, and *On the Generation of Animals*. Pliny, a Roman naturalist, wrote *Historia Naturalis*” (*Female American*, 103n).

28 *Female American*, 56.

29 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5, KJV). This study cites the King James Version of the Bible; this is an acknowledged anachronism since this 1611 translation wouldn’t have been available to the Jamestown colonists—or to Unca—who would most likely have referenced the Geneva Bible instead.

30 Rodney M. Baine, *Daniel Defoe and the Supernatural* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1968), 9-10. Baine notes that though Defoe never specifically speaks against bibliomancy, the practice was commonly denounced by his contemporaries.

31 *Female American*, 59.

32 *Female American*, 66, 67.

33 Burnham, 17; and *Female American*, 67.

34 For the story of baby Moses, see Exodus 2:1-10; and the full account of the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea is recorded in Exodus 13:17-14:31.

35 *Female American*, 69, 69-71, 71.

36 *Female American*, 72, 73.

37 *Female American*, 73-75.

38 *Female American*, 75, 76-77.

39 *Female American*, 78-80.

- 40 *Female American*, 80.
- 41 *Female American*, 83-84, 87.
- 42 *Female American*, 87, 87-91.
- 43 See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).
- 44 *Female American*, 92, 94, 95, 97.
- 45 *Female American*, 106.
- 46 *Female American*, 106-8, 113.
- 47 Founded in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) “was dedicated to advancing the Church of England abroad through missionary work” (*Female American*, 107n1). See Defoe’s discussion of natural and revealed religion in *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1720; New York: Thomas Crowell & Co., 1903), 186-87.
- 48 Theodore de Bry, *Thomas Hariot’s Virginia* (1588; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966). These quotes appear as a caption to the watercolor titled “Ther Idol Kiwasa” by John White, originally published in *The True Pictures and Fashions of the People in that Parte of America Now Called Virginia* (1588); the captions to White’s watercolors were penned by Thomas Hariot and translated from Latin into English by Richard Hakluyt.
- 49 *Female American*, 118, 107.
- 50 *Female American*, 118.
- 51 *Female American*, 118-19. New England missionary John Eliot and native translators John Sassomon, Job Nesuton, and James Printer worked together to produce and print a Bible in the Native American Massachusett language. It was published in 1663 “after years of labor”: “The Bible was the basis for Anglo-American Protestantism, but the edition printed in Massachusett was inaccessible to most English settlers. It was also inaccessible to most Native speakers of Massachusett, since the language did not exist in written form before Eliot and his Native co-workers created it. The bible in this indigenous language, printed in hundreds of copies, became the most visible artifact of the emerging bicultural community of Christian Indians in New England” (Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000], 1). In addition, Unca’s character of a female missionary to the Indians finds a precursor in Alain-René Lesage’s *Chevalier de Beuchêne* (1732).
- 52 *Female American*, 120.

53 *Female American*, 119, 120.

54 *Female American*, 125, 129.

55 *Female American*, 143-49, 151, 153, 154.

56 *Female American*, 132, 135.

57 *Female American*, 139, 138-39, 140, 141.

58 *Female American*, 140. Referencing original source materials like Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, which doesn't reflect this longing for the innocent past, Michelle Burnham argues that *The Female American's* "nostalgic dimension" is indicative of the novel's publication at the cusp of emerging "primitivism, romanticism, and the figure of the noble savage" (140n).

59 *Female American*, 141.

60 *Female American*, 154, 155, 154.

61 *Female American*, 105, 105-6.



CHAPTER 2: PART ENGLISH, PART NATIVE, CONSTRUCTED AMERICAN: UNCA'S TRANSATLANTIC HYBRIDITY

1 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 115.

2 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 226.

3 Albert Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 296.

4 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

5 Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xiv, x.

6 White, x.

- 7 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 108; and Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), 446-47.
- 8 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 5; Stuart Hall, "When Was the 'Post-Colonial': Thinking at the Limit," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (New York: Routledge, 1996), 250; Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory," in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London: Zed Books, 1997), 259; and Bhabha, 112. See also Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (1984): 125-33.
- 9 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 5, 2.
- 10 Peter J. Kitson, ed., "Introduction," in *Theories of Race*, vol. 8 of *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period*, ed. Peter J. Kitson and Debbie Lee (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999), 8:viii; and Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 113-14. See also Georg Forster, *A Voyage Round the World in his Britannic Majesty's Sloop Resolution Commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the Years 1772, 3, 4, and 5*, 2 vols. (London, 1777), 1:432.
- 11 See Debbie Lee, *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 139.
- 12 Jean-Jacques Simard, "White Ghosts, Red Shadows: The Reduction of North American Natives," in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 333.
- 13 M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
- 14 Allen Carey-Webb, *Making Subject(s): Literature and the Emergence of National Identity* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 7.
- 15 *Female American*, 49, 51, 137.
- 16 Burnham, 10; and McDowell, 309, 307.
- 17 *Female American*, 35, 105, 105n, 33, 9.
- 18 *Female American*, 36n.
- 19 *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature* 23 (1767): 217.

- 20 Burnham, 29; and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 241.
- 21 *Female American*, 49, 60. This fanciful representation of Unca's native clothing contrasts with traditional renderings of Indians who were civilized by donning European clothing. Camilla Townsend imagines Pocahontas's transformation in Jamestown: "They took away her deerskin apron and gave her instead a long white undergarment or 'petticoat,' a stiff bodice, and a colored overskirt, along with socks and some sort of shoes, although perhaps these were Indian moccasins. The clothes were hot in the thick summer air; the hemp of which the linen was made scratched her skin; the bodice was laced tightly over her breast" (*Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma* [New York: Hill and Wang, 2004], 110).
- 22 *Female American*, 113, 127.
- 23 Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 119-20; and Hulme, xiii.
- 24 *Female American*, 38.
- 25 Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 125.
- 26 *Female American*, 117, 118, 119, 140, 136.
- 27 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 107.
- 28 Burnham, 11; and April London, *Women and Property in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 99.
- 29 *Female American*, 58, 60, 83, 86.
- 30 Burnham, 17, 16; and *Female American*, 35.
- 31 *Female American*, 70; and London, 99.
- 32 Paula R. Backscheider, "Esteem in the Novels by Women," in *Fetter'd or Free?: British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1986), 152; William L. Andrews, ed., *Journeys in New Worlds: Early American Women's Narratives* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 4; and *Female American*, 50-51, 53-54.
- 33 *Female American*, 51; Burnham, 21; and *Female American*, 139, 140-41, 140, 141.
- 34 *Female American*, 42.
- 35 *Female American*, 46, 47.

- 36 *Female American*, 37, 121.
- 37 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 37.
- 38 *Female American*, 126, 127, 129, 130.



CHAPTER 3 – EMBARKING: RELIGION, TRAVEL, AND ETHNOGRAPHY IN UNCA’S TALE

- 1 Janis P. Stout, *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 3.
- 2 *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. Cecil Jane, rev. and annotated L. A. Vigneras (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1960), 23, 24.
- 3 Wilcomb Washburn, *Red Man’s Land/White Man’s Law: A Study of the Past and Present Status of the American Indian* (New York: Scribner’s, 1971), 6; Richard Hakluyt, quoted in Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 6; and Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 195-96, 196.
- 4 *Female American*, 120.
- 5 *Female American*, 56.
- 6 *Female American*, 93.
- 7 *Female American*, 86, 87.
- 8 *Female American*, 108, 106, 95, 96, 94, 110.
- 9 *Female American*, 112.
- 10 *Female American*, 119.
- 11 Eric Cheyfitz, “Savage Law: The Plot Against American Indians in *Johnson and Graham’s Lessee v. M’Intosh* and *The Pioneer*,” in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1993), 125.
- 12 Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, xii.
- 13 *Female American*, 38.
- 14 Hall, “Local and the Global,” 174; and *Female American*, 84, 111, 113.

- 15 *Female American*, 106, 88; and Burnham, 18.
- 16 *Female American*, 72, 75, 73.
- 17 *Female American*, 50.
- 18 *Female American*, 119 n.1, 118.
- 19 Anne McClintock, "'No Longer in a Future Heaven': Gender, Race, and Nationalism," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997), 89; and Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 100.
- 20 *Female American*, 113, 116, 120.
- 21 *Female American*, 140, 141.
- 22 *Female American*, 154.
- 23 *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, 3 vols., ed. Philip L. Barbour (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 2:146, n.3; Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 55; and Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982). See also Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); and Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 24 Todorov, 60, 61.
- 25 Todorov, 207, 210. For a complete discussion of Durán's conclusions see Todorov, 202-210.
- 26 Tarrell Awe Agahe Portman and Roger D. Herring, "Debunking the Pocahontas Paradox: The Need for a Humanistic Perspective," *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development* 40.2 (Fall 2001): 185-200.
- 27 Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, xviii.
- 28 Grace Steele Woodward, *Pocahontas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 57; and Rev. G. Maclaren Brydon, *Highlights Along the Road of the Anglican Church: the Church of England in England and Her Oldest Daughter, the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Diocesan Library, 1957), 8.

29 David Stymeist, "Strange Wives': Pocahontas in Early Modern Colonial Advertisement," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 35.3 (September 2002): 109-26. Compare Stymeist's comment to Rolfe's words to Governor Dale: "Nor was I ignorant of the displeasure which almighty God conceived against the sonnes of Levee and Israel for marrying strange wives" (Ralph Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia* [1615; Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1957], 64). Here Rolfe is referring to God's curse on the Israelites who entered into marriages with Canaanites (see Ezra 9:13) and to more general injunctions against the mingling of heathens and believers (see Deuteronomy).

30 Charles R. Larson, *American Indian Fiction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 23.

31 Helen Mondloch, "Rescue and Redemption: The Great Debate over Pocahontas and John Smith," *The World & I* 17.9 (September 2002): 173.

32 Smith, 2:258; and Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 163.

33 Thomas Hariot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, in Theodore de Bry, *Thomas Hariot's Virginia* (1588; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 25, 26. As the introduction to de Bry's volume points out, Hariot published his *Brief and True Report* (1588) in England. However, the German engraver and publisher de Bry published a Frankfurt edition (1590) of Hariot's narrative along with John White's watercolor drawings of Virginia; de Bry's edition was published in Latin, French, German, and English. This 1966 reproduction follows de Bry's English version from 1590.

34 *Virginia Voyages from Hakluyt*, ed. David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 8-9; and Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 208-9.

35 Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

36 Tilton, 127, 144.

37 Mondloch, 173; and Frances Mossiker, *Pocahontas: The Life and the Legend* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 168.

38 Rountree, 163; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Nehemiah 13:24; and Rolfe to Governor Dale, in Hamor, 64, 65. In Rolfe's original letter, housed in Oxford's Bodleian Library, to Governor Dale, he declares his willingness to marry Pocahontas even before her baptism because of his conviction that their children would be Christians. Rolfe writes, "The Children of Christians are accompted holye, yea although they be the yssue but of one parent faithfull" (in Philip Barbour, *Pocahontas and Her World* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970], 250-51). When Hamor included Rolfe's letter as an appendix to his *True Discourse*, he omitted this section, which would have undermined the significance of Pocahontas as Jamestown's first religious

convert. See the edited version of Rolfe's letter in Hamor, 61-68; compare to the complete letter in Barbour, 247-52. See also Barbour's study of Rolfe's signature to verify his authorship of the letter in *Pocahontas and Her World*, 279.

39 Genesis 25:22-26; and Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 126-27. See Hulme's discussion of the Pocahontas conversion in light of Genesis and Rebekah in *Colonial Encounters*, 144-46.

40 David A. Price, *Love and Hate in Jamestown: John Smith, Pocahontas, and the Heart of a New Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 157; Tilton, 131; and Hulme, 146.

41 Cheyfitz, *Poetics of Imperialism*, 196; Townsend, 125-26; and *The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. John E. Booty (1559; Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), 273. For Reverend Whitaker and Governor Dale's statements that Pocahontas willingly "renounced her countrey Idolatry, confessed the faith of Jesus Christ, and was baptised," see Hamor, 55, 60.

42 John Rolfe, "A True Relation of the State of Virginia," in *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Accounts of the Virginia Colony: The First Decade, 1607-1617*, ed. Edward W. Haile (Champlain, VA: RoundHouse, 1998), 877; compare to the biblical account in Numbers 13 and 14, especially 13:29-30.

43 Rolfe, 877.

44 Rountree, 182.

45 Samuel Griswold, *Lives of Celebrated American Indians* (Boston: George C. Rand, 1843), 189.

46 Smith, 2:262.

47 Fulford, xxx.

48 Fulford, xxxi.

49 William Wordsworth, "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman," *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). According to Fulford, Wordsworth utilizes the image of the Native American to symbolize the Romantic ideal of an "unfettered body and liberated soul" in *The Prelude*:

Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport
A naked savage, in the thunder shower.

However, though the British Romantics envisioned the savage society as “freer, more just, more equal and closer to nature than their own,” Wordsworth later denounced such “idealizations of savage liberty” as potentially “dangerous and deluding” (Fulford, xxxix, xxxviii, xxxix).

50 William Cowper, *The Task and Selected Other Poems*, ed. James Sambrook (London: Longman, 1994), 145; and Fulford, xix.

51 Fulford, xxii, xxiii. See also Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 74-85.

52 Blackwell, 5-26; and Joseph, 317-36.

53 Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 56.

54 Fulford, xvii.

55 Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 47.

56 Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 48-49.

57 *Female American*, 49.

58 Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 49, 59-60.

59 Fulford, Lee, and Kitson, 60. Thomas Hariot records a similar native response to European technology in *A Briefe and True Report*, 26-27:

Most things they sawe with vs, as Mathematicall instruments, sea compasses, the vertue of the loadstone in drawing yron, a perspectiue glass whereby was shewed manie strange sightes, burning glasses, wildefire woorkes, gunnes, bookes, writing and reading, spring clocks that seeme to goe of themselues, and manie other things that wee had, were so straunge vnto them, and so farre exceeded their capacities to comprehend the reason and meaneds how they should be made and done, that they thought they were rather the works of gods then of men, or at leastwise they had bin giuen and taught vs of the gods. Which made manie of them to haue such opinion of vs, as that if they knew not the trueth of god and religion already, it was rather to be had from vs, whom God so specially loued then from a people that were so simple, as they found themselues to be in comparison of vs. Whereupon greater credite was giuen vnto that we spake of concerning such matters.

60 Samuel Purchas, *Purchas, His Pilgrimes* (1625; Glasgow, 1906), 19:118; Townsend, 140; Hamor, 38; Norman K. Risjord, *The Colonists*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 21; Townsend, 150-51; Strong, 46; and Smith, 2:261.

61 *Female American*, 140.

62 *Female American*, 140, 64, 140.



CHAPTER 4 – THE INDIAN AND THE ANGLO: INTERRACIAL LOVE IN THE ATLANTIC

1 Peggy Lee, John Davenport, and Eddie Cooley, “Fever,” musical score, 1956.

2 Herman Melville, “The Metaphysics of Indian-hating,” *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*, in *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, vol. 10 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1984).

3 Hulme, 227-28. In addition to Richard Steele’s version (“The Story of Inkle and Yarico. From the 11th Spectator,” *The London Magazine*, 3 [1734]: 257-58), Richard Ligon’s *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London, 1673) is also considered a likely origin for the Inkle-Yarico story. For more on Inkle and Yarico, see Lawrence Marsden Price, *Inkle and Yarico Album* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1937.

4 Hulme, 141; and Christian F. Feest, “Pride and Prejudice: The Pocahontas Myth and the Pamunkey,” in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 50.

5 Charles R. Larson, *American Indian Fiction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 18.

6 Hulme, 138; Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 238; and Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture,” *Massachusetts Review* 16 (1976): 714, 703.

7 “The Pocahontas Phenomenon,” *Native Americas* (September 30, 1995): 55.

8 Hulme, 141; and Smith, 2:151.

9 Samuel Griswold Goodrich, *Lives of Celebrated American Indians* (Boston: George C. Rand, 1843), 176-77.

10 Tilton, 82. Though Doña Marina illuminates another example of the complicated relationships ushered in by Euro-American contact, Tilton’s argument problematically introduces an incredibly Eurocentric line of reasoning that seems to corroborate William Christie MacLeod’s suggestion, quoted in Tilton, that in western history’s perspective on Euro-American contact, Native American women seem to be party to the “constant betrayal of their own people’ . . . usually to white lovers.” In addition to Pocahontas and Doña Marina, Tilton points to the “treachery” of Native American women as early as Desoto. Continuing

the enumeration with Major Henry Gladwin's mistress at Detroit, a Natchez woman's betrayal that saved Fort Rosalie, Weetamo "Queen of Pocasset" who defected to the British in King Philip's War, as well as plentiful examples of native women who aided the "escape of white captives," Tilton dubiously concludes that "such conduct, it has been noted, is not marked among any other people" (84-85).

11 Mossiker, 82-83.

12 Mossiker, 82-83; and Tilton, 82. For more on similar literary rescues, see Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884).

13 Tilton, 3.

14 See Appendix B for a timeline of events in the traditional Pocahontas story.

15 Jennifer Gray Reddish, "Pocahontas: As A Girl, She Saved the Life of Captain John Smith. Nearly Four Hundred Years Later, She Continues to Shape the Nation's Image of American Indians," *Tribal College* 6.4 (April 30, 1995): 22.

16 J. A. Leo Lemay, *Did Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith?* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 19; and Philip L. Barbour, "Introduction," in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, 3 vols., ed. Philip L. Barbour (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 2:31.

17 Smith, 2:259.

18 Helen Mondloch, "Rescue and Redemption: The Great Debate over Pocahontas and John Smith," *The World & I* 17.9 (September 2002): 173-81.

19 See Smith, 3:184-203.

20 Tilton, 1.

21 Mondloch, 173; Lemay, 7; and Reddish, 22.

22 Lemay, 4; Mossiker, 85; Henry Adams, "Captaine John Smith," *North American Review* 104 (January 1867); and Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (1906; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918).

23 Lemay, 30. For further investigation into the Pocahontas-Smith rescue debate see, to name a few, Philip L. Barbour, *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964); William Warren Jenkins, "Three Centuries in the Development of the Pocahontas Story in American Literature: 1608-1908," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Tennessee, 1977); Lemay; Mondloch; Mossiker; Price; Strong, 43-76; and Grace Steele Woodward, *Pocahontas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969). One of the most

engaging studies of the Pocahontas legend is found in Rountree's *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown*, which presents the drama of early English-native contact in Virginia through the perspective of the Algonquian people.

- 24 Norman K. Risjord, *The Colonists*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 6.
- 25 Portman and Herring, 185-200.
- 26 Michael J. Puglisi, "Capt. John Smith and a Clash of Cultures: A Case for the Ethnohistoric Perspective," *The History Teacher* 25.1 (November 1991): 99; and Margaret Holmes Williamson, *Powhatan Lords of Life and Death: Command and Consent in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 32 and 215. See also Margaret Holmes Williamson, "Pocahontas and Captain John Smith: Examining an Historical Myth," *History and Anthropology* 5.3-4 (1992): 365-402; and Smith's account of Pocahontas's role in the trade of captives in John Smith, *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia* (London, 1608).
- 27 Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 76-82.
- 28 Alden T. Vaughn, *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the Founding of Virginia* (Little, Brown, and Co., Boston, 1975).
- 29 Tilton, 5.
- 30 Tilton, 178.
- 31 Edward Kimber, "A Short Account of the British Plantations in America," *London Magazine* 24 (July, 1755): 307-12; John Davis, *The Farmer of New-Jersey* (New York: Furman and Loudon's Type, 1800); and Barbour, ix.
- 32 Larson, 18. For the original sentiment, see Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), 70.
- 33 Stephen Vincent Benét, *Western Star*, (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943), 43; and Woodward, 55.
- 34 Mossiker, 86; Strong, 61; and Hulme, 151.
- 35 Quoted in Mossiker, 93.
- 36 Stymeist, 109-26; Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, ed. Neil Whitehead (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 165; and Stymeist, 109-26. See also Warren Billings, "The Transfer of English Law to Virginia,

1606-50," in *The Westward Enterprise*, ed. N. Canny (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978): especially 215-44.

37 Portman and Herring, 185-200.

38 Hamor, 37-47.

39 Stymeist, 109-26. See also David Ransome, "Wives for Virginia, 1621," *William and Mary Quarterly* 48 (1991): 7.

40 John Rolfe to Sir Thomas Dale, in Hamor, 63.

41 Rountree, 163; and Smith, 2:245.

42 Price, 155. Less romanticized histories, however, contend that Pocahontas was probably not a beauty according to European standards. Based on current knowledge of America's eastern tribes as well as specific study of Pocahontas herself, Rountree, among others, suggests that Pocahontas was most likely short, stocky, and square-faced, standing in stark contrast to the willowy beauty with flowing hair portrayed by Disney and others.

43 John Rolfe to Governor Thomas Dale, in Hamor, 61-68.

44 Rolfe to Dale, in Hamor, 64-66; Woodward, 162; and Risjord, 21.

45 Smith, 2:274; and Rountree, 142.

46 Smith, 2:246; Townsend, 119; and Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 77-78. For more on Indian intermarriage to build alliances, see Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 28-29, 33-34.

47 Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (New York: Norton, 1973), 175.

48 Tilton, 12.

49 *The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 160; and Peter Fontaine to Moses Fontaine, March 30, 1757, reprinted in Ann Maury, *Memoirs of a Huguenot Family* (New York: Putnam, 1872), 350.

50 Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1947), 38.

51 William Byrd, *Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1929), in Tilton, 18-19.

- 52 Fontaine, 350-51.
- 53 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Prairie: A Tale* (New York: Viking Press, 1985); and Tilton, 70. For the complete discussion on the fates of interracial couples and their mixed-race offspring, see Tilton, 63-70.
- 54 Albert D. Bell, *Bass Families of the South: A Collection of Historical and Genealogical Source Materials from Public and Private Records* (Rocky Mount, NC: 1961), 11; and Feest, 53.
- 55 Gary B. Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 20-21; and J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957), 208-9.
- 56 Woodward, 190-91.
- 57 Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory* 39.2 (Spring 1992): 104.
- 58 Elizabeth I. Hanson, *The American Indian in American Literature: A Study in Metaphor* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 12.
- 59 Tilton, 61, 62; James Fenimore Cooper, "Dedication," *The Wept of Wish Ton-Wish* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1829), iii-iv; and Tilton, 64.
- 60 Tilton, 69.
- 61 Tilton, 63.
- 62 Hulme, 141. Hulme suggests that the "myth of Pocahontas . . . is a product of the early nineteenth-century search for a United States national heritage." However, considering the state of colonization at the time that *The Female American* was written, this statement is equally applicable to the eighteenth century as well.
- 63 *Female American*, 37, 45; Tilton, 85; *Female American*, 39, 40; and Smith, *Generall Historie*, 183.
- 64 *Female American*, 40, 41.
- 65 *Female American*, 41, 40, 41, 44, 41.
- 66 *Female American*, 47.

67 *Female American*, 41, 43.

68 Rountree, *Pocahontas*, 31.

69 “Culture” is best here because though Winkfield at times racially identifies with the natives—at least when it is convenient for her purposes—the paradigms of her cultural interaction speak to her inherent, and thus ultimate, identification with the Anglo social customs of her father’s, and cousin’s, peoples.

70 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 46; and *Female American*, 136, 139, 140-41.

71 Cheyfitz, 12, 14.

72 Tilton, 72.

73 Woodward, 6.

74 Green, 704.



CONCLUSION

1 *Female American*, 154-55.

2 Charles R. Larson, *American Indian Fiction* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978).

3 *Female American*, 37, 121.

4 *Female American*, 53.

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