VEXED TONGUES: A TRANSLINGUAL APPROACH TO EIGHTEENTH- AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY ATLANTIC LITERATURE

A dissertation presented
by

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to
The Department of English

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of

English

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
April, 2015
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities of Northeastern University

April, 2015
ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the phenomenon of “linguistic colonization” or colonization by way of language, as for instance, when colonized diasporic Africans and Native Americans were forced to abandon their mother tongues in favor of English. Yet rather than purporting a unidirectional story of conquering space and cohering place through language, my project seeks to make visible the nuances of linguistic colonization and the multidirectional influences of language through literature. To analyze the complex, “middle ground” effects of moving across languages, this project borrows the term “translingual” from contemporary writing studies—a term that describes how language is reshaped in time and space and accounts for the rhetorical authority garnered (or ceded) by writers working in one or multiple languages.

This project analyzes the linguistic exchanges in works of colonial writers such as Mary Rowlandson—the Puritan-captive of Native Americans turned author, the works of early national non-native English speaking authors such as Samson Occom and Phillis Wheatley (the first Native American man and the first African American woman to publish writings in English, respectively), and the works of antebellum authors, such as Herman Melville. In bringing together works from the colonial and early national periods, this project examines the continuum of linguistic colonization as well as the transition from colonial to national accounts of language in America. In the colonial period, authors often denigrated languages outside of British English but still relied on these languages to situate themselves in a new colonial order. In the early national period, however, print culture reflected an English-based reading and writing public that actively ignored the existence of other languages in the name of national cohesion. Nonetheless,
across these periods, authors and consumers participated in complex translingual writing and reading practices. Focusing on situated, dynamic linguistic exchanges in this literature offers new possibilities and a fuller picture for understanding how the space of colonial and early national America was conceived, represented, and constituted.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the result of the hard work, guidance, time, and support of many. First, I thank my wonderful dissertation advisor, chair, and mentor, Professor Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, whose wisdom and support influenced every page of this document. I also would like to thank Professor Chris Gallagher and Professor Theo Davis for serving on my dissertation committee and Professor Ivy Schweitzer for serving as my outside reader. They have all provided thorough and valuable feedback every step of the way. I thank my exam committee members, Professor Patricia Sullivan and Professor Nicole Aljoe, for guiding my field statements and reading lists. The time and generosity of many other professors have influenced this project in many ways. The English Department staff, specifically Melissa Daigle, Linda Collins, and Jean Duddy, has been invaluable during my time at Northeastern.

I had the opportunity to work through my project with other scholars surrounding the theme of space and place this year through the Humanities Center Fellowship. I thank the Humanities Center and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities—specifically Dean Uta Poiger, Professor Tim Cresswell, and Professor Lori Lefkovitz—for this gift of time, and I thank the other fellows for their time and suggestions. The fellowship experience greatly contributed to the final product in the pages that follow.

Throughout the past seven years, the English graduate student community has in many ways made me the scholar and teacher I am today. I thank my dissertation group, in years past and present, and close friends for all of their suggestions and support: Ben Doyle, Elizabeth Hopwood, Greg Cass, Jeffrey Cottrell, David Ober, Ethan Whittet, Danielle Skeehan, Max White, Sarah Hastings, Jessica Nelson, Amanda Runyan, Kate
Simpkins, and Arjun Poudel. Thank you to those in the department who have always been there to read, comfort, and advise: Duyen Nguyen, Lauren Thacker, Jenna Sciuto, Genie Giaimo, Lana Cook, Victoria Papa, Charlie Lesh, Shun Kiang, and Jeremy Gillette-Newman.

Above all, I would not be where or who I am today without the constant encouragement and unconditional love of my wonderful family. Thank you to Katia, for being the best friend and cheerleader anyone could ask for; to Daniel, for reading everything I sent his way and for believing in me always; to Benji, for being a constant source of affection and pride; and to Mom and Dad—your advice, support, and love have been the most important thing in my life, and this dissertation is dedicated to you.
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Introduction

Records from John Smith and Ralph Hamor as early as 1613 recount the process of teaching English to Native Americans, most famously Pocahontas—notably a woman of color. In his *Generall Historie*, Smith reports to Queen Anne that Pocahontas “reject[ed] her barbarous condition, was married to an English gentleman, with whom at this present she is in England; the first Christian ever of that Nation, the first Virginian ever spake English, or had a child in marriage by an Englishman” (qtd. in Slevin 68). Smith praises Pocahontas’s rejection of her “barbarous condition” as well as her acquisition of English, adoption of English kinship, and conversion to Christianity. Pocahontas’s enculturation makes her historically visible, and according to Smith, admirable. Contemporary representations of the John Smith and Pocahontas story re-inscribe this narrative. The 1995 Disney *Pocahontas* film depicts a scene of cultural encounter in which John Smith teaches Pocahontas to say “hello.” She in turn teaches him to say “hau,” to which Smith responds, “I like hello better.” Their interactions take place in English (this of course makes practical sense for the Anglophone movie audience), but the movie makes a point of explaining it. When Pocahontas “do[esn’t] understand a word [Smith is] saying,” the willow tree sings that she just has to “listen to [her] heart and [she] will understand.” The relationship between spirituality and language acquisition in the movie resonates with the relationship between religion and language acquisition expressed in the reports of Hamor, Smith, and many others in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Once a Native American converted to Christianity, the colonizer claimed, English would come much more easily. This dominant narrative has been sustained hundreds of years from the initial reports, which were invested in
representing colonization in a particular way, to the movie, which seems equally invested in its representation of the colonial project. That is, this sustaining story of colonization suggests that British colonists unidirectionally imposed English on colonized peoples in the Americas for the benefit of all. My dissertation offers an alternative to this dominant narrative; it attends to the multiple languages present in Anglophone colonial and early national American literature to offer a new account of language and colonialism—one that foregrounds the complexity of cultural exchange and multilingualism in the Atlantic world during these periods.

While the movie and the seventeenth century reports depict these moments of language imposition as harmless, necessary, and even benevolent, contemporary critic James Slevin characterizes this imposition of English as “linguistic colonization” or colonization by way of language, as for instance, when colonized Native Americans and diasporic Africans were forced to abandon their mother tongues in favor of English. For Slevin, linguistic colonization aims to confirm the colonizer’s own language, which simultaneously implies the colonizer’s control of the larger situation of colonization itself. In the case of Native Americans in Tidewater, English education was designed to produce the model “civil” Indian. Thus, an Indian’s cultural habits, religion, and appearance would change to better reflect the identity of one whose language was English. Slevin explains,

> From the very beginning of colonization, English technology was used as a way of dramatizing superiority. John Smith reports various Tidewater tribes as acknowledging that the English God and so the English religion and culture must be more powerful than their own, to the degree that
English technology was more powerful. (95-96)

This at first seems like a strange contradiction. English was meant to dramatize colonial superiority, but the colonized were also taught and expected to use this language. However, to the end of maintaining power, colonizers denied complete mastery of English technology to Native Americans, and in the case of Pocahontas, this was a denial of access to writing. In his anecdotes about Pocahonatas and Chief Powhatan, Slevin demonstrates both Native Americans’ suspicion of English writing and Native American dependence on English writing in order to achieve economic enhancements with English presence in the colony. But Pocahontas does not learn to write, and she is still not quite English. Rather, her oral command of the English language characterizes her as a “civilized” Native American princess, and her example incited plans for establishing institutions for the formal education of Native Americans from grammar to preparatory school through the university. Formal schooling became the best mechanism for achieving the spiritual side of the colonial mission, articulated in the colonial charter itself. The seventeenth-century development of Henrico College, the first funded and organized university in America, was meant to draw people into the culture of the English community. Education at Henrico College involved asserting the superiority of English civilization, domesticating Native Americans, and achieving English hegemonic aims. The conceptual structure of cultural conversion through education at Henrico, then, began with the imposition of a new language, leading to subjection, leading to civility.

Pocahontas’ acquisition of the English language symbolically marks the transition to English domination in Virginia, and an investment in English monolingualism in North America (Slevin Introducing English 76). Investigating such instances of linguistic
colonization in colonial America allows for an examination, in the early national period, of the United States’ investment in a fiction of monolingualism in the early Republic, as seen in early primers, Webster’s dictionary, and grammar books. The eighteenth-century polyglot Atlantic world included native peoples, colonizers and settlers from imperial powers such as England, France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, and Africans who were brought to the Americas through the brutal transatlantic slave trade. A multitude of languages were spoken, written, and used to communicate. During this time, English language teaching was, as Alastair Pennycook notes, “a crucial part of the colonial enterprise,” and English is a major language in which colonial history has been recorded (*English and the Discourse of Colonialism* 9). English became the dominant language of print and education in the Americas, and the lingua franca of the North American colonies after political events such as King Philip’s War in key areas of New England and the French and Indian War in others.¹ The Anglo-British imposition of monolingualism sets the stage for a shift to American English as a language of imagined national unity.

This dissertation is interested in the relationship between English as an imperial language and later the de facto national language of the United States. In the United States today, specifically in education, English-Only policies and sentiments often require students to abandon their home or native languages in order to excel, or in some cases in order to get by, in the classroom. My project traces the origins of linguistic colonization in the colonial period and its persistence into the early national period. I view and analyze linguistic colonization in America not as a temporally bound event, but rather as a

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¹ Battles between colonizers including the French and Indian War shifted the administrative language of particular colonies to English; for further discussion of this shift, see Chapter 1.
continuing process to claim and maintain control: first, in the colonial period, for the
British to exert and maintain control over the colonized; and then, in the early national
period, for the former British, white, English-speaking Americans to exert and maintain
control over people of color, lower classes, and immigrants. Using a standard English
language as a means of uniting some at the exclusion of others resonates with English-
only policies today.

Critical narratives of linguistic colonization, such as Slevin’s, explore the
ideology behind language imposition and language policies. This has been a prominent
conversation in contemporary writing studies, applied linguistics, and language studies.
Even Slevin’s analysis of Pocahontas leads to a conversation about twentieth century and
contemporary language practices in education. Scholars such as Robert Phillipson,
Alastair Pennycook, and Suresh Canagarajah have explored contemporary instances of
“linguistic imperialism” and look at the spread of English as the dominant language as a
movement that marginalizes speakers of other languages. In pedagogy studies, critics
have addressed students’ right to their own language in a variety of ways to resist the
monolingual push of educational and political policies. These works consider linguistic

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imperialism in contemporary scenes of writing but these scenes are not temporally bound:
as Slevin shows in his reading of Pocahontas, they extend to historical scenes of speech
and writing. This conversation has not garnered some attention in literary studies, but
literature was in fact a key site of linguistic colonization and responses to it. Eric Cheyfitz
is one of the few literary scholars who have considered the phenomenon of linguistic
colonization in literature. Cheyfitz argues that hierarchies of linguistic eloquence mark
hierarchies between the colonizer and the colonized in literature. Through readings of
texts in multiple genres from the late fifteenth century to the early twentieth century
including William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1610-1611), Frederick Douglass’s
*Narrative* (1845) and Edgar Rice Burroughs’s *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912), Cheyfitz shows
the ways in which translation was part and parcel to the civilizing mission in America
and functioned for the colonizer as a means of asserting political power and legitimacy.
He also makes visible “the violent history of translation” (62), and his book is an attempt
to resist the poetics of imperialism through critique.4

While Cheyfitz focuses on the dominant group’s resistance to acts of translation, I
emphasize the ways in which translation and multiple languages are integral to many
everal American texts. In responding to critical narratives of linguistic colonization, I
argue that literature reflects, complicates, and unsettles the dominant narrative of
linguistic colonization. Rather than purporting a unidirectional story of conquering space

4 There is a lot of scholarship on early American literature in relation to Native American and African
American literacy; see for instance, Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss’s edited collection *Early Native
Literacies in New England* (2008) and Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein’s edited collection,
*Early African American Print Culture* (2012). While these texts and many others consider languages
outside of the dominant English language and historically marginalized language users in America, they do
not explicitly engage linguistic colonization and its destabilization through literature.
and cohering place through language, my project seeks to make visible the nuances of linguistic colonization and the multidirectional influences of language through literature. Literary narratives, I suggest, reflect and produce the “meeting-up of histories,” to borrow Doreen Massey’s term, rather than “the conquest of space” (120). Non-native English speakers played a major role in Anglophone texts both as characters and as authors in early America. I analyze the linguistic exchanges in works of colonial writers such as Mary Rowlandson—the Puritan-captive of Native Americans turned author, the works of early national non-native English speaking authors such as Samson Occom and Phillis Wheatley (the first Native American man and the first African American woman to publish writings in English, respectively), and the works of antebellum authors, such as Herman Melville. Focusing on dynamic linguistic exchanges in this literature offers new possibilities and a fuller picture for understanding how space and place were conceived, represented, and constituted through language in early America. Ultimately, I suggest that translingual practices constituted both colonial and national space.

In his *True Discourse*, Hamor recounts his time in Pocahontas’s Tidewater and describes an Englishman he encounters: “‘William Parker [had] growen so like both in complexion and habite to the Indians, that I onely knew him by his tongue to be an Englishman’” (qtd. in Slevin 91). This observation at once speaks to Hamor’s disconcertment when language and bodily habits and appearance do not coincide and to the primary relationship between language and identity. Parker’s English tongue marks him as an Englishman. English colonizers had to negotiate the relationship between one’s body and the language one spoke while simultaneously imposing the English language on those whose bodies were different. I argue that the process of linguistic colonization in
the Americas relied on associating particular languages with particular bodies, specifically in terms of race and sex. As the project of imperialism became redefined as a national project, particular bodies, namely those of educated white men, became associated with the national language. American English was mapped onto these Anglo-American bodies as a means of carving out a unified space for American identity. Imperial and national projects of linguistic colonization depended on associating language with the corporeal body in order to exclude particular bodies and transform others based on language use. The shift to nationalism and the investment in a national language, then, allowed women and people of color to utilize the imagined inherent link between language and the body to challenge the myth of linguistic homogeneity in the nation through literature, and by extension, to challenge the idea of a national consciousness based on sameness and a body politic that excluded them.

Scholarship over the past several decades demonstrates that neither language nor the body is an essential category, but the two are linked. Following in the tradition of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and other post-structural thinkers, Judith Butler (in her seminal works *Gender Trouble* and *Undoing Gender*) asserts that iterations of performance construct gender and sex and make them appear natural. This formulation allows for the possibility that one can then embody femaleness without being essentially female. Likewise, if the body is constructed through iterations of performance and discourse and can embody femaleness, the body can embody race through iterations of performance and discourse as well. Daphne Brooks addresses this topic in her consideration of African-American performers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who use their located bodies to complicate racial and gender distinctions in the Atlantic
world. Brooks’ text foregrounds the body and communication. She focuses on African American performances that materially enact meaning (through costumes and other materials) and perform “Afro-alienation acts,” as “a tactic that the marginalized seized on and reordered in the self making process” (4). By de-familiarizing their own bodies, Brooks argues, African Americans could “yield alternative racial and gender epistemologies” (4).

Efforts to reclaim the material body have not exclusively been the domain of feminist and critical race studies; rhetoric and composition scholars have produced a rich body of work considering material rhetoric and the role of the body in producing meaning. In her 2009 analysis of Kenneth Burke’s work, Debra Hawhee argues that Burke shows that the body itself is rhetorical. Building on the work of Butler and other theorists, Hawhee sees the body, through Burke’s work on topics such as medicine and music, as bearing on “meaning making, language use, and…thought itself” (2). Language and meaning, according to Hawhee, emerge from the body and also help to constitute the body (9). My dissertation considers this relationship between the body and language as central to revising the story of linguistic colonization through literature.

What is at stake in revising the story of linguistic colonization through literature? Pierre Bourdieu’s account of language as a medium of power is crucial in understanding the force of my project. Bourdieu’s *Language and Symbolic Power* informs my formulation of perceived linguistic hierarchies in relation to social structures and power relations. Every linguistic exchange, according to Bourdieu, expresses and reproduces a social structure. He writes, “linguistic exchanges—are…relations of symbolic power in

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which the power relations between speakers or their perspective groups are actualized” (Bourdieu 37). Bourdieu offers the formulation of a linguistic market in which particular languages and speakers carry degrees of linguistic and cultural capital:

The objective meaning engendered in linguistic circulation is based, first of all, on the distinctive value which results from the relationship that the speakers establish, consciously or unconsciously, between the linguistic product offered by a socially characterized speaker, and the other products offered simultaneously in a determinate social space. (38)

The speaker offers a product (speech act) and the linguistic capital—and even the meaning—of that speech act depends on the relationship between the social status (seemingly used interchangeably with class in Bourdieu’s examples) of the speaker and the surrounding speech acts in a particular social space. Specifically, Bourdieu, a social scientist, pushes back on a structuralist approach to language, put forth most famously by Ferdinand Saussure and Noam Chomsky that holds that there is a self sufficient system of language that is separate from performances of speech. For Bourdieu, no homogeneous language community exists; rather, what linguists look to as the self sufficient system of speech is merely the dominant set of linguistic practices constructed over time by social, historical, and economic forces. Language and social-historical conditions cannot be separated. Bourdieu looks to specific speech acts—from utterances at marriage ceremonies to political addresses—to analyze the ways in which social institutions regulate linguistic exchanges.

Bourdieu builds his theories of language on his *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in which he argues that people act in certain ways due to dispositions embedded in their
bodies. These dispositions—which include speaking—when embodied, become permanent. He calls the set of dispositions “habitus,” and he is particularly interested in the relationship between habitus and social context. This theory helps Bourdieu move away from theories of social structure determining human behavior, and instead offers a dialectical relationship in which human practices become sedimented and regulated over time. For Bourdieu, linguistic habitus is embodied; he considers the way the tongue and lips move to produce specific accents and articulations (which he writes about mostly in relation to class and French). My project attends to the bodies and social positions of the speakers, characters, narrators, and authors I analyze and the socio-historical context of the languages they use. I take seriously the relationship between the body and speech acts, focusing less on class, as Bourdieu does, and more on gender, race, and social position in the historical context that I try to capture in each chapter. Rather than analyze contemporary rituals such as marriage and baptisms or political addresses, I use this compelling premise of language as symbolic power to analyze another time and place of intense power struggles—colonial and early national America—at a site of creativity and critique: namely, literature.

Pennycook builds on Bourdieu’s theory of practice, but suggests that Bourdieu’s “view of context is too confining” (48). That is, Pennycook suggests that Bourdieu’s focus on social context does not fully account for the performative aspect of speech. For Pennycook, Bourdieu’s dialectical relationship between habitus and social context does not leave room for “the utterance,” to borrow Derrida’s term, which assumes new contexts and is not defined by a preexisting context. Building on Bourdieu’s theory of
practice but departing from his over-determined sense of social context, Pennycook analyzes language practices and argues,

A focus on language practices moves the focus from language as an autonomous system that preexists its use, and competence as an internal capacity that accounts for language production, towards an understanding of language as a product of the embodied social practices that bring it about…To talk of language practices, therefore, is to move away from the attempts to capture language as a system, and instead to investigate the doing of language as social activity, regulated as much by social contexts as by underlying systems. (Pennycook 9)

He continues, “Language, from this perspective, becomes a social practice, as are language teaching, translation and language policy” (29). Pennycook notes that Butler critiques Bourdieu’s “‘conservative account of the speech act [which]…presumes that the conventions which will authorize the performative are already in place, thus failing to account for the Derridean ‘break’ with context that utterances perform’” (qtd. in Pennycook 48). The performance of speech acts, for Butler and Pennycook, can break with a social context. So, Pennycook offers something in between Bourdieu’s “overdetermined social context and Derrida’s decontextualized utterance”—that is, he offers locality as a way of spatially and temporally situating and analyzing language (48). In moving away from context in favor of locality, Pennycook demonstrates the ways in which language practices in turn inform locality, and in effect, constitute space. Thus, Pennycook’s theoretical framework in which language, practice, and locality are mutually
constituted through performance offers me a way to understand colonial and national space as partly constituted by the language practices I analyze in the literature I consider. Building on Bourdieu and Pennycook’s emphasis on embodied language and language practices, scholarship in writing studies and pedagogy has developed a translingual approach to reading student writing. Scholars in this field turn to education as a social site in which student writing constitutes language acts and performances, and then asks questions of said language acts—questions that are central to my project when I ask them of language acts in texts in early America. As a critical approach, translingualism, according to Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, et al., allows scholars “to develop alternatives to conventional treatments of language difference” (“Language Difference” 304). Since the publication of Bruce Horner, Samantha NeCamp, and Christiane Donahue’s 2011 article, “Toward a Multilingual Composition Scholarship: From English Only to a Translingual Norm” and Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur’s 2011 article “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach,” translingualism has gained traction as a useful method in composition studies. In “Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency,” Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner describe a translingual approach as “[an] approach … best understood as a disposition of openness and inquiry toward language and language differences, not as a matter of the number and variety of languages and language varieties one can claim to know” (585). From a translingual approach, language is something that is done and performed in “individual instances of languaging” (591). In contrast, bilingualism or multilingualism would approach language as distinct and stable codes and consider one fluent in more than one stable or fixed code as bilingual or
multilingual. Languages many seem fixed and canonical, but drawing on Pennycook, Lu and Horner suggest that language, context, and identity have an “emergent character,” and “language is the achieved outcome of the everyday doing of language by ordinary people” across asymmetrical power relations rather than the product of structures unbound by space and time (588). They account for the appearance of language as a fixed form and the regularities in the way we speak by pointing to the observed repetitions in language practices. While scholars have primarily tended to use this approach in writing studies, I contend that when applied to early American literature, this approach helps uncover the emergent qualities of language that constructed and challenged colonials’ and natives’ notions of subjectivity, identity, and belonging. While Bourdieu and Pennycook’s theoretical orientations offer me ways of understanding language as embodied acts that constitute space, a translingual approach teaches us how to ask questions of these language acts and analyze them productively. Thus, this project uses a translingual approach to read Anglophone texts of colonial encounter and nationalism circulating in America to better understand what specific language acts and practices might mean in relation to specific language users.

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6 First, multilingualism and bilingualism are certainly resources to make meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening but do not suggest the fluidity inherent in a translingual approach. Second, I want to acknowledge that many scholars who address issues of linguistic variety are utilizing a translingual approach, even while using the vocabulary of multilingualism and bilingualism. For instance, in many works by R.K. Agnihotri, Patricia Bizzell, Suresh Canagarajah, Ellen Cushman, Jennifer Jenkins, Rebecca Lorimer Leonard, Paul Kei Matsuda, Kumiko Murata, Alastair Pennycook, Christopher Schroeder, John Trimbur, Victor Villanueva, and works by Keith Gilyard, Geneva Smitherman and Vershawn Ashanti Young (who focus specifically on African American language practices), the term multilingualism is employed in discussions of the process of languaging but is not meant to imply the fixity or stability of language by any means. Rather, multilingualism and bilingualism are resources for meaning making. In fact, in 2011, almost all of the aforementioned scholars have stated their support for a translingual approach in the classroom and the project of confronting and honoring language difference in writing (“Toward a Translingual Approach” 313-315). Making the distinction in terms as they relate to an approach to language clear in this chapter helps to reinforce the fluidity and emergent quality of language, both theoretically and specifically in the literature I consider.

7 Horner and Lu make clear that a translingual approach identifies difference as the norm for all users of language, not just users of minority languages and dialects.
Rhetoric and composition scholars often look to Bakhtin in multilingual studies and the theory of heteroglossia specifically in demonstrating the dialogic and muti-voiced nature of language. In fact, hetroglossia and translingualism are often used in tandem or in very similar ways. Bakhtin’s theories of heteroglossia and polyglossia inform my project in many ways, but I also turn to translingual studies because the questions become different from those heteroglossia is concerned with. While heteroglossia considers the multiplicity of language in novels, translingualism looks to the relationship across languages in writing and the literacy it requires. Bakhtin primarily considers language difference to make arguments about genre—specifically the differences between the novel and epic poetry. He is concerned with the ways in which the novel specifically produces a “double-voicedness” (primarily, but not exclusively, through dialogue), whereas translingualism, to my mind, is primarily concerned with linguistic differences as a resource for producing meaning in writing. By returning to literature with a translingual approach, then, the question is not only how the interactions between cultures and languages result in heteroglossia and polyglossia as the origin of the novel, but also explicitly “how, when, where, and why specific language strategies are deployed” (Lu and Horner “Translingual Literacy and Matters” 2) and the meaning these strategies produce. In writing studies, a translingual approach is meant to challenge English-Only policies in the classroom. Thus, this approach is already in conversation with linguistic colonization and asks the questions of the texts that make visible the ways in which literature responds to linguistic colonization in early America.

A translingual approach asks us to look for meaning in language difference in Anglophone texts rather than to attribute difference to authors’ stylistic idiosyncrasies or
dismiss texts that deviate from Standard Written English. Additionally, this approach asks us to recognize language difference in what seems to be linguistic sameness. Writing specifically about pedagogical practices in composition classrooms, Lu and Horner explain:

Arguments for students’ agency as producers of meaning and language tend to use writing that appears to deviate from conventionalized norms of lexicon, notational practice, syntax, organization, and register. This leaves unarticulated the agency of writers whose writing seems to merely repeat or imitate standardized forms and meanings. What is needed, then, is an articulation of agency in such writing: a framework by which to recognize the production of difference in the ‘same.’ (“Translingual Literacy and Matters” 9)

This dissertation analyzes rhetorical choices and recognizes “difference in the ‘same’”—specifically when the “same” (standard English) is often understood as difference, given the races of specific writers. That is, racialized authors, such as Occom and Wheatley, embodying and producing eloquent, standard English was typically understood as remarkable, as difference. Drawing largely on Pennycook, Lu and Horner contend that when we temporally and spatially situate language acts and stop treating iteration as repetition of the same, “we can recognize that what is commonly viewed as doing the same thing again in fact represents doing something different” (14).

Looking at authors’ texts as translingual revises a monolingual colonial and national framework and also challenges the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century assumption that a body is “languaged” and can be civilized if rendered monolingual in the Standard English
language. Rather, translingual literature complicates theories of the rise of nationalism founded on linguistic cohesion, which ignore the historical and textual reality of the Atlantic world.

I delimit the project in relation to two events that illuminate the interactions between bodies, languages, and language media circulating in the early Atlantic world and highlight the power of alternative language users: King Philip’s War (1675-76) and the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). The texts I examine are not necessarily composed between these two events, but rather, each text engages with issues central to these two events (e.g. Native American displacement, slavery, patriarchal communities). In bringing together works from the colonial and early national periods, I examine the continuum of linguistic colonization as well as the transition from colonial to national accounts of language in America. In the colonial period, I suggest, authors often denigrated languages outside of British English but still relied on these languages to situate themselves in a new colonial order. In the early national period, however, print culture reflected an English-based reading and writing public that actively ignored the existence of other languages in the name of national cohesion. Nonetheless, across these periods, authors and consumers participated in complex translingual writing and reading practices. In ignoring this dynamic account of language in early America and in not attending to the temporal and spatial situated-ness of language, we risk enforcing linguistic colonization as we describe a unidirectional history moving towards English-only policies in the U.S. However, a shift in reading the locus of power in early America

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8 It was acceptable and admirable to be multilingual as a white British man if the other languages mastered were associated with religion or other nation-states, such as Latin, German, or Italian. I am particularly interested in languages that were considered inferior to English and associated with “othered” bodies.

9 By “alternative language users” I mean users of languages and language media outside the confines the colonizer established through standardized languages.
from English to translingualism reveals the multidirectional influences of language and ascribes power to translingual actors. This fuller picture of language in early America highlights the active negotiation and mutual permeability of language in literature and speaks back to the domination and erasure enacted by English-only colonial and early national American histories. In turn, this linguistic negotiation helped to constitute the colonial and national space of America.

In Chapter 1, I focus on Puritan author Mary Rowlandson’s embodiment of language (as narrator) and on *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* as a text that exemplifies the reciprocity of language in colonial America as spatial dynamics shift. I analyze Rowlandson’s linguistic practices in the text through a reading of her code meshing, defined as “the blending together of diverse communicative resources in rhetorically strategic ways” (Roozen 203)—a tenet of translingualism. Rowlandson’s narrative reproduces Native languages and communicative forms, and she embodies the Algonquian language through code meshing. I suggest that while Rowlandson as narrator code meshes to uphold a racial and cultural boundary, Native American languages are integral to her own writing, and she in effect reveals the impossibility of linguistic boundaries in her narrative. Looking to Pennycook’s theories on language practices constituting locality, I argue that through her linguistic practices, Rowlandson produces colonial space both in the text and in the space of captivity she narrates.

Chapter 2 returns us first to England to examine how colonization affected attitudes toward language and linguistic variety at the imperial center and then shifts focus to the British Caribbean to understand how language attitudes and policies in England appeared in literature about the British Caribbean. First, this chapter considers
how language functions as an imperial tool through the process of imposing the English language on colonized people and denying these colonized people mastery of the English language. Then, this chapter considers the ways in which literary texts reflect and manage imperial anxieties regarding colonial language encounters in relation to race. Finally, Chapter 2 demonstrates the ways in which literature could not contain imperial anxieties regarding language and race, and rather reflected the way speakers and writers in colonial America were constantly “doing” language as a social and spatial activity.

I read Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and William Pittis’s *The Jamaica Lady* (1720) to show how these texts essentially link the body and language and, in so doing, enact linguistic colonization. Such an essentialist linking disappears the emergent qualities of embodied language. While my reading suggests that Defoe’s texts enact linguistic colonization through representations of characters’ power relations constituted by their bodies and languages, my reading of Pittis’s text suggests that *The Jamaica Lady* presents a counter-narrative to the standardization of English in the British imperial center. By taking up the question of standard English as a means of consolidating imperial power, this chapter also helps us to better understand the shift to linguistic nationalism that I engage in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 considers non-native English speakers who are authors writing at the revolutionary moment—specifically Phillis Wheatley and Samson Occom. Wheatley and Occom both converted to Christianity and mastered the English language, which I suggest authorized their presence in the print public sphere; they used their respective positions to make claims to national space and subjectivity through their language acts. At the United States’ revolutionary moment, Noah Webster, Benjamin Franklin, and
Benjamin Rush led a strong movement toward monolingualism that sought to solidify a united, independent nation through a fixed, uniquely American English language (Dierks 268). Writing against the backdrop of this interest in fixed, unified language, Wheatley and Occom experiment with the fluidity of language and utilize translingual practices to question their respective places in an emerging nation and to assert themselves as national speakers and writers. Occom, who ultimately rejected the new Anglo-American centric nation in founding the intertribal nation of Brothertown, produces rhetoric that offers a lens through to view Wheatley’s more subtle critiques. Wheatley, I suggest, uses translingual strategies, such as envoicing—relating the particularity of her lived body (Canagarajah, “Translingual Practice,” 80), and revises a monolingual national framework. Far from the homogenous “imagined community” Benedict Anderson describes, then, this chapter considers a national space constituted by translingual practices.

In Chapter 4, I explore the effects of the Haitian Revolution on American literature, but rather than focus on the effects in relation to slavery as many have done, I primarily focus on the effects in relation to language. I consider Anglophone texts coming out of the Haitian Revolution, specifically Pierre Toussaint’s memoir (1854) and Herman Melville’s *Benito Cereno* (1856), that explore the relationship between nation, race, and language at a time when the U.S. was on the cusp of civil war. The Constitution of Hayti (1805) banned most whites from citizenship and declared all citizens, even those

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10 There were, however, debates around whether or not English as opposed to another language, such as Spanish or French, should in fact be the nation’s Federal language.

11 As a new nation, Haiti declared French its national language, while, like the United States, linguistic negotiations actually constituted its text network. During the Haitian Revolution, proclamations were declared in Creole as well as French and slave prayers and incantations were often spoken in Creole, suggesting that subjectivity, agency, and resistance were performed in multiple languages and language media.
with lighter skin, to be “black.” However, French, the language of the white colonizer who had enslaved and oppressed the blacks for centuries, was declared the sole official literary language of the new nation in 1918. This reconfiguration indicates another developing fiction that suggests that national citizenship and place-based belonging depends on a relationship between the body and language—a fiction purported and belied in the literature I examine. Namely, I argue that these texts take up this history in very different ways and show what is at stake in revealing the veiled presence of non-standard languages, such as Haitian Creole—the language spoken by slaves as well as gens de couleur libres and whites to communicate with slaves. Lee’s text, I suggest, is invested in making Creole—the language of the Haitian Revolution—invisible, because Creole in many ways represents black community, agency, and revolt. Lee characterizes her Haitian hero, Pierre, as a non-threatening character able to assimilate to white nationalism, and thus presents black freedom as non-threatening to white nationalism. I argue that Melville, who was likely fearful of a divided country, implicitly engages with Creole, and disrupts an alignment of race, nation, and language. In Melville’s text, the relationship between blackness and multilingualism becomes very dangerous to imperial and national power. American literary texts at the nationalizing moment of the mid-nineteenth century, such as Lee’s, can dismiss Creole as a means of consolidating and sustaining white colonial power in a national context; but, Creole can also become visible in a text like Melville’s, through translingual practices and a translingual reading, and in effect, present a dangerous threat to national unity.

Ultimately, this dissertation aims to teach its readers *how to read* early American literature, and specifically, linguistic exchanges in these texts. A translingual approach to early American literature offers not only a way of revising the story of linguistic colonization in early America, but also an historical example of the ways in which writers negotiated English-Only policies like those present in contemporary educational institutions—negotiations that instructors and students should be mindful of today.
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“The Vast and Desolate Wilderness”: Mary Rowlandson Remaking Language and Colonial Space

Introduction

On February 10, 1676, Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians attacked the town of Lancaster, Massachusetts and kidnapped a thirty-nine year-old Puritan woman named Mary Rowlandson. Rowlandson was held captive by Algonquian-speaking Native Americans for eleven weeks and was then ransomed for twenty pounds. After her release, Rowlandson wrote *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, a narrative recounting her time in captivity during King Philip’s War. With the help of Increase Mather, Rowlandson’s manuscript was published in 1682 in Boston, Massachusetts by printer Samuel Green Jr. and in Cambridge, Massachusetts by Samuel Green Sr. 13 Mather, the minister of the North Church in Boston most likely wrote the Preface to the narrative and was likely very involved in writing the narrative itself. 14 The manuscript was bound with the last sermon her husband Joseph Rowlandson preached before his death in 1678. This sandwiching of Rowlandson’s narrative between writings by men indicates the public discomfort with the publication of a Puritan woman’s writing; nevertheless, with four editions published in 1682 (three in New England and one in London) and thirty editions to date the narrative achieved enduring popularity (*Heath Anthology*). While this bestseller has received much critical attention as a commentary on

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13 James Printer of the Nipmuck tribe served as the publisher’s assistant, and I will return to Printer’s significance to Rowlandson’s story later in the chapter.
14 In *Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip’s War* (2013), Billy J. Stratton provides evidence of Increase Mather’s involvement in the production of the narrative. For this reason, I hesitate attributing authorial agency to Rowlandson, and unless otherwise noted, I refer to her as the narrator rather than the author.
gender politics in Puritan New England and Puritan ideology as well as a document chronicling Native American and Puritan differences, few have focused on the text’s importance with regard to language encounters. Rowlandson’s text is ripe for such an examination. Rowlandson wrote her captivity narrative just after King Philip’s War—a transitional moment with regard to language in New England. Contemporary audiences were fascinated by the experience of captivity and the events of war, and the narrative allowed them to follow Rowlandson through the “vast and desolate Wilderness” (71) without having to actually experience her trials, tragedies, and traumas—an attribute of the narrative form itself. Her movements through space intrigued, and continues to intrigue, readers. Scholars today are still captivated by Rowlandson’s movements through space during captivity and war, but are equally interested in the formal way that she

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16 One study that has paid ample attention to the complex linguistic exchanges in Rowlandson’s text is Michelle Burnham’s “The Journey between: Liminality and Dialogism in Mary White Rowlandson’s Captivity Narrative.” Early American Literature 28.1 (1993): 60-75. Burnham contends that Rowlandson’s “culturally liminal position” is evident in “recollective language” (64). Informed by Bakhtin’s notion of narrative dialogism, Burnham suggests that Rowlandson’s narrative contains two distinct voices: Rowlandson’s participant voice and interpreter voice—voice of a “culturally restored individual remembering past events” (65). She concludes, “Narratives like Mary Rowlandson’s which recalled such experiences inevitably revealed the boundaries, linguistic and otherwise, of the Puritan culture which produced them” (72). While Burnham is interested in linguistic boundaries as a way to show Rowlandson’s “culturally liminal subjectivity” (67), I examine specific instances of linguistic exchange to suggest that Rowlandson’s negotiation of language in relation to cultural dominance helps constitute a new colonial order and literacy in early American literature that relies on translingualism.
narrates this space six years after she returns to Lancaster.\textsuperscript{17} Rowlandson begins her narrative explaining, “[T]hat I may better declare what happened to me during that grievous Captivity, I shall particularly speak of the severall Removes we had up and down the Wilderness” (70). The “severall Removes” take Rowlandson north through Massachusetts to Baquag River and then back to central Massachusetts. Rather than dividing her narration by chapters, the common practice of the time, Rowlandson designates each section as a numerical remove (e.g. first remove, second remove, etc.) indicative of the space she has traversed with her captors since she was “removed” from her home. In the Second Remove, she writes, “\textit{I must turn my back upon the Town, and travel with them into the vast and desolate Wilderness}” (71), and the Native captors move across the space they are fighting to maintain. So begins Rowlandson’s journey through space and time, told through movements and pauses, interactions and reflections.

When we examine the interactions between language and bodies in a colonial context as moments for the transfer of power (Stoler 7) and sites of contestation, we can see that the narrative in fact reveals two distinct results of colonial interactions. First, through its descriptions of language, Rowlandson’s narrative reflects a Eurocentric education system and print culture that linguistically colonizes Native Americans, and second, the narrative reveals Native American languages and knowledge. This chapter focuses specifically on language in the interactions between Native Americans and British colonists to show how colonists and Native Americans not only responded to

\textsuperscript{17} Literary scholars and historians have been intrigued by Rowlandson’s narrative in relation to space and place for decades. For example, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse’s \textit{The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life} (1992) is concerned with Rowlandson’s displacement from culture and kin and the way this influenced the novel genre, and Aaron Cloyd’s 2014 article, “A Posture of Removal: Mary Rowlandson’s Location, Position, and Displacement” in \textit{disclosure: A Journal of Social Theory}, reads Rowlandson’s removal from place in terms of spatial theory and social relations, specifically in relation to geographic features and Rowlandson’s posture. My interest in Rowlandson’s narrative in relation to space and place is specific to languaging and linguistic negotiations.
experiences of empire and colonization but also how their bodies and languages constituted a new colonial order and space in which they sought to situate themselves. Colonists and Native Americans alike had to navigate their place—bodily, discursively, and linguistically—in a colonial order in which the spatial and social activity of languaging necessitated a heightened negotiation of meaning for individuals coming from very different cultures. In this chapter, I focus specifically on Rowlandson’s text to explore these claims. As a text with enduring popularity that has garnered much scholarly attention in terms of its influence on Atlantic literature broadly, I think it is a particularly important case study for analyzing colonial languaging and space.

Arguing that the exclusion of Natives was essential to national identity in North America, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write, “Native Americans…had to be excluded from the terrain to open its spaces and make expansion possible. If they had been recognized, there would have been no real frontier on the continent and no spaces to fill” (Empire 170). The understanding of space in relation to Native people and deterritorialization that Hardt and Negri recount and critique describes a unidirectional history of European colonization—one that figures space as empty, fixed, or blank—that nationalism often perpetuates. In contrast, Doreen Massey’s theoretical account considering space as “open, multiple, and relational” (59), offers an alternative—one that I suggest captures the complex struggles and opportunities of Rowlandson’s removes. Massey writes, “[W]e read so often of the conquest of space, but what was/is at issue is also the meeting up with others who are also journeying, also making histories…Conquest, exploration, voyages of discovery are about the meeting-up of

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18 By using the term negotiation, I suggest that those involved find new terms on which to interact and understand one another. The term negotiation captures the complex and continuous ways participants dealt with political, cultural, and linguistic conflict.
histories, not merely a pushing out ‘across space’” (120). For Massey, space and time are interlinked, and place is “a specific articulation of space” (Pennycook 80). Rowlandson, a colonial implicated in the European project of conquest, exploration, and colonization of space, writes a narrative that in fact demonstrates the negotiations that accompany “the meeting-up of histories.” In recounting these removes, Rowlandson conveys her evolving unease with strict binaries between Puritans and Indians as she moves from the place she considers home. I argue that one of the most prominent ways in which the reader accesses Rowlandson’s unease and subsequent negotiation is through her depiction and use of languages in relation to the bodies from which languages are spoken or written.

The formulation of space as empty (or empty-able) and ready to be occupied coincides with the phenomenon of “linguistic colonization” or colonization by way of language, as for instance, when colonized diasporic Africans and Native Americans were forced to abandon their mother tongues in favor of English. The larger narrative of linguistic colonization in North America holds that colonists forced the English language on Native Americans; only those who acquired and used the language were able to become civilized participants of colonial society. Linguistic colonization is the process of the empire imposing its language as a means of asserting dominance and superiority over the colonized, often as part of a colonial effort to encourage cultural conversion (Slevin 72). James Axtell’s *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (2001) describes the pidgin languages that arose as a result of European (English, French, and Dutch) contact with Native American tribes, who spoke hundreds of mutually unintelligible languages in North America in the sixteenth century (47).

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19 See, for example, Eric Cheyfitz’s *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* and James Slevin’s *Introducing English.*
While their signs and gestures helped Native Americans and Europeans negotiate trade and offer directions, they used pidgin languages as well as interpreters (both Native American and European interpreters who lived with the other long enough to learn the language) to have more meaningful interactions and communicate abstract thoughts. While natives often spoke and concocted these pidgins in the South (Virginia and Mississippi) and other colonies outside New England (New Netherland and New Amsterdam) well into the eighteenth century, “[t]he English-based pidgin spoken largely by pidgins in colonial New England was ‘elevated,’ predictably if slowly, to more standard English, particularly in the Anglicized ‘praying towns’ established by Protestant missionaries” (Axtell 57). In Plymouth specifically, the first Native Americans to meet English settlers (as opposed to explorers, fishermen, and slavers) in 1620 spoke what William Bradford described as “broken English,” which “was to remain the standard language of intercourse between natives and newcomers in southern New England for most of the colonial period” (Axtell 59-60). Thus, New England’s settlers, and North America’s British settlers more generally, prioritized English as the lingua franca and linguistically colonized the space of North America. Partly through linguistic colonization, British colonists were able to establish and then maintain racial and cultural superiority and control—and often to interpolate the colonized subject into the structure of the empire.

In Rowlandson’s narrative, however, we see another version of this story. Throughout the removes, Rowlandson begins to understand Native language, begins to enjoy Native meals (even horse-liver), and participates in a Native economy to ensure her survival. To maintain her belonging as a British subject, and to ensure the reader that she
has not “gone native”—a common fear for captives of Native Americans in the colonial period—Rowlandson claims her English identity—through English literacy and the Bible specifically—symbolic of a familiar place separate from the space she travels with her captors. She characterizes Native language as “roaring” and “insulting” (70) in contrast to her own legible narration, which leads her “home” (107). It is important that English serves as a symbol of a separate place, primarily because settler and Native space were not separate in colonial New England, and this is even more visible in wartime. Even while populations primarily occupied different towns, settler and Native movement disallowed the preservation of separate space. Thus, she separates herself from her captors in her descriptions of language using a dichotomy of English—representative of a coherent and civil place—and Algonquian languages—representative of an incoherent space to be occupied. This is in many ways reflective of the ideology behind linguistic colonization—one that hierarchizes language in a way that justifies the domination of one language over another. Yet in Rowlandson’s text, linguistic colonization is far from solely a successful act of domination. The situated, dynamic linguistic exchanges in the narrative illuminate language as action and as practice. In other words, language as an act and as a practice accounts for the fluid and unstable qualities of language that necessitate a constant negotiation of meaning. Rather than understanding language as a reflection of a particular time and place, Alastair Pennycook argues that we must view language as practice: “Language practices are activities that produce time and space” (56); we must also view “language as action and as part of how places are interpreted, how the meaning of places is reinforced or changed” (2).  

According to Pennycook, “Locality is explored in its complex manifestations as place…To take the notion of locality seriously, rather than merely juxtaposing it with the global, the universal or the abstract is
and spatial activity” (3). Rowlandson’s language acts, or her languaging, undermine her descriptions of Native language as barbarous, indecipherable, and inferior. Rowlandson deploys Algonquian words and linguistic forms in her captivity narrative to express a separation between herself and her captors. However, even in using Algonquian as a marker of difference, she embodies and performs Algonquian, thus implicating herself in a cultural exchange that muddies the absolute distinction between Puritan and Native. In this sense, her language acts contradict her effort to describe and deploy language as a tool of colonial authority. 21

I analyze Rowlandson’s language acts using the translingual approach I described in the introduction to this dissertation. Engaging Rowlandson’s text with both an understanding of linguistic colonization in seventeenth-century New England and an understanding of language as something that is done and performed in “individual instances of languaging” (591), I explore the way Rowlandson’s narrative negotiates an established dichotomy between the colonizer and colonized with respect to language. Colonial encounters, like those described in Rowlandson’s narrative, produce a mutual need for one another’s language in language acts, not solely for communicative purposes, but also for the purpose of understanding and expressing one’s own culture and identity.

In *Writing Indians*, Hillary Wyss argues that Christian Native Americans found their to engage with ideas of place and space that in turn require us to examine time, movement, and interaction” (1-2). He also explains, “Practice is constituted by the grouping together of activities” (23). He points to practices such as graffiti to show how local language acts sediment. Looking at a few select texts, I am arguing that the code meshing constitutes a practice.

21 Pennycook makes clear in his work that in his approach, language cannot be deployed, as it is not a “tool to be used” (8). Rather, it is the “product of social action” (8). However, I am attempting to account for Rowlandson’s view of language as well as my approach to language. In Rowlandson’s descriptions of language, she does seem to value structure and linguistic forms that separate English from Algonquian. Contemporaneous texts and theories of language suggest her readers would have viewed language in a similar way. I suggest that we read Rowlandson as practicing language, specifically practicing code meshing.
place in a new colonial order largely through written, religious, English literacy (5).

Looking to the negotiation of language, here, I argue that both colonials, such as Rowlandson, and Native Americans, such as the Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians, looked to different forms of literacy—literacy in Algonquian language words and structures, economic exchange, and symbolic codes, to name a few—to position themselves in the new colonial order.\textsuperscript{22}

Puritans in early America had concerns with what bodies were speaking and writing and in what languages. Rowlandson’s text clearly associates languages and literacies with bodies and marks Native American bodies by using racial, cultural, and religious classifications such as “heathens” and “barbarians” (21,23).\textsuperscript{23} According to Roxann Wheeler, colonialism ushered “a newly felt urgency about interpreting human difference” (44); Wheeler contends that in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, “discourse[s] of civility, Christianity, and commercial society constituted racial ideology,” and these discourses are partially constituted by the English language (38). Complexion and biological theories of race did not become prominent until the end of the eighteenth century, and according to Wheeler, the late seventeenth century saw terms such as Christian, free, and white used interchangeably in the colonies to “singularize Europeans in relationship to other people whom they encountered in the Atlantic” (75). Thus, my use of the term \textit{white} to describe Rowlandson is meant to connote her race in

\textsuperscript{22} Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss’s edited anthology \textit{Early Native Literacies in New England} (2007) engages several forms of literacy outside of written English literacy, including baskets, pictographs, and signatures. Additionally, in \textit{The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England} (2010), Matt Cohen suggests that “literacy is not an ideal or achievement, but an evolving, uneven site of struggle for power” (19). Cohen challenges the print culture/oral culture divide of Puritan versus Native American culture and suggests that literacy is a fluid continuum. Cohen uses the term “multimedia literacy” to characterize American communication norms in early New England.

\textsuperscript{23} Edward Gray points out there is little evidence that Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries linked linguistic differences inherently to racial differences, but I believe his employment of racial differences has more to do with complexion than emerging biological theories of race.
terms of imagined civility, religious affiliation, and European homeland rather than to
describe her skin color.

Although a white, Puritan woman wrote *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*,
Native American bodies, speech acts, and languages are embedded in this text and reflect
a process of counter-colonization. Thus, the very notion that colonial bodies embody
Native American languages, as when Rowlandson uses Algonquian words such as
“papoos” or “nux,” complicates a dichotomy dependent on particular bodies’ association
with particular languages. In this chapter, I focus on Rowlandson’s embodiment of
language (as narrator) and on *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* as a text that
exemplifies the negotiation of language—a key component of translingualism—in
colonial America. Rowlandson’s narrative reproduces Native languages and
communicative forms, and in so doing, expresses Native American languages’ integrality
to her own writing. Because the author is white and female, Rowlandson’s reproduction
of Native American language structures and words unsettles a Puritan dichotomy in
which Rowlandson would embody the civilized English language and her Native captors
would embody an inferior, “savage” language. Although Rowlandson’s intention seems
to be to reassert the dominance of her culture and language, her experiences and her
account of these experiences make this an impossible endeavor.

I will first provide a brief history of conceptions of literacy and the linguistic
colonization of Native Americans through print and education in colonial New England
and show how King Philip’s War marked a transition to an even greater investment in an
English-only colonial order. I turn to Rowlandson’s narrative as an example of the ways
in which New England, specifically Puritan, representations of Native American
languages and lack thereof constitute linguistic colonization. I then show how embodied language and the translingual interactions recorded in and constitutive of this narrative disrupt a unidirectional story of linguistic colonization in colonial America. Specifically, I argue that Rowlandson’s text utilizes code meshing, defined as “the blending together of diverse communicative resources in rhetorically strategic ways” (Roozen 203), to achieve its purposes. Rowlandson embodies Algonquian through code meshing and crosses the linguistic boundary (or reveals the impossibility of upholding such a boundary) that functioned to maintain a racial and cultural boundary, thereby solidifying the multidirectional politics of linguistic identity and negotiating colonial hegemonic discourse. Finally, I read documents describing the education of Native Americans after King Philip’s War to show the ways in which Native Americans also embodied and performed the English language and code meshed in ways that negotiated British and colonial domination. These linguistic exchanges, and specifically the language practice of code meshing, play a prominent role in constituting colonial space and place—not as physical land but as the meeting-up of histories and socially and politically constructed ideologies.

A Brief History of Linguistic Colonization, Native American Education, and Native American Languages in Seventeenth-Century New England

On March 7, 1664, famed English scientist and governor of the Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England Robert Boyle wrote a letter to the Commissioners of the United Colonies—an alliance established by Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven.24 In this letter, Boyle informs the

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24 The United Colonies of New England was also called the New England Confederation. The Connecticut State Library site explains, “[T]he alliance served to protect its members from Indian attacks, and its
commissioners that he has received their account of the money the colonies have spent on Native American education. He agrees to pay the past year’s salaries of the Puritan missionaries who have spent time educating Algonquian tribes of New England in the gospel; he argues that the missionaries will be able to accomplish even more when enabled by an increase in salary and revenue. Boyle explains that he has taken notice of the good work the famous missionary John Eliot did in translating the Bible and treaties into “ye Indian language” and expresses his hope to “make a proportionable requitall” (Yale Indian Papers). Boyle concludes his letter,

Wee are glad to heare that the Indian youths at Cambridg have made so good a proficiency in learning, & wee are not without hopes but that the Lord will use them as Instruments in his owne hand, to preach & promote the Gospell of Christ amongst their owne Countrymen, to weh end, & for the better carrying on whereof, we desire care may be taken that they reteyne their owne native—Language, And as for those five Indian youthe

commissioners—two from each colony, with six votes needed to approve any decision—met to resolve disputes over trade, boundaries, and religion. The confederation’s decisions and recommendations were advisory rather than mandatory, however, and its influence proved weak until its dissolution when Massachusetts’ charter was revoked in 1684” (“Historical Note” par. 1).

25 Boyle was a member of the Royal Society in London, a society for science founded in London with a large Puritan membership. Part of the Royal Society’s investment in Christianizing the Native Americans was grounded in a fear of the French converting them to Catholicism. The Royal Society advocated “primitive purity”—a one to one ratio between a word and reality—and an eventual universal language, one much less abstract than English, which would reverse Babel. Proponents of a universal language also included Isaac Newton and John Wilkins. Thomas Sprat’s History of the Royal Society (1667) described this ideal universal language of primitive purity as “naked,” “natural,” and “native” (qtd. in Nate 408). This echoes seventeenth-century descriptions of Native Americans and their languages. The Royal Society was invested in language that had only one word for each meaning. Although we can see from Roger Williams’s A Key into the Language of America (1643), this was not the case for many Algonquian languages like the Narragansett language that Williams translated. In Williams’ text, there are often multiple Algonquian words for one English word. The prominent European view of Native American languages in the seventeenth century held that these languages were inferior to European languages and incapable of expressing abstract thought. The Royal Society, then, would not have considered English superior to Native American languages based on its perceived “primitiveness.” Eliot himself did not consider Native American languages necessarily inferior to English; he was also a proponent of a universal language and believed that Hebrew would serve as this language.
at—inferior Schooles wee desire that all Incouragment might be given unto them according to their sev’all—capacities & attainments in learning.

(Yale Indian Papers)

He adds the postscript, “Wee desire by yo’ next to informe us how many Bibles have beene printed in y Indian Language, it being that w.eh we judg might be of publique repute unto this worke” (Yale Indian Papers). It is not clear who the “wee” refers to in this letter (possibly the Royal Society to which Boyle belonged or to the Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England), but Boyle certainly provided a substantial amount of personal financial support to the cause of “tending to the Glory of God & ye spritituall good of those poore naked Sonnes of Adam” (Yale Indian Papers). He posthumously gave money to both the Indian School at William & Mary and the Indian School at Harvard College in Massachusetts. For Boyle, the propagation of the Christian faith to Western Indians was among the most pious and charitable of causes. In spite of the seemingly benevolent spirit of this mission, the Puritans certainly imposed their own belief system and an alphabetic written language, which Europeans and colonists considered to be the most complex and canonical form of language, on the Native Americans. Thus, linguistic colonization still occurred in a distinct form: imposing a writing system and valuing only specific forms of literacy. Algonquian, the “Indian language” to which Boyle refers, was not a written language in 1664. The language was predominantly oral and did not follow an alphabetic system. While Boyle stresses the importance of Native Americans retaining their own languages in colonial education, he still suggests that these languages take the form of alphabetic written

26 Before his death in 1691, Boyle financed the printing of the Bible into Irish from 1680 to 1685 (Greenslade 172).
language—a form that the reader might master. In turn, colonials could recognize him as literate. While encounters and contact resulted in a form of access to written, alphabetic forms, the imposition of an alphabetic written language is still a particular form of linguistic colonization; Native Americans who converted had to first learn European language forms. The reference made in Boyle’s letter, then, purports an ideology—one that values Native Christianity and Native literacy in written Native languages.

To better understand linguistic colonization in relation to language forms and literacy, we must first define literacy and establish what it means within different cultures. There is no single definition of literacy. Literacy does not simply refer to the capacity to read and write, though this is how the term is commonly used. According to the *OED*, in seventeenth-century England, to be literate was to be learned and lettered—knowledgeable in alphabetic language. I imagine that in seventeenth-century England, we can find ways to complicate this definition of literacy, and in a colonial context, literacy is even more multi-faceted. Wyss cites David Hall, who explains that “‘literacy’ could refer to ‘the Latin-based world of academic learning’ that was a sign of ‘the politics of privilege,’ or it could refer simply to the act of reading or writing in the English language” (7). Education of elite white men in Europe and the colonies involved significant time teaching rhetoric—specifically delivery and elocution—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In seventeenth-century New England, command of speech was just as important as a command of reading and writing. According to Dennis Baron, the Puritan insistence on reading the Bible in the vernacular resulted in high literacy rates (specifically alphabetic literacy) and an emphasis on education (125). In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Puritan emphasis on reading the Bible in the vernacular
assured an alphabetic literate population aware of the benefits of schooling. Oratory was not only central to education in New England, but in all of the colonies. By 1642, the Massachusetts Bay Colony required by law that children attend school and learn to read. If they were not trained to read or write, children could be removed from their parents’ homes. The children would be sent elsewhere for proper instruction. This law was quickly reproduced in other colonies including Connecticut, New Haven (a colony separate from Connecticut at the time), New York, Plymouth, and Pennsylvania in the following three decades (Monaghan, “Literacy Instruction,” 26). Notably, any laws that required writing instruction in the colonies only applied to males (26). Reading instruction followed what John Locke called in 1693 the “ordinary Road” sequenced as “‘the Horn-Book, Primer, Psalter, Testament, and Bible’” (Monaghan Learning to Read 13). Baron notes that the study of English “was seen as a preparation for the study of the classics, which in turn was considered a necessary part of leadership training” (Baron 125). Thus, vernacular education in America did center on the book—the Bible; “but oratory was not extemporaneous. It was instead the reading aloud, and with proper emphasis, of speeches, essays, and, sometimes, poems. Even composition, or rhetoric, involved the rewording or amplification of reading matter, or the imitation of a model” (125). Simultaneous facility with reading and oratory marked the most basic form of colonial literacy.

In Native American culture, forms of literacy were present in an array of communicative practices including pictographs, basket and wampum weaving, and not least, oratory. However, colonials viewed the oral culture of Native Americans (the ability to memorize and tell compelling stories with lessons and claims) as a cultural lack.
For British colonials, orality was not oratory, and rather than viewing orality as a form of literacy, they instead characterized it as illiteracy. Cultural practices that might have aligned Native Americans with the principles of the rhetorical education of the elite signified differently to the colonizer. Wyss explains that Protestant missionaries valued reading and writing as literacy practices that led to “proper religious conversion” (8). She writes, “This attitude had important implications for the orally based cultures of Native American converts, which were dismissed by missionaries as inadequate for a true understanding of Christianity” (8). The colonials dismissed the other cultural practices I mentioned, such as basket and wampum weaving and creating pictographs—practices that disseminated and relayed cultural knowledge.27 Reading and writing literacy was very much linked to civility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the British colonies (Wyss 7). Citing David Cressy, Hilary Wyss notes that ministers blamed wickedness on one’s inability to read or write and suggested that alphabetic literacy could “promote...civility” (7). European colonists used the Western alphabetic system as a way “to draw cultural (and later racial) boundaries between literate Europeans and the communities of native Americans and Africans that were largely unfamiliar with alphabetic literacy” (Gustafson 1). Missionaries such as Eliot viewed “Indian scriptlessness” as a cultural difference that had to be overcome, and “oral and textual bodies of language [became] symbols for distinctions among social bodies” (Gustafson 37, 1). Colonials’ narrow view of literacy was one way to ensure that civility was something bestowed upon the colonized through an English education.

Even when a few Puritans, including Eliot, learned Native American languages and translated texts into Algonquian, the alphabetic writing system reigned as the valued form of literacy. Eliot, to whom Boyle refers, along with other British colonists, attempted to civilize and convert Native Americans in the mid-seventeenth century by teaching reading in their native languages as well as in English and transforming the appearance of their bodies through “Puritan modes of hairstyling, dress, and habitation” (Monaghan Learning to Read 77).28 For Eliot and his fellow Puritan missionaries, language, bodies, and civilization were inextricably linked. Eliot enlisted Native Americans to join his Praying Towns around 1645, after the colonists had established their control over native lands and bodies through force (Gustafson 36).29 “Praying Indians,” as they were called, were taught literacy in alphabetic, written (transliterated) Massachusett, and some were also taught to read and write in English. Typical of gender dynamics in Puritan instruction generally, Native American men learned to read and write and women only to read (Cogley 118). Each Praying Town established a school that focused exclusively on religion and literacy, and participants learned to write legal codes and read Scripture in addition to receiving general literacy training. Some students advanced to one of the two grammar schools in Roxbury and Cambridge (forty students were enrolled between the 1650s and 1670s), and four went on to attend the Indian college at Harvard (from which two graduated) (Szasz and Ryan 286).

Native converts such as James Printer and Job Nesuton helped Eliot to create “a syllabic orthography of the Massachusett language” and assisted Eliot in writing a primer

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28 Sandra Gustafson eloquently writes, “If Eliot’s Indians were to escape idolatry, then Algonquian language, bodies, and social practices must be written over with Scripture” (37).
29 Most New England Native Americans, specifically Wampanoags, attended the school established on Martha’s Vineyard.
in transliterated Algonquian, which was published by the New England Society for the
Propagation of the Gospel (and printed by Samuel Green in Cambridge) in 1653 (Round
26). In 1663, Cambridge printers produced “Eliot’s Bible” or the “Indian Bible,” a
translation of the Old and New Testaments into Algonquian (26). Many missionaries
believed that Native American languages were “innately incoherent” until “Anglo-
American grammatical rules transformed [Algonquian] into a written language more
suitable for spiritual matters” in texts like the primer and Eliot’s Bible (Wyss 8). Even
while Eliot did not consider Algonquian an inferior language, he still recognized the
importance of scripture itself to proper religious conversion. These texts and several
others made up the “Indian Library” produced by John Eliot and his fellow missionaries
in the seventeenth century (15). Boyle’s letter articulates this view and reinforces the idea
that Native literacy in written languages is a means to Christian conversion. Such literacy
was both a way for missionaries to encourage converted Indians to Christianize other
Indians and also a stepping-stone to English literacy. Thus, this letter suggests that British
men living in England and British colonists alike advocated that Native Americans retain
their Algonquian language in some form in 1664, even if the ultimate goal was to impose
Puritan customs and religious beliefs. This reading of the relationship between Puritans,
Native Americans, and language in the mid-seventeenth century serves as a useful
contrast to the abandoned Puritan investment in Native American languages a little over a
decade later, after King Philip’s War. Eliot Bibles were destroyed during the war and

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31 For a detailed timeline and extensive discussion of King Philip’s War, see Jill Lepore’s The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity (1998), pp. xxv-xxviii.
few remained by the war’s end.\textsuperscript{32} Puritans’ linguistic colonization of Native Americans, in addition to imposing a writing system, became increasingly focused on implementing an \textit{English language} writing system after King Philip’s War. After the war, the colonists had established a level of economic and political power that obviated the need for Algonquian written literacy as a stepping-stone to Native American conversion. Partly, domination over a decimated Indian population gave New England colonials access to a larger population of Native Americans willing to learn English, and partly, colonials’ negative feelings toward Native Americans after the war against them kept colonials from putting in the same effort and money to learn Native languages.

King Philip’s War (1675-76), also called Metacom’s War by some historians, was fought between Puritan colonists and an Algonquian alliance under King Philip, sachem of the Wampanoag tribe.\textsuperscript{33} The Native Americans who occupied present-day New England rebelled against the Europeans. The British colonists had infected Native Americans with disease, exacted violence, and settled on Native land. A series of conflicts resulted in the Wampanoags, Nipmucks, and Narragansetts attacking colonial towns throughout 1675 and 1676 in retaliation for years of displacement, disease, and violence.\textsuperscript{34} In November of 1675, the Commissioners of the United Colonies ordered an

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\item \textsuperscript{32} Edward Gray points to evidence that suggests that English Puritans burned Eliot Bibles considering them a threat to the purity of God’s word and true religiosity (80).
\item \textsuperscript{33} Lepore makes a strong case for referring to the war as King Philip’s War and the sachem as King Philip, explaining that evidence suggests that Philip abandoned the name Metacom after 1660. Although Philip likely changed his name again during the war, we have no evidence suggesting what the new name might have been. She argues that we have few clues as to what Algonquians would have called the war in the seventeenth century, so scholars are not in fact reinscribing the agency of meaning making by referring to the war as Metacom’s War (xix-xx). Thus, I use the name King Philip’s War to remain as historically accurate as possible.
\item \textsuperscript{34} While King Philip was in talks with fellow tribe leaders to plan an attack on the Plymouth colony, John Sassamon (a “praying Indian” as the Native American Christian converts were often called) warned the governor of Plymouth colony that Native American allies were plotting an attack. Sassamon served as a translator and interpreter for John Eliot and also worked as a missionary. The colonists took his warning seriously. King Philip was questioned before a colonial court but never convicted. Soon after, Sassamon
\end{itemize}
army to attack the Narragansetts. Although the “praying Indians” and the Mohegans sided with the British colonists, Christian Indians were confined to Praying Towns throughout the war, rarely trusted, and treated poorly. The Praying Towns of Natick, Wamesit, Punkapoag, and Hassanamesit essentially became “government reservations” (Salisbury “Introduction” 37). The population and weapons of the colonists proved too devastating for the small Native population. Neal Salisbury explains that the war “took the lives of about five thousand of the Indians and about two thousand five hundred of the English, roughly 40 and 5 percent, respectively, of the two peoples’ populations” (1). With forty percent of their population killed, the Native Americans’ “legal and political” autonomy was destroyed (1). In August 1676, colonial commander Benjamin Church captured King Philip’s wife and son; that same month, Alderman, a Native American serving Church, killed King Philip.

King Philip’s War marks a transition to an increased focus on education in the colonies and an even heavier reliance on the English language in print. This revolution in print culture saw the progression from the first newspaper appearing in colonies in 1704 to 50 newspapers and 40 magazines by the time of the revolution (Baym ed. Norton Anthology of American Literature 430). Authors of early exploration and encounter texts such as Thomas Harriot translated Algonquian languages and Roger Williams’s *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643) reproduced Algonquian languages and terms in print; both Harriot and Williams attempted to learn these languages. After King Philip’s War, even with the increase in print, this was less often the case. Even as Eliot learned the Massachusetts language and translated the Bible before the war, he viewed

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was found killed, and the Wampanoag tribe began attacking small towns in the Plymouth colony (Lepore p xi).
both as a means to an end: Christianizing Native Americans. For many missionaries, the ultimate goal was to achieve this end through English reading and writing literacy, which, according to Eliot’s fellow missionary and Massachusetts Bay superintendent of Christian Indians Daniel Gookin, would “chang[e] the language of a barbarous people, into the speech of a more civil and potent nation that have conquered them…to reduce such a people unto the civility and religion of the prevailing nation” (Historical Collections 222). Gookin wrote this just before King Philip’s War, and while Eliot preached that the language of prayer was ultimately unimportant in reaching God, Gookin and Eliot approved a proposal to shift the language of instruction in Praying Towns in 1674 to the English language (Cogley 118). The colonists’ domination after King Philip’s War made Algonquian written literacy obsolete as colonists could impose English written literacy as a first step in Native American conversion. Colonial domination “under the mantle of Christianity” led to power relations that ensured that “translations were all in one direction” (Murray 7). Even Robert Boyle, who had praised Eliot’s efforts in propagating Christianity in the Massachusett language only fifteen years earlier, changed his tune. In a 1679 letter from the Commissioners of the United Colonies to Boyle, the commissioners wrote of the Indians, “Wee fully concur with your advice as to their learning the English tongue, and the means propounded for their attaining it; and have given our orders accordingly to Mr. Elyot and others that are their Teachers and Rulers that they endeavor respectively to effect the same” (Mayhew and Ford 59). Jennifer Monaghan notes that King Philip’s War so devastated the Indian population that the colonists no longer needed to focus on defense and could fully concentrate on education (“Literacy Instruction” 35). Although the colonists had the economic and
political means to defeat the Native Americans in armed conflicts before the war (as is clearly evident by the result of King Philip’s War), it was not until after the war that colonists no longer had to fear Native American attacks—given the dwindled Indian population—and could shift focus to education. I would add to this that education was meant to function in some ways as a defense—through education, the colonists could establish their dominance, normalize a hierarchy, and establish loyalties and dependencies. The colonial concentration on education extended to the small population of Native Americans who had survived disease and the war. They had survived bodily destruction but were then subjected to an attempted linguistic (and cultural) destruction.

In addition to the imposition of English-language education to eradicate Algonquian, colonists began using the printing press in New England (primarily in Cambridge and Boston) in the eighteenth century to exert control over public opinion; the English language became an even more powerful instrument of visible dominance than it had previously been. Phillip Round explains, “From a book history point of view, King Philip’s War, and the explosion of English-language print that followed in its wake, produced a fascinating postwar cultural battle that was waged by and through books” (Removable Type 40). Indians in New England were increasingly expected to conform to English ways, including learning the English language. According to Round, the war caused the English to scrutinize Native literacy—Natives were now figured as the enemy and Native literacy became “associated with dissembling”—and colonial authorities were

35 This explosion of English-language print at this time did not completely subsume all other languages in print. Texts such as Francis Daniel Pastorius’s Positive Information from America (1684), which was written in German (but soon translated into English), and texts written by colonists and sometimes the colonized in other languages after the war were printed and circulated (Christopher Sauer introduced German printing in 1738). In 1732, Benjamin Franklin started a German-language newspaper, Philadelphische Zeitung, but it failed within a year. However, by 1751, Franklin’s attitude toward the Germans had changed, and he wrote a tirade against Pennsylvania Germans characterizing them as “illegitimate invading rivals” (Trimbur 34).
no longer interested in learning and teaching Native vernacular print (*Removable Type* 44). While Eliot believed that language did not impede Christianization, European language philosophy following the war, specifically John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), held that linguistic meaning was a social construction and the pure translatability of Christian ideas from one language into another was impossible. While Eliot requested financial support to reprint the Eliot Bible in 1681, former supporters such as Boyle were not inclined to provide funds. Eighteenth-century New England missionary and education efforts in print also shifted to the English language in the eighteenth century (44). The *Indian Primer* printed in 1700 was a bilingual text including both the English and Massachusetts language (Monaghan *Learning to Read* 66). Experience Mayhew translated Psalms and John’s Gospel into the Martha’s Vineyard Wampanoag dialect in 1709, and Round notes that James Printer and Benjamin Green printed the last Massachusetts print text, *The Massachusetts Psalter*, in 1709 (44). Round notes that the physical properties of this text, such as the almost unreadable small type of the Algonquian text, suggested the end of a colonial investment in Native vernacular print literacy (44). This suggests that the waning investment was a process that manifested physically. Several texts, such as the *Indian Primer*, were written during and reflect the period of transition from Algonquian language texts to solely English-language texts. Coupled with this waning investment was an even more

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36 This is specifically in New England. In New York, the London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G) conducted the Mohawk missionary effort in New York in the Mohawk language, and missionaries translated and printed religious texts in Mohawk in the first quarter of the eighteenth century (Monaghan *Learning to Read* 173-174). Because the main aim of the S.P.G. was to convert rather than to civilize, the S.P.G. did not see the Mohawk tongue as a barrier to Christianity.

37 He suggests that though we do have words that correspond to words in other languages, with complex ideas, we rarely see the same precise idea captured by corresponding words in different languages (316).

38 Also, the Connecticut governor, Gordon Saltonstall, commissioned a translation of the Lord’s Prayer into Mohegan-Pequot in 1721; this was a rare exception and Native Americans who spoke these languages likely would not have been able to read it (Fisher 50).
disparaging attitude toward Native American languages associated with a hostile post-war attitude toward Native Americans generally; the colonial view in the eighteenth century held that Indians “could not lose their aboriginal ‘savagery’ without also losing their aboriginal language” (Monaghan *Learning to Read* 78-79). Colonials largely feared what they perceived as violent and diseased savage Native American bodies. Proper English education, then, would both strengthen and civilize the Native Americans’ “savage” bodies and simultaneously protect the colonizer from linguistic infection.39

**Linguistic Colonization, Linguistic Ambiguities, and “Algonkian Counterethnography” in Rowlandson’s Narrative**

Mary Rowlandson is an example of an English colonist who seemingly feared any kind of cultural and linguistic infection from Native Americans. She also was presumably not a supporter of Eliot’s mission given her disdain for Praying Indians in particular. Published in 1682 and arguably written around 1677 or 1678 (Salisbury “Contextualizing Mary Rowlandson” 134), Rowlandson’s text reflects a moment of transition in New England—a moment I have already described at which Puritan investment in Native American languages waned but languages and bodies that represented different cultures constantly interacted, requiring a negotiation in language acts to which most scholarship on this text has yet to give proper attention. She writes on the cusp of this transition and in Rowlandson’s world, there are two types of bodies from which language comes—savage and civil (civil often equating to literacy, as we saw above). Her narrative

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39 See Edward Gray’s *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (1999) for a comprehensive examination of European and Euro-American views of Native American languages. Gray argues that the view of Native American languages as inferior followed the publication of John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), in which Locke suggests that societies shaped their own languages, linguistic meaning is socially constructed, and language can both create culture and reflect the mind of the individual.
degrades Indian languages, but is also particularly skeptical of English-speaking Indians and the Puritan movement that would educate Native Americans in the English language. For Rowlandson, the savage speak the savage language, and the civil speak the civil language. In important ways, the text establishes and maintains this separation between savage and civil through language, but Rowlandson ironically traverses this seeming linguistic boundary between English and Algonquian in her very effort to maintain a cultural separation between the two.

Rowlandson lived in Lancaster, where the Nipmucks of Nashaway were the nearest neighbors (110). In 1644, the Nashaway sachem, along with many others, had agreed to be instructed for the purpose of conversion—an agreement upon which Eliot capitalized (though much less so in the Nashaway community in particular due to its distance from his congregation at Roxbury) (114). Daniel Gookin toured Nipmuck villages in 1673 to organize Praying Towns, but Nashaways were not interested (121). Thus, by the outset of King Philip’s War, Native Americans were not complete strangers to Rowlandson and the Puritans were in no way foreign to the Lancaster area’s Native Americans, even as these relationships were strained.

I turn to Rowlandson’s narrative to show two prominent means of linguistic colonization late in the seventeenth century: characterizing native languages as noise or voice rather than communication or speech, and silencing native speech. But even while recounting the ways in which Rowlandson’s text confirms a familiar narrative of linguistic colonization, I recognize the ambiguous representations of language reflective of the transitory moment in which Rowlandson writes. I also point to moments of

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40 Many Nipmucks returned to their own religious healers, powwows, after being largely ignored by Eliot in the 1650s (Salisbury “Contextualizing Mary Rowlandson” 114).
“Algonkian counterethnography”—a concept developed by Ed White that I explain in detail below—with respect to language. Then, in the following section, I will show how Rowlandson’s text simultaneously complicates the familiar narrative of linguistic colonization and relies on the relationship between and across languages and code meshes to record her captivity and release.

From the outset, Rowlandson clearly denigrates both Native bodies and languages. Rowlandson divides her text into twenty removes, chronicling her captivity in distinct and separate journeys. Rowlandson’s descriptions of Native American languages differ in each remove, even while presumably describing what she understands to be the same language. While the different tribes that made up King Philip’s alliance spoke different languages, the Southern New England Algonquian languages were related (and afforded at least some mutual intelligibility though pronunciations differed) and Rowlandson never distinguishes between them (she also spends the majority of her captivity among Narragansetts). Rather, at the beginning of her narrative she denigrates Native American languages as a whole. This is not particularly surprising: “Consistent with European attitudes about native cultures, most colonists considered the local languages barbaric, even satanic, and found in the Indians’ lack of a writing system powerful evidence of the primitiveness of their culture” (Lepore 29). Rowlandson’s descriptions align with the attitudes of her fellow colonists, and she also makes a point of

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41 In *Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip’s War* (2013), Billy J. Stratton argues that Rowlandson’s portrayal of Native Americans follows an established European literary tradition. His book also focuses on the perspective of Native Americans in the text in relation to other captivity narratives.

42 It is unclear from records how much Eastern Algonquian languages differed and how linguistically intelligible one tribe might be to another (Gray 65). Eliot, who composed his Bible in the Natick dialect of Massachusetts, expressed in letters that the languages were closely related enough for his Bible to be accessible to many New England tribes and the Bible’s dissemination would “be a meanes to fix, and extend this language” (qtd. in Gray 66).
noting the indiscernibility of Native voices.

The question of what it means for speech or voice to be discernible or legible is taken up by Jacques Rancière in *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Rancière begins by invoking Aristotle to describe the difference between speech and voice:

Speech is something different from voice, which is possessed by other animals also and used by them to express pain or pleasure; for their nature does indeed enable them not only to feel pleasure and pain but to communicate these feelings to each other. Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate what is useful and what is harmful, and so also what is just and what is unjust. (qtd. in Rancière 1).

According to Rancière’s reading of Aristotle, “The supremely political destiny of man is attested by a *sign*: the possession of the logos, that is, of speech, which *expresses*, while voice simply *indicates*” (2). Rancière continues, “What speech expresses, what it makes evident for a community of subjects who understand it, is the useful and the harmful and, consequently, the just and the unjust…[o]n this rests not the exclusivity of a bent for politics, politicity, but a politicity of a superior kind, which is achieved in the family and the city-state” (2). Rowlandson’s text adheres to this theory of difference between voice and speech in a literal way. At the beginning of her narrative, Rowlandson hears the voices of Native Americans but cannot understand them as expressions. The disagreement that Rancière describes appears in Rowlandson’s text when Native voices can only indicate, but cannot express. Through identifying voices and noises rather than speech, Rowlandson tacitly suggests that the Natives do not possess logos and are thus excluded from the markedly civil capacity for politicity, both in the family and in the colony.
For example, when recollecting her initial capture, Rowlandson describes the Natives as “a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting and insulting, as if they would have torn our very hearts out” (70). Rowlandson certainly characterizes her captors as Satanic in the phrase “hell-hounds” as well as in the description of “singing”—which would have been considered both distasteful and demonic to a Puritan witness. She can discern expression in their voices (e.g. “insulting”), but the voices themselves are not speech. Rowlandson, then, disassociates Native voices from speech and subjectivity. The reader might identify these characterizations as basic indications of pain or pleasure—indications, according to Rancière, available to animals. This follows European seventeenth-century philosophy and views, such as those of Cotton Mather, which held that the uncivilized had savage languages that were inherently incapable of sophistication or abstract expression. Rowlandson positions herself in contrast to this unsophistication when she asserts after her capture, “It is not my tongue, or pen can express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit,” the reader is reminded that both are typical avenues for her expression; it is the atrocities she has suffered by Native hands that inhibit such expression (71). While Rowlandson’s statement rehearses a generic argument that emotion is beyond expression, it also demonstrates her claim to linguistic superiority: the Natives exude voice, while language and literacy are still not enough for Rowlandson to express her markedly human emotions through speech. Additionally, the Natives are lacking individual names here. According to Rancière, beings cannot speak if they are “beings without a name, deprived of logos—meaning, of symbolic enrollment in the city” or the colony in the case of Rowlandson’s narrative (23). Likewise, Native bodies are figured as incapable of embodying subjectivity in the first remove when
Rowlandson contrasts the Puritan hearts and “bodies wounded and bleeding” with the “barbarous creatures” or “black creatures” with whom the Puritans are made to go (70-71). Rowlandson does not recognize Native subjectivity or polity in the first remove.

As Matthew Brown reminds us, “Such reports are suspect as ethnographic fact of course: they tell us more about the needs and desires of English colonists to see Native Americans as, respectively, naïve and illiterate bodies or as superstitious and resigned subalterns,” and, I would add, linguistically unintelligible bodies (1-2). The Native bodies Rowlandson encounters communicate through yells, hoots, howls, roars, dance, and song; the latter two would have particularly offended a Puritan belief system. Brown continues, “This ethnographic lore denigrates oral, gestural, and pictographic forms of American Indian communication, while implicitly commending the conventional literacy of Western Europeans” (1-2). Print creates and circulates this “ethnographic lore” in the seventeenth century; in Rowlandson’s text, conventional literacy is upheld through Rowlandson’s writing of her own narrative and denigration is enacted through the accounts of her interactions with Native Americans. Rowlandson has a vested interest in asserting her cultural dominance over her captors. Mary Louise Pratt’s Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation and her influential formulation of the “contact zone” suggest that contact is “how subjects get constituted in and by their relations to each other…often within radically asymmetrical relations of power” (8). It may seem that Rowlandson, a colonial coming from the culture that eventually decimated the Indian population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, already occupies the role of dominance and superiority over the Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians specifically. However, within the space of the narrative, it is Rowlandson who is in
constant danger of erasure. She is part of a diaspora that has not yet established permanence in North America; she is distanced from her home, first her home in England when her family moved to North America and then from her colonial home, which she moves further and further away from as the narrative progresses. The Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians physically dominate her throughout the narrative. The asymmetrical power relations in effect in the time and space the narrative recounts, then, in fact situate the captor tribes as the dominant culture. Thus, Rowlandson spends her narrative working to establish her role rhetorically as part of a dominant, Puritan culture—both through her dependence on Biblical language and her denigration of Native language. As she becomes more and more entrenched in Native American culture, however, Rowlandson becomes conflicted and this effort becomes in some ways incompatible with her experience.

In the third remove, while Rowlandson continues to characterize Native Americans’ languages as voice when describing her captors in groups, she simultaneously recognizes their capacity to communicate in a language that she is also able to understand. After Rowlandson’s captors attacked the town of Medfield, the outrageous roaring and hooping that there was: They began their din about a mile before they came to us. By their noise and hooping they signified how many they had destroyed…Those that were with us at home, were gathered together as soon as they heard the hooping, and every time that the other went over their number, these at home gave a shout, that the very Earth rung again. (76)

While Native American communication is still debased here, Rowlandson recognizes the
“noise and hooping” as comprehensible. She understands the “noise” as not only communicative, but as denoting something very specific. The “hooping” signifies the number of Englishmen the Native Americans have killed, imperative wartime information, and upon receiving word of the most current number, Natives at home return “a shout.” Even if the reason for her captors conversing is to denote their treacherous murders, Rowlandson recognizes here that the sounds she hears are more than mere savage voices, but rather a means for Natives to communicate with one another—a communication she recognizes. She continues to identify collective Native communication as “yelling” and “hooting” and describes sounds and gestures from Native bodies as “hellish” (78, 83), but she clearly recognizes them as a communicative form and is also able to register their meaning.⁴³

Rowlandson’s recognition suggests that the distinct line between voice and speech is no longer viable. Returning to Rancière:

There is the symbolic distribution of bodies that divides them into two categories: those that one sees and those that one does not see, those who have a logos—memorial speech, an account to be kept up—and those who have no logos, those who rarely speak and those whose voice merely mimics the articulate voice to express pleasure and pain. Politics exists because the logos is never simply speech, because it is always indissolubly the account that is made of this speech: the account by which a sonorous emission is understood as speech, capable of enunciating what is just, whereas some other emission is merely perceived as a noise signaling

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⁴³ Native Americans in seventeenth-century New England were known to conceal their language from Europeans as a means of securing the privacy of their local spiritual life (Gray 48). However, there is no evidence that such concealment is happening in this particular scene.
pleasure or pain, consent or revolt. (22-23)

Here, Rancière acknowledges that differences in voice and speech are a product of the *accounts* of them. Rowlandson’s account recognizes that her captors are not merely expressing pleasure, pain, consent or revolt. Rather, their speech acts express information about “the useful and the harmful” in relation to their participation in a war over what each side believes to be “the just and the unjust.” Through their speech acts, the Native Americans are ascribed subjectivity. Subjectification, according to Rancière, is “the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience” (35). The colonial experience, then, must be reconfigured once Native American speech acts are recognized or identified as such. However, Rowlandson’s descriptions of both voice and speech—and the unequal relationship between the bodies from which they come—are necessary precursors for politics, and specifically, for the politics that underlay King Philip’s War. Thus, a binary in which Rowlandson and her fellow colonists are civil and associated with speech while Native Americans merely have apolitical voices breaks down. Already, in the third remove, Rowlandson’s account conveys evolving unease with strict binaries between Puritans and Indians.

In later removes, Rowlandson curiously negotiates female Native American speech. Rowlandson’s captors sell her to Quinnapin, a Narragansett sachem, and his three wives, including Weetamoo (King Philip’s sister-in-law whom Rowlandson refers to as

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44 Furthermore, we might understand these scenes of “hooping” and “yelling” as moments of collective expression of identity—which would be essential to a group whose very existence is being threatened through disease and war.
Wettimore). The Narragansett force Rowlandson to serve Weetamoo during her captivity. Rowlandson remembers,

As I was sitting in the Wigwam here, Philips Maid came in with the Child in her arms, and asked her to give her a piece of my apron, to make a flap for it, I told her I would not: then my Mistress bade me give it, but still I said no: the maid told me if I would not give her a piece, she would tear a piece off it: I told her I would tear her Coat then, with that my Mistress rises up, and takes up a stick big enough to have killed me, and struck at me with it, but I stepped out, and she struck the stick into the Mat of the Wigwam. (89)

Clearly, speech and communication occur between the women in this scene. However, this passage does not directly reproduce any speech acts. Rowlandson relays the exchange in the third person. This is a common form of narration in the text, but notably, Rowlandson’s only form of narration when recounting Native female speech; in contrast, she at times reproduces Native male speech in the first person (which we will see later in this chapter). While all the women are positioned the same grammatically, Rowlandson’s speech as narrator is privileged. In this instance, the Native women’s speech or language cannot be reproduced, even in translation. When Rowlandson reports, “my Mistress bade me give it” and “the maid told me…she would tear a piece off,” she recounts this interaction in which she tries to protect her apron—a feminized object—completely in the third person. The text privileges Rowlandson’s speech—associated with civility and the British English language—to interpret, translate, report, record, and provide an account.

Why can’t these Native American women speak? Why can’t Weetamoo in
particular speak? For Rowlandson, this is an unfamiliar situation in terms of gender relations. Weetamoo’s power confuses what it means to be a woman, to be feminine, in Puritan culture. While Rowlandson and Weetamoo are both female, due to their difference in race and culture, their gender signifies differently within their own cultures. Although Rowlandson never describes Weetamoo in terms of complexion, she does racialize Weetamoo’s Native, female body: she marks it as savage and violent, as it “rises up, and takes up a stick big enough to kill [Rowlandson].” Weetamoo’s power and status in the Native political economy also mark her as dangerous in Puritan ideology. Weetamoo’s power as a female demonstrates a stark contrast between femaleness in Puritan versus Narragansett culture—as femaleness in Puritan culture is marked by subordination and humility. Weetamoo’s gendered body is also marked as aggressive. Dress can only disguise the body, as Rowlandson makes clear just before this description of Weetamoo. Earlier, Rowlandson believes she sees Englishmen heading toward her by the Baquag River when she sees their “English Apparel, with Hats, white Neckcloths, and Sashes about their waists, and Ribbons upon their shoulders”; she continues, “but when they came near, there was a vast difference between the lovely faces of Christians, and the foul looks of these Heathens, which much damped my spirit again” (94). Even when Weetamoo takes as much time to dress “as any of the Gentry of the land,” powders her hair, paints her face, and wears jewelry, Weetamoo still has an Indian body underneath, and a savage body in Rowlandson’s eyes (97). Rowlandson

45 In “Writing Indigenous Femininity: Mary Rowlandson’s Narrative of Captivity,” Tiffany Potter argues that Rowlandson represents native femininity as failed femininity—a femininity that is unable to meet English standards to highlight her own superiority as a Puritan.

46 Again, Wheeler’s argument is helpful here. She suggests that race is a fixed category we impose on early eighteenth-century subjects that was actually considered secondary to religious classification and language. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, people of color were sometimes considered or described as white if Christian and “civilized,” namely is they spoke in the English language.
describes Weetamoo’s clothing when she participates in a dance:

She had a Kersey Coat, and covered with Girdles of Wampom form the Loins upward: her arms from her elbows to her hands were covered with Bracelets; there were handfuls of Neck-laces about her neck, and several sorts of Jewels in her ears. She had fine red Stockins, and white Shoos, her hair powdered and face pained Red, that was alwayes before Black. (103)

Weetamoo wears both English clothing and Native textiles in this scene. Weetamoo’s clothing and body together threaten Rowlandson, because this embodied identity confuses a clear distinction between a body that is a site of power (the English body) and the body that is a site of subordination (the Native American body). Furthermore, paying as much attention to dress as an English woman and wearing English clothing, Weetamoo introduces a different form of femininity—a powerful, agentic, and aggressive femininity—into English clothing, which simultaneously represents and produces English culture. We might speculate that for a Puritan woman such as Rowlandson, this form of femininity would produce discomfort in unsettling cultural norms to which she is accustomed. One possible way for Rowlandson to reassert her cultural dominance in the face of this confusion is to silence the Native, female body. Weetamoo’s body forbids her from speech in Rowlandson’s narrative. Silencing is a rhetorical act, but it is Rowlandson’s civil and Puritan body that gives her this power. As a woman, even Rowlandson must be cautious about how she enters the public realm through print. As I have mentioned, Increase Mather writes the Preface to her story, and her narrative is bound with her husband’s last sermon. Rowlandson’s female speech is carefully

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47 Laurel Thatcher Ulrich explains that many of these clothes, including the Kersey coat, stocking, and shoes, would have been characterized at the time as English clothing.
contained between the writing of two men. Weetamoo is female and Native American—and
more dangerous still—a Native American woman dressed in English clothing, who is
not controlled or contained by a man. Thus, Rowlandson as narrator silences—as
silencing is an instrument of linguistic colonization—the speech of this potentially
culturally dangerous woman.

While cultural difference may connote a language divide that gender does not
necessarily imply, Rowlandson carefully reasserts her own race and gender through her
narrative representation of her bodily practices to ensure that the reader understands her
subjectivity as both Puritan and female. In several instances, she refers to Native
Americans asking her to “knit” or “make” something (79, 83). In the fifth remove,
Rowlandson explains, “I carried only my knitting work and two quarts of parched meal”
(79). Rowlandson parallels her knitting materials with sustenance, the only two things she
carries, perhaps implying that both are necessary for her survival. On the one hand,
Rowlandson enters into an exchange economy through knitting, and “her production of
clothing, stockings, and hats increase her interaction with the Indians [and give] her a
defined position within their economy” (Burnham 66). We can, and other scholars have,
read Rowlandson’s entrance into this economy as indicative of a newfound agency and
independence that Puritan culture restricted her from. I certainly think this is the case. I
am more interested, though, in how Rowlandson’s representation of the bodily practice of
knitting might help her temper her immersion into a Native economy by simultaneously
reasserting her place as a woman in Puritan society. Monaghan notes that during this
time, “[w]riting was a job-related skill. Because girls were not being trained to hold jobs,
but to be successful homemakers, penmanship was an irrelevant acquisition for them. The
skill that corresponded, for girls, to what writing was for boys, was the ability to sew [or knit]… More evidence of sewing as the advanced skill to be acquired by girls in lieu of writing is provided by contemporary records from across the Atlantic” (“Literacy Instruction” 28-29). Thus, Rowlandson’s knitting throughout the story reminds the reader of her relationship to writing. In *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life*, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse argue that Rowlandson develops subjectivity by remaining connected to her English community through the act of writing. In the absence of the speech community with which she identifies, they argue, Rowlandson looks to writing as a way to define her self, culture, and state. Writing is what separates the captive from the captors in this story (perhaps more-so than religion). Rowlandson’s safe return to her family and community at the end of the narrative allows her to participate in the community as an individual, showcasing an individuality she did not have before surviving her ordeal through writing. Writing, according to Armstrong and Tennenhouse, is the most prominent way Rowlandson remained connected to her Puritan culture; writing essentially kept her from “going native” and enabled her to survive as a Puritan woman. Thus, she renders her gendered and raced subjectivity through the bodily acts of knitting and sewing—which signify womanhood—and writing in English—which signifies whiteness. Once bodies circulated in the early Atlantic world, specifically female bodies, the British and the British colonials feared that they would never be the same. Despite her implication in a Native economy, Rowlandson wants to show that her circulating body remains intact—the Natives have not infected her body or her language.

However, as Rowlandson experiences more and more removes, she does not
sustain the same distinctions between herself and her captors in terms of language—speech and written versus voice and oral, respectively. Whether this is an active rhetorical choice on Rowlandson’s part as author (or partial author) or an inadvertent effect of her prolonged experience in contact with Indians is debatable—but either way, the text reflects the unsustainability of distinctions the narrator initially put forth. After she describes her mistress Weetamoo as a “proud dame,” Rowlandson explains: “When she had dressed herself, her work was to make girdles of wampum and beads” (96-97). Wampum are “purple and white beads, hand crafted from quahog shell” (Brooks 54). According to Lisa Brooks, wampum is a “form of indigenous ‘writing,’ …[that] originated in coastal villages between the Muhhekunnutuk (Hudson) River and Narragansett Bay” (9). Although Rowlandson does not explain the significance of wampum in her narrative, a colonial readership immersed in trade with Native Americans would have been familiar with it.48 Brooks explains, “Women wove wampum beads into strings and belts that represented the binds between nations, recorded communal narratives and commitments, and enacted renewal and change” (9). Wampum, to which Rowlandson calls attention in her narrative, is an Algonquian communicative, language. Ed White’s “Invisible Tagkanysough”—a response to Stephen Greenblatt’s “Invisible Bullets”—tries to reconstruct an Algonquian response to colonialism in Thomas Harriot’s A Briefe and True Report. He argues that present in these Eurocentric-seeming texts is the opportunity to read an “Algonkian counterethnography,” or a reconstruction of Algonquian responses in colonial-authored contact narratives (753, 756). This “Algonkian counterethnography” makes visible forms of Native knowledge and allows

48 Brooks even contends that when European trade entered the picture, a “chaotic explosion of conflict over the wampum trade was a key factor in the infamous ‘Pequot War’” (58).
the text to serve as a bridge between Native American cultures and the history of European colonization. “Algonkian counterethnography” is particularly helpful in thinking about wampum. In applying White’s “Algonkian counterethnography” to language, we can see Rowlandson’s narrative as (partially) bridging our understanding of Native language forms and the project of European colonialism. Thus, while I have considered the ways Rowlandson silences Weetamoo, here I am interested in the ways Rowlandson makes visible Weetamoo’s participation in a language system.

Rowlandson continues to attest to the use of wampum in her new community when she describes Quinnapin and Weetamoo preparing for their dance in the nineteenth remove putting on “Girdles of Wampom and Beads” (97). At the dance, Quinnapin and Weetamoo “held on till it was almost night, throwing out wampum to the standers by” (103). Wampum shells were “strung into belts and worn by those in positions of political or religious responsibility” (Salisbury “Contextualizing Mary Rowlandson” 128). Rowlandson’s involvement in a Native American economy throughout her captivity (she makes shirts, caps, etc. in return for food, shillings, and in one instance, a knife) suggests that she would understand the import of specific objects (even if these objects were not used as currency), the significance of objects, and the function of objects as language. During King Philip’s War, King Philip “traveled north to Nipmuc country, where he broke up and distributed his coat of wampum, demonstrating his willingness to distribute power and share in the leadership of resistance” (Brooks 64). Quinnapin and Weetamoo’s “throwing out wampum to the standers by,” then, is more than simply symbolic; in context, the wampum itself and the subsequent dispersing of it is a bodily

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49 Brooks report of this occurrence comes from Nathaniel Saltonstall’s 1675, The Present State of New England with Respect to the Indian War.
practice that communicates a specific meaning—namely a distribution of power—to the
Native American bystanders and presumably to Rowlandson. While the contemporary
readership may not have been aware of this specific meaning or wampum generally,
Rowlandson nonetheless exposes them to a communicative practice of a “form of
indigenous ‘writing.’” In her distribution of power and leadership through wampum in
the Native American resistance to English colonization, perhaps Weetamoo speaks—in a
particular way—in her own language after all.50 Pennycook writes, “[T]o understand
language locally is also to understand local meanings of language, which must be
grounded in local ways of thinking” (10). Rowlandson becomes immersed in local ways
of thinking through her interactions with her captors. Further, Rowlandson’s immersion
into local ways of thinking has implications with respect to space and place as well.
According to Massey, “If time unfolds as change then space unfolds as interaction. In that
sense space is the social dimension” (61). Again, colonial space must unfold and must be
reconfigured once Native American speech acts are recognized or identified as such.

By the seventeenth remove, Rowlandson seems to have a working understanding
of Algonquian oral language, undermining her earlier representation of Natives as
disassociated from speech. She writes, “At night we came to an Indian Town, and the
Indians sate down by a Wigwam discoursing, but I was almost spent, and could scarce

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50 In American Puritanism and Defense of Mourning, Mitchell Breitwieser provides an excellent reading of
the differences and affinities between Rowlandson’s grief over the loss of her daughter Sarah and
Weetamoo’s grief over the loss of her child. His reading bears on my argument. In Puritan society, religion
attempted to “sublimate mourning” (8). Breitwieser argues that for Rowlandson, “writing becomes a part of
the work of mourning” (9). While Rowlandson’s mourning over the death of her daughter Sarah is solitary,
private, and full of prayer, After the death of Weetamoo’s child, Rowlandson recalls, “[M]orning and
evening, there came a company to mourn and howle with her” (Rowlandson 91). Breitwieser’s careful
reading leads him to speculate that perhaps in Rowlandson’s identification in the cause to mourn, she
somewhat acknowledges that they are “akin in the abstract.” To further this argument, I might suggest then,
that Rowlandson’s description of Weetamoo and other Native Americans’ collective mourning is what she
desires. She displaces the howling and mourning she feels into the body of Weetamoo, because, as a
Puritan, Rowlandson cannot express her grief.
Rowlandson’s excuse for not engaging in conversation is her fatigue, rather than a lack of comprehension. As Breitwieser suggests,

[Rowlandson] must learn their language, in both the literal and figural senses…[s]he must learn a pragmatic minimum as travelers do, what is necessary to make her way through the other rather than lay hold of the gist of the other culture which, though it remains unknown on the most abstract level, is nonetheless concretely known in several aspects that border on her need. (147)

While Rowlandson gains proficiency in Algonquian and negotiates her language and Algonquian, she never allows readers access to the act of translation. David Murray, a scholar of Native American studies, asks us to recognize “the complex and various ways in which the process of translation, cultural as well as linguistic, is obscured or effaced in a wide variety of texts which claim to be representing or describing Indians, and what cultural or ideological assumptions underlie such effacement” (1). Of course, the readers are aware that a translation must take place for Rowlandson to understand the “discourzing” in the wigwam. While Rowlandson certainly effaces translation, I have tried to suggest in the last several examples above ways in which she does not eradicate the presence Native language altogether. In the next section, I look at the ways in which Rowlandson’s text relies on translation and Native American language and linguistic characteristics. Specifically, I examine the ways in which Rowlandson embodies Native American language in the text in order to assert a cultural divide, but in so doing, highlights the negotiation of language in her narrative.
Translingual Encounters and Code Meshing in the Narrative and Beyond

In writing her narrative, Rowlandson mediates between her readers and the space she represents, effectively putting herself back into the space of the wilderness. In Rowlandson’s representation, the reader can see the ways in which her movements through the wilderness and the interactions that accompany them move her away from a comfortable cultural distinction between herself and her captors. This inability often manifests itself at the level of grammar. For example, in the Seventeenth Remove, Rowlandson explains she is “comfortable” and describes her journey, writing: “along we went cheerfully” (95). Rowlandson shifts between the pronouns “they” and “we,” and in this remove, Rowlandson uses the “we” to refer to her captors and herself. In nine of the twenty removes, Rowlandson begins by describing movements with her captors and characterizes their movement in the first-person plural (80, 81, 84, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96). In other removes, Rowlandson begins by starkly differentiating herself from her captors; for example, she begins the Twelfth Remove: “It was upon a Sabbath-day morning, that they prepared for their Travel” (86). As Michelle Burnham suggests, the shifting of pronouns—which appears throughout the narrative and does not follow a chronological trajectory—reflects Rowlandson’s “confused cultural identification” (66). Of course, iterations of “I” and “we” in the narrative hardly express a wholly individuated or a wholly plural subject. Rather, each iteration is an act of languaging that produces the remove—both the remove in the space of the text, and the remove as the space she narrates.

As frequent as her shifts in pronouns are, Rowlandson’s invocations of Biblical

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51 Notably, this is the same remove I discussed earlier in which she witnesses her captors discoursing but decides not to partake due to fatigue rather than lack of comprehension.
passages appear just as often. In several instances, Rowlandson follows or precedes either an explicit or implicit identification with her captors or an acknowledgment of their humanity with a Biblical passage (70, 74, 90 95). As Rowlandson moves through the wilderness, her Puritan sensibilities seem to draw her back to a place of obedience, order, and heed. We see this primarily through her constant invocation of the Bible—in many ways representative of her Puritan community. Biblical passages appear in every remove of the narrative as she draws on them to express moments of desperation only survivable through faith (74, 76, 78, 79, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 91). Rowlandson also compares the challenges and afflictions of her captivity to the tests God gives prophets, kings, and other biblical figures (70, 80, 82, 91, 95, 111). In this section we will see that the use of words from one language in a text written in another language is multidirectional. As we saw in the brief history, teaching Native Americans English was part of the process of colonization, but Puritans also advocated the use of English words within the Algonquian language. Puritans instructing Native Americans in Christianity used loan words for specific rhetorical purposes. In 1687, Increase Mather wrote, “A Letter Concerning the Success the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England” to Dr. John Leusden, Hebrew Professor at the University of Utrecht. In this letter, he refers to John Eliot and John Cotton (Increase Mather’s father-in-law) learning the indigenous language and teaching the Bible. He also explains that converted Indians continue to preach to and instruct their fellow Native Americans in an Algonquian tongue. However, he explains:

Before the English came into these coasts, these barbarous nations were altogether ignorant of the true God; hence it is that in their prayers and sermons they use English words and terms; he that calls upon the most
holy name of God, says, Jehovah, or God, or Lord, and also they have learned and borrowed many other theological phrases from us. In short, there are six churches of baptized Indians in New England, and eighteen assemblies of Catechumens professing the name of Christ. (par. 3)

Even when learning the gospel in their native language, Native Americans must use English words when referring to a concept not in their culture, i.e. the true God. In this formulation, English is situated as the language of civility, truth, and God. How does Rowlandson use the language of God? If God and truth and civility are of her culture, it might follow that by invoking Biblical language, Rowlandson asserts her cultural loyalty and Puritan religious convictions. However, an analysis of Rowlandson’s instrumental use of biblical passages in her narrative suggests that her Puritanism is not stable. Through translating the Bible into her text, Rowlandson offers a more slippery account of her faith and gender in her language acts.

In the seventeenth remove, which she describes as “comfortable…because of my hopes” (95), Rowlandson writes, “Now I may say with David, Psalm 119. 22, 23, 24. I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down like the locusts; my knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness” (95). As many scholars have noted, Rowlandson relies on Biblical language to tell her story for many potential reasons. For example, Susan Howe suggests that Rowlandson uses Biblical language to “confirm her orthodoxy to readers” and control any errant perception…by vehemently invoking biblical authority”(117). Breitwieser, on the other hand, contends that Rowlandson’s “flashes of identification with the Bible are not automatically congenial to Puritan sagacity” (91). Rather, he
suggests that Rowlandson deploys scriptural language in a search for meaning, but the incommensurability of the experiences of biblical figures with her own forces her to perform “textual revisionism” (95). I am interested in these moments in relation to translation. According to Lu and Horner, “[F]rom a translingual perspective, all writing always involves rewriting and translation, inevitably engaging the labor of recontextualizing (and renewing) language, language practices, users, conventions, and contexts” (586). Biblical language, here, has undergone multiple translations—with multiple authors from Hebrew and Aramaic to Latin to the vernacular to English, to name just a few. Rowlandson translates it yet again and “engage[s] in the labor of recontextualizing (and renewing) language.” Drawing on Breitwieser, then, I suggest that Rowlandson’s invocation of David does not solely establish her piousness or her power as part of the culture of the true God. Rather, as a Puritan woman—a woman whose narrative is framed by the writings of two Puritan men who authenticate and authorize her story and speech—Rowlandson’s identification with David transgresses Puritan-prescribed gender dynamics in which the woman should be a model of humility and subordination. She translates the Biblical passage through recontextualizing it, and in so doing, speaks with the male David, the “suffering character” (Breitwieser 95). She has elevated herself to the status of David abiding neither by notions of humility or subordination. Together, the pronoun shifts and Biblical passages suggest Rowlandson’s unease with her culturally liminal position as she experiences more removes, and also produce a colonial space partially constituted by cultural negotiation.

Rowlandson’s deals with her struggle with this cultural negotiation partly in spatial terms. Drawing on Edward Soja and Henri Lefebvre, Pennycook suggests, “At the
core of the spatial turn is the observation that rather than being a neutral setting, a
backdrop, a blank canvas against which social relations are acted out, space is a central
interactive part of the social” (55). Thinking about space in this way, he suggests, makes
everything that happens local and makes claims to universality and abstraction difficult
(55). When Rowlandson faces the local reality of the space she occupies—a space
constituted by her interactions with her captors, she seemingly strives for the universal,
the abstract—God and religion—for comfort. In several instances, Rowlandson follows
or precedes either an explicit or implicit identification with her captors or an
acknowledgment of their humanity with a Biblical passage (70, 74, 90 95). When
Rowlandson begins the Seventeenth Remove with “along we went cheerfully” (95), she
immediately follows: “Now I may say with David, Psalm 119. 22, 23, 24. I am poor and
needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth:
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by the writings of two Puritan men who authenticate and authorize her story and
speech—Rowlandson’s identification with David transgresses Puritan-prescribed
gender dynamics in which the woman should be a model of humility and subordination.
The fact that Rowlandson follows this pronoun shift directly with a Biblical passage that
challenges the tenets of gender in Puritanism suggests that Rowlandson is questioning not

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52 Increase Mather, the minister of the North Church in Boston most likely wrote the Preface to the
narrative, and the manuscript was bound with the last sermon her husband Joseph Rowlandson preached
before his death in 1678. This sandwiching of Rowlandson’s narrative between writings by men indicates
the public discomfort with the publication of a Puritan woman’s writing.
just her own cultural identification, but perhaps the cultural paradigms themselves. What is distressing for Rowlandson and presumably the seventeenth-century reader is a potential slippage in cultural identification when she is removed from the place she considers home. As she interacts with another culture, one in which gender functions very differently, Rowlandson recognizes that during her captivity, local space is not unknown, not savage, but rather constituted by interactions, including her language encounters with Native Americans. “Languages are a product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage” (Pennycook 1), argues Pennycook, and we can see this in the way Rowlandson narrates her story linguistically.

Rowlandson uses the words “papoos,” “sannup,” “squaw,” and “wigwam”—all deriving from Algonquian languages—throughout her narrative. Rowlandson writes “Papoos,” which Roger Williams translates in *A Key Into the Language of America* (1643) to mean a child in the Narragansett language, eleven times. In the Thirteenth Remove of the narrative, Rowlandson explains that “one” Indian asked her “to make a shirt for her Papoos” (87). Just after “the burial of a Papoos,” Rowlandson recalls, “on a sudden my mistress gives out…and she called her Sannup”—a word that originates from the Narragansett language to mean a married man (86). Additionally, Rowlandson uses the term “Squaw”—a word of Narragansett and Massachusett origin (which Williams translates to mean “woman” in the Narragansett language) and used by other tribes—to refer to the wife of “an old Indian” (87). Rowlandson uses “Squaw” twenty-nine times, and never “woman,” to refer to Native American adult women.  

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53 James Axtell notes that the Natick words “squaw and papouse had migrated from eastern Massachusetts to the mid-Atlantic interior” at some point in the seventeenth century (63). This movement might in part be due to the use of these words in popular print sources such as Rowlandson’s narrative.
analysis of when and why Algonquian words appear in the text tells us something about not only Rowlandson’s values or the values of her captors, but also about the imagined incompatibility of their values and how this incompatibility disrupts a coherent notion of places separated by culture.

I suggest that Rowlandson’s rhetorical and linguistic choices serve two purposes: First, Rowlandson racializes (and also genders in the case of “sannup” and “squaw”) the individuals to whom she refers.\(^5^4\) The words “papoos,” “sannup,” and “squaw” translate into English, but for Rowlandson, the English translation does not have the racial connotation she needs to express difference to her audience. Second, in the instances I cite above and many others, Rowlandson uses Algonquian words to express kinship relations. For Rowlandson, a wife, a husband, or a couple’s child—if Native American—must be marked as such through language. Rowlandson does not translate when writing about Native American persons, kinship ties, or domestic space. Throughout her narrative, Rowlandson describes the violence and power of female Native Americans (specifically her mistress Weetamoo) and the polygamy she witnesses. Such gender and marital relations are untranslatable into English—and into an English way of life—for Rowlandson. Similarly, in a conversation regarding her own marriage, a separation between her English way of life and a Native American’s understanding of marriage is marked through a linguistic divide. In the Twelfth Remove, Rowlandson reports, “This morning I asked my master whither he would sell me to my husband; he answered me Nux, which did much rejoice my spirit” (86). In *A Key Into the Language of America*

\(^5^4\) While as Edward Gray points out there is little evidence that Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries linked linguistic differences inherently to racial differences, Rowlandson’s text clearly associates languages and literacies with bodies and marks Native American bodies using racial classifications such as “heathens” and “barbarians” (21,23).
When Rowlandson asks her master to weigh in on a reunion with her husband—their marital relationship the product of a religious and state sanctioned union—she recounts his response in the Narragansett language perhaps to imply the cultural translation that must take place alongside any linguistic translation in their conversation. Rowlandson seemingly suggests that her master cannot understand the import of an English marital relationship. She uses the Algonquian word to denote a Native American’s understanding of her own marital relationship, marking her master as unable to fully participate in a decidedly *English* exchange of a familial reunion.

The words “sannup,” “squaw,” “papoos,” and “wigwam” all appeared in print in the seventeenth century and came to refer specifically to Native Americans and their communities. These words became recognizable to and were used by the English colonists. These words would have likely been familiar to an English-speaking colonial readership, but their Algonquian etymology and continued use in communications among tribes suggest that readers would associate these words with Native American language. Additionally, colonial authors do not consistently deploy these terms to refer to Native American persons and kinship relations.\(^\text{55}\) Thus, we can conclude that there was a

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\(^{55}\) While the use of Native American terms in relation to family appears in several seventeenth-century English-language texts (e.g. Daniel Gookin’s *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England* [1677] and Increase Mather’s *A relation of the troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there. Together with an historical discourse concerning the prevalency of prayer* [1677]), many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English language texts do refer to an Indian family and do translate words linked to Native American kinship relations and domesticity. For instance, “A Notable Exploit; wherein, Dux Faemina Facti” [1702] written by Cotton Mather recounts the captivity of Hannah Duston completely in English. Mather does not refuse to translate particular Algonquian words into English the way Rowlandson does. This could be attributed to a variety of reasons including his gender or his belief in the fruitlessness of retaining a “savage” aboriginal language in any form (Monaghan *Learning to Read* 78). Also, Elizabeth Hanson’s narrative *God’s Mercy Surrounding Man’s Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson* [1728] alternates between using Native American words such as “Squaw” and “wigwam” and English words such as “Wife” and “Mother” to describe Native American kinship relations. Even Rowlandson has instances in which she
strategic rhetorical effect in an author’s use of Algonquian versus English words when describing Native American kinship relations and domesticity. The context always indicates whether the subject is Native American or Puritan in these instances; thus these loan words serve a purpose beyond clarity. Loan words, or words borrowed from one language while one speaks or writes in another, were commonly used in early America, most often to name plants and animals that were unfamiliar to colonial settlers (Cutler 44). Over time, English-speaking audiences became familiar with several Native American words, such as *moccasins* and *wigwam*. With British expansion through conquest, the English language also expanded and incorporated words from other nations for which they did not have the language. In some instances, colonists used Native American words, however, not out of necessity or taxonomy. When an author or speaker uses a loan word not solely for the purpose of naming that for which one’s own language does not have a comparable word, then the lexical borrowing is the result of an author or narrator’s deliberate choice for the purpose of establishing a particular meaning. And, when an author uses words from multiple languages in early America in one text deliberately to serve a rhetorical purpose for the text as a whole, borrowing or loaning becomes the practice of code meshing.

Rowlandson’s narrative exemplifies code meshing—the merging of language codes (Young et al. xix), which writing scholars such as Juan Guerra strongly link to translingualism. In writing studies, scholars discuss code meshing as “a strategy for

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56 In “Native American Loanwords in American English,” Ginney Carney explains that the “first awkward attempts at communication between Native Americans and English settlers had an astounding effect on American English, for according to the estimate of language scholars, some 1,700 words entered the English language during the seventeenth century” (195).
merging local varieties with Standard Written English in a move toward gradually pluralizing academic writing [moving away from one standard form] and developing multilingual competence for transnational relationships” (Canagarajah 586). In contrast to code switching—which has traditionally been used in writing studies to describe using different languages for different contexts (e.g. formal writing versus informal writing, or low stakes assignments versus high stakes assignments)—code meshing refers to the appearance of multiple languages in one unified text as a rhetorical strategy. Rhetoric and composition scholar Suresh Canagarajah focuses specifically on code meshing as a strategy for speakers of minority English dialects to hybridize their texts with “divergent varieties of English” (598). However, he recognizes that code meshing was used in classical rhetoric—one would insert a word in another language without translation—as a means of demonstrating one’s linguistic competency in languages known only to the well educated, such as Greek and Latin (Canagarajah 598). Code meshing, then, is concerned with both multiple languages and varieties within a language, and with multiple linguistic structures and genres that are hallmarks of a language or language variety. Typically, scholarly conversations of code meshing revolve around students’ right to their own languages, and students code mesh as a way of establishing a place for minority languages in academic writing. In applying theories of code meshing to an early American text such as Rowlandson’s, we can understand code meshing as a practice and a product of language encounters and linguistic colonization during this period. In Rowlandson’s text, the narrator’s goal often seems to be to maintain a boundary between her own culture and that of her captors through language; but her strategy of code meshing also results in re-orienting writing and developing multilingual competence. One
central tenet of code meshing, according to Canagarajah, is the integrating of “preferred varieties in rhetorically strategic ways” (598). Lexical borrowing, then, becomes code meshing when languages are *strategically* merged for a rhetorical purpose.

In Canagarajah’s formulation, code meshing is constructed as intentional, even strategic, and primarily performed by marginalized speakers of non-dominant languages or dialects. I suggest that in Rowlandson’s text, code meshing functions somewhat differently, especially in the latter respect. Rowlandson’s purpose was not to cultivate transnational relationships, but her strategy is similar to what Canagarajah describes. Rowlandson’s text uses Algonquian words in a rhetorically strategic way to establish the mutual alterity between her own community and the community of her captors but in so doing, she makes the mutual permeability of language visible to the reader. While I move away from attributing authorial agency to Rowlandson (especially given Increase Mather’s deep involvement in the production of the narrative), Rowlandson the narrator strategically meshes English and Algonquian for the purpose of maintaining cultural distance, which has become compromised as she traverses physical distance, in terms of kinship systems and notions of domesticity. Rowlandson, narrator and author, is of course a speaker of the dominant language, but her position as captive, as I mentioned, puts her in a precarious state of being in danger of erasure. The text positions Rowlandson, rather than her captors, in danger of death, infiltration, and erasure. Thus, through the practice of code meshing, Rowlandson attempts to affirm her individual existence in this space—to demonstrate that the Narragansett have not subsumed her.

Rowlandson refers to her house and home in Lancaster often and laments that in opposition to her current status, she once “had Husband and Father, and Children, and
Sisters, and Friends, and Relations, and House, and Home, and many Comforts of this Life” (81). The difference between house and home, here, seems to be that of a physical location, versus a sense of place, respectively. This formulation of home is one that expresses a “yearning for a whole and stable identity that the idea of home often represents” (Young 123). When expressed in this way, Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty explain, home is an “illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance, the repression of differences, even within oneself” (qtd. in Young 147). Certainly, Rowlandson’s nostalgia for her familiar home is based on a conception of a coherent and homogeneous Puritan community. However, she also refers to her place of lodging and domestic space (where she eats, sleeps, and reads) as “home.” In the Ninth Remove, she writes:

But I was fain to go and look after something to satisfy my hunger, and going among the Wigwams, I went into one and there found a Squaw who showed herself very kind to me, and gave me a piece of Bear. I put it into my pocket, and came home, but could not find an opportunity to broil it, for fear they would get it from me, and there it lay all that day and night in my stinking pocket. (84-85)

And in the Twelfth Remove she recalls:

Towards Night I gathered me some sticks for my own comfort, that I might not lie a-cold: but when we came to ly down they bade me go out, and ly somewhere else, for they had company (they said) come in more than their own: I told them, I could not tell where to go, they bade me go look; I told them, if I went to another Wigwam they would be angry, and

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send me home again. Then one of the company drew his sword, and told me he would run me through if I didn’t go presently. Then was I fain to stoop to this rude fellow, and to go out in the night, I knew not whither. 

Mine eyes have seen that fellow afterwards walking up and down Boston, under the appearance of a Friend-Indian, and severall others of the like Cut. I went to one Wigwam, and they told me they had no room. Then I went to another, and they said the same; at last an old Indian bade me come to him, and his Squaw gave me some Ground-nuts; she gave me also something to lay under my head, and a good fire we had: and through the good providence of God, I had a good lodging that night. (87)

While relaying her experience of finding a comfortable place to sleep, Rowlandson uses the term “Wigwam”—a variant of the Algonquian word for house “weekuwom”—which she writes forty times in her narrative. Wigwam refers to the specific structure that comprised such houses—a domed structure made of poles and covered with bark. She also uses the word “home” dozens of times to refer to her own wigwam, for instance when she writes that she accepted a piece of bear, put it in her pocket, “and came home.” Rowlandson refers to the structures in which Native Americans lodge and explicitly separates these structures from what she considers to be a “home” when she writes, “if I went to another Wigwam they would be angry, and send me home again.” Rowlandson can refer to the wigwam as a “home” only when referring to the wigwam where she lives and sleeps. When she shares a wigwam with Native Americans, it is a “home.”

Presumably, if Rowlandson had gone to stay, sleep, and live in “another Wigwam,” that

58 Often times the orthography of the words would change to reflect more common English-language spelling.
wigwam would then become “home.” In these instances, a home is where a white, Puritan woman lives, even if it is the structure of a wigwam, and a wigwam is where a Native American lodges. The space of the “home”—which functioned to describe both private, domestic space and the space of the imperial center in colonial America—cannot describe a Native American’s abode. Thus, the Algonquian word “wigwam” allows Rowlandson to maintain the cultural signification of the English word and notion of “home.”

However, in designating a wigwam in which she sleeps, eats, and reads “home,” Rowlandson is creating a new sense of place in her “specific articulation of space” (Pennycook 80). In differentiating between a home and other forms of shelter, Iris Marion Young writes:

A home…is personal in a visible, spatial sense. No matter how small a room or apartment, the home displays the things among which a person lives, that support his or her life activities and reflect in matter the events and values of his or her life. There are two levels in the process of the materialization of identity in the home: (1) my belongings are arranged in space as an extension of my bodily habits and as support for my routines, and (2) many of the things in the home, as well as the space itself, carry sedimented personal meaning as retainers of personal narrative. (139)

Building on Edward Casey’s claim that “we tend to identify ourselves by—and with—the places in which we reside” (qtd. in Young 140), Young continues, “[W]e dwell in the flux of interaction and history…Home as the materialization of identity does not fix

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59 This formulation gets more complicated at the end of the Nineteenth Remove when Rowlandson seems to refer to “home” broadly as the larger space she and the Native Americans occupy rather than individual wigwams.
identity but anchors it in physical being that makes a continuity between past and
present” (140). Young suggests that home serves as a “material anchor” that grounds time
and also grounds “a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity” (149). Just as home
is “the materialization of identity,” it is also “an extension of the person’s body, the space
that he or she takes up” (140, 152). For Rowlandson, then, her wigwam becomes her
home, and this is how she is able to connect her past to her present; she takes her familiar
notion of home, a place that connotes safety, coherence, and stable identity, and she maps
it onto the space that becomes an extension of her body while in captivity. The home as
an extension of her body serves to support her individual subjectivity (130). In her
feminist critique of the themes of house and home, Young advocates for a home that is
“attached to a particular locale as an extension and expression of bodily routines” (150).
If we understand Rowlandson’s language as a performance, a bodily routine, or a practice
as she writes, then her language and her linguistic choices in relation to “home” in fact
construct the meaning of the space she inhabits for her readers.

On the one hand, Rowlandson does not translate words into English that
correspond to Native American persons, kinship ties, or domestic space. This marks
Native American bodies, families, and domesticity as untranslatable into Rowlandson’s
English way of life. English domestic space is sacred to Rowlandson, and “matters of the
intimate are critical sites for the consolidation of colonial power” (Stoler 4). A domestic
economy in which a woman wields more power than a man and one man has multiple
wives is not one with which colonial Rowlandson will identify. Rowlandson as narrator
does not want her reader to identify with or relate to her Native American captors, whom
she often depicts as dishonest, violent, and callous. She doubts their veracity when she
writes, “they had company (they said).” She portrays their propensity for violence in her description of the man who “drew his sword.” This man is furthermore deceptive, as he appears to be a “Friend-Indian” thereafter—likely a reference to Christian Indians who Rowlandson believes are heathens trying to pass as Christians.  

The captors are callous when the inhabitants of one Wigwam send her out in the cold, and the inhabitants of two others send her away. Even when an Indian and his Squaw feed and lodge Rowlandson, she attributes her comfortable sleep to “the good providence of God.” She will not reconcile the characteristics she attributes to her captors with what she understands to be the kinship relations that help constitute, along with the English language, a civil society. Algonquian words cannot communicate the kind of people, familial relations, and notions of domesticity and privacy that comprise Englishness.

However, Rowlandson recognizes the domestic space of Native Americans, even when she presents it as a form of domesticity separate from her own. The wigwam, squaw, and papoose mark Native American personhood, kinship, and domesticity. There is a mother, a mother who lost her child, even if she is not an English mother. There is a “mother tongue”—the language associated with one’s cultural origin—a mother tongue at least somewhat familiar to Rowlandson, even if it is not English. Rather than indecipherable noise, in these instances, Native American language is integral to Rowlandson’s text in linguistically representing a distinct Native American kinship network. Thus, rather than subsuming Algonquian kinship relations or suggesting that none exist, Rowlandson recognizes a mutual opacity—a mutual opacity connoted in her

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60 Hilary Wyss suggests that this passage is possibly a reference to James Printer (49).
not translating these words into English.\textsuperscript{61} While readers may have understood the basic meaning of these words, they clearly mean something different from the direct English translation—and that precise difference is something the reader cannot access.

Rowlandson does not deny opacity to native speech; rather, she credits Algonquian, and Narragansett culture, with its own value. Rowlandson is neither attempting to use a language variety native to her, nor is she attempting to demonstrate her competency in languages of the elite. Rather, on the one hand, she authenticates her experience of spending time as a captive within this culture, and on the other hand, she implicates herself in another cultural paradigm—a cultural paradigm outside of, and in conflict with, Puritanism.\textsuperscript{62} If, as Casey suggests, culture is both embodied and located (“How to Get from Place” 34), then the merging of these cultural paradigms, through language and notions of home specifically, suggests that the located bodies of Rowlandson’s narrative belong to and constitute the space they inhabit physically and textually (24).

In the instances I describe above, Rowlandson reproduces Native American lexicons without any discernible shift in her discursive register. Only typographical marks, which were common in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts, show an acknowledgement of a linguistic shift in these moments. Rowlandson in no way disrupts her narrative; Algonquian language comes from Rowlandson’s speech/mouth/hand/body—she embodies the Native language from which she distances herself at other points in the narrative. Feminist theorists such as Elizabeth Grosz and

\textsuperscript{61} In \textit{Learning to Curse}, Stephen Greenblatt explains that when language is imbued with opacity, “we judge…but cannot make it vanish into silence” (43). People “find it difficult to credit another language with opacity. In other words, they render Indian language transparent, either by limiting or denying its existence or by dismissing its significance as an obstacle to communication between peoples. And as opacity is denied to native speech, so, by the same token, is it denied to native culture” (44).

\textsuperscript{62} Burnham identifies Rowlandson’s narrative as “an account of conflict between two cultural paradigms” (68).
Young are particularly concerned with embodiment as lived female bodily experiences. I contend that Rowlandson’s embodied femaleness as author as well as her embodied language as narrator place her in a liminal space—one that is constantly shifting as her lived body traverses more and more space with her captors. Far from maintaining a dichotomy dependent on her associating particular bodies’ with particular languages, Rowlandson’s embodiment of multiple languages exemplifies her negotiation of conflicting cultural, gendered, and racial ideologies. Throughout her narrative, she develops colonial ambivalence and her narrative reflects this in the ways her representations are dynamic, evolving, and translingual. Rowlandson the author perhaps inadvertently invites the reader to traverse the imagined boundary dividing languages as well. Furthermore, Rowlandson demonstrates her translingual competence and expects the readers to in some sense perform a translingual reading of her text. The text requires more than an English alphabetic literacy from its readers; it requires a metalinguistic awareness from both author and reader.

Rowlandson code meshes with Algonquian words and she also does so at the sentence level—specifically in her reproduction of King Philip’s speech and Christian Indians’ speech. In the Nineteenth Remove, Rowlandson reports that Philip says to her, “Two weeks more and you shal be Mistress again” and later, “quickly you shall come to your master again” (96). The second remark is a variation of the first. If she shall soon be a mistress again, it follows that she will soon come to her master. David J. Silverman offers a reading of a Wampanoag-written 1681 document that had been translated into English, most likely by either Matthew or Experience Mayhew. In his analysis, Silverman explains the hallmarks of “Indian oratory”: “It repeats the same theme over
and over again to give listeners the chance to commit it to memory, and it lacks the precise language of English legal documents” (170). Additionally, Native writings “contain short, easily memorized sentences, in contrast to the colonists’ characteristic run-ons” (170). What if we read Philip’s remarks as an instance of Indian oratory marked by repetition? Furthermore, what might we make of these two very “short, easily memorized sentences”?

The length of these sentences might not be immediately striking to a reader. But, when contrasted with Rowlandson’s final response in her exchange with Philip a few lines later, the difference is clear. Rowlandson writes of the last time she washed: “I told him not this month, then he fetcht me some water himself, and bid me wash, and gave me the Glass to see how I lookt; and bid his Squaw give me something to eat: so she gave me a mess of Beans and meat, and a little Ground-nut Cake” (96). There is a distinct difference between Rowlandson’s “characteristic run-ons” and Philip’s concise phrases that she reproduces. Admittedly, I am comparing Rowlandson’s reproduction of King Philip’s speech with her own writing and narrative style. She does not reproduce her response as a first person quotation (which she indicates through italics); rather, she describes her response in the third person. In this instance, though, Rowlandson does not seem to describe her response this way as a means of silencing her voice the way she does with Weetamoo—rather, she privileges her writing over her speech. Returning to seventeenth-century notions of literacy, while Silverman, a contemporary Native American scholar, characterizes “Indian oratory,” a seventeenth-century reader would more likely consider Philip’s speech orality—a sign of his illiteracy. The very fact that Rowlandson’s verbose writing contains Philip’s concise speech highlights, then, both
Philip’s illiteracy and his Algonquian linguistic hallmarks. The sentence structure, when contrasted to Rowlandson’s account of her responses, shows a clear linguistic distinction. Reportedly, the historical Philip knew very little English. It is unclear, then, whether Rowlandson’s reproduction of his speech is a translation. Either way, Rowlandson does reproduce his speech in English—she does not relay their conversation in the third person the way she does with Native American women earlier. There is an intimacy here. When Rowlandson partakes in this one-on-one conversation with a Native American, she becomes part of the equation. In this instance, Rowlandson also speaks to the humanity of Native Americans—Philip fetches her water and his Squaw feeds her. Again, it seems that Rowlandson’s clear distinctions between herself and her captors slip. Philip’s remarks express sympathy and Rowlandson reproduces his language in English, the language of civility, and she even attributes Puritan English terms of status to his speech—“mistress” and “master.” Far from denigrating Philip’s language or suggesting a lack of language, Rowlandson implicates herself in whatever language they are using to communicate. Thus, she must recognize a semblance of civility in their interaction. Rowlandson does not completely separate herself from her captor, here, and she makes characteristics of his Wampanoag language—which she embodies through writing—visible at the sentence level. The code meshing happening in this textual moment invites the reader to move across languages, again highlighting the translingual nature of the narrative.

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63 To be sure, Philip’s syntax is characteristic of English: subject, verb, object. Also, these sentences do not show, to my mind, grammatical consistencies with Algonquian language. Kathleen Bragdon and Ives Goddard provide a grammatical sketch of the Massachusetts language in the second volume of *Native Writings in Massachusetts*. The grammatical characteristics of Massachusetts include directional markers to indicate the relationship between the subject and object in place of strict word order and prefixes and suffixes of nouns to indicate gender or number.
Recent scholarship on Native Americans and colonial education consider ways that English language literacy did not compromise Native American culture—specifically for Christian Indians. Scholars such as Lisa Brooks, Jennifer Monaghan, and Hillary Wyss consider the complicated relationship Native Americans had to the English language; these scholars suggest that Native Americans were able to integrate their education and English language education into their own culture. Wyss focuses specifically on Christian Indians and challenges the idea that learning to read and write in English domesticated Indians. Rather, she argues, Christian Indians recognized that they had two distinct but related identities—as Native Americans and as colonial subjects. Christianity was integral to cultivating a Native colonial identity and to understanding their place in the colonial order. Wyss suggests that Rowlandson downplays the role of praying Indians in her narrative to position herself as “the lone Christian among savages” (48). She not only downplays the Christianity of the praying Indians, according to Wyss, but also tells story after story of Christian Indians who have engaged in sinful social practices. This is certainly true: A praying Indian took Rowlandson’s daughter Mary and sold her for a gun (Rowlandson 75). Another “betrayed his own father into the English hands, thereby to purchase his own life,” and yet another was “so wicked and cruel, as to wear a string about his neck, strung with Christian fingers” (98). Wyss points to these instances to argue that Rowlandson emphasized praying Indians’ “unscrupulousness and amorality” (49). While I agree that Rowlandson unfavorably portrays Christian Indians,

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64 Praying Indians were rejected by both fellow Native Americans who considered them traitors and by colonists who refused to accept them as allies. Daniel Gookin, the Massachusetts Bay superintendent of Christian Indians, completed a history of King Philip’s War in 1677 to redeem the Christian Indians entitled *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*. He wrote of their continued loyalty to the English, even when sequestered to Deer Island where many died of starvation and disease, and lamented their persecution by colonists.
she does not erase them or their speech from her text, which I suggest, speaks to her growing ambivalence about her relationship to Native culture and language.

Christian Indians, such as James Printer, also known as Wowaus, play an integral role in Rowlandson’s historical narrative and textual narrative. Printer, who Rowlandson refers to as James the Printer, negotiated on the side of King Philip regarding Rowlandson’s eventual release. He later helped to print Rowlandson’s narrative when he returned to his job at Samuel Green’s print shop after the war. Christian Indians in Rowlandson’s text also speak in “short, easily memorized” sentences. Native Americans were involved in letter negotiations during King Philip’s War, and Christian Indians negotiated Rowlandson’s release through letters. Nipmuck sachems called upon Nipmucks who had converted to Christianity in Praying Towns to mediate. Rowlandson recalls her encounter with Tom (Tom Duplet, also known as Nepanet) and Peter (Peter Conway, also known as Tatiquinea) two Christian Indians of the Nipmuck tribe who came to see Rowlandson (Salisbury “Contextualizing Mary Rowlandson” 131). She explains, “Though they were Indians, I gat them by the hand, and burst out into tears; my heart was so full that I could not speak to them; but recovering my self, I asked them how my husband did, and all my friends and acquaintance?” (97) They respond, “They are all very well, but melancholy” (97). Again, the length of these sentences would be unremarkable, if not for the marked contrast between the sentences spoken by the Native Americans and the writer’s own lengthy sentences. I have read such

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65 Printer was a Nipmuck convert first educated at one of Eliot’s Praying Towns and then at the Indian School at Harvard. When King Philip’s War began, Printer joined King Philip and his allies. According to Round, alphabetic and print literacy were central to Printer’s self-fashioning and cultural affiliation during war (41).
66 In Writing Indians (pp. 17-51), Wyss performs exceptional readings of negotiation letters written by Christian Indians, including Printer, during King Philip’s War. She suggests that these letters are “infused with language that rebuts the English attempt to control the negotiation” (40).
an exchange with Philip as a means for Rowlandson to differentiate her own skillful literary capabilities with the limited vocabulary and simple sentence constructions of English-speaking Natives. But, I also read these exchanges as Rowlandson embodying an Algonquian linguistic structure when she writes them. When read as code meshing, hallmarks of Native orality and language are appearing in Rowlandson’s record of her encounters.

It is the negotiation of language—Algonquian language working in this categorically colonial, English-language text—that constitutes the translingualism of the text and expresses Rowlandson’s evolving view of the mutual permeability of two cultures and their languages. Through these language acts, then, Rowlandson situates herself in a new order—an order in which multiple cultures coexist, interact, and ultimately alter the meaning of the space they inhabit.

**Performing Language and Performing Civility after King Philip’s War**

Up to this point, I have explored the ways in which a white Puritan’s embodiment of translingualism disrupts a comfortable distinction between white, Puritan colonial bodies/English and Native bodies/Algonquian in Rowlandson’s text and what this disruption can tell us about the linguistic and cultural negotiations colonialism necessitates. Negotiation also bears on the simultaneous subjection and affordances English language acquisition entails for Native Americans. After King Philip’s War, many Native communities accepted and even sought literacy education.⁶⁷

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⁶⁷ Of course, European powers other than Great Britain provided literacy education as part of missionary projects in languages other than English, but for the purposes of my project, I focus specifically on English education.
For the Martha’s Vineyard Native Americans, schooling became a part of life. “Even parents who were not religious sent their children to be educated at what were, in essence, religious schools” or provided reading instruction for their children at home (Monaghan 79). Between 1700 and 1740, there was also a wave of evangelist attempts to convert the Native American communities that had not yet been Christianized. Different Christian sects had different aims and methods in educating Native Americans; however, common to the missionary efforts in the colonies was the interest in teaching Native Americans to perform language and behaviors as a means of Anglicizing them. But in effect, these performances of language, which are embodied, also re-negotiated British and colonial domination.

One organization invested in the eighteenth-century conversion mission was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.). The S.P.G. was a London based organization established in 1701 (this is a different organization from the one of the same name that published Eliot’s Algonquian primer) and led in the colonies by Dr. Thomas Bray. This Anglican organization set out to educate and convert Native Americans, slaves and the poor, ingraining a hierarchical structure in its very mission. The S.P.G. founded and funded schools in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. The schools were established for both boys and girls, but the majority of students were male. The S.P.G.’s Anglican affiliation is important in that its purported aim was to convert, not to civilize, the Native Americans. In the eighteenth century, these often went hand-in-hand in Native American education, but the Anglicans emphasized conversion only and de-emphasized English language imposition. In New York, the S.P.G. mission to the Mohawks in the early eighteenth century consisted of
schoolmasters who were proficient in Mohawk and instruction took place solely in that language. William Bradford published the Book of Common Prayer in the Mohawk language in 1715 (Monaghan Learning to Read 174). The S.P.G. sent a series of missionaries to the Mohawks, but the S.P.G.’s lack of schoolmasters skilled in Mohawk in the 1720s, 30s, and 40s, as well as a lack of instructional texts (e.g. spelling) in the Mohawk language made the mission difficult. In the middle of the century, the S.P.G. ruled that instruction must take place in English (185). Thus, the linguistic hierarchy by which English trumped native languages in the colonies finally reached the Mohawks. The Congregationalists’ (Congregationalist was virtually synonymous with Puritan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) devotion to Native American education also continued to focus on conversion and civility in the eighteenth century.69

In the early 1700s, Puritans expanded their conversion and civilizing efforts to southern New England and western Massachusetts. In the seventeenth century, the Mohegan tribe led by their sachem Uncas refused to entertain the Christian religion (Fisher 36). But by the mid 1720s, missionaries supported schools, including one at Mohegan, Connecticut attended by Mohegan, Pequot, and Niantic children (Szasz and Ryan 287).70 In the 1730s, John Sergeant (missionary to Mahican, Housatonic, and Naugatuck) opened a day school at Stockbridge for Indian children, funded by commissioners. Sergeant wanted to educate Indian boys and girls and replicated Eliot’s Praying Towns. Native Americans at Stockbridge were baptized and encouraged to live

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68 Monaghan argues that this ruling was defied as evidenced by the Mohawk missionary’s interest in creating instructional texts in Mohawk in 1770 (Learning to Read 185).
69 According to J. William T. Youngs, it was not until the nineteenth century that many Congregationalists no longer thought of themselves as Puritans (xiv).
70 A white Puritan started the school but it “eventually came under the supervision of Mohegan Ben Uncas, III, who served as schoolmaster for over a decade” (Szasz and Ryan 287).
in English households (Fisher 47). David Brainerd, a Presbyterian missionary to Mahicans near Albany, moved to Delaware to educate Delawares. His brother John Brainerd served the Delawares as a missionary in New Jersey. Moravians did similar educational and missionary work in Pennsylvania in the 1740s (Szasz and Ryan 287).

For Anglicans and Congregationalists alike, learning and performing particular behaviors was an important part of education. Reading was taught aloud, and one’s reading ability was measured in terms of pronunciation, manners, and delivery. The Talcott Papers, letters written to and from Governor Talcott of Connecticut, demonstrate the importance of behavior particularly in the Mohegan school. Reverend Benjamin Lord of Norwich wrote a letter to Governor Talcott to be communicated to the General Assembly early in the eighteenth century (date unknown). In this letter, Lord reported his observation of the Indians at Mohegan and his evaluation of their learning. The Native Americans he observed had been at the English school for eighteen months. He writes:

I observed they read with a considerable degree of freedom, exactness and judgment. While some read in their Primers and others in their Psalters they all spelt well, and some of them I perceived were able to read off a Psalm roundly without spelling. And their dropping of the Indian and falling so readily into the English tone and pronunciation to such a wonderful degree of conformity made me think they might quickly become great proficients in the language and manners of the English, if followed with their present happy and faithful instruction. Again, I observed when they were catechized that they recited memoriter a considerable part of the first principles of Religion, and with a becoming
gravity, still keeping to the English tone and pronunciation, and all with but little hesitation. (Connecticut Historical Society 110)

He concludes by asking the governor for “promotion and encouragement,” in other words, funds, to continue this successful endeavor of educating the Native Americans. First, the very notion that the Native American students must demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities to an English observer who will then request money for continued education suggests that performance is integral to the financial support of the school. The students literally have to perform what they have learned, including their “English tone and pronunciation.” The ability to “read off a Psalm roundly without spelling” and to recite from memory responses to questions about Christianity indicates a remarkably well-rehearsed performance. While elocution was important to rhetorical education for all students in formal education at this time, these Native American students’ speech and behaviors aligned with those of the English, and with further schooling, “they might quickly become great proficients in the language and manners of the English.” Lord describes language as a performance in his emphasis on tone and pronunciation, and the “manners of the English” might refer to the common eighteenth-century usage of the word “manners” as the performance of “conventional politeness” (OED). Lord subsequently writes, “Upon the whole I couldn’t forbear thinking that there is great probability of their coming to a good knowledge of the principles of Religion, as well as skill in the English language, if kept to their learning” (110). In Lord’s letter, his comments on tone, pronunciation, and manners precede his discussion of the “knowledge of the principles of Religion.” The Native Americans, then, are not solely learning to read about Christianity in the English language to comprehend the material—they are just
as importantly learning to perform Englishness.

Additionally, such a performance, specifically the oral aspects of it, require an embodiment of English. “‘Good reading,’” as we see in Lord’s letter, meant “accurate oral reading” (Monaghan Learning to Read 153). Although he is a Caribbean writer and scholar studying Creole, Glissant’s writing on language and orality resonates with this moment in the history of Native American education. In Caribbean Discourse, Glissant writes,

The written requires nonmovement: the body does not move with the flow of what is said. The body must remain still; therefore the hand wielding the pen (or using the typewriter) does not reflect the movement of the body, but is linked to (an appendage of) the page…. The oral, on the other hand, is inseparable from the movement of the body. There the spoken is inscribed not only in the posture of the body that makes it possible (squatting for a palaver for instance, or the rhythmic tapping of feet in a circle when we keep time to music), but also in the almost semaphoric signals through which the body implies or emphasizes what is said. Utterance depends on posture, and perhaps is limited by it. (122)

In Glissant’s formulation, orality is embodied language. When Native American students recite, read, and rehearse memorized passages aloud, they are performing a specific identity. However, the Native American body can only partially perform this identity. This exemplifies Homi Bhabha claim that while mimicry—the act of the colonized imitating the language and customs of the colonizer—constitutes colonial power, it also disrupts colonial power when a clear distinction between colonized and colonizer is not
maintained. Lord’s letter reflects the fear of complete mimicry when he writes that “they might quickly become great proficients in the language and manners of the English”—they are not yet—and they keep “the English tone and pronunciation, and all with but little hesitation”—not with no hesitation. This sense of almost English but not quite, which Bhabha describes in “Of Mimicry and Man,” suggests that Native American reading performances were in fact, reiterations with a difference. This difference is present in the racialized body of the performer, the hesitation in the performance, and the inability of the performance to fully reach the heights of the English language. The Native American students are performing Englishness, but simultaneously, they are performing Indian-ness in their difference from the English. In essence, these students are meshing codes—they are performing the codes of the English, while the colonizers (as we saw in Rowlandson’s text) code their bodies as Native. Code meshing is one tactic through which one can transgress boundaries and simultaneously perform multiple identities (Love 186). The subjects inhabiting the body in these instances of reading negotiated the discourses that constructed and marginalized that body as well as essentialist discourses of race and language through translingualism. The performance of their reading, then, is one way that Native Americans presented alternatives to racial epistemologies and also negotiated colonial dominance through code meshing.

Missionaries and the government also encouraged informal communication in English for Native Americans to supplement formal reading instruction. Informal application, Governor Talcott implies, would help the Native Americans to truly assimilate. Talcott writes to Colonel Adam Winthrop, the treasurer of the New England

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71 Bhabha calls this “repetition of its semblance ‘in part’” (131).
Confederation, in 1725:

I am reddy to think it best to bring them up from their own habits and Customs, & it must be by degrees. If about 20 or 30 of their Children might be kept to School, separate from their parents and under good government, Mixt amongst English Children, it may be best: and then ye Indian Girls must also be taught if it may be by School dames…I think best get all their Children ye can be to live with ye English, and our Laws will oblige them to teach them to read, but it might be both males and females, or else as soon as they are for themselves will be gone to Look [for] mates. (Connecticut Historical Society 398)

English, according to Talcott, must become a part of Native American life and everyday communication if they are to truly assimilate—which is seemingly the goal. But, according to Canagarajah, “Proficiency requires adapting the new language for one’s own values and interests. To use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to mimic not speak. It means ‘acting white’ … and ‘putting a show’”(Canagarajah 597). But of course, once Native Americans acquire this proficiency, they can:

- appropriate the codes of the powerful for the purposes of the subaltern;
- and they demystify the power, secrecy, and monopoly of the dominant codes. More importantly, they display immense creativity as the subalterns negotiate competing literacies to construct new genres and codes that speak to their own interests. (601)

Native Americans certainly did use their performance of the English language for their
own purposes and negotiated hegemonic discourse both in colonial American and in the new Republic. I will detail such instances in chapter 3, but for now, suffice it to say that English proficiency was a form of intended subjugation that did lead to appropriations and negotiations that would challenge established power relations.

Conclusion

Literature, like Rowlandson’s narrative, negotiates an established dichotomy between the colonizer and colonized with respect to language. Colonial encounters, like those described in Rowlandson’s narrative, produce a mutual need for one another’s language in language acts, not solely for communicative purposes, but also for the purpose of understanding and expressing one's own culture and identity in constantly changing space. Just as one’s identity and culture is never static, neither are space or place, and all of them need to be constantly situated and reconstituted. Furthermore, languaging that expresses identity and culture contributes to the production of space and place. Wyss argues that Christian Native Americans found their place in a new colonial order largely through written, religious, English literacy (5). Looking to the negotiation of language, here, we see that both colonials, such as Rowlandson, and Native Americans, such as the Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians, looked to different forms of literacy—literacy in Algonquian language words and structures, economic exchange, and symbolic codes, to name a few—to position themselves in the new colonial order and recreate colonial space.

The circulation of Rowlandson’s narrative also destabilizes any neat distinction between colonials as writing subjects and Native Americans as oral subjects. According to Salisbury, based on the popularity of Rowlandson’s narrative and New England
reading customs, we can deduce that Rowlandson’s narrative was often read aloud (“Contextualizing Mary Rowlandson” 141). The written becomes oral when read aloud (Brown 12). Rowlandson may have attempted to distinguish herself from her captors through writing, but Native Americans writing in English negotiated her release, and fellow Puritans read her text aloud. According to Matthew Brown’s study of the history of the book in New England, the “archive of early American literature and its formative role in American literary history and intellectual history has as its pretext, Native American bodies” (xiv). This chapter aimed to challenge the notion that there is an object and pretext of American literature. Rather, in many ways, Native American bodies and languages help constitute the language of at least one of the most well known canonical texts of early American literature.

Finally, Native Americans were captured and sold into slavery to the West Indies during the war—an aspect of colonization and of the war that speaks to the constant movement and trafficking of bodies, bodies that performed different language acts. The constant interactions among users of multiple languages often develop into new languages. Recently, the Yale Indian Papers project—an archive of thousands of documents recording Native and colonist interactions—recovered documents that verified oral Native accounts that captives from King Philip’s War were also sold to Africa, Portugal, and the Middle East. At the war’s end, most Native American captives, including King Philip’s wife and son, were sold into slavery in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is a site where we can clearly see British linguistic imperialism and linguistic negotiation. This is where we now turn our attention.
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“Her Language was a fort of Jargon”: Mapping Linguistic Difference onto Bodies in British Caribbean Literature

Introduction

While the last chapter focused on the project of British linguistic colonization in North America, this chapter returns us first to England to examine how colonization affected attitudes toward language and linguistic variety at the imperial center and then shifts focus to the British Caribbean to understand how language attitudes and policies in England appeared in literature about the British Caribbean. In this chapter, I read Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and William Pittis’s *The Jamaica Lady* (1720) to illuminate the role literary texts play in language standardization and imposition in relation to empire. I suggest that authorities and authors in the British Empire partially drive imperialism through the simultaneous processes of imposing the English language on and denying English to colonized peoples in texts. Part of this dissertation aims to show how national languages and language policies in education reproduced colonialism, as the project of imperialism became redefined as a national project in the United States in the second half of the eighteenth century. By understanding the role of language in empire, we can better understand the shift to linguistic nationalism in the latter half of the seventeenth century and the antebellum eighteenth century—the central focus of chapters three and four. This chapter, then, aims to show how British imperial anxieties concerning race and language were addressed and managed through literature, but also how these anxieties could not be contained or controlled by literature when that literature reflected the process of colonization.
Scholars have long been invested in conversations surrounding projects of language standardization. Many have suggested that eighteenth-century men and women considered language nationalistic—nationally interested and associated with countries.\(^72\) Meanwhile, colonization produced interactions and negotiations among multiple languages and dialects. In England, not all British men spoke alike given that regional dialects and class associated dialects often varied from the London dialect. Scholars of linguistics and language such as Hans Frede Nielson and Marnie Holborrow trace the rise of the language of the British metropole, which held prestige over other dialects long before the invention of the printing press. The London dialect was considered the “standard” in England as early as the fourteenth century (Nielson 129). The London dialect became the standard idiom, due to London’s strong and growing merchant class—a commercial class influential in politics, land purchases, and education. Class, Holborrow contends, played a pivotal role in the status of the London dialect (159).

Historians, most famously Elizabeth Eisenstein, address English standardization through the invention of the printing press, which Eisenstein credits as an agent of standardization.\(^73\) The evolution of the printing press in early modern Europe, according to Eisenstein, codified London’s standard dialect, which became the dominant language of print in England and its colonies. According to Eisenstein, the shift in communication to print led to cultural transformations in Europe—a claim that can be applied to print in the British colonies as well. Eisenstein explains that in sixteenth-century Europe, a vernacular that was printed in a primer, catechism, or Bible would be preserved. This

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\(^73\) See Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, Volume 2* (1980).
vernacular served as “a prerequisite for a budding ‘national’ consciousness” and “a separate ‘national’ literary culture ensued” (117). Typography served to purify and codify imperial European languages, according to Eisenstein, and provided the basis for national myths in multilingual states (118). In Europe, students read “homogenized print-made language” at home and school; thus “the eye would first see a more standardized version of what the ear had first heard” (118).

While printing made standardization possible, commerce necessitated a standardized English in the Atlantic world, according to Eve Tavor Bannet. Commercial communication faced problems due to language difference in the Atlantic World, and Bannet notes that Defoe found the “Devonshire dialect incomprehensible” (15). Bannet argues, “To prevent local dialects and eccentric local practices from impeding ‘commerce’ across countries and provinces, standard English and spelling had to replace the writing and printing of local dialects” (15). Standardization, then, was not only a function of printing but rather was a necessary process for facilitating commerce and communicating throughout an empire. Bannet focuses on the role of letter writing manuals and the epistolary genre in the standardization of the English language in the eighteenth century. She explains, “One function of letter manuals in the long eighteenth century was to unite dispersed localities by facilitating mutual communication of persons with different local and regional dialects, pronunciations, mores, memories, levels of education and ranks” (x). The manuals disseminated a single standard language for the

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74 Michael Warner challenges Eisenstein’s configuration in which the technology of print affected “[r]eligion, science, capitalism, republicanism, and the like” (Letters of the Republic 6). Rather, Warner contends that it is these cultural values that make meaning of print and print cannot exist separate from them (6). I take Warner’s point and suggest that we must understand print and culture as mutually constitutive. However, I do not see this point contradicting Eisenstein’s account of the rise of print as an agent of standardization. Rather, Warner’s critique should make us more conscious of the ways in which standardization initiatives also affected print capitalism.
written commerce of people in different “countries, kingdoms, provinces, and estates” (x). Atlantic commerce and imperial expansion served as precursors to the standardization of British English. Thus, we might conclude that the standardization of British English was in part an Atlantic phenomenon.

Scholars have also addressed the impossibility of a monolithic or totalizing project of language standardization, specifically in literature. Mikhail Bakhtin demonstrates the ways in which social spaces, such as literary texts, cannot stand still despite institutional efforts. In *Dialogic Imagination* (1975), Bakhtin specifically looks to the interactions between cultures and languages and the resulting heteroglossia and polyglossia as the origin of the novel. According to Bakhtin, the "unitary, canonic language, of a national myth bolstered by a yet-unshaken unity" can only begin to disintegrate when national culture becomes conscious of itself as only one among other cultures and languages. It is this knowledge that will sap the roots of a mythological feeling for language, based as it is on an absolute fusion of ideological meaning with language; there will arise an acute feeling for language boundaries (social, national and semantic), and only then will language reveal its essential human character; from behind its words, forms, styles, nationally characteristic and socially typical faces begin to emerge, the images of speaking human beings. (370)

Even in this formulation, though, Bakhtin recognizes that the national myth is so strong that such a consciousness has yet to emerge. Twenty years after the publication of

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75 This brings to mind Mary Louise Pratt’s assertion, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, that even in the colonial context of asymmetrical power relations, the dominant culture is impacted and hybridized through contact.
Dialogic Imagination, Jacques Derrida attests to still not seeing such a consciousness emerging in his philosophical work Monolingualism of the Other (1996). Derrida analyzes national language—specifically French—and the imposition of national language to the exclusion of others. The metropole, according to Derrida, is the city of the mother tongue and represents the language of the master (41). He considers the relationship between identity and the prominent desire of the colonized to master the language of the colonizer, while, Derrida suggests, the colonizer has no true claim to the language or its mastery. He writes,

For contrary to what one is often tempted to believe, the master is nothing. And he does not have exclusive possession of anything. Because the master does not possess exclusively, and naturally, what he calls his language, because, whatever he wants or does, he cannot maintain any relations of property or identity that are natural, national, congenital, or ontological, with it, because he can give substance to and articulate this appropriation only in the course of an unnatural process of politico-phantasmatic constructions, because language is not his natural possession, he can, thanks to that very fact, pretend historically, through the rape of a cultural usurpation, which means always essentially colonial, to appropriate it in order to impose it as ‘his own.’ That is his belief; he wishes to make others share it through the use of force or cunning; he wants to make others believe it, as they do a miracle. (23-24)

While monolingualism is of course “unnatural” and articulated through “politico-phantasmatic constructions” in Derrida’s terms, it still appears as natural and prevails as a
property of national literature. While Derrida is concerned here with the colonizer’s artificial claim to national language, Homi Bhabha, often drawing on Derrida’s work, focuses on the colonized and their imitation or “mimicry” of the colonizer’s manners and language. Bhabha asserts, while mimicry—the act of the colonized imitating the language and customs of the colonizer—constitutes colonial power, it also disrupts colonial power (126). Looking specifically to American literature, Colleen Boggs attempts to make the fiction of such a miracle visible and argues that multilingualism, the presence of multiple languages, is a hallmark of American texts. She suggests that multilingualism calls attention to the realities of translation in works participating in the late eighteenth-century and antebellum nineteenth-century transatlantic print public sphere (including novels, periodicals, and letters), and argues that authors “practiced translation as American literature” (6).

The above scholarship informs in many ways my consideration of the texts in this chapter; but I am interested in making visible heterogeneous print culture by focusing on the embodied and performed languages in texts in relation to the bodies of narrators and characters. As I described in the Introduction and explored in Chapter 1, there is a relationship between language and the body in the way that language is embodied—language emerges from the body and helps to constitute the body, but this relationship can never be essentialized given the emergent nature of language. Bakhtin, Derrida, Bhabha, and Boggs all attempt to make visible the multiplicity and unreliability of language. A translingual approach takes this instability as its premise and asks “how, when, where, and why specific language strategies are deployed” (Lu and Horner “Translingual Literacy and Matters” 2). Using this approach and asking precisely how,
when, where, and why narrators and characters deploy specific language strategies, I
examine two literary case studies and argue that these texts attempted to stabilize and fix
language as distinct codes specifically through mapping specific languages onto specific
bodies. Through readings of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Pittis’s *The Jamaica
Lady* (1720), I argue that this essentialist linking of language and body is a tool of
linguistic colonization that effaces the emergent qualities of embodied language. Through
Defoe’s texts, I consider how characters’ power relations in relation to language and body
would immediately situate the colonizer as master. Pittis’s text reverses the process of
linguistic colonization that we see in Defoe’s novels and presents a counter-narrative to
the narrative of the standardization of English in the British imperial center. His novella
maps language onto bodies in explicit ways, but such mappings are unsustainable, thus
demonstrating the ways in which imperial expansion can make translingualism even
more visible in literature.

**Linguistic Power Relations in *Robinson Crusoe***

Perhaps one of the most canonical images of linguistic colonization in the New
World is that of Robinson Crusoe teaching English to his “savage” servant, Friday.

*Robinson Crusoe* tells the now famous story of an Englishman who is the sole survivor of
a shipwreck that occurs in the late 1650s while he is on a journey to buy black slaves
from Guinea and bring them to Brazil.76 In the twenty-eight years he spends in the West
Indies, Crusoe is able to develop his own small community, or colony, of which he is the
king. Crusoe keeps a diary of his experiences first presumably to maintain his sanity and

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76 According to Thomas Krise, the novel examines two central concerns—“travel and slavery—bound up as
they are with mercantile imperialism” (*Caribbeana* 5). “Travel, slavery, trade, and imperialism,” Krise
continues, “all play roles in Crusoe’s fate” (5). I contend that travel, slavery, trade, and imperialism also
initiated a number of language negotiations that became a concern and a source of anxiety for the British
empire in the eighteenth century.
sense of civility, and in so doing, like Rowlandson, to differentiate himself from the savages that surround him. While Rowlandson is forced to interact with those she believes to be savages through her unwilling captivity, Crusoe seems to desire the intimate interactions with the native savage. Crusoe writes, “[N]ow was my time to get me a servant, and perhaps a companion or assistant” (148), and in that moment, Crusoe is presented with the opportunity to save a man from other cannibals on the island—this man would become Crusoe’s servant. Crusoe’s servant appears at the moment Crusoe wishes it; he invents this position and then finds a body to fill it—a native, savage body.

Crusoe gives the name Friday to this native. Crusoe describes Friday: “He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect; but seem’d to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an European in his countenance too, especially when he smil’d…[H]is hair was long and black, not curl’d like wool” (150). He notes that his skin is “very tawny… a bright kind of a dun olive colour…[and] [h]is face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the negroes, a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory” (150). Friday’s appearance is fundamentally important to the reader in its insistence on difference.

According to Roxann Wheeler, colonialism ushered “a newly felt urgency about interpreting human difference” (Wheeler 44). Wheeler contends that in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, “discourse[s] of civility, Christianity, and commercial society constituted racial ideology,” and these discourses are partially constituted by the English language (38). The growing empire of Great Britain conceptualized race as heterogeneous in the early eighteenth century rather than as a black and white binary.77

77 Wheeler argues that the elasticity of conceptions of race in the eighteenth century can partially be explained by climate theories: “The linchpin to understanding most eighteenth-century pronouncements
Friday’s body is simultaneously Othered and compared to a European’s body not necessarily to connote a significant difference in complexion, but rather as a physical indicator of fundamental differences between Friday and Crusoe as well as potential similarities. Crusoe also makes clear that Friday is different from other “savages” the reader might encounter—his hair is “not curl’d like wool” and his nose is “not flat like the negroes.” Friday occupies a liminal space; Crusoe’s description of Friday, then, asserts his difference as well as his potential to be the same—a potential to become civilized. By describing and focusing on the body of the Other, Crusoe produces Friday’s inferiority, but also allows for the possibility of transformation, as we soon learn, through the influence of education.

Friday’s race may not be constituted by his skin color, but Crusoe, as narrator, constructs his racial difference through his lack of Christianity and English language skills. I will briefly discuss this difference in terms of Christianity—a topic that Wheeler explores extensively in *The Complexion of Race*, and then I will spend the remainder of the section focusing on English language acquisition, which, as we saw in Chapter 1, is strongly linked to religion for the British at this time. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Christian heritage and “desire for economic advancement in exploiting African labor power and natural resources in the colonies” binds Europeans from many countries in the first section of the novel (Wheeler 65). Friday’s unfamiliarity with Christianity marks him as savage. This is similar to the ways Rowlandson imagined difference in her

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about the body’s appearance is climate. Positing that all bodies (minds, emotions, and the like) responded similarly to the environment, climate theory also suggested that some environments were better than others for enabling humans to fulfill their potential ... Comprehending the profound respect Europeans granted climate accounts for their superficial and malleable beliefs about skin color and race during the eighteenth century” (21).

Friday’s lack of clothing is another way that the text constructs his savagery. Wheeler explains that nakedness indicated to the British a lack of hierarchy in society because of the correlation of dress and class in England (58).
narrative. While Rowlandson was a colonial living in North America and Crusoe was an Englishman shipwrecked in the Caribbean, both construct their superiority to colonized peoples in similar ways. While Rowlandson insists on demonizing Christian Indians to ensure that readers would not consider them true Christians, Crusoe insists on Christianizing Friday so he could be his subject. Both these narratives, then, suggest the significance of Christianity in notions of civility. Wheeler recognizes that at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, British culture “encourage[d] a sense of exchangeability between Indians and Africans … both groups were scantily clad non-Christians” (88). While settlers in the colonies, like Rowlandson, viewed slaves and Indians as separate, Britons themselves often conflated all colonized subjects (Caribees, Africans, Indians, etc.) as non-Christian, and therefore, believed they could be represented similarly. Differences in complexion, then, were secondary to differences in religion, and “Britons maintained an optimistic sense of the efficacy of Christianity, education, and commerce in redressing unpolished manners or in erasing the importance of dark skin color, which is evident in their embracing select Others as various subordinate, but fellow, subjects of the British empire” (47). Through conversion and education, then, Friday could be interpellated into the British Empire, but throughout the novel, he remains subordinate. Friday remains Crusoe’s servant throughout the three novels; Friday continues to represent the savagery of the colony even after his conversion.

79 Wheeler notes that the illustration of Friday as frontispiece to The Serious Reflections During the Life and Surpring Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1720) represents Friday as a black man with curly hair, demonstrating the affinity between or conflation of African slaves and Caribbean natives.

80 With the shift to a sugar economy in the British West Indies the mid-seventeenth century, African slavery became the prominent form of servitude and soon replaced most others. Over the course of the century, according to Wheeler, the term Christian was replaced with Englishmen “to reassure planters that converting their slaves would not alter their temporal status” (74). This suggests that categories of difference shifted to meet the needs of empire’s economic and political domination. Defoe’s constructions of Friday serve as an example of such shifting notions of difference.
(Wheeler notes that Crusoe continues to refer to Friday as “savage” in the second volume of the story (71)); and Friday never masters the English language—even twelve years later as we will see in Defoe’s second volume of the story *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (81). I argue that Friday’s inability to master the English language ensures the hierarchy that Crusoe and British imperialists more broadly constructed and established between the colonizer and the colonized—the former superior to the latter in body and mind. Following the formulation that iterations in performance construct identity through embodiment, I suggest that were Friday to master English speech (in addition to his clothing and manners), he would perform Englishness and thus embody Englishness—an embodiment that would threaten the hierarchy Crusoe created.81

In the first volume, Crusoe and Friday spend their first several days together communicating through signs and gestures. But soon, Crusoe explains, “I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I sav’d his life…I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know, that was to be my name” (151). First, Crusoe names Friday. The process of naming slaves, according to Orlando Patterson, is one that involved degradation in slave cultures in the Americas (*Slavery and Society* 55-57). Crusoe reinforces the master/slave dynamic demonstrating his autonomy in the act of *naming himself* Master. Although Friday is not an African slave, his position of servitude and inferiority in the Caribbean—a space of multiple slave societies in the eighteenth century—resonates with the identity of a slave. After Crusoe saved him, Friday “kneel’d down …, kiss’d the ground, and laid

81 Butler suggestively destabilizes the Cartesian dichotomy between the mind and the body with respect to sex and gender, a dichotomy that Elizabeth Grosz and Susan Bordo point out associates the mind with maleness and the body with femaleness.
his head upon the ground, and … set [Crusoe’s] foot upon his head” (149). These initial gestures seem to Crusoe to signify that Friday is “offering to be [his] slave forever” (149). As Wheeler points out, “Even though slave signified ‘African’ or ‘Negro’ in common colonial usage, slavery was not a condition reserved only for Africans” (57). Friday is figured as Crusoe’s subordinate in their very first interaction. So, in Crusoe’s formulation, his language, though foreign to the land and its inhabitants, must be the language of communication between these two individuals, because he figures himself as the master and Friday as his inferior. Crusoe never considers the option of learning Friday’s native tongue. He treats Friday much like his parrot companion from earlier in the novel, to whom Crusoe spoke English and expected English to be spoken to him. But with Friday, Crusoe is also concerned with his student’s comprehension of the language. He writes, “I…made it my business to teach him every thing that was proper to make him speak, and understand me when I spake, and he was the aptest scholar that ever was…and so pleas’d, when he cou’d but understand me, or make me understand him, that it was very pleasant to talk to him” (154). Comprehension becomes important, just as it was for Native Americans who learned the English language, because the Bible required understanding, and Crusoe aimed to convert Friday to Christianity. Ultimately, the ability to learn and comprehend “the knowledge of the true God” separates Friday from the parrot; Friday does receive “with pleasure the notion of Jesus Christ being sent to redeem us” (158). Crusoe describes the year he spent teaching Friday English as “the pleasantest year of all the life I led in this place” (156). Friday learning English seems inevitable, and Crusoe’s affection for Friday and the pleasure he gains in conversing with him tempers the symbolic violence of the linguistic colonization occurring.82

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82 Pierre Bourdieu uses the term “symbolic violence” to describe forms of power deployed in social life,
While Crusoe certainly situates the English language as a system that the
colonized should attempt to mimic, not all contemporary texts understood language as
unidirectional. One of Defoe’s contemporaries wrote a scathing piece that reviews
Defoe’s three volumes of *Robinson Crusoe* in which he calls attention to the erroneous
way Crusoe constructs linguistic relations in his novels. English critic and dramatist,
Charles Gildon, begins his critique with a humorous dialogue between Defoe, Crusoe,
and Friday that takes place in London in a field “betwixt Newington-Green and
Newington-Town” (v). Gildon follows the dialogue with a forty-eight-page epistle to
Defoe in which he identifies the absurdity of imposing English as the language of
communication in instances that would not warrant such a default to Crusoe’s language.
Gildon writes,

> What occasion else had you to make *Xury* speak broken *English*, when he
> never convers’d with any *English* but *Robinson Crusoe*? So that it had
> been more natural to have made *Robinson* speak broken *Arabick*, which
> language he must be forc’d in some Measure to learn; whereas *Xury* had
> no Motive in the World to study so much *English* as he makes him speak;
> but this is a Peccadillo and not worth dwelling upon. (13)

It would have perhaps been “more natural to have made *Robinson* speak broken
*Arabick,*” than to have made Xury, the Arab slave with whom Crusoe escaped
enslavement in Sallee, speak English, as narrator Gildon suggests. But, to have Crusoe
attempt to speak Xury’s language, the language of a non-European slave, would be to
interrupt and undermine the colonial project. As Wheeler points out, the relationship
between Xury and Crusoe shifts after they escape slavery in West Africa and are in the

and James Slevin uses the term to refer specifically to language acts deployed as a form of power.
presence of other Europeans; Xury remains a slave, while Crusoe becomes his master of sorts, selling him into ten years of servitude to a Portuguese captain (61). The power relation established between Xury and Crusoe is maintained and reinforced through language. Gildon identifies Defoe’s disregard for practicality in making Xury speak English, but remarks that it is “not worth dwelling upon.” Perhaps this is because Gildon’s document’s main purpose is to chastise Defoe and reveal Defoe’s authorial offenses: “For the Evil Consequences of allowing Lies to mingle with the Holy Truths of Religion, is the certain Seed of Atheism and utter Irreligion” (47-48). The linguistic situation with Xury does little to show the inconsistencies, improbabilities, and anti-Christian notions in Defoe’s writing or to illuminate Defoe’s ignorance or carelessness, thus it is not worth dwelling upon for Gildon. Rather, it reflects the larger cultural landscape of the imperial project in the early eighteenth century.

In the dialogue that precedes Gildon’s epistle, Crusoe explains that he and Friday have come to “punish” Defoe for “making [them] such Scoundrels in [his] Writing” (vii). While Crusoe’s complaints against Defoe revolve mostly around the way the novel portrays Crusoe as whimsical and the ways the novel characterizes Crusoe religiously, Friday has a different qualm with the novel: Defoe’s portrayal of Friday’s English language acquisition. In the dialogue, Friday says to Defoe: “Have injure me, to make me such Blockhead, so much contradiction, as to be able to speak English tolerably well in a Month or two, and not to speak it better in twelve Years after; to make me go out to be kill’d by the Savages, only to be a Spokesman to them, tho’ I did not know, whether they

83 Wheeler notes that Xury’s position of servitude is emphasized through language in other versions of Robinson Crusoe: “In an eighteenth-century abridged edition of Robinson Crusoe, the editor Negroizes Xury by intensifying his pidgin English to approximate stereotypes of slave speech common on the stage” (62).
understood one Word of my Language; for you must know…that almost ev’ry Nation of us Indians speak a different Language” (Gildon ix). In this passage, Friday is referring to the second volume entitled The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. This story begins in 1693 as Crusoe decides to return to his island with his nephew (who serves as the ship’s captain) and Friday to ensure the civility of the island’s inhabitants. Crusoe quotes Friday in this volume saying, “no see him more, no ever more see again…he long ago die, long ago; he much old Man” (Defoe 38). In the novel, just after Crusoe enlists Friday to speak to unknown natives as a mediator, “Savages” shoot three hundred arrows, three of which strike and killed Friday. The communication that occurred between Friday and the inhabitants of the island resulted in Friday’s death. Even while Crusoe recognizes that the inhabitants potentially did not understand Friday, he does not acknowledge the multiple languages of the Caribees and still sends Friday out into danger to attempt communication. Crusoe ignores the linguistic diversity of the island and again shows his command over Friday as he “made [him] go upon the Deck.” In referring to these two specific scenes, Gildon as narrator demonstrates that he is clearly annoyed with the lack of verisimilitude in the story—a man’s English would invariably improve while speaking it for twelve years and Caribbean natives from different tribes would very likely speak different languages. Thus, Gildon’s text destabilizes the narrative of linguistic colonization that Defoe’s novels set up for an eighteenth-century readership. Gildon’s text calls attention to the realities of embodied language: in every iteration of English,

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84 Halfway through The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, after leaving the island inhabitants “in good Circumstances” (Defoe 205), Crusoe and company leave to return to the mainland. While sailing, the ship’s chief mate sees what he describes as an army, but that we soon learn is 126 canoes filled with “Savages” (206). Crusoe recalls that he “made Friday go out upon the Deck, and call out aloud to them in his Language, to know what they meant, which according he did; whether they understood him or not, that I knew not” (208).
Friday’s language would change, shift, and emerge as something different. Not surprisingly, given the interest in standardizing language at the time and the incredible popularity of the novel genre and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* specifically, Gildon’s text did not achieve commercial success.

What are the implications of Friday’s inability to improve in English fluency in Defoe’s novel? What investment might the novels have in representing Friday’s English with a lack of subjects, verbs, and subject and verb agreement? In Gildon’s dialogue, Defoe replies to Friday’s concern: “I did not make you speak broken English to represent you as a Blockhead, incapable of learning to speak it better, but merely for the Variety of Stile, to intermix some broken English to make my Lie go down the more glibly with the Vulgar Reader; and in this, I use you no worse than I do the Bible itself, which I quote for the very same End only” (xvii). Gildon’s humorous recreation clearly takes jabs at Defoe for what he believes is his misrepresentation of Christianity, and Gildon’s character, Defoe, does not adequately respond to Friday’s question. In addition to the “broken English” that Friday speaks in the second volume of Defoe’s series, Friday’s language is also a subject upon which Crusoe comments and reflects in the novels. After Friday dies, Crusoe and his shipmates take one of the savages as a prisoner and teach him a little English. Crusoe observes, “That all those Natives, as also those of Africa, when they learn English, they always add two E’s at the End of the Words where we use one, and place the Accent upon them, as makêè takêè, and the like; and we could not break them of it; nay, I could hardly make Friday leave it off, tho’ at last he did” (211). This passage suggests that Friday not gaining fluency in English has little to do with carelessness or “Stile.” Crusoe and the influences of education could bring Friday to
Christianity; they could bring Friday to clothes; they could bring Friday to Europe; but they could not bring Friday to English fluency, and by extension, *Englishness*. Friday can become more civilized but can never be English.

Notably, Crusoe only acknowledges Friday’s ability to say specific words without an accent after his death. This, I argue, is a clear acknowledgment of the relationship between language and the body. When his body is dead and no longer able to speak and perform Englishness, only then can Crusoe acknowledge that he has in fact dropped the accent that would mark his pronunciation as non-English. Friday’s non-mastery of the English language ensures and maintains his racial subordination. When Friday learns English, he and Crusoe engage in an intimate companionship and forge a bond, but it is Crusoe who structures the power relations of that bond—Crusoe is the pedagogue/master and Friday is the student/slave. If Friday masters what Crusoe has taught him, then Crusoe is no longer the master and the power relations Crusoe has established are threatened. By extension, the master-slave dynamic is threatened and colonial power relations undermined.

Commerce is the impetus for Crusoe’s voyage and English, as I’ve established, is the defacto language of communication between Crusoe and colonized and enslaved peoples. In Defoe’s novels, English first serves as the language of commerce and communication, and then as the language of education and Christianity. Standardized English is the language in which Crusoe writes his journal and is the language in which Defoe’s novels are printed. The individual, rather than institutional, representation of linguistic power structures in Defoe’s novels obscures the role of empire in this process. Despite the seemingly natural, benevolent, and individualized progression of moderate
English language acquisition that the text presents through Friday, the spread and standardization of the English language was in fact a sustained imperial effort—an effort maintained through institutional authorities, publications, and education rather than an inevitable effect of colonization. This is a point Defoe’s novels seem to elide, and in so doing, present standard English as a natural lingua franca.

Fixing Language, Linguistic Violence and Negotiations, and Translations in *The Jamaica Lady*

The naturalness of English as a lingua franca becomes a central question of a contemporaneous text—that is, *The Jamaica Lady* struggles to stabilize language through a lingua franca. Inspired by Edward Long’s critique of Jamaica in his 1698 tract, *A Trip to Jamaica*, Pittis wrote the novella *The Jamaica Lady* in 1720. *The Jamaica Lady* tells the stories of two licentious women who have separately conned their way onto a vessel traveling from Jamaica to England. Unlike Defoe’s novels, *The Jamaica Lady* reproduces

85 Contemporary authors addressed the institutionalized standardization of the English language. Defoe and Swift, both prominent European writers in the eighteenth century (and political enemies by 1712), wrote proposals regarding the necessity of a fixed, standardized English language. Both were concerned with domestic and foreign dialects. Ginny Carney found in her study of Native American loanwords that Swift’s 1712 is the earliest record of the word Mohock. Swift describes Mohocks, a British gang of “hoodlums…[who] mauled passerby[s]” as “ruffians who ‘play the devil about this town every night, slit people’s noses, and beat them’” (qtd. in Carney 195). In 1768, the *Gentlemen’s Magazine* recorded that the group got its name given that they acted “‘in the same cruel manner which the Mohawks, one of the Six Nations of Indians, might be supposed to do’” (qtd. in Carney 195-196). This view of Native Americans as uncivilized echoes both Rowlandson’s and Crusoe’s descriptions of native inhabitants in the Americas—natives who spoke what they considered to be inferior languages. A fixed, standardized English language, according to Defoe, would mark prestige and cultural refinement. Defoe’s *Essay Upon Projects* (1697) proposes a project to implement a language academy “‘to polish and refine the English tongue’” modeled on such an academy in France (qtd. in Watts 180). Fifteen years later, Swift wrote a public letter to the Earl of Oxford entitled *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. Commentators have read Swift’s *Proposal* both as a complaint about the corruption of the English language and as a political mockery of such complaints and of the Whigs who often made them. Many scholars, such as Anne Cline Kelly, have read Swift’s *A Proposal* as indicative of an honest concern for maintaining the prestige of the English language. However, Richard Watts argues that taking Swift’s literary history into account (see *Gulliver’s Travels* [1728] and *A Modest Proposal* [1729]), we must read *A Proposal* as a satire. Regardless of Swift’s own views on language standardization and whether an honest concern or a veiled critique, clearly the subject matter of *A Proposal* was familiar and important to a contemporary audience. Watts recognizes that even if a satire, *A Proposal* shows that “the idea of an emergent standard language at the beginning of the eighteenth century was able to stir emotions” (182). The text demonstrates a strong cultural, political, and literary interest in an institutionalized standardization of English.
British English, Jamaican Creole, and Irish English in dialogue among characters, and the narrator directly comments on language usage, implicitly demonstrating the social capital particular languages afford. *The Jamaica Lady* simultaneously figures the Caribbean body and Caribbean creole languages as exotic to establish both as aspects of a threatening “other” that purportedly exists only in the degenerate Americas. *The Jamaica Lady* registers and embodies the British Empire’s anxieties concerning linguistic variety in Atlantic culture by mapping language difference onto the bodies of the racialized female characters. The novella also marks particular languages as linguistically superior in the Americas. Like *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Jamaica Lady* is thus complicit in perpetuating the imperialist project of linguistic colonization; however, the constant language negotiation by characters and the narrator belie the aims of linguistic colonization to erase linguistic differences. I argue that the text, in effect, functions as an example of the impossibility of a purified standard English language that the narrator seemingly advocates. Viewing language as emergent and unstable and asking “how, when, where, and why specific language strategies are deployed,” we see how the text uses the assignment of particular languages and dialects to bodies as well as translations to banish linguistic difference from England. But doing so, ironically, reinforces the translingual nature of the text, as we also see the narrator inhabit multiple linguistic identities.

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86 The women’s bodies are racialized through their association with anti-Christian practices, their complexions, and their language. In *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference*, Jenny Shaw echoes Wheeler’s claims about difference and complexion when she writes, “In this new world, the English defined a person of quality as one who was Christian rather than heathen; Protestant rather than Catholic; English rather than Irish or African or Indian; civilized rather than savage. There were more divisions among and between colonial subjects than simply black and white” (Shaw 5).
The Jamaica Lady undoubtedly traces the racist, misogynistic, and xenophobic sentiments of the potential readership; however, linguistic variety and translation are central to the novella. Set just after the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession and marked England’s inheritance of the transatlantic slave trade from Spain, The Jamaica Lady begins with the principal characters on a voyage from Jamaica to England, when “there were for the first time significant numbers of slaves (as well as some free black people) in London and other English trading centers” (Barash 415-416). The majority of the story takes place on a ship, and as Gilroy points out, the image of a ship calls to mind “a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion” undeniably associated with New World Slavery (Black Atlantic 4). The novella revolves around the stories of two women living in Jamaica when the novella begins: the Jamaican-born Holmesia and the Scottish-born Bavia. The plot is complex and convoluted, and the story is organized around the interplay of multiple accounts of Holmesia’s and Bavia’s life stories prior to boarding the ship in Jamaica, including their sexual transgressions (in Jamaica Holmesia worked in the brothel her mother ran and Bavia served as a conniving matchmaker), and the sexual behavior they participate in and facilitate while on the ship. Their stories, told multiple times by different characters, and notably never by the women themselves, drive the plot of The Jamaica Lady. Each woman solicits a man to tell the Captain a story about her beauty and virtuous character in order to gain passage on the ship. On the ship, creole language, though described as indecipherable by the narrator, seems to be accessible to other characters. But in London, the Jamaica ladies are unintelligible to the English. This framing first emphasizes the nautical language negotiations that must take place among the characters. Then, the text
registers particular anxieties circulating in England concerning the potential contamination, and specifically the linguistic contamination, that the presence of the colonized in the metropole could have on the empire and nation.\(^{87}\)

As I have shown throughout this chapter and Chapter One, rather than erase difference, the authorities in the British Empire strived for fixity by organizing, classifying, and hierarchizing linguistic difference to reassert the empire’s authority and superiority. English language fluency could be attained and was often forcibly imposed in the New World. But, the mastery and control of the English language also had to remain in the hands/mouths of the British in order to reinforce their cultural superiority. We certainly see this power relation in Crusoe’s relationship with Friday. In *The Jamaica Lady*, there is, on the one hand, an imperative that English be spoken, and, on the other hand, an insistence that the Jamaica ladies can never fully access the English language.\(^{88}\) Language in this text partially constitutes racial and sexual difference and becomes part of sexualized and racialized bodies; thus the text attempts to make language a fixed entity that could be categorized. Through a translingual approach, we see how such an attempt to supplement language’s stability in fact highlights the non-fixity of language. This text poses two potential threats of such instability—the threat of its colonized subjects altering a perceived stable English language through interactions, and the threat of its colonized subjects mastering this perceived stable English language. Teaching the English language to colonized subjects was integral to communication and the Christianizing mission of the

\(^{87}\) Krise reminds us, “[t]ravel is an important emblem of the early West Indies in that it is a sign of empire” (7).

\(^{88}\) The term creole “was used to account for admixtures, or syncretisms, between Old and New World ‘races’ and cultures. Indeed, a European not born and raised in the West Indies but who had spent many consecutive years there might be thought to have ‘become’ creole-like, or degenerate, on cultural and racial levels according to the rhetorical operations of some European creole discourses” (Goudie 8).
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, similarly to the volumes of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Jamaica Lady* does not allow mastery on the part of the colonized women; to maintain the subjugation of the colonized, the text takes language, which is emergent, and links it to the seemingly more stable physical body—a space that scholars often note was the focus of Western cultures to establish the inferiority of the colonized. The novella thus uses the relationship between body and language to expel linguistically marked “others” from England and to represent British language dominance and mastery in print culture. However, neither the body nor language is stable in this text. *The Jamaica Lady* differs from Defoe’s text in that it is reliant on other languages to tell the story and reproduces British English, Jamaican Creole, and Irish English in dialogue among characters. The relationship across languages, or translingualism, is inherent to projects of colonialism and empire expansion in the Americas, as well as to projects of nation building in the metropole. This is the counter-narrative *The Jamaica Lady* cannot help but tell.

In an effort to stabilize language, the narrator describes Holmesia, Bavia, and Holmesia’s slave Quomina, in ways that inextricably link language to physical appearance, character, and climate. Language is mapped onto Holmesia’s body. Holmesia is the daughter a shoplifter who was shipped to Jamaica and a “Mullatto” man whom her criminal mother met on her journey to the colony. The narrator describes Holmesia as follows: “She herself was a *Creole*, and consequently of a pale yellow Complexion, and Stature tall and meager…and, when mov’d of an implacable, revengeful Temper; yet a great Pretender to Piety and Virtue. Her Language was a fort of Jargon, being a Dialect peculiar to the Natives of that Island, it being partly *English*, and partly *Negroish*” (9).
Holmesia’s language is rhetorically mapped onto her body, as her complexion, her stature, and her language are all situated as mutually constitutive characteristics. Her language is described as “partly English, and partly Negroish”—two non-analogous terms in relation to language as the latter is not a language, but rather a derogatory description of African nationality, color, and often slave status. According to the narrator, “[T]hat island,” or Jamaica, “has the power to “change [one’s] whole Mass of Blood, and totally alter her Nature” (36). Enlightenment philosophy supports this notion of climatic determinism.\(^8^9\) For the narrator, it is Jamaica that determines and fixes Holmesia’s blood and body, which, in turn, engender the “fort of Jargon” she speaks. This jargon renders Holmesia unable to reach the cultural height of the English language.\(^9^0\) Holmesia’s body, though sexually desirable to men in Jamaica and on the ship, is associated with physical violence and is diseased. She has contracted a venereal disease while working as a prostitute at her mother’s brothel in Jamaica. Her language, described as “jargon,”

\(^8^9\) In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, climate theories served to account for differences in minds and bodies, especially as colonialism expanded the world known to Europeans. In their introduction to Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment, Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley note, “Philosophers such as Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, David Hulme, Georg Wilhelm Friedric Hegel, and Immanuel Kant” (each writing in close proximity to the publication of The Jamaica Lady) “all articulated some form of climatic determinism, asserting that the peoples of the tropics were unable to attain the moral and cultural height of northern Europe and to produce history. As such, the determinist discourse of colonial (tropical) place was often used to justify the practice of slavery and the denial of citizenship and subjectivity to non-Europeans” (12).

\(^9^0\) The OED defines jargon as, “A barbarous, rude, or debased language or variety of speech; a ‘lingo’; used esp. of a hybrid speech arising from a mixture of languages. Also applied contemptuously to a language by one who does not understand it.”
becomes part of this disease for the narrator, cannot be cured, and threatens to infect others.

Likewise, Bavia’s body and appearance, though “never…handsome,” was through “the West-India Climate…alter’d for the worse” (53). Bavia is described as “of a Complexion, large, poble Wall-Eyes, Bottle-Nose, very wide mouth, with great Blubber-Lips, her teeth broad, long and yellow, with Space enough betwixt each to fix a moderate Size; and one of her Legs much shorter than the other” (21). Although Scottish born, the description of Bavia’s body parallels descriptions of Africans in the eighteenth century. Her wainscot skin—the color of wainscot or oak—is in contrast with the alabaster skin of Europeans, and her “Blubber-Lips” recall eighteenth-century European accounts of Africans’ physical appearance.\(^9^1\) Climate is partially responsible for the colonized woman’s body and appearance. This description of Bavia is the first time the reader learns that the first story told about Bavia, in which she is praised for her “Beauty, Virtue, and Fortune” (11) is untrue. The description focuses primarily on her mouth and mirrors the lies associated with her person: her wide mouth is unable to contain a truthful narrative and gaps in her teeth are akin to the gaps in the stories she reportedly tells and those told about her. The tale of her virtue is quickly debunked as well. She is caught engaging in sexual activities with one of the ship’s lieutenants and “glories in her Guilt, and was proud to have it known” (24). Although her actual language is never reproduced (a third party claims to reproduce a conversation she had, but we later learn it never occurred), the narrator describes Bavia’s language as “ill” and associates it with profanity

\(^9^1\) See for example Daniel Beeckman’s *A voyage to and from the island of Borneo, in the East-Indies* (1718) in John Pinkerton’s *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages in all Parts of the World* (1812), 152. Published in 1748, Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* portrays the character of Mrs. Sinclair, a brothel manager in London, who is described as having “blubber-lips” (883), perhaps suggesting a correlation between such a description and sexuality as well.
When telling the truer story of Bavia, the second mate compares the Englishmen’s aversion to Bavia, a known procuress, to one’s avoidance of “a Person infected with the Pestilence” (54). Like Holmesia, Bavia’s body is associated with sexual disease and her language with degeneracy and lies.

In contrast to the Jamaica ladies, the reader learns that the Englishwoman on the ship, the wife of the English passenger, Pharmaceuticus, is virtuous and honest. The man sleeping with both Bavia and Holmesia accuses Pharmaceuticus’s wife of sleeping with a petty officer to displace blame for his own sexual transgressions. Pharmaceuticus believes this is possible because the climate of Jamaica “so changes the Constitution of its Inhabitants, that if a Woman land there as chaste as a Vestal, she becomes in forty-eight Hours a perfect Messalina” (35). So “having liv’d five years in Jamaica was time long enough...to change her whole Mass of Blood” (36). Pharmaceuticus beats his wife for her alleged indiscretion, but is soon after convinced of his wife’s innocence. The reader, who has known of her innocence all along, is not surprised that the text reproduces her relation of Holmesia’s transgressions to the Captain, which is spoken in standard English (49). Pharmaceuticus’s wife’s intact virtue and her undisturbed constitution are reinforced by the purity of her language and unsettle notions of climactic determinism. Alternatively, a reader might infer that Pharmaceuticus’s wife’s linguistic purity partially protected her from a colonial climate that had the potential to corrupt her.

Languages and dialects become markers of power and truth in this novella as important as, and inextricably linked to, skin color, gender, and place.

In a compelling article entitled “The Character of Difference,” Carol Barash argues that language onboard the ship in The Jamaica Lady can be separated along
gender lines and suggests that the relationship between “sexual and linguistic warfare” (419) in the novella is solidified through the male characters’ attempts to contain female sexuality and Creole language (as a representation of “the sexual slavery within [Caribbean] culture” [419])—both marked as unruly and dangerous. For Barash, “*The Jamaica Lady*’s obsession with linguistic warfare and the authority of a monolithic English language [an authority Barash attributes to the novella’s concluding table of terms, to which I will return] is intimately bound up with the novel's attempt to delimit female virtue and vice” (Barash 420). While I certainly agree that language is inextricably linked to issues of gender, and specifically issues of female sexuality in this story, the presence of linguistic difference among males, and the centrality of questions of veracity in storytelling (even in stories relayed in standard English), suggest another reading of the novella’s attempt to control and contain language that deals with the threat of linguistic difference to England’s national and imperial identity. It is not only the sexually promiscuous female characters who cannot be taken at their word. Phlebotomus, the Irish surgeon onboard the ship, attempts to reassure his shipmate, Pharmaceuticus, who thinks his wife is having an affair and says: “…as I will tell dee, bee mee fait, I did once upon a time, Broder, catch my wife upon de same Sport” (38). Phlebotomus goes on to explain that he was assured by his wife’s “‘good words’” (38) that he was mistaken. Pharmaceuticus recognizes the faults in the story, which confirm that “the Story was made by the Wife only to amuse the husband. He then ask’d him how he pass’d his Examination at *Surgeon’s-Hall*” to which Phlebotomus answers that he “‘had a Trick for dat’” (41), admitting that he cheated. The false story in this instance is connected to female sexual promiscuity and is first promulgated by Phlebotomus’s wife; it is then
Phlebotommus’s Irish dialect, his language, with which the reader associates the false tale and deceit. The reader does not learn of this story from the supposedly unfaithful woman, but rather through the mediated language of Phlebotomus, whom the reader then associates with female promiscuity. My interest in the relationship between the body and language, however, is grounded in the literal threat of linguistic variety. The fiction of a “pure” English speaking/writing metropole depends on such a configuration linking body and language.

The explicit relationship between licentious sexuality and language links linguistic creolism with racial miscegenation. Miscegenation, associated with Holmesia, is also the subject of discourse in the second mate’s relation of Bavia’s exploits in Jamaica. Bavia fled to Jamaica after her matchmaking scams were discovered in England. Working for a planter and his wife in Jamaica, Bavia began to stir up trouble, whispering to both the plantation’s master and mistress that the other was “too familiar” (64) with the slaves. This led to the master whipping the male slaves and the mistress the female slaves—a means of controlling the slaves’ bodies and ensuring that miscegenation would not take place in their home. Though this is a minor part of Bavia’s Jamaica story, the very inclusion of it suggests a fear of miscegenation that parallels a fear of linguistic miscegenation—the mixing of languages to produce a pidgin language that, when taken up as a first language, becomes a creole language. The attempt to control bodies to delimit the biological reproduction of creole bodies is linked to the attempt to maintain a pure English language by eliminating the social reproduction of creole languages. But of course, as most clearly seen in the presence of the creole Holmesia, attempts to prohibit the biological reproduction of creole bodies prove futile. Pittis’s text, in associating the
body with language, reproduces creolized forms and reveals that attempts to regulate creole language prove equally ineffective. Just as England could not prevent biological reproduction from socially reproducing creolized forms, the text reproduces creolized textual and linguistic forms—even if these forms are presented as diseased.

On the ship, the prominent site of linguistic negotiations, *The Jamaica Lady* captures the violence necessary to attempt to regulate these creolized forms and to represent an English monolingualism. Scholars have noted the ways in which physical violence enacted by the colonizer is displaced onto the colonized in this text. For instance, Holmesia beats her slave Quomina for what she wrongly interprets as the theft of her water bottle and is described as exploiting Jamaican women in the brothel her mother runs. This contrasts with descriptions of Captain Fustian, the white, male colonizer, exercising physical restraint toward the colonized when he learns that Bavia has had sexual relations with his son (26). Holmesia, the colonized subject, then, becomes the violent figure, and the colony of Jamaica becomes the agent of violence. But this reading can be extended to an inversion of symbolic violence. Because language has already been mapped onto the established hierarchies of complexion and gender through a non-white, colonized female, the inversion of violence through Holmesia’s physical, bodily acts can be extended to include the threat of symbolic violence enacted through her language. Scholar James Slevin follows Bhabha’s analysis of colonial discourse in order to better understand the process of subjectification through discourse. Slevin uses the term “symbolic violence” to describe the colonizer’s subjugation of the language of

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93 Fustian means cotton cloth (OED), and the name perhaps reinforces his complexion.
the colonized to the dominant language, and argues that “the symbolic violence exerted upon colonized peoples...is at the heart of colonization as a larger project of cultural, economic, and political domination” (67). Of course, this symbolic violence also became physical violence in slave societies like Jamaica where slaves’ tongues were cut out of their mouths for communicating with one another in African languages. By inverting this symbolic violence and figuring the colonized female as the linguistic threat, The Jamaica Lady situates the colonizer as one who must protect himself by resisting all languages other than English. Just as the ladies threaten to seduce and de-purify men on the ship, so too do their languages. The symbolic violence Holmesia and the Jamaica ladies threaten, then, is not to impose their languages onto the Englishmen on the ship, but rather, to violently infect the desired monolingualism of England.

The ship is not only violent, but the attempts made on the ship to maintain linguistic hierarchies in fact reveal the unstable nature of language and highlight the translilngualism of the text. Throughout their time on the ship, characters report tales to the English Captain Fustian. For example, when a man in Jamaica attempts to tell a tale to the captain, the captain “stop’d him, and said, Prithee, Fellow, don’t part thy Story” (16). He regulates how people speak from the very beginning of the novella. Referring to language on the level of word choice and civility rather than linguistic difference in

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94 Michel-Rolph Trouillot classifies Jamaica and other eighteenth-century colonies in the Caribbean as slave societies, because slavery defined their economic, social, and cultural organization. Such slave societies were partially characterized by what Orlando Patterson calls “natal alienation,” or the abjection of family ties by birth or family ties by choice. Natal alienation, or alienation from the mother, must also be examined in terms of alienation from the mother tongue. Colleen Boggs notes that the middle passage resulted for some in a loss of both the “mother’s tongue,” or the language spoken by one’s mother as well as “the mother tongue,” or the language associated with one’s cultural origin (Transnationalism and American Literature 37). In The Jamaica Lady, English is meant to stand in as a national mother tongue for those in slave societies who do not claim any mother tongue. Even while slaves should never master English, it should remain the target language that the slaves seek to approximate.
dialect, the narrator describes Captain Fustian’s language as “unmannerly…without any manner of Provocation” and attributes his ignorance and character to “having had his whole Education at Sea” (2). This conception of language links location with education, i.e. education on the sea is inferior to education in the metropole, and links language with education, i.e. the captain’s foul language can be attributed to a poor education, through syllogism, linking language and location. Almost immediately, though, the narrator describes the sudden change in the captain when dancing or fighting occurs on the ship: “you would take him for another Man, his cloudy Look, and surly Language were chang’d immediately; you might now behold a serene Aspect, a pleasant smiling Countenance, and a cheerful, easie, inconsider’d Discourse” (5). Language is linked to location, as well as appearance and embodied temperament—namely, it is linked to the body. The story positions the Captain, to whom the characters relay the stories of the women onboard the ship, as the manager and regulator of language, as he “would frequently…put a forc’d Construction on some part of their Discourse, and make his own Applications, though never so foreign” (2). This forced construction on discourse, according to the narrator, reveals the Captain’s ignorance. But, it also demonstrates the necessity of actively forcing the construction of language, which highlights the natural instability and fluidity of language. The Captain, described as “pliable as Wax” (2), is the sole character relegated the duty of controlling the women and constructing linguistic boundaries onboard the ship. Thus, his role as negotiator of language and conflicting

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95 The novella again presents language, body, and place and mutually constitutive. For instance, the narrator discusses Pharmaceuticals’ wife’s infidelity: “It’s true, indeed, he had caught her tripping at Jamaica, but that he thought was not so much the Fault of the Woman as of the Climate, believing ’twas not her natural Inclination, but that cursed malevolent Planet which predominates in that Island, and so changes the Constitution of its Inhabitants” (35).
stories (Barash 419) is undermined by the narrator at the start of the narrative, suggesting that controlling or relegating discourse and language is in fact either a futile exercise on the ship because it is impossible or it is the work of the ignorant because it serves no purpose—implicit commentary on the futility of attempting to standardize language or narratives in transatlantic space.

Despite the descriptions of his incompetence, Fustian is still charged with maintaining linguistic hierarchies. After an incident in which Holmesia beats Quomina, Holmesia “hurried to the Captain, and told him he ought to make an Example of that imprudent Rogue who had assisted the Wench in the Theft” (37-38). He replies by chastising Holmesia:

I have heard talk of Furies with Whips of Steel, and Hair of Serpents, and if it be true that the Devil does employ such Instruments, a Negro had better live in Hell than with a Jamaica Termagant; look you Mistress, I did not concern my self with the Correction of your Slave, neither shall I take your Instructions how to govern myself in relation to the Punishment of my own Ship’s Company; I see you are at best but a Make-bate, so desire you will keep in your own Apartment. (38)

He relegates Holmesia to her apartment, establishing, through his orders for Holmesia to no longer give him instructions and to remain in her apartment, a linguistic and physical separation of the creole character. The text itself establishes the subjugation of Holmesia’s language to Captain Fustian’s language in this scene as Captain Fustian’s language is reproduced in its entirety while the narrator summarizes and reports in the third-person what Holmesia relayed to the captain in her creole language. Captain Fustian
calls Holmesia, “‘a Jamaica Termagant’”—a term that refers to the gods of heathens, suggesting that her Jamaican origins and her lack of Christianity both contribute to his desire to separate himself from her. However, this scene in which language establishes and maintains race- and gender-based hierarchies also signifies The Jamaica Lady’s consciousness of its position within a larger, translingual transatlantic space. When Holmesia speaks with Captain Fustian, a language negotiation must take place, as he does not ask her what her “jargon” signifies and seemingly has no trouble understanding her—her creole language is intelligible to the captain. Thus, despite the narrator’s hierarchizing of language and the negating of the languages of the Jamaica ladies, the text demonstrates the necessity of linguistic negotiation. This dialogue across languages then, represents translingual interaction.

When the ship reaches London, however, the Jamaica ladies are unintelligible to the English. The first time Holmesia and Quomina’s creole language is reproduced for the reader is after their dangerous and linguistically marked bodies have infiltrated the metropole of England. Holmesia has not inherited a national mother tongue and is thus incomprehensible in the metropole. She asks a man passing, “You Baccararaman, which is de way to grandee Town?” (Pittis 86). When he ignores her, Holmesia orders: “‘Quomina, Fumfun yon Baccarara, funfu n hem grandee.’” When her slave Quomina tries to stop the man, she cries out, “‘Boonfam yamyam the Baccarara, can he no save speak to some Body?’” And the “Man did not perceive the Negro till he heard her at his Heels” (86). First, it is important to note that Quomina asks the man to speak to “‘some Body,’” defined in the OED as an “unknown, indeterminate, or unnamed person.” Quomina and Holmesia are not recognizable subjects; Quomina does not invoke the “I”
or “me” or “she” or “her” that would imply a form of subjectivity or agency associated with the women’s language and speech acts. Second, the man does not hear her speaking, as if he is initially immune to her language. He only hears her footsteps behind him, her moving body, and upon turning, “seeing her black Face, he thought certainly the Gipsey had sent the Devil for him” (86). After an altercation, Holmesia identifies herself as “‘de Creole’” (86) and also refers to herself as “‘some Body’” (87) while trying to explain that they are trying to get to London. The man replies, “‘Don’t think your Gibberish shall save you? We know you are a Pack of Counterfeits, and stroll about only to cheat the Country under Pretense of telling Fortunes’” (87). In England, the language negotiation that happens on the ship does not take place. Rather, the London man finds Holmesia’s and her slave’s language incomprehensible and characterizes it as “gibberish.” He identifies Holmesia as a gypsy, indicating his belief that she is not an English national but also demonstrating his inability to identify an alternative place of belonging for her. While false tales propelled the story on the ship, Holmesia’s and Quomina’s language, even while incomprehensible to the Englishman, is deemed untrue—the language of counterfeiters (or perhaps a counterfeit language)—in England. Not only does this formulation attempt to regulate and stabilize how creole bodies are read, but so too the languages in which they are read. Read through translanguagual literacy, the partly English, partly “Negroish” dialect is accessible on the ship, but read through the stabilizing pattern of English, the women are unintelligible to other characters. If the eighteenth-century reader is able to decipher this language, the reader is more in line with the ship’s translanguagual literacy than England’s purified English literacy. Rather than simply figuring the characters as bad imitators of English, the text appropriates the women’s language to
tell this story. The colonized women’s language, then, infiltrates the text. In these “individual instances of languaging,” the narrator reproduces Holmesia’s and Quomina’s language, suggesting that he in fact embodies and performs multiple languages—a hallmark of translingualism. Furthermore, I am interested in the way the text itself relies on translingualism in the form of translation. Lu and Horner write:

[Translingualism] recognizes translation and the renegotiation of meaning as operating in all language acts, including those seemingly working within as well as across language boundaries (Horner, Donahue, and NeCamp 287). For, from a translingual perspective, all writing always involves rewriting and translation, inevitably engaging the labor of recontextualizing (and renewing) language, language practices, users, conventions, and contexts. (“Translingual Literacy” 586)

The listeners’ and readers’ hear and read the same stories multiple times, but each time, the story changes. The narrator’s retelling of these stories through writing marks them as translation.

The text attempts to put forth a connection between reliable language, or veracity and English. However, this connection is destabilized through the multiple telling of stories that are central to this English novella. For instance, the life stories of Bavia and Holmesia are told twice—suggesting a renegotiation of language on the part of the narrator. Also, as Boggs argues in her analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the “strategy of twice-telling…mimics translation” (8). Rather than mimicking translation, a translingual approach would classify this as a form of translation
as the language, the speaker, and the context all shift to produce a renewed language act each time what should be the same story is told.

The ship’s captain and the reader first learn of Bavia from a man off shore in Jamaica who Bavia evidently hired to plead for a space for her on this ship to England. For many pages, the man speaks of Bavia’s English education, tried and true virtue, and her misfortune in marrying an evil man who sold her into slavery. The man in Jamaica begins his story, “‘Bavia (for so is the Lady call’d) is of a very antient and wealthy Family, the only Child of a Gentleman of Great estate, who gave her Education suitable to her Birth’” (Pitti 11). We learn that soon after their marriage, Bavia’s husband locked her in a garret to spend time with his Mistress. He then tricked her into boarding a boat, claiming they were going to visit her father, but actually sold her into slavery. She ends up in Jamaica (which she preferred) rather than in Turkey where her husband intended. The man telling the story to the captain is careful to emphasize that Bavia did not get to Jamaica through any illicit bargaining, as she was a “‘Mistress of as much Prudence as Beauty…her Honour was dearer to her than her Life’” (19). She earns the respect and affection of the family she serves in Jamaica. After describing Bavia’s trials in detail, the man concludes, “‘She has resided [in Jamaica] for Seven Years past…she is willing to return to England’” (20).

In the second telling of Bavia’s life later in the novella, the captain and reader learn that this entire story is false. The only time we have access to Bavia’s language is when the man in Jamaica quotes her to the captain. The man in Jamaica relays Bavia’s response to the ship captain that was hired to take Bavia to Turkey. The captain attempts to bargain with Bavia for sex in return for sending her back to England, and she replies:
“I...shall no more press a Return to England: But though it does not conflict with your Conveniency wholly to desist, yet you may alter the Measures, carry me to the West-Indies, sell me for a Servant there, ’twill be some Ease to me to live amongst Christians, and a greater Happiness to preserve myself inviolate” (18). In this false telling of her life story, Bavia speaks standard English, disrupting the linguistic economy of the ship.

While Bavia’s standard English might at first complicate and unsettle associations between standard English and truth, the captain and reader learn that Bavia never in fact spoke the words that the man in Jamaica attributes to her, and as the sincerity of the story disappears, so too does any reproduction of Bavia’s English language.

The story is subsequently told again by a shipmate described as Bavia’s “Countryman” (52) who has known her for years. He explains that Bavia served as a matchmaker, who conned people out of money by presenting false information and kept multiple Irish sexual partners at a time (59). When discovered, Bavia attains a place on a ship to Jamaica under false pretenses, where she acts as a procuress. The captain even attempts to control this storyteller’s language, reminding him to refrain from speaking like a “Mountebank” which “might be applauded by an illiterate Coxcomb,” but would “make him censur’d by Men of Judgment” (54). The shipmate goes on to tell what we are supposed to believe is the true story of Bavia. In this second-telling, Bavia is associated with vice, lies, and Jamaica.

The man in Jamaica and the shipmate tell two different stories—a multiple telling of what should be the same story. Bavia’s life story, then, is translated multiple times. “A logic of monolingualism” according to Boggs, “thrives on repetition yet occludes
“The hallmark of multilingualism and translation” is variation in a twice telling and the “change of words” (9). In *The Jamaica Lady*, the signifiers, the words, change in the second telling of Bavia’s story and Holmesia’s story (which is told twice by Pharmaceuticus). Every story, even the first story of each woman in its unreliability, is integral to the novella as the “entire plot and structure depends on the construction of false narratives” (Downes 41). In the preface to the novella, Oxford educated Pittis, who published *The Jamaica Lady* anonymously, grudgingly admits that to remain true to his story, several languages will play a part. In this particular story, he writes, “are represented Persons of different Characters distinctly wide one from the other: And the Story being true, an Author…must suit his Words not only to the Reader’s Taste, but to the Persons represented; both which I have endeavour’d, and hope, in some measure, effected” (A6). A “true” story can only be relayed through the collective telling. Thus, the multiple telling, the translation, is the hallmark of this novella. The plot relies on multiple versions of Bavia’s and Holmesia’s stories, on translation, as this is what propels the entire story.

The text’s most tangible example of concern with linguistic contamination and language negotiation is the novella’s concluding “Table Explaining the Sea, and other Difficult Terms.” The table translates terms such as “baccarara,” to mean “in the Negroish Tongue White, which they apply to all Persons of a different Colour from

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96 Boggs, who looks specifically at American literature from 1773 to 1892, argues that Hawthorne implicitly recognizes that translation “creates an original” (14), and she suggests “that monolingualism remains in competition with and constituted by the multilingual American and transnational scene” (17).

97 The story of English nationalism in the transatlantic colonial context, too, is in itself a twice telling. To have multiple stories of what it means to be English in the metropole and in relation to the colonies unsettles the relationship between nation and monolingualism.

98 Furthermore, truth is not the object, nor the goal of the novella, as “the structure of the text itself relies on questions of identity and falsity” (Downes 41), and it is the multiple accounts of characters such as Bavia that propel the novella and entertain the reader.
themselves.” In this translation, the creole language is situated as “other,” and the table itself reifies translation, which, according to Barash, “suggests the need for a unified English language (or, we might say, a stable linguistic economy)” (420). The table renders all “difficult Terms,” that is, terms unfamiliar to the presumed English speaking reader, into the standard London dialect. In her reading of nineteenth-century American literature, Boggs, citing Hugo Friedrich, characterizes “imperial translation,” as that which transformed language “in order to mold the foreign into the linguistic structures of one’s culture” (29). This molding and formation of imperial translation takes place at the end of the novella, by relegating linguistic difference physically, through banishing characters from the metropole and their bodies from the national body politic (Holmesia to Jamaica and Bavia to Ireland), as well as materially, with the concluding table. Jamaica and Ireland are associated with linguistic degeneracy in this novella. The Irish dialect spoken by the comical Irish surgeon, Phlebotomus, shows similarities between the creole language of Jamaica and Irish English. So both women are banished to lands presented as linguistically inferior. The idea of molding the nation and empire of England engenders a forceful image of linguistic coherence, one that depends on a linguistic violence enacted upon colonized peoples who threatened England’s linguistic unity.

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99 Krise notes that “[t]he vast majority of West Indian literary works were printed in London, despite the arrival of the first printing press in the British West Indies (in Jamaica) in 1717. This preference for printing in the metropole reflects both the small population of readers in the island colonies and the writers’ evident desire to appeal to the larger literary world of London,” which suggests that Pittis has a particular readership that he imagines as metropolitan English speakers (5).

100 This form of translation is called translatio imperii et studii.

101 De translates to “the” and dat translates to “that” (38-41). Barbara Lalla and Jean D’Costa’s Language in Exile reproduce eighteenth- and nineteenth-century letters that use these words. Dat and de were common substitutions in Irish English too (Lalla and D’Costa 53). Irish, Scottish, and lower-class British dialects “provided the models for the English language in Jamaica” (7). Also, while there was not a large Irish population in Jamaica in the beginning of the eighteenth century, Shaw explains that there was an affinity between enslaved Africans and Irish Catholics in the Caribbean, specifically in Barbados and the Leeward Islands in the seventeenth century: “Irish indentures and laborers and enslaved Africans…create[d] communities by forging their own ideas about difference” (Shaw 10).
However, the paratext of the concluding table also makes the language of Holmesia and Quomina legible to those who did not first read the story with a translingual literacy. Rather than an erasure, then, the table reinforces a translingual reading of the text, encouraging readers to comprehend the multiple languages embodied by the narrator.

**Conclusion**

In the introduction to his anthology *Caribbeana*, Thomas Krise describes the necessary language negotiation in the Caribbean produced by the slave trade: “Once thrown together, these African peoples created their own lingua francas and composite cultures by drawing from their widely diverse religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds comingled with the English language and culture of the charter society” (7). The lingua francas that emerged through linguistic interaction among a number of cultures, including that of the English colonizer, threaten to infiltrate England in *The Jamaica Lady*, and the novella answers this threat at the end of the novel by relegating linguistic difference physically; Holmesia and Quomina are returned to Jamaica and Bavia is sent to Ireland. Pittis’s concern with the maintenance of empire and nation, that the text attempts to uphold through linguistic violence in *The Jamaica Lady*, is continuously disrupted and destabilized, as practically, his text is structured around the mobility of language, rather than its fixity. The multiple forms of translation that must take place to purport a fiction of language’s fixity belie its very purpose, as translation itself is a form of linguistic mobility. This mobility typifies the translingualism of both imperial and national discourse and the Atlantic text network, specifically when read in terms of the cultural, economic, and social effects of colonialism and slavery. It also suggests that is precisely this mobility, exemplified by colonialism, that necessitated a
movement for linguistic standardization in England associated with a national identity by the end of the seventeenth century. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the relationship between national identity and institutionalized linguistic cohesion became paramount to the British colonials in North America who were beginning to form an independent, national identity of their own.
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Literary Negotiation of a National Language: Making and “Breaking English”\textsuperscript{102}

**Introduction**

In a 1774 letter to the Native American author Samson Occom, the poet Phillis Wheatley writes about the contradiction between British colonists in North America fighting for their own freedom and denying freedom to the enslaved. Looking to the promise of the American Revolution, she contends, “[t]he Chaos which has reign’d so long, is converting into beautiful Order, and [r]eveals more and more clearly, the glorious Dispensation of civil and religious Liberty, which are so inseparably united, that there is little or no Enjoyment of one without the other” (qtd. in Caretta, *Complete Writings*, 153).

In this passage, Wheatley links the Christian conversion that both she and Occom have undergone to the potential political conversion that will enable the two authors to enjoy civil liberty in the newly forming United States. She uses religious discourse, which her conversion authorizes her to do, as a means of engaging in a discussion about civil liberty—a national discourse at this historical moment. Wheatley and Occom both perform their control of the English language in order to participate in a discourse on civil liberty and citizenship: notably, however, both are non-native speakers of English. In this chapter, I argue that we should read accounts of their religious and political conversions in relation to their language use and translingualism. One might perceive Wheatley’s and Occom’s use of English as a linguistic conversion—a perception that would view these authors as converting from one language system to another. However, rather than converting from one language to another, I suggest Wheatley and Occom’s movements across languages inform their sense of the fluidity of language and allow

\textsuperscript{102} John Trimbur uses the term “break English” to describe what Africans began to do in the New World through plantation creole (“Linguistic Memory” 29).
them to engage in translingual practices. Specifically, I suggest that their religious conversions and acquisition of English authorized Wheatley’s and Occom’s entrance into the print public sphere, and they used their positions to make claims to national space and subjectivity through language in particular ways. In other words, their translingual practices suggest cultural shifts in notions of national space and national subjectivity.

These two authors developed transatlantic networks—with many of the same players—and became key political figures in the Revolutionary era. Their fluency and literacy in English—their ability to speak, read, and write the English language easily and well—was remarkable to many eighteenth-century listeners and readers. But, this fluency does not account for their sustained participation in public discourse and transatlantic recognition. Rather, the ways in which each author deployed linguistic and rhetorical strategies to make political arguments earned these authors the acclaim they received during their lifetimes and their statuses today as canonical early American authors. While the last chapter explored the ways in which authors mapped language onto bodies as a means of linguistic colonization, this chapter considers how authors—namely Wheatley—capitalized on perceptions of her raced body to make rhetorically savvy arguments about slavery in relation to an emerging nation. In this chapter, I show that at the revolutionary moment, political and educational figures continued the process of linguistic colonization through advocating for a standard, American English monolingualism to represent the nation to the exclusion of many. As we have seen in previous chapters, one tenet of linguistic colonization is the specification of a relationship between speakers’/writers’ bodies and the language they speak. This relationship served in colonial America as a way of de-authorizing non-white speakers and writers, as it
insisted, on the one hand, that only English would count as the language of civility and citizenship, and on the other, that racialized bodies would never master the English language. Recently, critics have suggested that contemporary Wheatley scholarship privileges considerations of race over the art of language, thereby reducing Wheatley’s “creative agency [to a] single consideration” (Franke 225). I argue that, in fact, both Wheatley and Occom used their publicly raced bodies as writing strategies, linking their bodies and language for specific purposes. Through astute rhetorical strategies, Occom and Wheatley used the relationship between the body and language—one that often served to de-authorize non-white racialized people in this historical moment—to in effect authorize themselves as national speakers and writers.

Wheatley’s work will be the focus of the chapter, because she has not typically been considered in scholarship in relation to language and monolingualism in the way that Occom has. Occom, an ordained preacher and brilliant rhetor, has been considered in scholarship as a “forked tongue” to borrow David Murray’s term. His letters, while primarily written in English, contain Mohegan and Latin terms, and he used his native language often in missionary efforts. Given Occom’s continued use of his native tongue and Latin in addition to the English language, scholars in the last several decades have viewed him—at least at some points in his ministerial career—as occupying and exploiting his position as an English-literate Christian Indian. Scholars show the ways in which Occom’s multiple identities allowed him to express his dissatisfaction with colonial policies and action, use his literacy to reclaim land for an intertribal community,

and ultimately, reject many aspects of Anglo-American culture. As a preacher, Occom performed multiple languages for multiple audiences, and his language was always connected to his bodily and social behaviors for those who listened to him speak. Contemporary scholarship recognizes Occom’s resistance as a Native American man in the mid-eighteenth century vocally critiquing Anglo-Americans and their hypocritical imagination for an emerging nation.

On the other hand, until recently, scholarship has critiqued Wheatley for not being resistant or critical enough on behalf of the enslaved community. Unlike Occom, she does not perform for large audiences of Anglo-Americans, Africans, and Native Americans. She does not speak in her native African language to fellow Africans—she does not have the large network of fellow brethren with whom she can communicate, nor the freedom to do so, and she is forbidden from communicating with other Wheatley household slaves (Reid-Pharr 8). Her writing appears to adhere in many ways to British language and form. Many scholars have written thoroughly and convincingly about the form of Wheatley’s poems—rhyming couplets and iambic pentameter—and have explored her indebtedness to the elegiac tradition, neoclassical style, and to Alexander Pope and John Milton specifically. Contemporaries of Wheatley accused her of

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105 In Conjugal Union (1999), Robert Reid-Pharr questions Wheatley’s place in a black literary tradition. He suggests that her domestic place in an interracial household allows her to “readily transcend the fact of her black body,” and argues, “When she puts pen to paper she cannot leave behind the sure mark of the black hand because the blackness of that hand is already so much in dispute” (7). Recently, scholars such as John Shields and David Waldstreicher have viewed Wheatley as a political figure and more revolutionary figure, but not in ways that foreground translingualism and the body.

106 For a thorough recent examination of the relationship between Milton and Wheatley, see Paula Loscocco’s Phillis Wheatley’s Miltonic Poetics (2014).
“writ[ing] white” for her primarily white, female audience (Shields 9). But when we consider Wheatley’s languaging, especially in relation to her body, I think it is more interesting to consider how she translates these forms, in the ways I’ve described, to participate in national discourse. Alastair Pennycook argues that we must view language “as action and as part of how places are interpreted, how the meaning of places is reinforced or changed” (2). Thus, language is largely “an integrated social and spatial activity” (3). The very space in which Wheatley writes—a New England household in which she is a slave—changes the meaning of the forms in which she writes. I think it is important to reiterate: “As we do [language],” Pennycook explains, “we remake the language, and the space in which this happens” (2). This is the premise on which I argue that a translingual approach gives us access to Wheatley’s remaking of language.

Translingualism considers relationships across languages but also the ways in which “each new instance of language use brings the need and opportunity to develop new ways of using language, and to draw on a range of language resources” (Horner, Lu, et. al 312). This chapter takes a translingual approach, but in a way that previous chapters have only touched upon—that is, by analyzing language that does not discernibly deviate from an assumed standard language. Pennycook, Lu, and Horner account for the appearance of language as a fixed or standard form and the regularities in the way we speak by pointing to observed repetitions in language practices. According to Lu and Horner, the seeming iterations of standardized forms and meanings by “nonmainstream” writers are often perceived as evidence of either their mastery of the privileged language or their betrayal of their home or first language. (Lu and Horner “Translingual Literacy”

107 Joanna Brooks details the text network of which Wheatley was apart. Brooks accuses this network of white women of using Wheatley to evade their own economic culpability in the institution of slavery and then neglecting her when she no longer served their purposes (“Our Phillis, Ourselves”).
This chapter is still very much concerned with the fluidity of language and the questions of “how, when, where, and why specific language strategies are deployed” (Lu and Horner “Translingual Literacy and Matters” 2); but here, I focus on the forms of difference that often go unrecognized because they adhere in certain ways to the dominant definitions of standard language. Writing specifically about pedagogical practices in composition classrooms, Lu and Horner explain:

Arguments for students’ agency as producers of meaning and language tend to use writing that appears to deviate from conventionalized norms of lexicon, notational practice, syntax, organization, and register. This leaves unarticulated the agency of writers whose writing seems to merely repeat or imitate standardized forms and meanings. What is needed, then, is an articulation of agency in such writing: a framework by which to recognize the production of difference in the ‘same.’ (“Translingual Literacy and Matters” 9)

While the goal of this chapter is not to prove Wheatley’s agency, I am very invested in analyzing both her and Occom’s rhetorical choices and recognizing “difference in the ‘same’”—specifically when the “same” (standard English) is often understood as difference, given the races of the writers. That is, raced authors embodying and producing standard English is typically read as difference in the eighteenth century. Drawing largely on Pennycook, Lu and Horner contend that when we temporally and spatially situate language acts and stop treating iteration as repetition of the same, “we can recognize that what is commonly viewed as doing the same thing again in fact represents doing something different” (14).
To recognize such difference, Lu and Horner suggest we view language from a perspective in which “difference is seen as the norm of utterances” (15). Postcolonial theories, such as those of Pratt and Bhabha, have addressed the ways in which mimicry can create “new meanings” and has “the potential to undermine the status and distinction of the dominant” (15). Pennycook, Lu, and Horner build on these theories to suggest that “repetitive uses of standardized codes can produce differences, or changes, in meaning (semio-diversity), and differences in the meaning and order of power relations as we recontextualize linguistic patterns such as standardized lexico-grammatical code across time and space” (15). Wheatley and Occom produce both forms of difference in their writing. A central tenet of translingualism is the “co-constitutive relation between language, language users, and the temporal-spatial contexts and consequences of language acts” (“Translingual Literacy and Matters” 3). Thus, the language users I consider in this chapter, Occom and Wheatley, *do language*—a phrase that challenges social boundaries of individual languages—in ways that highlight difference and consequently challenge their exclusions within their temporal-spatial context—the early Republic. In this way, they preemptively challenge the imperative put forth by the “Founding Fathers,” Noah Webster, and other educational reformers to linguistically unify the nation through a fiction of American monolingualism representative of a fixed place and homogeneous body politic. Ultimately excluded from citizenship, both Wheatley and Occom engaged in linguistic negotiations that helped to produce and constitute a new national space—one far more dynamic, diverse, and linguistically fluid than many of their contemporaries pictured.
In the case of Wheatley specifically, one might wonder: how does writing in English challenge monolingualism? I suggest that the push toward monolingualism at the revolutionary moment was rooted in a desire for homogeneity partly based in racial sameness. When Wheatley engages in translingual and transliterate practices, then, even while writing in English, she challenges the image of a homogeneous, monolingual nation-state that would exclude her or others of her race who have not mastered the English language through education. When we consider Wheatley’s writing not as simply reproducing English, but rather as “writing, or rewriting language and context with each writing” (“Translingual Literacy and Matters” 5), her linguistic and rhetorical strategies emerge as challenging the value of sameness in the early Republic.

In this chapter, I first provide a brief history of language debates in early America as a backdrop for interest in language fixity, not only in England, but also in the United States. This history demonstrates a continuum between imperial monolingual interests that I explored the first two chapters, and a national monolingual interests rooted in homogeneity. I then briefly turn to Occom to show the ways in which he was rhetorically critical of Anglo-American culture, and ultimately rejected it in founding the intertribal nation of Brothertown. We can see Occom’s rhetorical strategies as a lens through which to view Wheatley’s subtle critiques. Finally, I turn to Wheatley to argue that she uses translingual strategies, including relating her writing to the particularity of her lived body, and subtly revises a monolingual national framework in order to authorize herself as a national speaker and writer and participate in a national discourse. Writing on the cusp of the transition from colonialism to nationalism, Wheatley experiments with the fluidity of
language to question the place of an African in an emerging nation and to assert her place within it.

**Politics, Education, and Language in the early Republic**

What is the fiction of American monolingualism? From where did it come and why does it exist? At the nation’s inception, many believed that monolingualism had the potential to generate a sense of cohesion and unity for a national community. By the late eighteenth century, politicians, authors, and intellectuals in both England and the new United States were invested in creating a standard vernacular. In England, Samuel Johnson, author of *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), argued for a standard English language modeled on written forms. He suggested that dialects in one country were the result of “‘uncertain pronunciation’” that led to spelling variations (qtd. in Tennenhouse *Importance of Feeling English* 21)—a problem that could be remedied through establishing a written standard. English language and grammar guides were popular across the Atlantic. For instance, English author Thomas Dilworth's *A New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740) sold 40 editions between 1747 and 1840 in the colonies and the U.S. and Robert Lowth’s *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) was later hugely popular in both England and the colonies. While the colonies and then the early Republic adopted language and literature from England, Leonard Tennenhouse explains that Americans reinvented literary traditions and conventions to fit the needs and desires of a new culture. The common English language and literary culture were important to Americans’ sense of unity, but they also saw themselves as different in the way they valued unity, republicanism, and collectivity rather than conquest and imperialism. But of course, linguistic colonization still occurred in
particular ways. In the colonial period, authors often denigrated languages outside of British English but still relied on these languages to situate themselves and serve rhetorical purposes. In the early national period, however, print culture and education reflected an English-based reading and writing public that actively ignored the existence of other languages in the name of national cohesion.

In the early Republic, a strong movement toward monolingualism, led by Noah Webster, Benjamin Franklin, and Benjamin Rush, sought to “transcend the United States’ colonial past” and solidify an independent future through a reinvented English language that was a “unique and uniform-new mode of language for a new culture” (Dierks In My Power 268). Unlike Johnson, Webster looks to speech as a basis for a national vernacular. David Simpson suggests that American-ness became partly defined in relation to (and sometimes in terms of slight orthographical divergence from) elite British semantics and a shared English language that American writers tried to reflect. Ultimately Simpson argues—namely through a reading of the work of James Fenimore Cooper—that such a common language does not exist. But the promise of one certainly existed in the early Republic. While Webster and others acknowledged the reality that emigrants from many different parts of Europe settled North America, Franklin and Webster largely tried to erase linguistic memory, according to John Trimbur, and present English as “the language…that was, in fact, already there, at moments of settlement and subsequent nativity” (“Linguistic Memory” 23). As my previous chapters show, this was

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108 There were, however, debates around whether or not English as opposed to another language, such as Spanish or French, should in fact be the nation’s Federal language.
110 Simpson details the political debates surrounding language in the early Republic and examines the language views of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Noah Webster in particular. He finds many inconsistencies and contradictions in the way each national figure conceives of and argues for language reform (grammar, spelling, etc.).
hardly the case, and the English of national unity was incompatible with regional dialects and the influence of languages of the circum-Atlantic world. Attempts to linguistically homogenize the early Republic faced the similar challenge of accounting for the polyglot reality of the new national space, but such attempts persisted.

Webster devoted his life to establishing a uniquely American English that would reflect a national character. A member of the Philological Society and the author of the *Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1783) (later issued as *American Spelling Book* [1787]), Webster argued in *Sketches of American Policy* (1785) for a language that would distinguish the new nation:

> America is an independent empire, and ought to assume a national character. Nothing can be more ridiculous than a servile imitation of the manners, the language, and the vices of foreigners. For setting aside the infancy of our government and our inability to support the fashionable amusements of Europe, nothing can betray a more despicable disposition in Americans, than to be the apes of Europeans. An American ought not to ask what is the custom of London and Paris; but what is proper for us in our circumstances and what is becoming our dignity? (47)

While Webster believed Americans must distinguish themselves from Europeans, he also believed that uniform pronunciation (spoken first) and spelling (writing after) would rid American English of dialects and unify the new nation through language. He acknowledged the existence of dialects in local speech acts, but believed they should not “pass into the standard national language” (Simpson 102). For Webster, dialects were important insofar as they reinforced a standard English by *not being* that standard and by
being understood in relation to the standard; non-standardization impeded a sense of national belonging. In *Dissertations on the English Language*, Webster writes, “A national language is a band of national union” (397). Webster links grammar with patriotism, and national language with national unity. Language, for Webster, was a political issue, and he asked Benjamin Franklin to bring issues of spelling reform to Congress (Baron 64). During the early national period in the United States, “founding fathers,” educators, and politicians debated the usefulness of an official national language and the benefits of a prescriptivist versus descriptivist grammar in education in the early Republic.  

Although the government never took official action, English became the de-facto national language—a result that is, on the one hand, a testament to the inability to reach a consensus on the question of an official national language, and on the other, evidence of what Pierre Bourdieu calls “doxa”—the taken-for-granted-ness of English as a national language—something so self-evident that it requires no official sanction or institutional recognition.

In education, Webster’s language standardization spread across the new nation like wild fire, with one and a half million copies of his *American Spelling Book* printed between 1783 and 1801 and his dictionary used by almost every schoolchild in the Republic (Lepore 6).  

Similar to the colonial period discussed in the previous chapters, educators imposed the dominant English language on students. For Webster, Franklin,

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111 Leonard Tennenhouse traces these debates in his chapter “Writing English in America” in *The Importance of Feeling English* (2007).

112 While the particulars of the grammatical ideologies offered by specific players is outside the scope of this chapter, it is interesting to note that according to Webster, language is a science and “the grammar of each language is a combination of linguistic universals and idiosyncratic particulars…and it is the job of a grammar to connect the realm of ideas with that of expression” (Baron 136). This seems to be one possible reason Webster was opposed to loanwords—a central topic in my first chapter—making their way into the English language (20). For a discussion of Webster’s views on grammar, see Dennis Baron’s *Grammar an Good Taste* (1982), 132-139. For a thorough examination and analysis of Webster’s views on language and politics, see Simpson’s *The Politics of American English, 1776-1850* (1986), 52-90.
and Rush, education was integral to the success of the new republic, because literacy would be a part of a cultural reformation in which a standardized and disciplined education would lead to uniformity in a Federal language. But of course, each figure had a different idea of how to achieve such uniformity. As early as 1748, Franklin advocated for English instruction in schools (in opposition to a focus on the classics), and in 1749, he organized an English school in Philadelphia designed to prepare students for professional and civic life (Baron 122). In many ways, this followed John Locke’s insistence on the imperative for vernacular language instruction that I discussed in Chapter 1. After the American Revolution, vernacular instruction in schools in the United States became the norm (123-124). Post-Revolution English teachers were paid as well or better than Latin teachers and some states replaced their legislative requirements for Latin schools with requirements for English schools (124). A student at Franklin’s English School in Philadelphia, Lindley Murray, published the most popular American school grammar book of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries: *English Grammar, Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners* (1795), which sold over a million copies (142). Murray imagined a British and American audience for his work. For Murray, English language instruction was linked to virtue and religion; education should produce pious and virtuous citizens who would share a sense of national belonging through language.

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113 Interestingly, Rush refers to Wheatley in his writings against slavery in 1773 (Caretta, *Biography*, 89). Also, Rush’s "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" (1786) speaks to the ways in which American education should properly reflect democracy, again suggesting that education and nationality are linked.

114 Webster supported a national literary canon but argues that this language should not necessarily be the standard; rather, folk language should be the uniform national American language (Baron 138).
Webster links education and patriotism more explicitly in “On the Education of Youth in America” (1787):

But every child in America should be acquainted with his own country. He could read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty, and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen, who have wrought a revolution in her favor. (22)

Patricia Crain details Webster’s call for “systematic public education whose imagined infant scholar would embody national memory” (55) arguing that, through such an education “the child becomes a ventriloquist of revolutionary history…and an encyclopedia of patriotic narrative” (55). Education becomes the key to republican literacy. This history is particularly important when considering the ways in which education is inextricably linked to culture. Raymond Williams asserts:

There are clear and obvious connections between the quality of a culture and the quality of its system of education…the way in which education is organized can be seen to express consciously and unconsciously, the wider organization of a culture and a society…what is thought of as ‘an

115 Mary Kelley’s Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic (2006) and Carolyn Eastman’s A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public After the Revolution (2009) both consider the role of education in cultivating national citizens—both male and female. Kelley is concerned with the role of women in the early Republic and the way educational curriculum promoted or defined women’s position in “the ‘public sphere’” (Kelley 2). She traces the role that educational institutions played in women’s movement into public life in the early Republic. Crain’s book traces the continuities and differences between Puritan views of the alphabet and literacy and those of the leaders in the early Republic. She also details the ways in which the alphabet itself becomes essential to culture, socialization, and new forms of literacy in the early republic (“the Republic of ABC” is the oft disregarded counterpart to the “Republic of Letters”). Accounting for the shifting images in alphabet books, Crain argues that as children’s books and ABC books developed as a genre, the alphabet becomes commercialized and commodified and the alphabet text itself “posits the world of imperial and capitalist enterprise as one that is already inside the language learning child” (96).
education’ being in fact a particular selection, a particular set of emphases and omissions. (*The Long Revolution* 125)

This seems glaringly apparent in the case of the early Republic, specifically in Murray’s linking of language instruction with virtue, and Webster’s linking of reading with revolutionary history. A fixed, standard, unified language, according to these men and many other political and educational figures, would in turn unify a culture, and they tied nationalist revolutionary literacy to monolingualism. But if education and English language use are meant to give one the resources to rehearse a single national history, “the history,” what of the lips of those who were excluded as subjects of this nation? While Wheatley and Occom write much of their work before the United States becomes an official nation, they are both concerned with this very question: how might notions of nation-making coming from the lips of those who are politically and socially excluded from that nation challenge a conception of the nation as one of sameness with a shared history? Translingual practices emerge from their lips and pens to explore nation-making.

Contemporary critics have to some extent reinforced this monolingual push at the national moment in the ways they have described early national print culture. In his influential and oft-cited *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argues that colonialism was the necessary precursor to the “imagined community” of the nation, and holds that the genres of the novel and newspaper enabled colonists, the “creole pioneers,” to feel connected to the metropole through the act of reading narratives written in a common vernacular language.\(^\text{116}\) Anderson recognizes that in the case of the United States,\(^\text{116}\) Two of the most influential texts that challenge print’s primacy to community-making through language are Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) and Joseph Roach’s *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996). Gilroy looks to print and beyond print to invert the Eurocentric view of the Atlantic world and modernity and put the African Diaspora at the center. He
“language was not an element that differentiated” the colonies from the metropole (47), but linguistic unity was a precursor to a national consciousness. He also attributes the rise of national communities in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas partially to the “fatality of human linguistic diversity” (43). Focusing specifically on the early Republic, Michael Warner argues that the print public sphere embodied the nation, as it allowed subjects to put forth their ideas in a disembodied print culture for the consumption of an abstract public readership apart from the state. He argues that print was the venue through which subjects participated as republican citizens, either as readers or writers, and contends that only the white, propertied male had the privilege of separating himself from the words he wrote. Warner does not include Occom in his study and refers to Wheatley, along with Jupiter Hammon, as “the exceptions that prove the rule, since they define their public voices as white, even if only proleptically” (11). Rather than exceptions that prove the rule, I suggest these authors manipulate the rule as a means of participating in national discourse.

Recently, scholars of early American literature have explored the ways in which circulating literature did not adhere to the linguistic unifying aims of education. Christopher Looby’s *Voicing America* (1996) Trish Loughran’s *The Republic in Print* (2007) and Colleen Glenney Boggs’s *Transnationalism and American Literature* (2009) argue against both the accuracy and the salience of claims of a homogenizing print culture in the early Republic. Looby explains that “the grain of voice,” or vocal embodiment characterized early American texts, leaves traces of one’s corporeal body in

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argues that slaves were able to push against Enlightenment ideologies dispersed in print and express a “counter-culture of modernity” through alternate forms that allowed them to establish communal ties. Roach examines the role of performance in the circum-Atlantic world and suggests that “orature”—orality, performance, vocal utterance, gestures, etc.—all embodied language media but often mediated through print, can lend insight into cultures of the early Atlantic world.
the texts one produces. Loughran argues that Michael Warner wrongly dismisses “other forms of affiliation...like handwritten letters, oratory, privately circulated manuscripts, public debate, and private conversations,” and she asserts, “print culture did not dominate these other forms but was embedded within them” (114-115). She also challenges “the larger idea that the institutions of the public sphere (including print culture) helped to produce a functionally disembodied and disinterested revolutionary collectivity, or national ‘public’” (92), as the technological infrastructure at the time could not support a national audience. Boggs’s consideration of multilingualism, the presence of multiple languages, in American texts calls attention to realities of translation in works participating in the late eighteenth-century and antebellum nineteenth-century transatlantic print public sphere (including novels, periodicals, and letters) and the effects of translation on print culture in antebellum America. While neither Warner, Looby nor Loughran consider Wheatley or Occom critically in their studies, Boggs devotes a chapter to Wheatley and her neoclassical translation, arguing that Wheatley invented a transatlantic American literature.\(^{117}\) I draw on Looby, Loughran, and Boggs in this chapter to suggest that Wheatley’s and Occom’s work certainly exemplifies “the grain of voice,” embeds multiple “forms of affiliation,” and participates in translation. I build on this work by asking specifically: what does the English language look like for non-white subjects on American soil and how do they deploy language in particular language acts?

\(^{117}\) Boggs relies on Webster’s definitions of translation and transatlantic to show the ways in which Wheatley’s “neoclassical translation provided a way of protesting the forceful exclusion of Africa from the transatlantic imaginary, and a means of authorizing herself as an American poet” (33). In relation to pedagogy, Boggs suggests that the 1820s mark a moment at which Latin and Greek gave way to modern languages in schools, and then post WWI xenophobia led to repressive language policies (35). I consider Wheatley not as a figure who predated repressive language policies, but rather, as a figure writing through a continuum of linguistic colonization from the colonial to national periods. In relation to Occom, we can see the ways in which Wheatley is a translingual writer who deployed rhetorical strategies as a way to protest her own and others’ exclusion from an emerging nation.
My goal is not to put Wheatley and Occom in direct opposition to Webster and other contemporaneous proponents of a monolingual nation. Wheatley’s and Occom’s work did not directly lead to discussions of monolingual policies in the new nation, nor did an ideology of monolingualism directly lead to Wheatley’s and Occom’s works. However, Webster, Franklin, Rush, Wheatley, Occom, and many others were, in many ways, writing about how the space of a new nation should look. While they wrote before the American Revolution, the content of Wheatley and Occom’s works and letters is largely concerned with questions of national consciousness, what it means to be a unified nation, and what it means to not be a unified nation. Thus, by analyzing the translingual works of national imagination that Wheatley and Occom composed against the backdrop of a monolingual national imaginary, I show that while Webster and others advocated for the notion that a unified language leads to unified culture, Wheatley and Occom take an un-unified culture as their premise—a culture that enslaves Africans and displaces Natives. They deploy linguistic strategies in the perceived unified English language to challenge a national consciousness that excludes them based on their race. In other words, they deploy linguistic strategies, such as code meshing and envoicing, that effectively oppose an exclusionary white and Anglo national consciousness.

Readers racially “othered” Occom and Wheatley, and images of the authors circulated in their work (specifically in Occom’s collection of hymns written by others and himself and Wheatley’s collection of poetry) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, materially locating their corporeal and discursive bodies in the same text.

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118 Wheatley was in direct conversation with both Rush and Franklin during her lifetime, but considering that Webster wrote his spelling book over a decade after Wheatley published her volume of poetry and after Occom published his narrative and collection of hymns, it is not possible that either Wheatley or Occom are writing in response to Webster’s linguistic claims.
According to Roxanne Wheeler, the latter half of the eighteenth century marks the emergence of race in relation to complexion as an important category of difference (36). She explains that “complexion becomes a topic of narration in writings by people of black African descent during the 1770s” (258). Their bodies and native languages othered, these authors faced the history of English in politics, education, and print that I have recounted. But for the authors themselves, complexion was not a concern. As David Waldstreicher notes, color did not interest Wheatley except “when she mocked whites’ obsession with it” in the poem “On Being Brought from Africa” (547): “Some view our sable race with scornful eye,/ ‘Their colour is a diabolic die./ Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,/ May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train.” But, both Wheatley and Occom were concerned with their lived bodies. Even while standing in front of crowds, Occom refers to his flesh and his Indianness while Wheatley consistently refers to her own body as speaker of the texts she writes. Certainly, I do not mean to suggest that there is a singular black or native body that exists or existed prior to subjectivity or literature; rather I aim to show how Wheatley specifically used the perception of her body as a rhetorical strategy. By locating rhetorical power and authorization in the relationship between bodies and language, I show that authors’ language acts in relation to their lived bodies produced linguistic negotiations that present alternatives to eighteenth-century monolingual national epistemologies based on sameness—alternatives that helped to produce and constitute this new place—the United.

119 Trimbur argues that for Franklin, “language and race became proxies for each other”—and suggests that Franklin effectively essentializes both race and language in this formulation (34). He cites Franklin’s “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind” written in 1751. In justifying the English claim to Pennsylvania, Franklin asks, “‘Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of Aliens, who...will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion’” (33).

120 Reid-Pharr warns against such a reading of the raced body, specifically in relation to Wheatley (8).
States. I now briefly turn to Occom to show the ways in which his experience with formal education and as an ordained preacher and missionary to Native Americans situate him as a translingual author politically engaged in national discourse in different ways throughout his career.

**Samson Occom’s Transitional Rhetoric**

In a 1769 letter to Eleazar Wheelock, New Light preacher Jacob Johnson writes about his concerns regarding a mission to the Oneida Indians:

> I could wish that all and every one that think of doing Service as missionaries among the Indians woud give themselves to the Learning of their Language, as one most necessary ante cedent qualification for their going among them

> And for this most important purpose that you would sir get as soon as possible a profes sor of Indian in your School and that the Indian Language may be taught as equally if not even more necessary than Latin Greek or Hebrew as I am indeed certain it is in this Case by my own most certain experience

> Their Language may be reduced to the rules of grammar and taught as any other Language and be learned as soon or sooner than any other
I hope they will in the mean time give themselves to the study of the Indian Tongue —you see sir the affair is so much on my Mind that I know not how to dismiss it or give over urging it upon your mind sir till you do some thing to effect about it the which when I hear of my Mind will be easy in that respect (OCP ms 769313)

Johnson was a missionary to the Mohawk and proficient in the Mohawk language. In the Native American missionary effort during the Great Awakening, many missionaries learned tribes’ languages as a means of living among them while providing missionary services. According to Johnson, proficiency in Indian languages was “even more necessary than Latin Greek or Hebrew”—languages that students at Wheelock’s Moor’s Indian Charity School learned. While there was a strong shift away from learning Native languages after King Philip’s War in the late seventeenth century, the Great Awakening of the mid eighteenth century saw, not so much resurgence in missionaries learning Native languages, but a particular interest among some missionaries in learning these languages for the purpose of conversion.

Samson Occom, a native Mohegan speaker, learned to speak, read, and write in English, and after seeking out and receiving an education from the Anglo-American

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Jacob Johnson was a delegate at the Fort Stanwix treaty meeting at which the Iroquois sold a substantial amount of land to the British. Sir William Johnson, representing the British, encouraged the Iroquois to sell the land (much of which belonged to other tribes), and Jacob Johnson recommended to the Iroquois that they only sell the land if for the purpose of Wheelock’s Moor’s Indian Charity School. In order to save his relationship with William Johnson, Wheelock attempted to distance himself from Jacob Johnson after the treaty. Despite Wheelock’s effort, his relationship with William Johnson was strained (OCP).
minister Eleazar Wheelock, became an ordained Presbyterian minister.\textsuperscript{122} In 1768, he composed a short autobiography to provide what he describes as an honest account of himself, given that many false representations were then circulating. In this text he describes his interest in an English education:

> I had Stronger Desire Still to Learn to read the Word of god, and at the Same Time had an uncommon Pity and Compassion to my Poor Brethren According to the Flesh, I usd to wish, I was Capable of Instructing my poor Kindred, I use to think if I Coud once Learn to Read I Woud Instruct poor Children in Reading,—and used freequently to talk with our Indians Concerning Religion. (54)\textsuperscript{123}

After leaving Wheelock, Occom went on a twelve-year mission to the Montauk on Long Island and recalls, “I read the Scriptures to them and Usd to expound upon Some particular Passages in my own Young… I Catechised 3 or 4 Times a Week according to the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, and many Times Proposd Questions of my own, and in my own Tonugue” (55-56). Occom’s desire to learn English (he also learned Greek, Latin, and Hebrew) was motivated by his wish to bring Christianity to his fellow Native Americans, and in doing so, he wished to use both his native language and English. Multilingualism for Occom—his moving back and forth between languages—was vital to his effective participation in both Anglo and Native communities as a missionary.

He went on to preach all over New York and New England as well as England and Scotland while on a fundraising tour of Great Britain with the reverend Nathaniel

\textsuperscript{122} Occom’s success as Wheelock’s student inspired Wheelock’s Moor’s Indian Charity School, which opened in 1754.

Whitaker from 1765 to 1768 on behalf of Wheelock’s school. His preaching not only secured 12,000 pounds for the Moor’s Indian Charity School but also garnered fame and support for his incredible rhetorical skills. When Occom learned that Wheelock had not cared for Occom’s family in his absence, and that the money he raised in Great Britain would go to Wheelock’s new project—Dartmouth College—rather than to Indian education, Occom became disillusioned with Wheelock specifically and Anglo-Americans generally. In his famous 1771 letter indicting Wheelock, Occom writes, “I am very Jealous that instead of Your seminary Becoming alma Mater, She will be too alba mater to Suckle the Tawnies,” and continues, “I was quite Willing to become a Gazing Stock, Yea Even a Laughing Stock, in Strange Countries, to Promote your Cause” (OCP 771424). Alma mater, the Latin for “kind mother” becomes alba mater, or “white mother” in Occom’s letter. Occom charges Wheelock with caring little for him—even using him as a pawn, a “Gazing Stock,” to raise money for his school which was comprised mostly, at this point, of Anglo-American students.

After his split from Wheelock, Occom continued to serve as a preacher and rhetor, but his concerns became more pointedly focused on Native American politics in relation to Anglo-Americans. In 1772, Moses Paul, a Wampanoag man sentenced to execution for killing a white man outside of a bar, wrote to Occom asking him to give an execution sermon. Thousands of people gathered at the First Congregation Church in New Haven and Occom delivered his famous, “On The Execution of Moses Paul.”

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124 This revision is discussed by Emma Vance in her unpublished article, “Classical Education and the Brothertown Nation of Indians” and by Ivy Schweitzer in her January 4, 2013 MLA talk, “Occom, Archives, and the Digital Humanities.”
125 Brooks explains that Occom adapts “a variant of the American Jeremiad…genre to issue a major public statement about the spiritual consequences of colonialism” (Collected Writings 162). He has repurposed a Euro-American genre for his own goals.
his preface to this sermon, Occom explains that while “the books that are in the world are written in very high and refined language, and the sermons that are delivered every Sabbath, in general, are in a very high and lofty stile,” he will make his sermon comprehensible with “common, plain, every-day talk” so that “little children may understand it; and poor Negroes may plainly and fully understand my meaning; and it may be of service to them. Again, it may in a particular manner be serviceable to my poor kindred the Indians” (177). Occom prefaces his sermon by explaining his rhetorical and linguistic choices and indicates that his intended audience is expansive (he refers again to his audience of “Negroes, Indians, English” in the sermon itself [185]). In the sermon, Occom draws on the stories of Joseph, St. Paul, Daniel, and Jacob to indict the sinfulness of ALL people, regardless of race or nation. In making the point that language can be sinful, as it is no longer pure, Occom writes, “The tongue is only an interpreter of the heart” (180). He moves from making a claim about the universality of sin, addressing in turn, Moses Paul, “revered Gentleman and fathers in Israel,” and finally “to the Indians, my bretheren and kindred according to the flesh. My poor kindred” (191, 192). He speaks of the dangers of drunkenness to which, he explains, his fellow Indians are inclined: “by this sin we have no name or credit in the world among polite nations” (192). But, well aware of his Anglo-American audience, just before he concludes his sermon, Occom offers: “And here I cannot but observe, we find in sacred writ, a wo announced against men, who put their bottles to their neighbors mouth to make them drunk, that they may see their nakedness: And no doubt there are such devilish men now in our days, as there were in the days of old” (193). Using biblical language and religious discourse, while addressing his fellow Indians, Occom slyly implicates his Anglo-American audience in
the sin of drunkenness—as one could interpret the neighbors who put the bottles to their mouths as the Anglo-Americans who introduced more potent and abused forms of alcohol to many tribes. This is an example of Occom’s masterful rhetoric. According to Scott Lyons, “rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires…to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (qtd, in Enoch 75). In his version of the American jeremiad, Occom claims this rhetorical sovereignty—he decides the style and language of his sermon: it will be in “common, plain, every-day talk” and it will achieve goals beyond what is expected in the domain of Christian piety. He capitalizes on religious rhetoric and biblical language to in fact argue for “name or credit in the world among polite nations” for his fellow Native Americans.

Occom ultimately rejects the hypocrisy of the new nation in favor of an intertribal community in central New York: Brothertown. A group of Southern Algonquians in New England founded the Brothertown movement, and Occom became involved in 1773. The founders of the movement purchased land in New York from the Oneida tribe and moved there in 1775. After the Revolution, Occom openly and bitingly condemned colonialism and slavery in sermons and letters. In a sermon entitled, “When He Drowned His Reason,” Occom condemns the swearing of “the White people” and exclaims, “it Seems to be a mother Tongue with them, or are there Schools Where they go to Learn this Language?” (226-227). He continues to accuse Anglo-Americans of corruption, blaming them for “many Diseases, that Europians Brought into this Country, that the Natives were entirely Ignorant before; Such as what they Call in Genteel Language, Venerial Disease, in Common Language French Pox” (227). He transitions into this pointed rhetoric after
he sees that the promise of the Revolution brought no relief to the injustices of Native Americans and Africans. Of slavery, in his 1787 sermon “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” Occom preaches:

what Shall we say of you or think of you, or what do you think of yourselves; You that are Slavekeepers, do you Love God, and do you Love your Neighbour, your Neighbour Negroe as Yourself, are you willing to be Slaves yourselves, and your Children to be Slaves too, I think I have made out by the Bible, that the poor Negroes are your Neighbours, and if you can prove it from the Bible that Negroes are not the Race of Adam, then you may keep them as Slaves, Otherwise you have no more right to keep them as slaves as they have to keep you as Slaves…I must Conclude, that Slavekeepers must keep Slaves against their own Light and understanding and they that will keep Slaves and plead for it, are not Neighbours to anyone, and Consequently they are not Lovers of God, They are no Christians, they are unbelievers, yea they are ungenteel, and inhumane. (206)

While he is preaching to a Native American audience, Occom directs his accusations in the second person to Anglo-Americans. This is a clear example of Occom using the English language for his own purposes and aims—to reveal the hypocrisy of slave holding Anglo-Christians. Occom’s locally performed rhetoric had universal implications, and he leveraged his knowledge of English and religious language to make a universal argument about the sins of slavery. Occom renounced the U.S. and moved to Brothertown in 1789 and continued to serve as a minister to the Brothertown,
Stockbridge, and Mohegan Indians. He and other Native Americans, such as his son-in-law and fellow founder of Brothertown, Joseph Johnson, "replaced the infantilizing language of the missionaries with language that emphasized personal agency, action, and control" in this intertribal community (Wyss 126). Brothertown exemplified the Christian religion, colonial laws, and democratic forms; however, this community seemingly recognized that English and Christian education did not deliver a more “English” or “American” identity to Native Americans. Rather, the founders and members of the community adapted their English and classical education to create their own nation.

OCCOM’s language reflects this straddling of cultures as a means of critiquing the new nation and its Anglo-American citizens. In a 1785 journal entry, OCCOM explains, “We Named our Town by the Name of Brotherton, in Indian Eeyawquitoowauconnuck” (OCP ms 785554). In the naming of an intertribal Christian community, OCCOM includes both the language that coincides with his religious conversion—English—and his native language. OCCOM works within and across languages to establish his own subjectivity and place or lack thereof in the new nation. In turn, the new nation is partially constituted by the lived bodily experiences and words of those like OCCOM who expose the limitations of citizenship and liberty.

Unlike OCCOM, Wheatley was not a preacher, did not receive a formal education, was a woman, and was a slave. Wheatley, like OCCOM, was introduced to English and Christianity together. Her first known piece of writing was a 1765 now-lost letter to OCCOM. The Wheatleys were members of the New South Congregationalist Church in Boston, and Phillis was baptized into the nearby Congregationalist Old South Church on

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126 This is an argument put forth in Catherine Prendergast’s contemporary study Buying into English (2008). She argues that citizens of former Soviet Bloc countries often learn English as way to achieve social betterment, but the investment in English does not meet their expectations.
August 18, 1771. Much like for Occom, Christianity and English alone did not allow Wheatley to participate in public discourse. Wheatley uses English, African forms, Latin, Christianity, and her body to develop subtle rhetorical strategies to engage a public national discourse.

“My Trembling Tongue”: Phillis Wheatley and Translingual Poetics

While Jacob Johnson writes to Wheelock urging him to require Anglo-missionaries to learn Native languages, those in Wheatley’s network do not register a language barrier as an issue. In response to English philanthropist John Thornton’s request that Wheatley go to Africa to serve as a Christian missionary in 1774, Wheatley writes,

You propose my returning to Africa with Bristol yamma and John Quamine if either of them upon Strict enquiry is Such, as I dare give my heart and hand to, I believe they are either of them good enough if not too good for me, or they would not be fit for Missionaries; but why do you hon’d sir, wish those poor men so much trouble as to carry me So long a voyage? Upon my arrival, how like a Barbarian Should I look to the Natives; I can promise that my tongue shall be quiet for a strong reason indeed being an utter stranger to the Language of Anamaboe. (qtd. in Caretta, Phyllis Wheatley, 159).

Wheatley responds to Thornton’s assumption that she would serve as a suitable missionary given her African origins. In suggesting she is an utter stranger to the language of fellow Africans in Anamaboe, Wheatley reminds Thornton that a monolingual African language and Africans are not inextricably linked. Simultaneously,
Wheatley asks, “how like a Barbarian Should I look to the Natives” and directly follows this question with her assertion that she does not speak the language of Anamaboe. Wheatley suggests that if she were to speak, her performance of English would cast her in the role of “Barbarian”—a term that, as we have seen in previous chapters, authors typically reserve for non-English speaking persons. Additionally, Wheatley would “look” like a barbarian to the natives, linking language to appearance—and by extension, to the body. Complexly, then, in these few short lines, Wheatley at once questions monolithic and essentialized notions of language, while also purporting a relationship between body and language. In her poetry, she draws on this relationship and her astute understanding of the fluidity of language to participate in national discourse.

Wheatley wrote prolifically. She wrote elegiac, or mourning, poems; pastoral poems; hymns; and letters. Many of Wheatley’s poems were published in newspapers and broadsides or circulated privately prior to the publication of her collection, *Poems on Various Subjects*. She revised many of her poems before they appeared in her collection—perhaps to improve them, or, to reach a specific audience. In *Phillis Wheatley: Complete Writings* (2001), editor Vincent Caretta includes a section devoted to “Variants of Poems Published in Poems on Various Subjects”—or what I would call her translations. Translation, in which Wheatley engages, and translingualism are inextricably linked. Of a translingual approach, Min Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner write:

> Such an approach recognizes translation and the renegotiation of meaning as operating in all language acts, including those seemingly working within as well as across language boundaries (Horner, Donahue, and NeCamp 287). For, from a translingual perspective, all writing always
involves rewriting and translation, inevitably engaging the labor of recontextualizing (and renewing) language, language practices, users, conventions, and contexts. (586)

Wheatley’s translations can help us understand two rhetorical strategies she deploys: code meshing and envoicing. While code meshing in previous chapters referred to the merging of semantic and syntactical codes, here, I discuss code meshing as the strategic merging of words and language from separate discourses. Code meshing in this way, does not in and of itself challenge a monolingual paradigm; but, it is a translingual practice that can subtly revise homogenous accounts of nationhood based partly in racial sameness, as is the case with Wheatley. Envoicing, according to Suresh Canagarajah, is a strategy that “refers to modes of encoding one’s identity and location in texts and talk… [as] [s]peakers desire to be understood with all their social and cultural particularity” (“Translingual Practice” 80).

One of the first poems she wrote, “To the University of Cambridge (1767) was published in Poems on Various Subjects (1773) as “To the University of CAMBRIDGE, in NEW-ENGLAND.”¹²⁷ In this poem, the third to appear in her Poems on Various Subjects, Wheatley addresses her audience, the students at Harvard University, with authority and imperatives. She rhetorically situates Harvard men as the students and herself as the teacher: “Students, to you ’tis giv’n to scan the heights/ Above, to traverse the ethereal space,/ And mark the systems of revolving worlds./… Improve your privileges while they stay” (11-12: lines 7-11, 21). To garner such authority, Wheatley as narrator made explicit rhetorical choices—namely, to code mesh the languages of religion and education and to encode, or envoice, her own identity within the text

¹²⁷ All poems are taken from Vincent Caretta’s Phillis Wheatley: Complete Writings (2001).
Wheatley’s religious discourse is clear in her imagery of Christ’s crucifixion: “How Jesus’ blood for your redemption flows./ See him with hands out-strecht upon the cross;” (12: lines 12-13). She becomes the religious authority—she urges the students to visualize Jesus’s sacrifice. In the draft of this poem written in 1767, Wheatley refers to the “Parent of mercy” (105: line 6) rather than the “Father of mercy” (11: line 5) as she does in the translation. In this language act, the subtle shift demonstrates an awareness of patriarchal discourse underlying Christianity, and she embodies this discourse in deploying “Father” in the published poem. Her embodiment of religious language marks Wheatley as converted—as one who has the authority to speak about Christianity and to warn others about the dangers of sin. Wheatley levels the racial distinctions through the universal consequences of sin: “Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,/ By you be shunn’d, nor once remit your guard;/ Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg./ Ye blooming plants of human race divine” (24-27). It is through the “human race divine” that Wheatley is connected to her audience, and sin is the universal “evil to the soul.”

Simultaneously, she deploys the language of education, referring to her audience as “youths” (105: line 8) in her 1767 poem and as “Students” in the version published in Poems on Various Subjects. In the 1773 poem, Wheatley also adds “Ye pupils” to line 22 when instructing her audience to “Improve your privileges” and “each hour redeem.”

Looby refers to the blending or convergence of republican political thought and biblical tradition as a “double rhetorical system,” but he suggests that scholarship tends to give propriety to one over another (225-226). Writing specifically about Wheatley, Waldstreicher argues that she “seiz[ed] on multiple traditions (religion, classicism, language of rights and slavery, British nationalism), in the process creating something that could not be completely disavowed without creating an ideological, or cultural, crisis” (550). This is to say that I am certainly one of many to observe these languages working in texts or even in Wheatley’s texts specifically. By analyzing Wheatley’s strategy of envoicing in relation to her specific moments of code meshing, I contend that we see exactly how Wheatley participates in a national discourse that calls upon readers to reconsider national epistemologies of exclusion. Understanding how she does so is particularly important in arguing for a translingual, rather than monolingual, early American print culture.
While excluded from formal education herself, Wheatley deploys pedagogical language in relationship to the universalizing language of Christianity that includes her, through code meshing. The discourse of education is also a national discourse, as education is concerned with citizenship and producing national citizens. She, the speaker, becomes the authority on the subject in this poem in commanding the students to take full advantage of the opportunity to learn and in turn, be good Christians, and citizens, free of sin.

While Wheatley’s race and gender made her in many ways invisible in the distribution of rights, Wheatley makes herself visible as speaker through envoicing. She encodes her location in the added titular phrase, “in NEW-ENGLAND” in the 1773 poem. She encodes her identity when she refers to herself as the poem’s speaker in line 28: “An Ethiopt tells you ’tis your greatest foe.” Here, Wheatley illuminates her bodily experience in New England as an Ethiop—from Africa. She asserts her own subjectivity as speaker when she writes, “WHILE an intrinsic ardor prompts to write,/ The muses promise to assist my pen.” Wheatley attributes only assistance to the muses and attributes the inspiration to write to herself. As speaker/writer of the poem, Wheatley, not the page on the paper, embodies the languages of religion and education. While the “intrinsic ardor bids” her to write in the 1767 version, she more forcefully uses the word “prompts”—meaning to move or induce (a person, etc.) to do something (OED)—in the 1773 poem. Her “intrinsic ardor,” then, has more force in the 1773 version, moving her to do language through the action of writing. Whether this is a result of a growing sense of authority as she gained a transatlantic reputation or a means of shifting her role for a wider audience, Wheatley emphasizes her own command over her words and their meaning. In the next two lines, Wheatley makes a subtle reference to slavery, but inverts
the reference to figure her native land as a land of slavery: “’Twas not long since I left
my native shore/ The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom.” In the letter I cited from
Wheatley to Occom in the introduction to this chapter, Wheatley refers to the Israelites in
“Egyptian slavery” in relation to slavery in the U.S. and the “Natural rights” of the
“Negroes.” Her translation from referring to her native land as “The sable Land of error’s
darkest night” in 1767 to “The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom” in 1773, perhaps
invokes an image of slavery in Africa, that is, the spiritual slavery of never knowing
Christ. But, given Wheatley’s parallels between Egyptian slavery and that of the
“Negroes” elsewhere, as well as Wheatley encoding herself as an “Ethiop” and her
audience as located in New England, this line might in turn invoke an image of slavery in
the U.S., the bodily slavery of never knowing political freedom. Wheatley envoices her
multiple identities at once: a poet, the creative voice with the freedom to openly direct the
students at Harvard; a child of God, with the authority to partake in public discourse; and
a slave, an Ethiop in New England. Wheatley makes a rhetorical claim as poet, then, to
the particularity of her own position in relation to the universalizing promise of religion.

Understanding the trajectory of Wheatley’s life and career make this strategic
code meshing and envoicing at once clearer and more remarkable. In 1761, a young girl
(seven or eight years old) disembarked the Phillis—a slave ship that arrived in Boston,
Massachusetts after a two-month journey from Africa. Only around five percent of
Boston’s population was of African descent at that time, and 98 percent of this population
was enslaved (Caretta, Biography, 1). John Wheatley, a Boston merchant of
Congregationalist faith, purchased the young girl to be a personal slave to his wife
Susanna and named her Phillis after the slave ship that brought her to North America.129 Wheatley spoke no English and was unable to read or write in any language when she arrived at the Wheatley home, but a mere twelve years later, a large network would read, sell, and circulate Wheatley’s poetry—many even requesting that she write poems to commemorate specific events (Brooks, “Our Phillis,” 10-11).

Educational opportunities for enslaved or free Africans were few and far between in America in the eighteenth century. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.), founded in 1701 in England, established schools in the colonies attended by both Native Americans and black slaves during the eighteenth century.130 These schools focused on religious instruction, English imposition, and reading and reciting, but not writing. A New York Charity school held evening classes for the enslaved to teach the singing of psalms and reading of the Bible and Anthony Benezet’s Quaker school in Philadelphia held evening classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic for enslaved and free African students—a rare exception in the collective education of Africans (Monaghan 241-245). In addition to the institutional efforts of the S.P.G., Dr. Thomas Bray and Associates funded schools for the enslaved such as The Negro Charity School at Philadelphia (1758), which was also invested in teaching reading as a means of converting the pupils. Benjamin Franklin observed the students in 1763 and reported being very impressed with their reading abilities (259). The New Lights of the Great Awakening invited Africans to their churches and often offered reading instruction as a means to conversion. Typically, efforts to educate slaves in English focused solely on

129 Because this section discusses several members of the Wheatley family, I will use first names when referring to anyone but Phillis, and will reserve the last name Wheatley to refer to author Phillis Wheatley.
130 These schools were established in New England, New York, Pennsylvania as well as many places in the South.
reading instruction—as the S.P.G. held that reading instruction is what promoted Christianity. Unlike John Eliot and other Anglican missionaries we encountered in chapter 1, educators of enslaved Africans “never once attempted to learn, let alone analyze, African languages” (242).\(^{131}\)

Changes to educational practices in North America throughout the eighteenth century indicate an institutional fear of Africans’ agency both through writing literacy and the retention of their native languages. These changes often came in the form of prohibitions, namely in the southern United States, on teaching slaves to write and on slaves communicating with one another in native languages. For example, the Negro Act of 1740 passed in South Carolina forbid slaves to learn to write in English and assemble or travel in groups (1740 South Carolina Slave Code). Slaves were separated from their families to keep them from communicating, and in some cases, had their tongues cut out for speaking a language other than English (Gentzler 183). By the latter half of the eighteenth century, in many places slave owners and other whites encouraged or required Africans to speak English and forbid or discouraged writing literacy.

There are few instances in New England of individual enslaved persons acquiring reading and writing literacy—of these, Phillis Wheatley is perhaps the most renowned.\(^{132}\) Mary Wheatley, the daughter of Susanna and John, taught Wheatley to read; Mary herself likely had a private schoolmaster or attended a public boys and girls school in Boston, given her family’s socioeconomic status.\(^{133}\) Wheatley gained fluency in reading and

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\(^{131}\) See Jennifer Monaghan’s *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (2005), pp. 241-272 for an excellent overview of literacy instruction to enslaved Africans between 1750 and 1776.  
\(^{132}\) One other example is Chloe Spear, a slave in Philadelphia and then in Boston in the 1760s who learned to read from her master and to write with the help of a white neighbor (Caretta, *Biography*, 38-39).  
\(^{133}\) Hannah Mather Crocker, the granddaughter of Cotton Mather and a contemporary of Wheatley’s, wrote in her diary that Mary acted as Wheatley’s tutor.
writing English within sixteen months of arriving in Boston, and she began writing poetry as early as age fourteen. Wheatley’s education afforded her not only literacy in reading and writing English, but also knowledge of English literature and the Classics. Her poetry demonstrates familiarity with Latin as well (Caretta, Biography, 40). Wheatley’s poetry began appearing in newspapers in 1767 and broadsides in 1770. Her Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral was published in 1773, and John Wheatley wrote a letter for the preface that explains,

Without any assistance from school education, and by only what she was taught in the family, she in sixteen months time from her arrival, attained the English language, to which she was an utter stranger before, to such a degree as to read any, the most difficult parts of the sacred writings, to the great astonishment to all who heard her. As to her writing, her own curiosity led her to it, and this she learned in so short a time, that in the year 1765, she wrote a letter to the Rev. Mr, Occum, the Indian minister, while in England. She has a great inclination to learn the Latin tongue, and has made some progress in it.

At a time when only about fifty percent of white women were able to write (a percentage that likely includes those who could only sign their names), Wheatley’s education and writing abilities were truly extraordinary.134

When her first poem was published in the Newport Mercury newspaper in 1767, the introductory title to her poem “To the Messrs. Hussey and Coffin” announced her as:

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134 In “Literacy Instruction and Gender,” Monaghan suggests that the number of women who were literate in reading and writing in the eighteenth century is very difficult to accurately discern given that the indicators for literacy historians, such as signing one’s name rather than a mark in a will, are not conclusive of one’s ability to read or write.
“A Negro Girl (belonging to one Mr. Wheatley of Boston)” wrote this poem. A few years later her second published poem, “On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield” appeared in several American newspapers in Boston, New York, Connecticut, Providence, and other locations. This poem and others published in newspapers around the publication time of *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* include some variation of the author’s lived bodily experience on the page: “by Phillis, a Servant Girl 17 Years of Age, belonging to Mr. Wheatley, of Boston. Has been but 9 Years in this Country from Africa” (*The New York Gazette*, November 12, 1770); “a Negro poet” (*Connecticut Journal*, May 7, 1773); and “Phillis, the extraordinary negro poet, servant to Mr. John Wheatley” (*Boston New-letter*, May 13, 1773) to name a few examples. In contrast, an elegiac poem on the death of the Reverend George Whitefield that appeared in the *Boston Gazette* in October 1770 included no information about the author’s gender, race, origin, or social status. Implicitly, the white, male is the author of a text, unless otherwise indicated.

Wheatley circulated her work in private manuscripts and publicly, and hoped to find a publisher for a collection of her writings. She had sent her elegy on Whitefield along with a letter to the Countess of Huntingdon in 1770, and in 1772, Captain Robert Calef brought Wheatley’s manuscript to a bookseller in London, who in turn, approached the Countess of Huntingdon. The Countess of Huntingdon agreed to patronize Wheatley’s work (she also patronized the work of Ukausaw Gronniosaw, Olaudah Equiano, and John Marrant), and the book was set to be published in London. A London publication would protect Wheatley’s work under British copyright laws—laws that did not exist in America. Marketing of the book began immediately. In 1773, having been in
poor health for several months (or this was at least the reason the Wheatleys provided publicly), Wheatley accompanied Nathaniel Wheatley, Susanna and John’s son (and Mary’s twin), to England to improve her health but also to publicize the forthcoming collection of her writings. She wrote “A Farewell to America” to commemorate her leaving America. In England, she attended museums and shows, spent time in parks, and met Lord Dartmouth and Benjamin Franklin as well as many other prominent people (Caretta, Biography, 82-118). The Countess of Huntingdon encouraged Wheatley’s publisher to include an engraving of Wheatley in the book. Vincent Caretta notes that this was a rare practice in eighteenth-century books, “especially … during the author’s lifetime” (Biography 99). He explains that frontispieces were status markers and typically reserved for white merchants and other professional landowners, and while there were a few examples of living British women authors’ frontispieces in the eighteenth century, as an individual of African descent, Wheatley is an even more rare exception (99-100).

135 Interestingly, Phillis arrived in London a year after the highest common law court in England ruled that “a slave brought to England from the colonies could not legally be forced to return to the colonies as a slave” (Caretta, Genuis, 109).
Why is it important that an image of Wheatley circulated with her published collections of poems, despite common practices of the time? Why does it matter that newspapers repeatedly published racial classifications of the author alongside Wheatley’s poems? Why does John Wheatley in his preface to her poetry specify Wheatley’s literacy capabilities “to the great astonishment to all who heard her” (emphasis mine)? First, let us look at what the engraving above depicts compared with the common description of “the Negro” in the eighteenth century. Wheatley sits at her desk, seemingly in deep contemplation, with ink and paper at hand—tools that call to mind the literacy usually denied slaves. In contrast to her regal posture, her plain-styled clothes serve as reminders of her position within the Wheatley household. It is important to note the ways in which the dark hatchings of the engraving emphasize her dark complexion and the

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137 Susanna Wheatley asked the Countess of Huntingdon that Phillis Wheatley be dressed in plain clothes appropriate to her station (Caretta, Biography, 101).
grayness of her clothing, the two markers that make her possession of ink and paper all the more spectacular to the eighteenth-century public. With her sleeves rolled up, Wheatley is depicted as at work, but rather than the drudge of household duties, she is now engaged in the work of imagination. Eighteenth-century definitions and descriptions of “the Negro” largely privileged physical features: “their Hair being wooly, and their Colour black; their Noses flat, and their Lips large” (qtd, in Wheeler 90). Wheeler warns that there is an “overemphasis on physical features to the exclusion of religion and social organization when discussing [eighteenth-century] Africans” (100). So, we must look at this image, taking into account both the physical features emphasized and the subject’s religious and social affiliations (implied by the paratext in addition to the poems themselves).

We see a woman who in many ways does not conform to the racial stereotypes that surround her (the profile thins her nose, a cap covers her hair, the pen is in her hand, and the title page indicates that her poems address subjects both religious and moral). But we also see a black woman, one with a dark complexion, clothes indicative of her station, who has been referred to as “a Negro” in various circulating newspapers. This image of a woman coded as black and female, then, is as much about a remarkable exception for readers to essentialized notions of language—notions in which only mastery of English comes from white bodies—as it is an opportunity for Wheatley to use the particularity of her lived body—“the Ethiop”—to participate in national discourse.139

138 See chapter 2 for more details on eighteenth-century sources that describe the physicality of Africans.
139 Wheatley scholars have provided a number of interpretations of this frontispiece. For example, David Grimsted suggests that it serves as a refutation of racial prejudices and Walt Nott explains that is shows the power of public presentation.
For the reader, it seems, the racial classification served to highlight the remarkable nature of the poems published. Waldstreicher narrates the story of Thomas Wooldridge, a British businessman, who went to see Wheatley after reading her eulogy to George Whitefield, and he asked her to write on the spot.\textsuperscript{140} Reportedly, he did this so he could report back to his patron, William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, that he has seen and heard Wheatley firsthand. Wheatley obliged and wrote, “To the Right Honourable William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, his Majesty's Secretary of State for America, &,&,” knowing that “any performance of hers would be understood as an African one, with relevance for the question of slavery” (Waldstreicher 525). For Wooldridge, and presumably for the Earl of Dartmouth—who was known for his interest in the religious conversions of Africans and Native Americans and was the leading trustee for Wheelock’s Moor’s Charity School,—it was important that Wheatley’s lived bodily experience as author be beyond dispute. This was equally important for Wheatley. Joanna Brooks and Waldstreicher both point to Wheatley’s own interest in making her physical self inseparable from her work in the 1772 document signed by several prominent Boston men testifying that she had in fact written her poems.\textsuperscript{141} Most likely, according to Brooks and Waldstreicher, the document was “like a petition, or a subscription list—a common testimonial device prefacing eighteenth century books” (Waldstreicher 528).

In contrast, Tara Bynum argues that Wheatley’s religious conversion creates an inward self not bound by the flesh, and thus, that her body no longer matters. She

\textsuperscript{140} Waldstreicher argues that Wheatley was a key political figure in the Revolutionary era. He traces her relationships with Lord Dartmouth, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson to show her savvy interventions in slavery politics.

\textsuperscript{141} Both Brooks and Waldstreicher oppose Henry Louis Gates’ well-known narration of an actual Wheatley trial in which a gathering took place in which Wheatley was forced to undergo the equivalent of a graduate student oral exam to prove her authenticity. This Wheatley trial, Brooks and Waldstreicher contend, never happened.
suggests, “Wheatley divorces her weak fleshly body from the experiences of this inward self who delights in and is transformed by way of sharing deeply with God” (par. 28). Bynum focuses on Wheatley’s Christian faith, to the exclusion of any concern for/with her body: “No longer bound to a black body, an explicitly African body in [her] writing space…the language of Christianity offers Wheatley a way to imagine a self that transcends the fleshly weakness of her body” (par. 17). Bynum concludes that Wheatley does not write about race as a collective embodied experience of suffering and does not address what it means to be a part of a community with a racialized identity. I agree that Wheatley did not write about the collective experience of Africans in America. However, I think one can still arrive at this conclusion without insisting that Wheatley divorced herself from her body, which would allow us to understand her body as part of, rather than opposed to, her language. Many of Wheatley’s poems refer to herself as a speaker and highlight her body as such. Certainly, there are moments in letters and poems in which Wheatley asserts a separation between body and soul, and Bynum cites many. However, in many other poems and letters, it is through her body, specifically through associations between language and body, that Wheatley uses Christian language to garner authority for that body.¹⁴² She is not yet, while writing, released from the confines of her body into a union with God. Rather, she argues for the relationship between her body and God as a way to make political statements in poems such as “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” “To The King’s Most Excellent Majesty on his Repealing the

¹⁴² In “‘My Body! Not to Either State Inclined,’” Ivy Schweitzer argues that in early America, “women writers articulate a sense of self and authority that is not derived from biological or cultural femininity but in response to its pervasive denigration” (408). I certainly agree that Wheatley does not derive authority from her body, and, as Schweitzer makes clear “In many cases, colonial European women and slave women used the Bible as a source of what they would consider feminism or female empowerment, and as an argument for their worth, authority, and position as speakers and writers” (406). This is certainly true for Wheatley, as it was for Rowlandson in Chapter 1, and I contend that Wheatley derives authority from Christianity in a way that allows her to make claims for the treatment of her bodily self.
American Stamp Act,” “To His Excellency General Washington,” “On the Capture of General Lee,” and many others. Envoicing is a means by which Wheatley makes the relationship between her body and her words visible in her poetry.

We can see rhetorical traces of Wheatley’s interest in the corporeal body in relation to language in the sixth poem to appear in Poems on Various Subjects, “On the Death of the Rev. Dr. Sewell,” specifically when compared with earlier variants or translations. Wheatley is increasingly attentive to language and the body in several moments. Line 4 of the variant, “We hear thy warnings and advice no more” (107: line 4) becomes “Though we shall hear thy warning voice no more.” (13: line 4) in Poems on Various Subjects. Speech and voice are central in her 1773 version. The fourth line in the “variant” emphasizes the aural—what “we shall hear…no more,” while the volume’s version illuminates Sewell’s voice. Rather than a characterization of what his voice might convey (“warnings and advice”), the volume’s version expresses the loss of his voice as it dies with his material body. The added period punctuating this line lends finality to this death of voice—voice and speech are inextricably linked to the body and cannot outlive it. The bodily nature of voice, and the embodiment of language, here, are paramount in the volume’s version. Again we see a shift to the speech when the line “I speak Sincerely and with truth and Love” (107: line 43) becomes “I speak sincerely, while I speak and love,” (14: line 37) in the volume’s version. To “speak Sincerely and with truth and Love” emphasizes how she speaks, whereas to speak sincerely, “while I speak and love,” focuses on the act of speaking itself.

Wheatley seems to make a conscious rhetorical choice to include spoken dialogue in the poem, moving from “[“]Sewall is dead[,”] Swift-pinioned fame thus cryd/ [“]Is
Sewall dead[?]” my trembling heart reply’d” (107: 23-24) to “‘Sewell is dead.’ Swift-pinion’d Fame thus cry’d./‘Is Sewell dead,’ my trembling tongue reply’d,” (14: 23-24). Wheatley solidifies the decision to add quotation marks by her third variant and that is how the lines appear in the Poems on Various Subjects version. She becomes invested in these lines acting as a metaphorical dialogue between personified Fame and herself.

According to Boggs,

Direct citation was one of Wheatley’s favorite strategies, and she drew on it to accomplish three goals. One, citation inscribes orality within print culture and allows both to coexist. That coexistence disrupts the linear move from orality to literacy that John Wheatley outlines as part of Wheatley’s educational ‘Progress.’ Two…direct quotation draws attention explicitly to the citationality of all language. Third, direct citation makes visible the linguistic construction of cultural epistemologies. (41)

Boggs’ claim about Wheatley’s goals in using direct citation suggests that Wheatley, narrator and writer, makes visible her body as a source of oral language, as speaker, and as voice. The third goal Boggs identifies applies very specifically to her reading of another Wheatley poem. Boggs looks to lines 5-6 in “On Being Brought from Africa” (written in 1768 and published in 1773)—“Some view our sable race with scornful eye,/Their colour is a diabolical die”—to argue that the quote “demonstrate[s] how an ascriptive racism uses language to objectify (through the materiality of ‘die’) and demonize slaves (refers to them as ‘diabolic’)” (41). Boggs continues, “For Wheatley, such racism depends on epistemes that are linguistically self-referential” (41).143

143 Boggs’ entire reading of this poem as an explication of translation is fascinating and illuminating. She suggests that “On Being Brought from Africa” illustrates a move across space, which is the essence of
Boggs formulation, Wheatley reveals the cultural epistemology of racism partly through her attribution of spoken words to an unidentified “Some.” Wheatley makes visible the relationship between language and cultural epistemologies in lines 23-24 of “On the Death of the Rev. Dr. Sewell,” but in a different way from what Boggs describes in her reading. In “On the Death of the Rev. Dr. Sewell,” the speaker of the quote is Wheatley herself, narrator and writer. The way she characterizes the direct citation of her own language points to a linguistic construction of an alternative cultural epistemology—one more in line with her own thinking rather than the thinking of the “Some.” Specifically, the striking shift from Wheatley’s “trembling heart” to her “trembling tongue” doing the replying points to an engagement with the instability of language—a cultural epistemology that, as we saw in the previous chapters, the British and colonials soon-to-be-officially-Americans did not share. And while the heart and tongue are both a part of the human body, they are also often used as metaphors (both in the eighteenth century and today) for emotion and language, respectively. Thus, Wheatley’s decision to shift to her trembling tongue’s reply also suggests that she wanted to highlight language, mouth, and body. In Poems on Various Subjects, “On the Death of the Rev. Dr. Sewell” appears directly after “On Being Brought from Africa to America.” Wheatley’s declaration about “our sable race”—in which she identifies with the objects of the “scornful eye”—is directly followed by this alternative cultural epistemology that challenges the one put forth by the direct citation in “On Being Brought from Africa to America.” In these ways, Wheatley rhetorically teaches her readers how to read her work. She asks her readers to

Webster’s definition of translation (39-42). While I explicitly look to scholars of translingualism to understand the way translation works in Wheatley’s poetry, Boggs’ readings of translation in Wheatley’s poems and in other works informs my readings and arguments.
perform a translingual reading in which they identify her, in all of her identities, as the speaker of the language on the page.

When Wheatley code meshes through her inclusion of extra-national linguistic resources—namely Latin and African poetry forms—then, her readers are already performing a translingual reading of her poems. Boggs and leading Wheatley scholar, John Shields, have convincingly demonstrated the ways in which Wheatley deploys languages outside of English, and their arguments are worth recounting here. Boggs explains that Wheatley’s mastery of Latin and neoclassical translation authorized her as a poet, provided her the opportunity to “participate in the subject formation normally reserved for white men,” and “enabled her to rewrite the racial politics of empire” (38). Wheatley could rewrite these racial politics through inverting her readers’ literacy assumptions about an African woman in the eighteenth century. Shields performs a linguistic reading of Wheatley’s “Hymn to the Morning” and “Hymn to the Evening” to show the ways in which these poems resemble the genre of oral poetry in Africa more than Milton’s work (109). Scholarship since the 1990s suggests that Wheatley remembered her experiences in Africa, and Shields consults sources on African poetry and oral literature and their rhythmic patterns to illustrate the affinities between Wheatley’s hymns and African language forms and styles. He points to several specific aspects of the hymns to make this point. Wheatley’s allusion to birds is very common in oral poetry in Africa, as is the abrupt ending: “And scarce begun, concludes th’ abortive song” (20). The opening invocation of the muse parallels an African practice of “accepting the first line of a lyric…as donnée” (110). Also, the underlying rhyme of Wheatley’s lines echoes the rhythmic pattern of African oral poetry “to which the
trained African audience could respond, a rhythm that they and the poet had inherited” (qtd. in Shields 110). While there is no evidence I know of that an eighteenth-century trained African audience heard Wheatley’s poetry, this rhetorical strategy might have allowed her to imagine an audience beyond the circle of white women who requested specific topics in poems and provided patronage for Wheatley and the influential white men and women to whom she addressed and dedicated her poems.\textsuperscript{144}

While these readings certainly speak to Wheatley as a translingual writer, neither Boggs nor Shields consider the implication of these rhetorical strategies in how Wheatley might imagine her audience. Indeed, her audience included recipients of her letters, among them Occom and Obour Tanner. Who else might have accessed these poems?

Writing about the hymn genre specifically, Brooks argues,

\begin{quote}
Whether committed to memory, hand-copied in personal tune books, or gathered in printed collections, hymns traveled across cultures, colonies, and continents; they crossed boundaries of denomination, race, class and gender. Importantly, the orality of this textual form invited participation, innovation, and contribution even by the semi literate, non literate, or non English speaking worshippers. (\textit{American Lazarus} 54)\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

The shift from psalmody into hymnody in the eighteenth century also “opened new, non-institutional venues for authoritative literary, cultural, and religious expression by African-Americans and Native Americans” according to Brooks (64). Hymns were texts written to be sung, written to be vocalized. Song and music, of course, are not the domain

\textsuperscript{144} Wheatley describes the “shadey groves” that are meant “To shield your poet from the burning day:” (11, 12), suggesting that \textit{she is our} poet—the reader’s poet or the listener’s poet—expanding her reach infinitely.

\textsuperscript{145} While I consider different forms of literacy in chapter 1, Brooks uses literacy to connote one’s ability to read.
of African and slave culture alone, but given the lack of opportunities for black men, women, and children to learn to read that I outlined in the introduction, the hymn form not only speaks to Wheatley’s connections to Africa, but also to an expanded audience—one that is not homogenized or monolingual.

About eight months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Wheatley wrote to General Washington and enclosed a poem: “To His Excellency General Washington.” In this poem, Wheatley addresses the “Celestial choir” while “enthron’d in realms of light/ Columbia’s scenes of toils I write” (89: lines 1-2). Wheatley follows the image of heavenly song and herself as writer situated within heavenly light with her subject matter: “Columbia’s scenes of toils I write.” Columbia is the Latin name for the thirteen North American colonies and the poetic name for the United States of America (OED). Wheatley, then, in the first two lines of her poem, positions herself as simultaneously enveloped in religious imagery and authorized to describe the political landscape of America—a landscape in which “freedom’s cause her anxious breast alarms” and at which other “nations gaze at scenes before unknown” (89: lines 3,6). In the fourth stanza, Wheatley writes, “Fix’d are the eyes of nations on the scales, for in their hopes Columbia’s arm prevails./ Anon Brittania droops the pensive head,/ While round increase the rising hills of dead” (89: 33-36). In using the Latin names for both America and Great Britain, Wheatley code meshes at once establishing her adaptation of the poetic tradition and revising monolingual patriotism.

Wheatley refers to the American military of which Washington had just been appointed General as “armies” (89: line 14), “warrior’s train” (89: line 20), and “martial band” (89: 26). Alongside her deployment of this military language, Wheatley calls on
“freedom’s cause,” and refers to America as “The land of freedom’s heaven-defended race!” (89: line 32). Washington’s military here represents freedom—and the race of the land of freedom, according to Wheatley, is the Christian race, of which she is a part. “Thee, first in place and honours,—we demand,” Wheatley writes, “The grace and glory of thy martial band” (89:25-25). She is part of the “we,” the “we” of the land of freedom for whom Washington’s army fights. In the letter prefacing her poem, Wheatley writes, “Sir, I have taken the freedom to address your Excellency in the enclosed poem” (88). She has “taken the freedom” to engage in this national discourse, and she positions herself as part of the “heaven-defended race” that occupies the land of freedom. A national space would be declared in June 1776—but as history shows, this space was far from free. Wheatley’s rhetorical insistence on a space that could contain religion, national discourse, and black bodies did not extend to the space in which her writing circulated, but it certainly negotiated and helped constitute that space in many meaningful ways.

Wheatley’s translations, both those of form and those of language in her several “variants,” makes the form and language of her poetry specific to her body, voice, and speech. She recontextualizes, relocates, and converts language practices through code meshing and envoicing in a way that negotiates the restrictions of her body as a slave with her mastery of English. Her practice exemplifies the “difference in the same” that Lu and Horner discuss as the hallmark of translingualism. Through translingualism, Wheatley rhetorically situated herself in a nation coming into being and, in fact, changed what that space could look like. Thus, what Wheatley creates here is a uniquely American English, not in terms of orthography or pronunciation (Wheatley’s collection of poems was published a few years before the writing of the Declaration of Independence and a
decade before Webster even publishes his first text), but rather in terms of drawing attention to the instability of language (a notion that formal education attempted to efface) and by extension to the instability of the identity of an emerging nation—one that invades and enslaves while purporting freedom, equality, and democracy.

Conclusion

The situated, dynamic linguistic negotiations in the hymns, poems, letters, and other texts written by Wheatley illuminate language as action and as practice. Rather than solely understanding language as a reflection of a particular time and place, we must understand it also as producing space. The “meeting-up of histories,” the histories, for instance, of a formerly enslaved poet, a well-traveled Native American missionary, and a white “founding father,” come to produce the space of the print public sphere and national space itself in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Rather than defining the white, propertied “national subject” in relation to racial others, I contend that it is in the meeting-up that we better understand national identity. In examining these texts as making national space in the meeting-up of histories through language, we begin to speak back to the domination and erasure enacted by English-only colonial and early national histories.
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The Haitian Revolution and Creolizing American Literature

Introduction

In 1855, *Putnam’s Monthly* published Herman Melville’s novella *Benito Cereno*. Melville took two key events as the basis for his story: 1. The 1805 slave revolt aboard the Spanish ship named the *Tryal* 2. the Haitian Revolution. The Haitian Revolution was the first successful slave revolt in history and led to the founding of Haiti as an independent nation and the first black republic. This had profound effects on the United States, a country struggling to define its national identity in the nineteenth century. The revolution had geographic effects: when the French colony Saint Domingue defeated Napoleon Bonaparte and the French and declared independence in 1804 to become Haiti, Napoleon sold the Louisiana territory to the U.S. The Haitian Revolution caused Napoleon to abandon his plans of building an empire in North America, as he no longer had the land that would produce the commodities he needed to establish this empire. In addition to precipitating massive U.S. territorial expansion, the Haitian Revolution forced the U.S. to confront slavery in a different way. Americans produced and circulated texts calling on the Haitian Revolution to both support the continuation of slavery and to oppose the institution in the U.S.\(^{146}\) While scholars have explored the influence of the

\(^{146}\) “[T]he Haitian Revolution had taken on an emblematic role for the nascent black-nationalist movement” in the United States, especially in Philadelphia (Fanning 42). Print reflected this influence, especially in the African American community. In the mid-nineteenth century, William Wells Brown, James McCune Smith, and James Theodore Holly were among the many authors who wrote explicitly about the Haitian Revolution, and it was often a topic of presentations at African American State and Regional Conventions (Jackson and Bacon 9-24). Frederick Douglass’s *North Star* and *National Anti-Slavery Standard* had a wide readership and constantly linked Haiti with slavery in the United States (17). He even included a biography of Toussaint Louverture in one issue that compared the Revolutionary leader to George Washington (17). Reverend James T. Holly often used his influence to put forth the idea that black nationality proved the equality of “‘the Negro race’” (qtd. in Jackson and Bacon 18). As Fanning explains, newspapers often heavily covered Haiti and its leaders, and such reports circulated widely among African Americans “because the papers were often read to large groups of people in taverns, coffee houses, oyster bars, dance clubs, and hotels” (41). Even illiterate or semi-literate African Americans were well informed about the history of and the goings-on in the black republic.
Haitian Revolution on geography and slavery in the U.S., few have considered this influence in relation to language. While the influence of the Haitian Revolution on the U.S. in relation to slavery and geography is related to issues of language, this chapter puts the influence of the Haitian Revolution on language in American literature at the forefront in order to explore processes and counter-processes of power through language in nineteenth-century American literature. Given both nascent countries’ relationship to language and nationality in the nineteenth century, studying American literature in relation to Haiti’s linguistic history is a particularly generative way to consider the hierarchical notions of language, race, and the idea of national language itself.

In this chapter, I have two related lines of inquiry: First, I explore the ways in which Haiti’s relationship to language is represented in two nineteenth-century American literary texts and what is at stake in these representations; second, I interrogate how the representations of Haiti and language in these texts speak to particular anxieties about the United States’ national unity at a moment when the nation is becoming increasingly divided on the issue of slavery. In Chapter 3, I provided an historical account of the shift to linguistic nationalism in the late eighteenth century. In this chapter, I first present a brief history of the Creole language and Haitian language policies. I then show the ways in which the historical investment in English monolingualism persisted and even intensified in the mid-nineteenth century in the U.S. I suggest that the relationship between these histories becomes visible in nineteenth-century American literature, which addresses the questions of language and nation that arise in relation to Haiti and the Haitian Revolution.147 I first read Hannah F. Lee’s 1854 *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint*,

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147 Scholars in the past several decades have expanded definitions of American literature to include a variety of texts produced, consumed, circulated, and set in the United States as well as the Caribbean—
*Born a Slave in St. Domingo* as demonstrative of the way creoleness was feared and made invisible—its existence ignored—in an American text. I then read Melville’s *Benito Cereno* as an exemplary text of making Creole simultaneously visible and invisible. In bringing these texts together, I explore the ways a translingual approach might show us what is at stake for these authors and readers in texts presenting creoleness and language in the ways that they do. While both texts are exploring the relationship between nation, race, and language, Lee’s text makes Creole—the language of the Haitian Revolution—invisible and associates Haiti with French. This association, I argue, is less threatening to the United States’ notion of itself as a coherent nation, because Creole in many ways represents black community, agency, and revolt—three common fears in the antebellum United States. Thus, Lee incorporates the black subject into white nationhood—as free but subordinate—and she represents this through language. Melville, writing on the cusp of the Civil War, represents anxieties regarding national unity and partly does so through disrupting a neat distinction between race, nation, and language. Specifically, Melville’s implicit engagement with Creole and the association he makes between blackness and multilingualism becomes very dangerous to imperial and national power.

**History of Creole and Haiti’s Language Policies**

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148 The term creoleness is defined in Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphael Confiant’s “In Praise of Creoleness” (translated by Mohamed B. Taleb Khayr: “Creoleness is the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history. For three centuries the islands and parts of continents affected by this phenomenon proved to be the real forges of a new humanity, where languages, races, religions, customs, ways of being from all over the world were brutally uprooted and transplanted in an environment where they had to reinvent life” (891-892)). Creoleness, then, describes the heterogeneous cultural, social, and linguistic nature of the Caribbean.
It is important to understand the development of creole languages and Haitian Creole specifically to answer questions about the import of the visibility or invisibility of creoleness in American literature. In Saint Domingue—the French colony that would become Haiti when revolutionary leader Jacques Dessalines declared independence in 1804—language and language media were integral to the identity of the blacks who made up 85 percent of the population (half of whom were born in Africa) before the revolution began (Fischer 209). When French colonists settled the island of Hispaniola in the mid-seventeenth century, their plantation economy became increasingly lucrative for France. This economy, which produced sugar and coffee, relied entirely on the labor of African slaves who were transported from Africa. John Trimbur argues, “The political economy of the slave trade produced an interlanguage that enabled communication both between European slavers and Africans and among Africans themselves, who in the maelstrom of the slave trade had been cast together from various language groups” (“Linguistic Memory” 28). This interlanguage, first pidgin—a language that develops from the mixing of two or more language—and then creole—once taken up as a first language—“ranged throughout the circum-Atlantic world from North America throughout the Caribbean to Guyana and Surinam on the Atlantic coast of South America” (29). Haitian Creole emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and was often considered by colonists an infant or bastardized version of French (DeGraff 392).

Haitian Creole, though, was far from a primitive version of French and was integral to the Haitian Revolution as a common language among the revolting slaves. As C.L.R. James notes, during the Revolution, several proclamations were announced in Haitian Creole, rituals were performed in Haitian Creole, and meetings were conducted in
Haitian Creole (175). The language unified divided groups from different parts of Africa and served as a tool of organization and secrecy. For example, James recalls the goal of the revolution: “exterminating the whites and taking the colony for themselves,” and he explains:

Voodoo was the medium of the conspiracy. In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves travelled miles to sing and dance and practise the rights and talk; and now, since the revolution, to hear the political news and make their plans. Boukman, a Papaloi or High Priest, a gigantic Negro, was the leader…[On a night in 1791] Boukman gave the last instructions and, after Voodoo incantations and the sucking of the blood of a stuck pig, he stimulated his followers by a prayer spoken in creole, which, like so much spoken on such occasions, has remained. (87)

The oral and bodily language of communication—singing and dancing—is often linked to slave culture, as is Creole. Toussaint Louverture in James’ and many others’ accounts was the leader of the Haitian Revolution. Toussaint, according to critic Jonathan Beecher, “was fluent in Creole and in the African language of his Arada parents, but it seems that he was never entirely at home with French. Only in his forties did he learn to write in that language; and as the ruler of Saint-Domingue in the late 1790’s, he dictated his proclamations and addresses to secretaries, who put them in good French” (46). Creole, then, was the language of the revolution and its leader.

But the relationship between the nation of Haiti, the new black republic, and Haitian Creole, was fraught and complex. After his imprisonment by the French in 1802 (and his death in 1803), his principal lieutenant Jean-Jacques Dessalines took command
of the slave rebellion. Dessalines declared Haiti’s independence in 1804 and renamed the country with the indigenous name of the island of Hispaniola, Ayiti or Haiti in the French spelling, from the Taíno language. In 1804, the entire island constituted Haiti, and it was not until 1821 that the Dominican Republic became independent. Under Dessalines emerged the first constitution of Haiti proper, the Constitution of Ayiti (1805). Article 12 of the Constitution declares: “No whiteman of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in future acquire any property therein.” There were rare exceptions to this article, as following articles indicate, but essentially, almost all white people were banned from citizenship. Furthermore, Article 14 states, “All acception (sic) of colour among the children of one and the same family, of whom the chief magistrate is the father, being necessarily to cease, the Haytians shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks.” The impetus for this article was to unite the people of Haiti and ending racism toward those of lighter skin on the island. To be a Haitian citizen, one could not be white, and once a Haitian citizen, one was black. The first constitution, then, presented race—whiteness and blackness—as both a prerequisite for and as a result of national citizenship. While the first constitution did not declare a national language, the constitution itself was written in French, and throughout the eighteenth century, French was the language of government and other institutional business. The Constitution of 1918 declared French the official language of Haiti.

In the 1805 Constitution, Dessalines named himself Emperor for Life and served in this role until his assassination in 1806—likely in an ambush organized by two key members of his administration: Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion (Dayan 17).
Christophe was a general in the Haitian Revolution and in 1807, he was elected the President of the newly created state of Haiti in the North; Pétion was elected as the president in the South (the North and South were reunited under Jean-Pierre Boyer in 1820) (Drexler 44-51). Similar to the way in which the U.S. struggled with differentiating itself from England in relation to language after the American Revolution, Haiti also faced a challenge in cohering the nation without reproducing the imperial French language. Both Christophe and Pétion struggled with decisions regarding national language and the implementation of language in government and education. As we have seen, education is a key site for the institutionalization of language in relation to national cohesion. Pétion’s 1816 Constitution mandated free primary school education for all citizens, and Christophe also had a specific educational agenda (Fanning 46). As Sara Fanning explains in “The Roots of Early Black Nationalism,”

As reported in the leading American newspapers, Christophe’s educational programs pushed English as well as French reading and writing. In one paper’s report on the progress of the Cape Henry school, the children’s English was so proficient after three months they could already ‘read the Bible in English.’ Christophe also flirted with…making the kingdom’s official language English rather than French. The adoption of English would have mitigated fears of cultural alienation among prospective American emigrants. The move also suggests an internationalist bent, such as later black nationalists adopted, although Christophe’s stated aim sounded more Anglophiliac: ‘changing the manners and habits of my citizens, which until now preserve those of the French and replacing them
with the manners and habits of the English.’ Christophe’s admiration for English culture and social structures derived in part from the antislavery activities of the English in abolishing the Atlantic slave trade and in part to the reality of the diplomatic situation. (46)

For Christophe, the question of nationality and language was not one of Haitian Creole versus French, but rather a question of retaining French—the language of the former colonizer—as the national language or shifting to English—the language of another colonial power that could represent an opposition to slavery. One might wonder: why, if Christophe was invested in a language that could represent antislavery activities, would he not flirt with the idea of making Haitian Creole a national language? At this point in Haiti’s history, international recognition and relations were vital to the nation’s economic survival. Thus, Christophe and Pétion had to focus their educational agendas on internationally recognized languages. While the majority of the population continued to speak Haitian Creole, the island’s land owning and well educated elite spoke French (Berotte Joseph 235). For the purposes of survival, nationalism in Haiti, then, was first and foremost about international recognition of the subjects’ freedom and independence.

Creole could not fulfill the promise of recognition as many in Europe and America viewed Haitian Creole at best as a language without the promise of mobility, and at worst, as an inferior form of communication.149 In a letter written in 1804 published in his “Memoirs of Hayti,” U.S. diplomat Condy Raguet writes, “‘The ignorant negroes speak a language which is called Creole, but is a mixture of that language with the African. Those of the better class speak the Creole with some French, generally

149 Scholars of Haitian history and language such as Arthur Spears, Marc Prou, and DeGraff have documented the European view of Haitian Creole as an inferior and corrupt language See for example, Michel DeGraff’s “Linguists’ Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Creole Exceptionalism” (2005).
however very corrupt French’’ (qtd. in Drexler 302). An 1820 article in *The American* newspaper explains that primary schools in Haiti provide instruction in English, because the pupils need to learn to read and speak a *written* language, suggesting the superiority or at least the prioritization of internationally recognized languages. Creole, of course, could and has become a written language, but given the low percentage of Haitians exposed to written literacy and the almost exclusively oral inception of Haitian Creole, it was not an alphabetic written language until the twentieth century. Thus, like we saw in the previous chapter, linguistic colonization continues in a national context in the form of a linguistic hierarchy that privileges the language of the former colonizer—French in Haiti. Creole, the language that evolved under the duress of slavery and spoken by almost the entire Haitian population in the nineteenth century, was subordinate to French in every official capacity. The black nation, as it was dictated in the 1805 Constitution, would not officially recognize the language that had in many ways unified an enslaved black population and propelled the revolution. This fraught and complex history informed American authors implicitly or explicitly engaging with Haiti in their work. To better understand how Lee and Melville represented the relationship between language and nation in their American Anglo-phone texts, we must also understand the history of the relationship between English and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

**History of American English in the Nineteenth Century**

The debates regarding language reform and the standardization of American English that I explored in the last chapter continued into the nineteenth century. Webster’s 1828 dictionary provided vocabulary of 70,000 words and was well received

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and provided an American English with specific Americanisms in contrast to the contemporaneous Joseph Emerson Worcester dictionary based on the London standard. While the fixity of language Webster put forth in the later eighteenth century (a central element in Chapter 3) was not divisive, his Federalist views of language were and those views were the subject of debates over language reform. But, by the release of Webster’s 1828 dictionary, the American public and policy makers largely accepted Webster’s American English (Simpson 141-143). Investment in a standard English continued in education throughout the century. Lindley Murray’s grammar book sold over a million copies in various editions by 1850 (Baron 142). Samuel Kirkham’s *English Grammar in Familiar Lectures* (1825), which credits Murray’s book as its influence, was also widely popular in schools. This text focuses on grammar as scientific and purports fixed rules in English grammar and syntax and uses American patriotism as a means of promoting English grammatical knowledge. Kirkham writes,

[T]he mighty struggle for independence is over; and you live to enjoy the rich boon of freedom and prosperity which was purchased with the blood of our fathers. These considerations forbid that you should ever be so unmindful of your duty to your country, to your Creator, to yourself, and to succeeding generations, as to be content to grovel in ignorance. Remember that ‘knowledge is power;’ that an enlightened and a virtuous people can never be enslaved; and that, on the intelligence of our youth, rest the future liberty, the prosperity, the happiness, the grandeur, and the glory of our beloved country. (15)

Much like Webster does, Kirkham links language to patriotism, suggesting not only that
national subjects must adhere to rules of grammar and syntax as a debt to earlier
generations, but also that such adherence was necessary for the success and longevity of
the nation. Kirkham’s claim that “an enlightened and a virtuous people can never be
enslaved” explicitly uses education and character, and implicitly English grammar given
the topic the text, to explain why some are not enslaved. It would follow, then, that those
who are enslaved are not enlightened, not virtuous, and not knowledgeable in English
grammar.

Many other grammar books were published and circulated in the nineteenth-
century United States including Samuel S. Greene’s *Elements of English Grammar*
(1853) and *A Grammar of the English Language* (1863), Goold Brown’s *Institutes of
English Grammar* (1825) and *Grammar of English Grammars* (1851), and William
Chauncey Fowler’s *English Grammar: The English Language in Its Elements and Forms*
(1868). Each was used in classrooms at different points. While these texts approached
grammar differently, for instance Greene focused on demonstrating sentence structure
while Brown suggested that memorizing grammar rules would lead one to master
language, each ultimately argued for principles of grammar to regulate language (Baron
150-168). According to Baron, these texts “form[ed] the backbone of American grammar
education”—a backbone constituted by “orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody”
(153). I do not recount this history of grammar/language texts to demonstrate how
language in America changed or functioned in the nineteenth century. Rather, I want to
illustrate how dominant attitudes toward language, and specifically toward
monolingualism and language regulation, developed and circulated in the nineteenth
century.
We see such attitudes and debates in the literature of the time as well. In contrast to Anderson and Warner, Boggs argues that “Mongolot mass readerships came into existence only belatedly in the United States; they emerged at the end of the nineteenth century as new national and international copyright laws were passed that curtailed the free dissemination of print and regulated translation” (129). While Boggs locates the shift to an actual monoglot reading public to a later time than Anderson and Warner do, she recognizes that national subjects had anxious attitudes toward translation and linguistic diversity in literature in the mid nineteenth century. It is at the beginning of the postbellum era, according to Boggs, that a clear “anti-immigrant backlash against the culture of translation” took place in the United States” (129). Boggs looks to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a work on the nexus of change. In 1852, Stowe sued F.W. Thomas for publishing a German translation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in a Philadelphian German-language newspaper. Boggs writes, “Stowe’s side argued for an American literature that was monolingual, indigenous, and homogenous—that was, in short, much like the national literature Benedict Anderson envisions. Stowe developed a theory of national literature that hinged on iconic translation, a form of translation by which a text maintained its linguistic and national identity even as it passed into other languages” (129). This 1852 lawsuit, I suggest, reflected the attitudes toward monolingualism that had been building throughout the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Stowe’s lawsuit does not mark the first investment in a “monolingual, indigenous, and homogenous” American literature—rather, it was a moment at which the recent invention of copyright allowed for action in this investment to proceed through the legal channels of intellectual property.
It is interesting to think about *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a textual pioneer in rejecting translation, specifically because of the longevity of scholarship on this text in relation to language and dialect.\(^{151}\) Scholarly interest in regionalism in the twentieth century foregrounded the use of dialect in American literature. But, nineteenth-century readers often dismissed dialect, not as a threat to a monolingual nation, but rather as an example of classed and/or raced individuals speaking sub-standard English or struggling with an “articulation disorder” (Wilson).\(^{152}\) I argue that Creole, the language of the Haitian Revolution, was more threatening to linguistic national unity and could not be dismissed in nineteenth-century American literature. Nineteenth-century American literature, and specifically abolitionist literature including *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, considers Haiti as central to questions of slavery and freedom in the United States. However, scholarship has not put nineteenth-century Haiti and the U.S. in conversation when it comes to the relationship between slavery, race, and language. I suggest that American literature is concerned with such a conversation, and I offer readings of three nineteenth-century American literary texts that deal either implicitly or explicitly with the relationship between Haiti and the United States with respect to language.

In the nineteenth century, there was a shift from the Republic to the primary category of nationhood for the U.S., and the nation was even more racialized category than it was in the eighteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, race science and the scientizing of language developed in tandem. Richard Bauman and

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\(^{152}\) I do think that a translingual reading of dialect in nineteenth-century American literature would contribute to the overarching argument of this dissertation, but for purpose of focusing concretely on the transnational linguistic influences on nineteenth-century American literature, here, I delimit my discussion to Creole.
Charles Briggs suggest, “Scientizing language…involves the development of
temporalizing and spatializing practices specifically designed for charting linguistic
difference based upon its relative distance from modern European languages” (200).
Additionally, “Each language is isolated as a separate universe of inquiry, thereby
constructing languages as bounded entities—surely an imagining of language that would
be useful for emergent national projects” (200). At the same time, developing notions of
race became more sophisticated and were often purported by the government. Writing
specifically about the American government and the philological removal debates
regarding Native Americans in the nineteenth century, Sean Harvey argues that in the
nineteenth century, the federal government began demanding English-only education
“even as race science gained ascendance” (507). “The beginnings of race science in the
United States are usually found in antebellum physical ethnology, but philology’s
contribution was central, even if inadvertent”—and this contribution was partially
grounded in eighteenth-century colonial missionary work and language philosophy
(Harvey 530). Harvey explains that ethnologists used philology to argue that “fixed, and
morally and intellectually unequal, races shared no common ancestry” (530). That is,
many believed that philology could trace racial origins through genealogical relationships
of languages. However, this was a topic for debate in the mid-nineteenth century with
direct political implications:

Denials of philology’s ethnological authority came with increased national
debate over slavery in the 1840s–50s. After all, what useful racial
information concerning English-speaking black slaves could philology
provide to proslavery writers? Notions of separate creations never
prevailed; insistence on racial fixity garnered somewhat more support.

That ‘race’ could be defined by the body alone was the American school’s [of race science] most successful argument. (530)

Harvey concludes that language theories were not essentialist in the same way as mid-nineteenth-century race science, so ultimately, languages other than English could be exterminated; this extermination would be “a necessary precondition for [one’s] assimilation into the American nation” (532). But of course, authors in the mid-nineteenth century were exploring, interrogating, and investing in circulating notions of essentialist notions of race and language.

This chapter both builds on the broader aim of the dissertation—that is, is engages the ways in which American literature complicates the narrative of linguistic colonization in a colonial and then national context and continues a conversation about the relationship between race and language in nineteenth-century American literature. While conversations regarding language and race in the United States have tended to focus on dialect and Native American languages, I focus on Creole to better understand the ways in which race, language, and nation relate to one another in the literary imaginary and make visible anxieties regarding these relationships.

These relationships are always in flux and never fixed. In Poetics of Relation, Caribbean intellectual Édouard Glissant coins the title to describe the ways “in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other” (11). Drawing on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Glissant combats a totalitarian rootedness in culture, identity, or language and posits that creolization “approximates the idea of Relation for us as nearly as possible” (34). He explains that creole languages
(specifically in the French Caribbean) are symbolic of a poetics of relation in the way that is “always…open, that is, perhaps, never becoming fixed except according to systems of variables that we have to imagine as much as define” (34). While all language is constantly emergent and never fixed, creole languages are particularly ripe to examine in relation to localized, historical moments because they emerged as an entity from contact between languages that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century actors presupposed as fixed and belonging to a specific group, culture, race, or identity. Thus, creole languages contribute to an understanding of how specific speakers and writers “fashion and refashion standardized conventions, subjectivity, the world, and their relations to others and the world” (Lu and Horner 591). Return to a translingual approach—“a disposition of openness and inquiry toward language and language differences” (585)—that has guided this dissertation, this chapter focuses on the meaning language difference produces in individual instances in literary texts. This approach reveals the ways in which American texts’ relationship to Creole reflect and complicate the perceived relationship between language and nation and between race and language in nineteenth-century America. As we can see in recounting the history of language in the U.S. and Haiti, national languages are integral to colonization, even within independent countries, and language politics are integral to how we understand subjectivity and identity. The literary texts I consider put American English in conversation with Creole, and through a translingual approach to these American texts informed by the Haitian Revolution, I

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153 As I explain in the introduction to the dissertation, I look to literature and specifically in this chapter novels and novellas to explore the decentering of national language and the linguistic diversity of the nineteenth-century United States, because, as Mikhail Bakhtin says, “The novel begins by presuming a verbal and semantic decentering of the ideological world, a certain linguistic homelessness of literary consciousness, which no longer possesses a sacrosanct and unitary linguistic medium for containing ideological thought” (qtd. in Dash 109). Thus, the literary begins by presupposing that a unitary linguistic medium does not exist.
show how literature represents and threatens a unified, monolingual American
cnationhood, and in so doing, reconsiders subjectivity, identity, and citizenship.

**Creole’s Disappearance in *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint***

Hannah F. Lee’s 1854 *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Born a Slave in St. Domingo* takes as her subject her sister’s devoted friend, a former slave in Saint-Domingue (also called St. Domingo) who immigrated to New York City during the Haitian Revolution with his master Jean Bérard and his household. Pierre remained enslaved until 1807, after the death of his mistress. Hannah F. Lee was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts and wrote several popular texts, mostly domestic tales dealing with education and biographies (Duyckinck and Duyckinck 295). She wrote her last published text, *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint*, about Pierre’s life in the U.S. She became acquainted with the subject of the memoir through her sister of whom Pierre was a good friend (295). The narrator makes several references to things Pierre told her directly, suggesting that Lee interviewed Pierre to write the biography and to access letters written to him. Pierre’s master, Jean Bérard, returns to Haiti to claim his land and dies during his trip, at which point Pierre takes up the occupation of hairdresser to earn money to support his now impoverished mistress. He also saves money to buy freedom for his sister Rosalie, and for his future wife, Juliette Noel. Pierre’s mistress grants him his freedom on her deathbed, and Pierre takes the name of war hero Toussaint Louverture to mark his status as a free man. He spends the rest of his life working as a hairdresser, donating money to those (white and black) in need of financial assistance, and setting up educational opportunities for white and black children alike. Pierre’s sister Rosalie gives birth to a

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154 After 1793 there was a large emigration of Haitians to the United States. In fact, “Beginning in 1808, ministers in Philadelphia started giving sermons on ‘New Year’s Day, the date abolishing the American slave trade but also the date of Haitian independence in 1804’” (Jackson and Bacon 14-15).
daughter, Euphemia, and Rosalie dies soon after. Pierre and Juliette take Euphemia in as their own. Together, Pierre and Juliette spent their lives caring for those who were ill (they cared for many victims of a plague that struck New York) and raising funds for orphanages and cathedrals.

In writing the Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Lee seems invested in portraying her subject, Pierre Toussaint, as an exalted individual in spite of his race, one who is worthy of praise and even sainthood. In fact, the 2010 edition is an explicit call to the Vatican from “[m]any Catholics, white and black, from all around the world…to call Pierre Toussaint ‘Saint Toussaint’” (5). Pierre is a remarkably creole figure; a few days after his death the following appeared in a notice in the Home Journal of New York:

His relations…were threefold; first, to his cherished lady friends and their families, whom he had attended in youth, and towards whom he exhibited a disinterested and loyal attachment, which seemed to belong to a past age or a different country, so unique and touching was its manifestation; second, to the French population of New York, to which he was attached by early association and native language; and thirdly, to his own race, the mass of whom were so much below him in tone of character and position, that only a fraternal sentiment truly Christian could have prompted his constant interest in their welfare, and ready sympathy in their pleasures and griefs. By these so widely different classes Pierre was both respected and beloved. (87)

The notice describes Pierre as a black man born in Saint-Domingue, who moves to the United States, transitions from enslaved to free status, and is situated at an intersection of
languages. His affiliations overlap and intersect. However, despite this complex history, Lee spends the majority of her text attempting to eradicate his creoleness. At a time when slave rebellions were a real fear and civil war possible, this recognition and description of Pierre is unthreatening to any white American readers. His “disinterested and loyal attachment” to the New York women and their children for whom he worked resonates with descriptions of the ideal slave both for slave owners who make paternal arguments for the continuation of slavery and for abolitionists who use such a depiction to make claims for the eradication of slavery. His attachment “by native language” to the French-speaking population in New York markedly ignores the native language of most slaves in Haiti during the time Pierre lived there: Creole. While I do not have direct evidence that Pierre was a Creole and French speaker, it would have been likely given the incredibly high percentage of Creole speaking slaves at the time. If he did not speak Creole, he was a rare exception, and this might suggest that his primary communication was with his masters rather than with other slaves. Either way, his association with French and French-speakers in the United States partly erases Creole from Pierre’s relationship to slave culture in Haiti. Finally, even his relations to his own race are presented as innocuous to white superiority as the majority of his race “were so much below him in tone of character and position, that only a fraternal sentiment truly Christian could have prompted his constant interest in their welfare, and ready sympathy in their pleasures and griefs.” Pierre’s affiliations with others of his race, in this description, can be attributed to his Christianity and “fraternal sentiment” rather than to any shared language, experience, nation, or suffering under the institution of slavery. Lee includes this notice in the appendix of her text, and the body of her memoir reflects this depiction—one that
privileges Pierre’s national affiliations over his racial or creole affiliations—while moving through the details of Pierre’s life. One way she does this, I suggest, is through her depictions of language.

Lee certainly does not ignore Haiti—in fact, she begins her memoir by recounting what happened on “the island of St. Domingo, or Hayti” after Pierre’s birth. She describes the luxury of the French colony in the latter half of the eighteenth century and then explains,

The terrible events which followed this flourishing era are too painful to record; yet we can hardly forbear touching upon the history of Toussaint L’Ouverture, though bearing no other connection with the subject of our memoir than accidentally arises from similarity of name, color, country, and being both born in slavery, and on the same river. (18)

Pierre and Toussaint’s “similarity of name, color, country, and being both born in slavery, and on the same river” are significant connections. But, in contrast to Pierre’s strong relations purported in the *Home Journal of New York*, Lee carefully moderates the relationship between Pierre and the revolutionary leader, explaining that their connections “accidentally arise.” She does not include language or religion as a connection between the two men—Pierre and Toussaint were both Catholic. In distancing Pierre from Toussaint, she also distances Pierre from the “terrible events” of the Haitian Revolution and thereby distances Pierre from any threat to white superiority and control in the United States.

Despite this distancing, surely the reader will associate the two men based on their “similarity of name, color, country, and being both born in slavery, and on the same
river,” especially given that Pierre chose the name Toussaint after the death of his mistress as symbolic of his free status. So, Lee does extol Toussaint as a noble player in the Haitian Revolution. Lee does not laud the Revolution; she describes the revolution as “terrible events…too painful to record.” But, she does praise Toussaint, Pierre’s namesake, as an exception to the rule put forth in race science of black inferiority. He has a “superior capacity” to those with whom he fights, and “his natural endowments of manner and person inspired respect and deference, and enabled him to keep in check [the black chieftains’] wild and revengeful passions” (18). Toussaint was not an impassioned, ruthless figure that perpetuated the “terrible events” in Lee’s formulation; rather, he was a rational and noble figure who ultimately was faithful to France and “received a commission from the French government of commander-in-chief over the armies of St. Domingo” (18). Lee continues, “In 1801, when the independence of Hayti was proclaimed, he sent his two sons to France for an education” (18). As I explained in the “History of Creole” section, Toussaint Louverture, the father and symbol of Haitian nationalism, was fluent in Creole. But Lee does not mention Creole in relation to Toussaint; rather, she focuses on the way he was compelled to reproduce French language and literacy in the new generation of Haitian national subjects through his sons’ education. When engaging the Haitian Revolution, then, Lee does so in a way that privileges Haiti’s connection to France rather than its independence. Rather than ever rebuking France for its colonial enterprise in the Caribbean or its cruel practices of slavery, Lee only condemns Bonaparte individually for his unjust and cruel treatment of Toussaint, and she praises Toussaint individually insofar as he acknowledges France’s authority and influence.
In her retelling of the history of Pierre’s place of birth, Lee, an abolitionist, does offer support to the cause behind the Haitian Revolution but never expresses support for the way in was carried out or for black nationhood. She argues in her memoir for the “negro[‘s] divine right” to freedom” (22) and suggests that “the revolutionary doctrines of France” influenced St. Domingo’s “contest for liberty and equality” (20). While Lee is an abolitionist, she certainly does not consider black individuals equal to whites. Describing the relationship between Pierre and his mistress, Lee writes, “The attachment of these two classes, of mistress and slave, might almost reconcile us to domestic slavery” (21); in this family, Lee, assures the reader, “Slavery with them was but a name” (17). But she quickly refutes such a reconciliation: “But without suggesting there are few or many such, we may all understand the danger of institutions which leave to ignorant, passionate men the uncontrolled exercise of power” (21). While Lee states that one’s divine right to freedom makes individual treatment of slaves obsolete in the question of the immorality of slavery, she still exalts the Bérards for their treatment of Pierre and praises Pierre’s loyalty and deference to them. She describes Pierre’s time as a slave in Saint Domingue as “the happiest period of [his] life” (20) and lauds his continued loyalty to his mistress after they moved to the United States. Thus, even while on the one hand suggesting that blacks have the right to liberty and equality, Lee also presents Pierre’s happy service and loyalty to his masters and their relationship as ideal, in contrast to the “terrible events” of the revolution. Lee aligns herself with the intellectual and religious anti-slavery arguments of “the philanthropist, the statesman, and the moralist” (21), presumably white abolitionists, rather than with the actions taken in Saint Domingue by
free and enslaved blacks alike to ensure their freedom—actions that were potentially threatening to a white American readership.

The violent upheaval on the island put the Bérards’ property in danger and Mr. Bérard took his family and several slaves to New York City. Mr. Bérard returned to Saint Domingue shortly after to “look after his affairs” (23). Pierre remained in New York City with his mistress and, per Mr. Bérard’s request, took up the occupation of hairdresser. In his capacity as a hairdresser, Pierre primarily served an elite, white clientele. In *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barber Shops in America*, Quincy Mills explores the subject of black barbers in the nineteenth century both as a means of economic opportunities and also as a way to “labor in a service industry” (xii) that served white clients in the antebellum United States. Black barbers shaved and cut the hair of their clients, in effect, performing the “grooming process” that produced the presentable and respectable white subject (5). Thus, according to Mills, the barber in a sense performs a consolidation of white nationalism—he grooms the citizen. The hairdresser performed a similar role of preparing subjects to move about in public spaces with a specific appearance. Pierre did use this performance first and foremost as means of providing economically for his mistress rather than as a means of economic mobility for himself. Mr. Bérard wrote from Saint Domingue that he had lost all of his property; soon after, the Bérard family received a letter announcing that Mr. Bérard had died of pleurisy. With his mistress struggling financially, Pierre “considered his earnings as belonging to Madame Bérard, except a small deduction, which he regularly set aside” to eventually purchase his sister’s freedom (she was also the property of the Bérard family). Pierre “was industriously pursuing his business as a hair-dresser, and denying himself all but the
neat apparel necessary for his occupation, never appropriating the smallest sum of his earnings to his own amusement...He was successful, and took a respectable stand as a hair-dresser” (26). Lee presents Pierre as a loyal and congenial black hairdresser who uses his occupation and economic success to maintain rather than disrupt the status quo and socio-economic hierarchy in the U.S.

Additionally, Lee demonstrates that once Pierre is in the U.S., he rejects all things that would/could have implicated him as a threat to the status quo and to white authority. Lee writes, “[W]hile on the island, among his sable brethren, first in the dance and song, he now scrupulously rejected all temptation for spending money, and devoted his time to his mistress” (26). This sentence seems to be a non sequitur of sorts, as song and dance did not require money of slaves in Saint-Domingue. If we recall James’ description of revolutionary meetings—“In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves travelled miles to sing and dance and practise the rights and talk; and now, since the revolution, to heard the political news and make their plans”—we might read Lee’s investment in making clear to her reader that Pierre had left behind this form of communication—one that might seem threatening to slave owners and white dominance. Song and dance, of course, are not the domain of African, Caribbean, and slave culture alone; however, in this context, Lee presents it as something related to Pierre’s “sable brethren”—those who revolted against the French and gained independence. In pointedly disassociating Pierre from such communication and revolutionary language, he does not represent a danger to imperial or national power.

While language mediums—the mediums through which language happens (writing, speaking, singing, etc.)—and languages of Haiti recall revolution and threats to
white national and imperial power, national and imperial languages, namely French and English, represent a consolidation of white power that free blacks might adopt as a means of assimilating. In Lee’s text, nationalism linked to the French language appears before American nationalism. The narrator explains that Pierre’s master, Jean Bérard “early decided to send his son to Paris to be educated…[and then sent] the two daughters to Paris, who were to be placed at as boarding school” (16). This suggests that one way in which Bérard retains his sense of French nationalism while in Saint Domingue is through the reproduction of French education and language. Reportedly, Pierre’s master teaches him to read in French and he “was encouraged to read from books he was dusting during his chores in the library” (6). Thus, at the start of The Memoir, French is the primary language linked to both France and Haiti; Creole is absent. Throughout the text, Pierre corresponds with people in France and Haiti in French. Lee explains, “It is but justice to observe, that all the original letters in this volume addressed to Toussaint are translations from the French” (37). All the letters Toussaint receives are from correspondences in France and Haiti. Language is very important when differentiating characters’ national origins as well. Lee explains that Madame Bérard “was much pleased with Pierre’s success as a coiffeur” (23). Using “coiffeur,” the French term for hairdresser, Lee connects Madame Bérard back to France by appropriating Madame Bérard’s linguistic assignation of Pierre’s occupation. The term “coiffeur” is used here instead of “hairdresser.” Lee describes Pierre as a “hair-dresser,” at least eight times in the memoir, each time, she describes him in relation to an American clientele or a clientele of unidentified national origin. For instance, Lee writes, “The occupation of ladies’ hair-dresser gave him admission to the houses of the influential families of the day” (84)—
families, that we learn, are American. In contrast, the two other times Lee refers to Pierre as a coiffeur, she associates him with characters from France: “[H]e was the fashionable coiffeur of the day; he had all the custom and patronage of the French families in New York” (35). He is the “coiffeur” for the French families, and the hair-dresser for the American ladies and their children. Likewise, when Pierre’s godmother writes to him from Paris, Lee translates the letter but does not translate her address: “A. MONSIEUR TOUSSAINT, Coiffeur (37). This reinforces the letter and character’s country of origin before Lee translates its contents. Because the text was published in Boston and consumed primarily by an American audience, Lee presumably found American English the most suitable language. The slight orthographic differences such as “color” rather than “colour” mark American English rather than British English in the text. This code meshing—that is “the blending together of diverse communicative resources in rhetorically strategic ways” (Roozen 203)—functions in Lee’s text to represent boundaries much like it did in the texts I considered in Chapter 2. But, rather than representing imperial and colonial boundaries, Lee’s code meshing represents national boundaries. The text, then, marks French as the language of the countries France and Haiti, and American English as the language of the U.S.

The way Lee reproduces Pierre’s speech serves to reinforce this national separation of languages, and does so through associating Pierre with Haiti through the French language. Lee reproduces Pierre’s speech in a curious way: sometimes she relates his words in French with an English translation and other times, she relates his words in English. For instance, the narrator describes Pierre’s affection for his wife, Juliette: “They were most truly attached to each other. ‘Je ne donnerois pas ma Juliette,’ said he to
one of his French friends, ‘pour toutes les dames du monde; elle est belle à mes yeux,’—
‘I would not give my Juliette for all the women in the world; she is beautiful in my eyes’”
(74-75). Earlier in the text, when asked if he is an abolitionist, Pierre responds:
“‘Madame ils n'ont jamais vu couler le sang comme moi,’ ‘They have never seen blood
flow as I have’” (65). And he jokes in response to being asked to close a window: “‘O
non, Madame,’ he replied,’car alors je serai trop noir’;--‘O no, Madam, for then I shall be
too black’” (73). Even while providing English translations, Lee still code meshes in
these instances as she makes a rhetorical choice to reproduce Pierre’s words in French in
an Anglophone text. The fact that she translates the French phrases into English
demonstrates an assumption about the French illiteracy of her American audience. We
could just assume that Pierre’s language is reproduced to accurately reflect the language
he most likely would have spoken depending on the native language of the person with
whom he spoke. However, this does not seem to be the case, as his language is
reproduced in English when he speaks to the French-speaking Madame Bérard or to his
French-speaking wife, and the narrator rarely identifies the languages of the ladies with
whom Pierre converses (the identification of a “French friend” in the example of Pierre
speaking about Juliette is an exception). So, then, what accounts for this reproduction of
Pierre’s language in French in these instances? We might speculate that Lee’s code
meshing implicitly comments on the relationship between language and nationality. If we
look to the text and specifically to the examples I provided, Pierre’s French is reproduced
when his words are spoken in relation to his family (often considered a microcosm of
national identity in American literature), his race (which is strongly linked to national
identity in the Constitution of Hayti), and the Haitian Revolution (from which the nation
of Haiti was born). His French is not reproduced when he discusses shawls, economic losses, or gossip about his American customers. The reproduction of the French language when dealing with the Haitian nation in a text otherwise presented in English reinforces the relationship between Haiti and French—the language of its former colonizer.

In almost every other moment in the memoir, Lee reproduces Pierre’s speech in English. For instance, when he is discussing shawls with his wife, the French-speaking Juliette, Pierre tells her that her shawl is “very pretty…it is a very nice shawl” (45). Lee also reproduces Pierre’s speech in grammatical English when he describes to a friend a visit with another friend who had lost a family member: “I could only take her hand and weep with her, and then I went away; there was nothing to be said” (55). And at other times still, Lee reproduces Pierre’s speech in English, and the narrator captures the grammatical particularities that might characterize a non-native English speaker. For instance, when Pierre describes the financial plight of his mistress after losing her plantation in Haiti, he says, “My poor mistress…cry very much” (25). And when prompted to gossip about the affairs of one of his customers, the narrator explains, “‘Madam,’ he replied with dignity, though with the utmost respect, ‘Toussaint dresses hair, he no news journal’” (35). In these examples and several others, Pierre’s English does not demonstrate subject/verb agreement and in some cases lacks a verb altogether.

When Lee reproduces Pierre’s English, she occasionally disrupts the association between Pierre and English; Pierre speaks English, but not quite, marking him as initially outside the bounds of English-language nationalism. A childhood acquaintance of Pierre even remarks, “Though he labored under the disadvantage of speaking a language imperfectly, it being late before he became familiarized with English, he seemed always

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155 Homi Bhaba’s work on mimicry informs this formulation.
to say just what was proper, and what any one who knew him would expect him to say’” (79). In instances in which Lee reports what Pierre remarked to her personally, she reproduces his language in standard, grammatical English. For instance, when Lee describes Pierre’s reaction to Madame Bérard’s financial difficulties, she writes, “‘Ah!’ said Toussaint, ‘it was a sad period for my poor mistress; but she believed—we all believed—that she would recover her property in the West Indies. She was rich in her own right, as well as her husband’s’” (24). In these moments of oral reflection to the memoir’s author, Lee reproduces Pierre’s English to reflect a temporal logic in which his English would grammatically improve as he passed years in New York. In his passing years in New York, we also learn that Pierre gives generously to his mistress, donates all of his money to an orphanage, opens his home to educators and children, and cares for the sick. The evolution of Pierre’s character, proved by reports of every continuing deed throughout the memoir, coincides with the evolution of his English language acquisition. An old friend of Pierre’s who had moved to Chicago writes to him,

“Thanks to your regular habits and your fervent prayers, you are still in good health, and I hear very prosperous. But you are still a negro. You may indeed change your condition, but you cannot change your complexion—you will always remain black…I have conversed with you at night when it was dark, and I have forgot that you were not white. The next morning when I saw you, I said to myself, is this the black man I heard talk last night?” (72)

There is an exception in which Lee reproduces Pierre’s broken English, “your mother very good” (45) after an instance of reproducing his grammatical English, “pray take [the shawl], Juliette; it is good for mourning, for church, for rain, and for market; it is a very nice shawl” (45). I attribute this to a break in chronology, as Lee seems to be providing random anecdotes at this juncture in the text.
According to this friend, while his complexion is fixed, Toussaint’s language does not racialize him. In the dark, his friend suggests, he is white. Pierre’s language marks him as intelligible, and if not for his complexion, would warrant the same social recognition as if it were coming from a white man.

The narrative makes clear the association between nation and language, while also highlighting the role perfecting language plays in acquiring social capital, and in one case, monetary capital. Pierre procures his niece a French teacher, because though “French was his own and his wife’s language, of course that of his family…he wished her to speak it grammatically” (46). He also “let apartments in his house to a respectable white woman, a widow, who taught Euphemia English, and who after a while collected a small school of young children” (46). His niece grows up learning both proper English and French, and “…every week or two little notes in French and English were handed to Toussaint from his niece”—letters that the narrator assures us “are about equal to those of white children at her age” (49). Furthermore, Pierre suggests to a “French lady, who was much embarrassed in her circumstances” that she teach French as he “‘frequently heard it said that [she] speaks remarkably pure and correct French.’ This was really the case, for she had been educated in the best society” (54). The woman is able to support herself by teaching French, and the narrator informs the readers that this idea of proper language instruction “has since been adopted even in our own language” (54). Perfecting the grammar of a national language, then, allows individuals to reap both economic and social benefits. As an immigrant coming from Haiti out of the Revolution, Pierre, and Lee, recognize that proper language instruction in an internationally recognized language

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157 Suresh Canagarajah uses the term “linguistic capital” to refer to the hierarchy of discourses, languages, and registers that are socially valued.
is valuable. This suggests an understanding from both the protagonist and the author, and by extension the reader, of linguistic ideologies that privilege grammatical, national language systems.

While conversing with his clients and friends, Pierre speaks either French or English. The narrator writes, “A highly cultivated and elegant woman said, ‘Some of the pleasantest hours I pass are in conversing with Toussaint while he is dressing my hair’” (23). She later describes, “He was summoned to the City Hotel to dress the hair of a French lady, who was a stranger. She could speak no English, and therefore was very glad to converse with him in her native language” (36). Pierre is speaking in national languages that are not racialized. His verbal conversations with fellow black men and women (with the exception of his French-speaking wife and niece) are not reproduced. The narrator attempts to explain this omission: “When we speak of Toussaint’s friends, we do not include his own people of color, though most gladly would we procure their testimony were it in our power…but our walks have not led us among them” (56).

Correspondences between Pierre and his large network of black friends in the United States (he “took of his responsibility towards his own race” in New York City) do not exist in this text. But, Lee does include letters Pierre and his wife Juliette receive from black friends back in Haiti—letters translated into English, presumably from French. Several of these letters do not depict Haiti favorably. One 1849 letter from “a young colored man” in St. Thomas begins by lauding the United States, calling it “‘beautiful’” and “‘first among nations’” (71). The writer continues, “I wish I could tell you something satisfactory of our country; but this gratification is a long way off. If there is not bloodshed, there are deceptions, iniquities, the same bad tendencies—terror is the order
of the day’’ (71). The only letter that describes Haiti in a positive way is an 1844 letter from “a colored woman to Madame Toussaint,” and she describes the “‘dinners, breakfasts, and balls’” that have taken place since the arrival of the French Consul and other officers to sign a treaty (71). Thus, even in these letters between Haitians, French and France is privileged, and then English is privileged in its translation. Thus, within the textually bound space of the memoir, both English and French merge as languages of American literature, but at this intersection, creoleness disappears.

While English and French are both central to the memoir, there is a stark absence of Haitian Creole or any forms of communication linked to Africa or to slave culture in Haiti. In the text’s only reference to plantation songs, the narrator explains that Pierre’s “lively descriptions” of his native plantation remind one of a traveler’s description of Western Africa, writing, “Some of the songs of the West-Indian negroes are yet preserved amongst us, and are remarkable for their childlike expression of human nature” (59). This description not only degrades linguistic exchanges in Africa and on Pierre’s native plantation, but also demonstrates a lack of understanding of the power such languages and linguistic forms can yield. Specifically, the narrator’s observation degrades the very linguistic forms that were central to the first successful slave revolt in history. Although this description of West Indian songs does not explicitly mention a creole language, there is both a complete eradication of creole from the story and a degradation of African languages that, in contact with French dialects, served as the “external catalyst to creolization” (Degraff *Language Creation* 4). Pierre is distanced from these languages and language forms and is instead strongly linked to the French language and

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158 Specifically, the Niger-Congo languages came in contact with the French dialects. Through stabilization, expansion, and nativization, the resulting language becomes Creole (Degraff *Language Creation* 4-5).
to recognition of the importance of English. Even when Pierre is associated with Haiti in the instances I recount above, he is linked through French, the language of the colonizer of Saint-Domingue. When words specific to Haiti are included, they are done so in a way that links Haiti back to France and French imperialism.\textsuperscript{159} In a letter to her nurse Marie who has returned to Haiti, Madame Bérard calls her nurse “my dear Memin” and signs the letter “Bonté” which Lee explains are “fancy names of endearment…peculiar to the West Indian mistresses and slaves” (30). Words used that are “peculiar” to West Indian and slave culture in this memoir are not Creole; rather, they are French words written by a French woman that denote the slave/mistress relationship. This relationship seems to continue, as Lee then reports that Marie returns to New York to be with her mistress after receiving her letter (30). While French was the de facto official language of Haiti, Creole and language mediums (e.g. music and dance) related to slave culture were those associated with the Haitian Revolution in particular and to Haiti generally (as we saw in the brief history of Creole above). These languages were potentially viewed as threatening in their unfamiliarity to imperial and national power.

European languages associated with nationhood are permissible in the account of Pierre’s life, even if the inclusion of both in a piece of American literature interrupts a fiction of national linguistic cohesion that was particularly important when the country was on the brink of a civil war. Lee exalts Pierre—she presents him as a slave so loyal to his master and mistress, family, and religion that slavery for Pierre was “but a name”

\textsuperscript{159} This is also somewhat the case with West Indian fashion. Juliette often wears Madras handkerchiefs as a headdress, a fashion of Creole women in Haiti that was then adopted by French women. In the memoir, Juliette spends time teaching French women “to fold them, and give them the graceful and picturesque air which she gave to her own” (39). Lee describes the Madras handkerchief as “a highly prized” article for “French ladies” that they considered “a most tasteful and fashionable headdress” (38-39). The Madras is presented as belonging to the Caribbean—Juliette is the expert—but it becomes notable in the memoir in the way it is appropriated by the French ladies.
While Lee claims that “the strongest argument against slavery…is on the eternal rights of man” (22), she praises Pierre’s continued loyalty to his former owners after he is free. In the appendix to the memoir, Lee includes an extract from the New York *Evening Post* that appeared after Pierre Toussaint’s death. The opening reads, “‘UNCLE TOM NOT AN APOCRYPHAL CHARACTER…Pierre Toussaint…if Mrs. Stowe could have been supposed to have known him, have sat as the original of the portraiture to which she gave the name of Uncle Tom’” (85). This parallel between Pierre Toussaint and Uncle Tom makes sense given both authors’, Lee and Stowe, status as abolitionists. But, Lee does not seem interested in a polarizing story. She does not tell the story of a slave physically abused by his master or slaves fleeing. Rather, she tells a story that might unite American readers—all men have eternal rights, but blacks should remain subordinate and faithful until freedom becomes possible through non-violent, institutional, and rule-abiding means—the moral indicated by Lee’s constant praise of the Pierre Toussaint’s path. Pierre’s mastery of English by the time he is reflecting on his life suggests that he has been incorporated in the United States. Rather than fighting for black nationhood or equality, Pierre moves from an acceptance of French superiority and imperialism, represented in the memoir through his language, to his implication in American nationalism through occupation and language. This clearly contrasts with the “terrible events”—as Lee characterizes them—of the Haitian Revolution. The inclusion of non-

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160 Stowe’s characters do not view Haiti as a model for the free, educated colonies in Africa. After being educated for four years at a French University, George Harris returns to North America and writes to a friend: “The desire and yearning of my soul is for an African nationality. I want a people that will have a tangible, separate existence of its own; and where am I to look for it? Not in Hayti; for in Hayti they had nothing to start with. A stream cannot rise above its fountain. The race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out, effeminate one; and, of course, the subject race will be centuries in rising to anything” (374). Instead, George looks to Africa, and specifically Liberia, as a fertile space for a black republic. Her allusions to Uncle Tom, then, perhaps allows Lee to subtly align herself with George in not looking to Haiti and an ideal for black nationhood (though Lee’s project seems to be one of incorporating blacks into white nationhood).
national languages, creole languages, or linguistic forms associated with Africa or slave culture would associate Pierre with such violence and insubordination—a threat to national cohesion. Such an association between black bodies and non-national languages is present in another mid-nineteenth century texts, Benito Cereno.161

The Languages of the San Dominick

There is little by way of direct evidence in journals or letters regarding Melville’s views on slavery and race.162 Melville’s obscure views toward the Civil War and slavery in the United States are reflected in his literary texts. Benito Cereno is not a clear or direct commentary on either the morality of slavery or racial power relations. What Melville does make clear in Benito Cereno, I argue, through his implicit engagement with Creole and the association he makes between blackness and multilingualism, is that hierarchal assumptions of language and race can become very dangerous to imperial and national power. Melville’s representation of language, then, does not suggest the possibility of a free black population willing to remain subordinate to its former masters and assimilate through language. Rather, his representation of language seems to suggest the danger in such an assumption.

161 Both Lee and Melville’s texts have an interesting relationship to Catholicism that is outside the scope of this paper. Melville’s tale is meant to evoke the role of the Catholic Church, the Dominicans in particular, in the initiation of New World slavery at the same time that it anticipates resonant elements of the crisis over slavery in the antebellum period. Lee’s text is partially meant to present her protagonist as fit for sainthood.

162 Stanton Garner’s book length study of Melville’s attitude toward the Civil War shows how scarce this history is in the amount he has to infer from available archival documents. While there is little to conclusively identify Melville’s views toward slavery, Garner does suggest that Melville was a Democrat, who was opposed to slavery, but was not an abolitionist. Melville reportedly “recommended travel [in his lectures] as an education in sympathy ‘with men of all shades of color, and all degrees of intellect, rank, and social worth’” (24). Garner argues that the ambiguity in Melville’s work stems from “his understanding of the complexity of experience and of the conflicts of values within his society” (34). Thus, we cannot simply read Benito Cereno as a condemnation of African slavery or a depiction of the brutality of slaves. This ambiguity extends to Melville’s treatment of language. I do not suggest that by making Creole visible Melville either condones or denounces the institution of slavery; rather, I suggest he makes claims about the dangers in linguistic assumptions associated with intellect and race.
Before turning to Melville’s novella, I want to briefly consider Melville’s familiarity with at least one author’s illustration of Creole and the Haitian Revolution. Melville read Harriet Martineau’s *The Hour and the Man: An Historical Romance* (1839) shortly before composing *Benito Cereno*. Martineau’s portrayal of Africans, slaves, and the Haitian Revolution in relation to language helps us to understand the ways in which what appears to be merely sound or noise in Melville’s text is in fact a depiction of complex linguistic exchanges. I briefly turn to several scenes in Martineau’s text to show the ways in which she presents Creole, which she calls “the negro language” as a powerful expression of blackness, and presents multilingualism as a powerful agent of rebellion—conceptions that I suggest potentially impacted Melville’s linguistic depictions in *Benito Cereno*.

A successful Victorian writer and abolitionist who spent time in and wrote a travel narrative (*Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838)) about the United States, Martineau based her text on several British histories: Marcus Rainsford’s *Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*, the Quarterly Review’s "Past and Present State of Hayti," Bryan Edwards’s “Sainto Domingo,” an article on Toussaint in the *Biographie Universelle*, and the *Haytian Papers*, edited by Prince Saunders (Martineau 152). Armed with history, Martineau conveys in her text two core aspects of African and slave culture and language: music and Haitian Creole. Throughout *The Hour and the Man*, music and song are associated with black characters. Characters and the narrator alike comment on the

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163 Jonathan Beecher’s “Echoes of Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution in Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno’” argues that *The Hour and the Man*, is an important neglected source for “Benito Cereno” (45), and cites a letter that “[Melville] wrote his neighbor Sarah Morewood [explaining] that her gift of Harriet Martineau’s “triple-decker’ novel on the life of Toussaint was “exceedingly acceptable to me’” (45). Beecher’s article draws the parallels and also notes the differences between Martineau’s depiction of Toussaint Louverture and Melville’s portrayal of the slave who led the revolt, Babo, to suggest that Melville created Babo as a sympathetic yet “more complex” version of Martineau’s Toussaint (55-56).
centrality of music to the Revolution. When the Revolution begins, a colonial observes, “How these people revel in music!...How they are pouring it forth now!” to which another responds, “And not without reason, surely...It is their exodus that we are watching” (32). Another character observes, “The heart of the negro was...as naturally charged with music as his native air with fragrance” (48). Music is positioned as a language medium specific to African or black culture. Martineau seems to suggest that the colonizer could not learn these communicative practices given the context in which they arose and the subject position needed to interpret specific iterations of songs and music. For instance, in Martineau’s account of the time during which Napoleon and his army attempted to keep Saint-Domingue from establishing itself as a sovereign state, she makes it clear that the French prisoners taken by Toussaint and his army were not privy to the meaning of the music and sounds circulating in Saint-Domingue: “If it was at noon, the clear music of the wind-instruments floated faintly in the still air; if the morning or evening breezes were abroad the harmony came in gushes; and the shouts of greeting and reception were plainly distinguishable, and were responded to involuntarily by all at Le Zéphyr but the two prisoners” (Martineau 116). Only the two French prisoners being kept at Le Zéphyr—one of Toussaint’s houses of retreat—are unable to distinguish the sounds they hear, while all others can’t help but respond and engage in this interaction. Martineau suggests that their communal agency and resistance is embedded in iterations of song.

As I have mentioned, song and music are not the domain of African and slave culture alone; however, the context in which Martineau’s Toussaint Louverture utilizes

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164 Frederick Douglass echoes this notion in both his Narrative and My Bondage and My Freedom when he discusses the slave songs and their representations versus the interpretations of the slave owners and overseers (Narrative 18-19, My Bondage and My Freedom 84-85).
Toussaint is being held prisoner on a ship near his family as he awaits his transportation to France. The narrator explains:

Again and again he caught the voices of his children, singing upon deck—no doubt in order to communicate with him: but, in every instance, almost before he had begun to listen, the song ceased. Mars Plaisir explained that it was silenced by the captain’s order. No captain’s order had power to stop the prisoner’s singing. Every night was Aimée consoled, amidst her weeping, by the solemn air of her father’s favourite Latin Hymn to Our Lady of the Sea: every morning was Margot roused to hope by her husband’s voice, singing his matin-prayer. Whatever might be the captain’s apprehensions of political danger from these exercises, he gave over the opposition which had succeeded so well with the women. (139)

Toussaint communicates with his children and wife through a Latin hymn to the Virgin Mary. Latin, according to the model Benedict Anderson proposes in *Imagined Communities*, was the language of religion, the sacred, politics, and print prior to the mid-seventeenth century (36-42). After the Reformation, Latin gave way to vernacular languages as a result of the boom of print-capitalism, and Latin “acquired an esoteric quality” (39). Toussaint is singing in a language that was once reserved for the “European high intelligentsia” (18), yet in his song, a very particular meaning is conveyed to his family of former slaves—a meaning that cannot be censored by a captain’s order or understood by even a Latin-literate or Catholic colonial audience.  

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165 In *Language as Local Practice*, Pennycook describes the way in which repetition can be an act of relocalization, and thus produce difference in meaning. Toussaint Louverture’s performance of the hymn
language in many ways meant to exclude and appropriates it in a way that he and his family can understand; he is empowered by a language often meant to disempower. The hymn genre is also significant here. As Joanna Brooks point out in *American Lazarus*, the orality of the textual form of the hymn “traveled across cultures, colonies, and continents; they crossed boundaries of denomination, race, class and gender…[T]he orality of this textual form invited participation, innovation, and contribution” (Brooks 54). Toussaint, in Martineau’s representation, has re-appropriated the hymn to offer comfort to his family. He effectively utilizes Catholic practices and language to communicate with his family in the constricted context of his imprisonment—and it is his specific iteration of the hymn in this context, and his multilingualism, that allows him to mediate between his position as imprisoned former slave and empowered patriarch of family and country.166

Throughout Martineau’s text, Haitian Creole, which the narrator refers to as the “negro language,” functions in some instances as a natural expression of blackness and in others, as a rhetorical choice— in each instance in this narrative, though, Haitian Creole serves as representative of community. When two former slaves are relaying their story to Madame Toussaint, “they were perpetually falling unconsciously into the use of their negro language, and as often recalled by their hearers to that which all could understand” (Martineau 53). The former slaves in this scenario are fluent in both Haitian Creole and French, but their natural inclination is to speak Haitian Creole. While they can “fall unconsciously into their use of the negro language,” they also have the capacity when

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166 It is important to note that Vodoun was an instrumental religion in Haiti during the Haitian Revolution and continues to be today. Toussaint practices Catholicism and texts like Martineau’s that romanticize the Haitian Revolution for an American and European audience tend to highlight Toussaint’s affiliation with Catholicism.
conscious of it to speak either language depending on the circumstance and audience.

This is again made clear when the narrator describes an interaction between Dessalines and his soon-to-be-wife in the presence of a planter:

Here, remembering the presence of a white, Jacques explained to Thérèse in the negro language (which she understood, though she always spoke French), the new hopes which had arisen for the blacks, and his own intention of following Toussaint, to make him a chief. He concluded in good French, smiling maliciously at Papalier as he spoke—“You will come with me now to the priest, and be my wife.” (Martineau 31)

This passage is interesting in what Dessalines chooses to relay in Haitian Creole and what declarations he reserves for French. “The negro language,” or Haitian Creole, is associated with “new hopes…for the blacks,” Toussaint Louverture’s leadership, and Dessalines’ position in the army of the revolution. Dessalines only speaks of his impending marriage in French, suggesting that this is the only information to which the French-speaking Papalier can be privy. Haitian Creole is not only situated as a means of secret communication, but also as the language of regeneration—of “new hopes…for the blacks”; it is the language of revolution; it is the language of duty to the independent black republic.  

It would be interesting to explore and analyze Martineau’s investment in Creole and nationhood, but for the purposes of this chapter, I want to consider her representations only insofar as they might have influenced Melville’s depiction of language. In recounting the history of Creole at the beginning of this chapter, I suggested

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167 There are also several instances in which characters are reportedly singing in Haitian Creole (Martineau 125, 144). In these instances, Martineau illustrates the ways in which song in the vernacular can be a powerful weapon of communal camaraderie.
that Creole was historically denigrated in nineteenth century texts and even the reluctance of Haitian leaders like Christophe to consider Creole as a national language for the “black republic.” In contrast, Martineau represents Haiti as a racialized nation represented partly through Creole—a language to which she ascribes power rather than denigration. For Martineau, Creole and music become ways of positively associating race with language and language with nationhood. Melville seems to adopt this notion of racialized language as a form of community and agency and interrogates its relationship to U.S. nationhood. Importantly for Melville, language is not a stable or natural expression of race; rather, language and race are related insofar as language emerges out of the shared experience of slavery.

Melville sets *Benito Cereno* on the *San Dominick* in 1799. Given the spatial, temporal, and name-related allusions, many scholars, including Gillman, Gruesz, and Eric Sundquist, point to *Benito Cereno* as a meditation on the Haitian Revolution. The novella stages a ship “where white and black, North and South, Africa, Europe, and America are overlaid and become hybridized” (Richards 74, 87). The hybridized space not only “provides literary space for cultural conflict” (Kelley 15), but also a space for inter-discursive and linguistic negotiations that threaten the hierarchical structure on the ship. Sundquist’s work on this novella certainly addresses the many ways in which African communicative forms and means of resistance such as drum language and chanting underlie the text and argues that “such sounds are nothing less than a kind of

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168 Greg Grandin’s *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World* explores the events surrounding the slave revolt of the *Tryal*—the actual ship on which the Melville’s ship, the *San Dominick* is based—in detail, and Grandin concludes that the slaves who had revolted were attempting to get the ship to Haiti when Amasa Delano arrived.

169 Gilroy calls the image of the ship “a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion” undeniably associated with New World Slavery (*Black Atlantic* 4).
speech” (166). But, as Gavin Jones makes clear, this suggests a pan-tribal lingua franca, when in fact, “African tongues correspond to tribal and cultural divisions.” Spanish, according to Jones as well as to Gilman and Gruesz, is the language the slaves use on the San Dominick against their controllers. The narrative, Jones argues, “does not leave us with the impression of an African community retreating into the privacy of its own drum-language, but of an active and adaptable community capable of breaking through the barrier of tribal division by assuming the language of colonial power.”

However, the mutinous slaves of the San Dominick are from or have spent time in Senegal, Ashantee, the Caribbean, and Europe—a more heterogeneous mix than in Amasa Delano’s 1817 A Narrative upon which Benito Cereno is based. I suggest that Melville makes this change from his source story in order to highlight linguistic negotiations—in relation to the slave trade generally and the Haitian Revolution in particular. When we read the communication among the mutinous slaves described in Melville’s text outside the context of a pan-tribal language and not as secondary to the slaves’ knowledge of the Spanish language, we can see allusions to emerged or emerging Caribbean languages. These languages challenge the dominance of the colonizer’s language and reveal the complication of designating an imperial national language to represent the new republic in the Caribbean or a de facto national language in the U.S.

The novella begins when Captain Amasa Delano boards the San Dominick from another ship, the Bachelor’s Delight, and meeting the Spanish Captain Benito Cereno and

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170 The recent work of Susan Gillman and Kirsten Silva Gruesz explore Benito Cereno’s place in a larger hemispheric text network that necessitate “multilingual pathways” and highlight “many social scales of language use” (23). Gillman and Gruez specifically look to the “inadequate translation[s]” (232) rife in the text and “the role of language in granting or withholding power and agency” (237). Their claims concerning Spanish as a foreign language and as the language of conspiracy in the text is interesting and certainly relevant, but this chapter is more interested in the relationship to Caribbean languages.
his seemingly loyal slave, Babo. In a well-known scene in the text, Delano, Babo, and Cereno descend to the cuddy of the ship, so that Babo can attend to shaving Captain Cereno. The narrator explains:

Most negroes are natural valets and hairdressers; taking to the comb and brush congenially as to the castinets, and flourishing them apparently with almost equal satisfaction. There is, too, a smooth tact about them in this employment, with a marvelous, noiseless, gliding briskness, not ungraceful in its way, singularly pleasing to behold, and still more so to be the manipulated subject of. (73)

The loyal “negro” hairdresser in the narrator’s formulation excels at his position as the groomer of a national subject—a position I discussed in relation to Lee’s text. However, Captain Delano and the reader ultimately learn that Babo is not congenial he is dangerous; not satisfied, he is wholly unsatisfied; not tactful or noiseless, rather, he is in the midst of a violent and loud revolution, reminiscent of the Haitian Revolution half a century before.

Captain Delano, the narrator, and the reader view Babo as a loyal and devoted black hairdresser in this shaving scene—the figure Lee describes in Pierre. But Babo has in fact led all the slaves aboard the ship in a violent revolt during which the slaves kill almost all the Spanish seaman on the ship (save Don Benito and a few others who have necessary maritime expertise)—a revolt the slaves orchestrate and then proceed to hide. The perceived servile barber, Babo, has a knife to Don Benito’s neck during the shaving scene, but what perhaps makes his control so dangerous in the story is his power to
conceal it and manipulate others through language.¹⁷¹

Melville inverts linguistic assumptions on the San Dominick—assumptions that would privilege national languages and illustrate slaves’ attempts to master the colonizer’s language as a means of assimilating. On the San Dominick, the slaves’ knowledge of the colonizer’s language, the languages of the slaves, and the intersection of these languages, that make the slaves’ dangerous and the revolt nearly successful.

Babo (and presumably other slaves) comprehend the colonizer’s Spanish; we learn that Babo even chalked the phrase “Seguid vuestro jefe,” meaning follow your leader, under the skeleton of Don Alexandro Aranda—the slaves’ owner and master—who the revolting slaves had killed (Melville 38, 88, 97). Because of his knowledge of Spanish, Babo can perform what Jones calls “linguistic surveillance” (44) on the ship to ensure Don Benito and Captain Delano do not secretly communicate. Beecher points out that the historic Toussaint, who he believes that character of Babo is partially based on, “knew the ways of both black and white communities, and he constantly adapted himself to others’ expectations” (46-47). Similarly Babo is able to adapt and act in accordance with Delano’s expectations to remain undetected.

While the narrator describes the noise of the “negresses,” oakum pickers, hatchet polishers, and others as “barbarous din” indicative of their unsophistication (which is Delano’s interpretation), he classifies the noise throughout the novella in particular ways. Some songs he describes as “blithe” and “inspirited” (81) and others as “melancholy” of a “melancholy tone” (102). The oakum pickers often produce a “continuous, low, monotonous chant” (30), but at points a “queer cry” (60) and an “unknown syllable” (69).

¹⁷¹ According to Susan Gilman and Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Babo is creolized having spent time in the Americas prior to his experience on the San Dominick.
Delano can hear the “buzzing whistle and industrious hum of the hatchet polishers” (85) and also the “wailing chant” of the “negresses” (91). While Delano hears noise, the narrator, and by extension Melville, provide the discerning reader an image of linguistic communication. Thinking of this in the context of Martineau’s text, what seems to be merely noise has power. More than a century after Melville published *Benito Cereno*, Glissant asserts that “[f]or the Caribbean man, the word is first and foremost sound. Noise is essential to speech. Din is discourse…It seems that meaning and pitch went together for the uprooted individual, in the unrelenting silence of the world of slavery. It was the intensity of the sound that dictated meaning” (123). Developing from this, according to Glissant, “Creole organizes speech as a blast of sound” (123-124). Because the reader soon learns that the “barbarous din” is actually communication among revolting slaves, Melville’s depiction depicts what Glissant would describe as history a century later.¹⁷² Like Martineau, Melville ascribes Creole power.

In depicting Delano’s obtuseness, Melville draws attention to the dangers of hierarchical views of language in which only the language of the colonizer can connote

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¹⁷² Building on Glissant’s theories of “‘oral structures’” in Caribbean slave culture, Gilroy argues in *The Black Atlantic* that music “raises aspects of embodied subjectivity that are not reducible to the cognitive and the ethical” (75, 76). We might look at Gilroy’s influential argument in relation to the way Melville portrays Delano—as one who couldn’t access the key components of a black counterculture. The inability of the colonial to access this counterculture on a cognitive level allowed the black slaves on board the ship to continue their revolt in Delano’s presence, and thus, their embodied subjectivities emerged and remained uncensored. Melville seems particularly interested in depicting the dangers of dismissing a counter culture that perhaps does not seem familiar. What is remarkable, though, is that Melville’s nuanced novella does give credence (even if in a cautionary way) to this counter culture long before Gilroy, Glissant, Michael Dash and others theorized it.

In *Modernity Disavowed*, Sibylle Fischer takes issue with Gilroy’s counterculture of modernity. She argues that Gilroy’s “critique of the discursive regulations that govern emancipatory accounts of the past” inserts cultures of the black Atlantic into a modernity that it suffers or contests, rather than constructs (36). Fischer contends that revolutionary action of slave dissent, namely the Haitian Revolution, shows the politically representable resistance that produce different concepts of modernity (36-37). My project takes this claim seriously, and I am not suggesting that slave resistance in the black Atlantic only took place outside of the discursive realm. Rather, I look to music as an anti-discursive form in conjunction with the political and discursive realities of the revolution as they are represented in literature.
meaning. What is for Delano “barbarous din,” is for Melville and his discerning reader a means of communication and expression—the initial stages of a creole language—for a group of people brought together by the slave trade from different linguistic groups. Delano is unable to discern this meaning because he evidently adheres to language ideologies that de-legitimate creole languages. The way the slaves’ languages and means of communication remain invisible to Delano under the power structures of the ship seems similar to ways in which imperial power structures did not recognize the agency of the Creole-speaking blacks that orchestrated the Haitian Revolution. Such a well-orchestrated and communicated revolution was “unthinkable”—to borrow Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s term—to eighteenth-century imperial powers even after it happened. Delano is illiterate in the language of the slaves and is blind to the way they have manipulated the colonizer’s language for the purpose of surveillance. Melville presents an interesting disconnect, then, between the knowledge of the colonial captain versus the knowledge of the slave leader. Both Cereno and Delano are multilingual, but only in imperial, western languages and ignorant of the languages of the slaves. Delano understands these languages as not languages at all, but rather as meaningless noise.¹⁷³ Delano interprets the circumstances on the ship—explicitly the scene in which Babo shaves his master—to reaffirm his assumptions about relationships and hierarchies. The “colored servant…professionally dabbling among the bubbling suds on the Spaniard’s lank neck” (73-74) is what Delano expects to see; his assumptions are reaffirmed, and he is unable to see past them and understand the intersections and de-hierarchizing of language on the

¹⁷³ While he does not discuss *Benito Cereno*, Gilroy uses literature and history to contend that slaves in Atlantic culture practiced communicative forms outside those recognizable within an Enlightenment framework of rationality and reason, such as music. It seems that Melville’s depiction of Delano would be a literary moment to support this point.
ship. Melville, then, demonstrates the dangers of Creole to white authority when imperial and national powers refuse to acknowledge it. While Melville certainly does not seem to advocate for Creole, black nationhood, or abolition, he does acknowledge the danger in assuming black intellectual or linguistic inferiority.

This is precisely how the slaves who had revolted on the *San Dominick* are able to remain undetected by Captain Delano. Captain Delano saw what he expected to see. But of course, the truth of the goings-on aboard the *San Dominick* does not reflect ideas of language and communication posited and culturally situated by Europeans—specifically ideas rooted in science, race, and language. Delano continues to look and listen for what he expects to see and hear. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Gilroy points out, “Though African linguistic tropes and political and philosophical themes are still visible for those who wish to see them, they have often been transformed and adapted by their New World locations to a new point where the dangerous issues of purified essences and simple origins lose all meaning” (48). Gilroy recognizes the “complex interpenetration” of culture and rejects the notion that black Atlantic culture can be reduced to essences and origins in the New World. Melville shows the ways in which Delano prescribed meaning to “purified essences and simple origins” in a New World context, and in so doing, misunderstood his surroundings and situation. In showing readers the error of Delano’s way, Melville makes creole languages, or allusions to them, both visible and invisible at once and reflects the dangers of dismissing these languages as well as the dangers of linguistic assumptions and hierarchies. Creole languages are not subsumed under national/imperial languages in Melville’s text, nor is Creole depicted as a national language or a natural expression of blackness; rather, moving across languages...
becomes powerful and agentic for the slaves on the *San Dominick*. Creole or emerging allusions to creole languages and moving across languages represent the shared experience of slavery on the San Dominick. While not commenting directly on slavery in the United States, Melville uses his depiction of language to critique racial hierarchies that would denigrate blacks and also to present blacks as dangerous to white authority and power. Of course, by the mid nineteenth century, slaves were no longer forcibly coming to the United States from Africa, but were rather born on American soil and spoke English, often in dialect. These slaves were denied a formal education and the opportunity to master the English language. I want to suggest, though, that the way that Melville uses language, and specifically allusions to languages of the Haitian Revolution, represents the threat to white authority of de-legitimating black intellectual and linguistic capacities. Additionally, in including these languages in his novella, Melville unsettles the relationship between monolingualism and nationalism in literature—as his entire story is propelled through translation and translingualism.

The generic conventions of *Benito Cereno* serve as yet another means of critiquing hegemonic discourse in American literature. Priscilla Wald explains that “in order to be psychologically unsettling, [literary works] had to be formally unsettled” (Wald 13). The legal narrative embedded in *Benito Cereno* formally unsettles the text, and the depositions included in the novella highlight legal translations and the relationship between these translations and subjectivity. Wald argues that “[l]egal being…determines social being” (8) and suggests that “Melville examines the fate of the national subject within, and without, the law” (Wald 108). *Benito Cereno* is particularly interesting in that the slaves who reportedly provide depositions are not national subjects
and enjoy no legal protection whatsoever. The legal translations in the text show that social being, often understood partially through language as I have demonstrated, can also determine legal being.

I employ a translingual approach to translation in Melville’s text to highlight the negotiations implicated in every act of translation. Lu and Horner write:

Such an approach recognizes translation and the renegotiation of meaning as operating in all language acts, including those seemingly working within as well as across language boundaries (Horner, Donahue, and NeCamp 287). For, from a translingual perspective, all writing always involves rewriting and translation, inevitably engaging the labor of recontextualizing (and renewing) language, language practices, users, conventions, and contexts. (586)

Translation, relocation, and negotiation operates in all language acts, but looking at those that are “seemingly working…across language boundaries”—boundaries that separate nationally recognized languages in the Western world from other—illuminates the ways in which the slaves on board Melville’s San Dominick are viewed through the lens of an imperial power structure as lacking social capital, and thus, legal status.

Melville translates the depositions of Captain Delano and Benito Cereno reproduced in Delano’s A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres (1817) and includes them in Benito Cereno. Melville’s narrator selects Cereno’s deposition for “partial translation” (92). The documents are translated from the Spanish into English and then from English in the official depositions to what Melville includes in his novella. The legal system and Melville honor the American
men’s social status through a translingual approach of their depositions, which are translated, negotiated, and recontextualized, *twice*.

Melville includes the captains’ depositions and this positions the slaves as those who are spoken about, shamed, and silenced. In Benito Cereno’s deposition, which is “translated from one of the official Spanish documents” (92), he names, describes and lists the atrocities of every “negro” on the ship. For example, Cereno explains, “That the negro José, eighteen years old, and in the personal service of Don Alexandro, was the one who communicated the information to the negro Babo, about the state of things in the cabin, before the revolt” (101). In naming the perpetrators of the revolt, Cereno is shaming the slaves locked up awaiting their fate and assuming his colonial position of the socially recognized subject, deserving of having his words translated and legally documented. In contrast, the narrator describes Babo’s end:

As for the black—whose brain, not body, had schemed and led the revolt, with the plot—his slight frame, inadequate to that which it held, had at once yielded to the superior muscular strength of his captain, in the boat. Seeing all was over, he uttered no sound, and could not be forced to. His aspect seemed to say, since I cannot do deeds, I will not speak words. Put in irons in the hold, with the rest, he was carried to Lima. During the passage Don Benito did not visit him. Nor then, nor at any time after, would he look at him. Before the tribunal he refused. When pressed by the judges he fainted. On the testimony of the sailors alone rested the legal

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174 In her talk “Abolitionism, Sentiment, and the Problem of Agency in (the text)” at the Haitian Studies Association Conference, Doris Garraway explained that naming individual perpetrators and litany of atrocities in a legal disposition serves the purpose of inflicting shame. According to Garraway, shame follows from an unveiling, or from being seen (Nov. 8, 2013).
identity of Babo. (107)

The legal system takes Babo’s silence as the absence of words, the absence of language, the absence of sociality. It is the point at which Babo’s physical body is overpowered that he decides not to speak or utter a sound. Although it was his “brain, not body [that] had schemed and led the revolt,” the bondage of his body symbolizes his social position. This is Babo’s social rather than legal position because on the ship, a social and cultural hierarchy ruled, was overthrown and replaced, and was eventually restored. The visible juridical/ governmental framework enters the story with the inclusion of the depositions at the end, and this is when the European sailors are able to decide the legal identity of a man who has no protection of status of personhood under the law. Once Babo believes he “cannot do deeds” as a socially free subject, he chooses not to speak.

While Cereno, Delano, and the deposers refuse to translate Babo’s silence in any way that might connote a presence, the reader still has that option. Silence is a language act, and Babo makes the decision to perform that act.175 “The things one declines to say” can also constitute a speech act “in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it” (Foucault 27, Sedgwick 3). When “the black met his voiceless end” (Melville 107), the discourse surrounding Babo situated him as a lesser being. His decision to be silent, then, might be translated as a protest of the social order; a protest of the linguistic order; and ultimately, a protest of the legal order. If Melville is similarly protesting this order is not clear, but he certainly puts this order in question to the reader.

Conclusion

175 This point has been argued and convincingly established by theorists and scholars in several different fields such as Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Krista Ratcliffe.
While *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint* shows us the ways in which only languages associated with the former colonizer retain a sense of linguistic capital in a national context, *Benito Cereno* engages the danger of non-national languages retaining power or not being recognized. This markedly American text, as indicated by its American-born author, its self-proclaimed American publication, and its primarily American audience, leaves the setting of the nation behind. *Memoir of Pierre Toussaint* and *Benito Cereno* evoke the Haitian Revolution and the language ideologies that emerge from it and negotiate the language of American literature. By considering these texts in relation to language, we can see how each engages both hierarchical notions of language and also the idea of national language itself, both of which are central to debates concerning educational practices in the United States and Haiti today.176

Today, although Haitian Creole was designated an official language of Haiti in 1987 alongside French, it does not enjoy an equal status; French is the language of all government and educational institutions, the language of prestige (235). On the one hand, “only 2-3 percent of the Haitian population can be said to be proficient in French…On the other hand, all Haitians know Haitian Creole” (234). Michel DeGraff makes clear in his work with applied linguistics, while Haitian Creole’s “lexicon, among other linguistic modules, is mostly derived from French” (392), it is a distinct language that is “equally systematic linguistically” as any other language (Agnihotri 81); it does not have an “exceptional genealogy” (Degraff 392). Degraff explains that “the term ‘creolization’ refers to the sequence of sociohistorical events that led to the formation of these

176 For preliminary reading on these debates in the United States, see Generva Smitherman and Victor Villanueva’s edited collection *Language Diversity in the Classroom: From Intention to Practice* (2003). For information on these debates in Haitian education, see Arthur K. Spears and Carole M. Berotte Joseph’s edited collection *The Haitian Creole Language: History, Structure, Use, and Education* (2010), specifically chapters 8, 9, and 10.
languages known as Creoles” (391). He makes clear that the evolution of creole languages is similar to the language change that occurred when the Romance languages evolved and progressed to fulfill the communicative roles Latin and Greek once served (395). Creole languages are not “degenerate versions of their European ancestors,” and even offer complexities and structural properties that cannot be found in their European counterparts (395). Thus, Creole languages, and specifically Haitian Creole, are equal to any other language in their ability to express complex and sophisticated ideas and abstract thoughts (403-404).

Linguistic hierarchies are just as prevalent in the U.S. today. Debates over English Only political movements have led to a tacit policy of English monolingualism in education. James Crawford claims that this movement is often used by interest groups who are invested in keeping white Americans in control. In “English Only and U.S. Composition,” Bruce Horner and John Trimbur explain that the formation of U.S. college composition courses have institutionalized a curriculum with a unidirectional monolingualism. Since the 1980s, critics in rhetoric and composition have been increasingly concerned with pushing back against this unidirectional monolingualism in the classroom launching scholarship in contrastive rhetoric, multilingual studies, global Englishes, and most recently, translingualism. In many ways, my project aims to historicize this conversation through early American literature. In appropriating rhetoric and composition theories of student agency through linguistic diversity and theories openness to language fluidity that have emerged in response the monolingualism in education, I hope to demonstrate how language and monolingualism as a means of
exclusion has a long history—and a history that has been consistently challenged—I argue, in American literature specifically.
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