

**Space, Identity and Culture in North American  
Captivity Narratives, 1700-1776**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines eighteenth-century pre-Revolutionary War North American captivity narratives to analyse how captives described and made sense of their encounters with their Native American (and in some cases French Canadian) captors. It investigates the cultural boundaries and spaces constructed by the narratives and uses them as a starting point to challenge and problematise prevailing binary oppositions of freedom/captivity, safe/unsafe, civilised/uncivilised, and colonial/native grounded in a Eurocentric colonial discourse. It thus builds on existing scholarship that analyses cultural encounters between captives and captors, but questions and extends this scholarship through a specifically spatial focus to examine how colonials negotiated their identity and the possibility of multiple identities. Exploring questions of culture, identity, and belonging generates insight into how colonials negotiated their new roles as captives and (for those who were adopted by Native Americans) family members, and navigated the new cultural spaces they were confronted with during captivity, introducing a new way of reading captivity narratives by applying a set of spatial concepts.

This thesis takes a structural approach to the selected captivity narratives by dividing them into the different stages of captivity, focusing on the specific spatial elements in each stage. Chapters 1 to 3 explore the first, second and third stages of captivity: the attack and capture, the captives' journey with their captors, and the confinement, or extended stay with their captors. Chapter 4 analyses two case studies in their entirety, also discussing the fourth and final stage (the captives' return). Overall, the thesis argues that these stages of captivity both facilitated and complicated the colonials' transformation into captives (and, for some, adopted members of their captors' group), and shows how they negotiated their own cultural identity. While none of the captives in the selected narratives fully dismissed their colonial identity, the moments of belonging and assimilation to their captors enables this thesis to challenge the colonial discourse that maintains the image of Native Americans as 'the Other'.

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, who have shown continuous faith and pride in me, and who have influenced me tremendously with their work ethic, love and generosity.

## Introduction

*The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things.*

– Michel Foucault, 'Of other Spaces'<sup>1</sup>

Robert Eastburn was pulled out from the space in which he lived and which he called his home in 1756, when he was captured by a group of Native Americans, a moment that would later become a scene in his captivity narrative:

Presently after I was taken, I was surrounded by a great number, who stripped me of my clothing, hat and neckcloth, so that I had nothing left but a flannel vest without sleeves, put a rope on my neck, bound my arms fast behind me, put a long band round my body, and a large pack on my back, struck me a severe blow on the head, and drove me through the woods before them.<sup>2</sup>

This passage conveys a sense of danger, violence and confinement, which are elements that appear consistently in captivity narratives. What this scene also shows is how the captive had to leave behind their home and was removed from a familiar and formerly safe space. Similarly, when the Anglo-American captive James Smith was adopted into his captor's family, he reports the newly gained freedom his transition from a captive to a family member offered him, but simultaneously implies the difficulties of abandoning his role as a British colonial subject.<sup>3</sup> The impact that the time in captivity had on people is also reflected in Susanna Johnson's account in which, after having returned from captivity, she describes her family as 'a mixture of nations'.<sup>4</sup> Tales about captivity such as these have frequently been studied by scholars as they exhibit a rich potential to explore questions of identity, nationality, religion and cultural exchange. In my analysis,

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (1984), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Eastburn, 'A Faithful Narrative of the Many Dangers and Sufferings, as well as Wonderful and Surprising Deliverances, of Robert Eastburn, During His Late Captivity among the Indians. Written by Himself', in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 265-83 (p. 267).

<sup>3</sup> James Smith, 'An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith, (Late Citizen of Bourbon County, Kentucky,) During his Captivity with the Indians, in the Years 1755, '56, '57, '58, and '59', in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 178-264.

<sup>4</sup> Susanna Johnson, 'A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson', in *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire*, ed. by Colin G. Calloway (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992), pp. 45-85 (p. 81).



I see the new and different environments that captives occupied and consequently explored in their narratives as distinct spaces. Applying a spatial perspective, this thesis aims to show, through literary analysis, how the captives actualised and constructed space to make sense of their experience and negotiate their concept(s) of identity. To explore questions of identity (which I discuss further in the section 'Nationality and Identity'), I focus on identity as self-presentation – how captives presented themselves and their new roles in relation to their captors – to explore how analysing spatial elements could help us understand this self-presentation, rather than attempting to pinpoint how captives thought of their identity. By investigating the authors' attempts to consolidate and/or question their culture and process their experience of a different, 'other', culture I draw attention to the relationships between spatial elements, self-presentation and identity to show how the British colonials positioned themselves and made sense of their experiences.

Studies on captivity narratives have broadly focused on two major geographical areas: North American ('Indian') captivity narratives and North African ('Barbary Coast') captivity narratives.<sup>5</sup> Scholarly interest in North American captivity narratives began in the early twentieth century, marked by the publication of Emma L. Coleman's work *New England Captives Carried to Canada* (1925), which has continued to be cited frequently by critics, so much so that Evan Haefeli calls it 'an essential guide for the study of New England captivity'.<sup>6</sup> While Haefeli rightly highlights Coleman's pioneering function in 'the large-scale study of individual captivity fates', this work is painfully dated, particularly

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<sup>5</sup> Extensive scholarship has been done on Barbary Coast captivity narratives. Paul Baepler, for instance, provides a significant contribution to this field with his monograph *White Slaves, African Masters*, which is an anthology of captivity narratives from the Barbary Coast and a comprehensive introduction into this research area (Paul M. Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)); Khalid Bekkaoui's anthology of female Barbary Coast captivity narratives provides invaluable information on captivity narratives written by women (Khalid Bekkaoui, *White Women Captives in North Africa: Narratives of Enslavement, 1735-1830* (New York: Palgrave, 2011)). Without attempting a list of scholars ranked by their significance or contribution, the following alphabetical list shall give some overview of the scholarly field of Barbary Coast captivity narratives: Henry G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War 1785-1797* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966); Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1977); Lawrence A. Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785-1816* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009); Christine E. Sears, *American Slaves and African Masters: Algiers and the Western Sahara, 1776-1820* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Daniel Vitkus (ed.), *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narrative from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1893).

<sup>6</sup> Evan Haefeli, 'Captivity in North America', *obo* in *Atlantic History*, <<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0148.xml>> [accessed 26 June 2019].

due to the racist terminology that Coleman uses in her book.<sup>7</sup> As Coleman refers to the Native Americans as ‘our Indian enemies’ and ‘savages’ and to the captives as ‘civilized people’, she reproduces and reinforces these categories instead of interrogating them, and thus establishes the binary oppositions that can otherwise be found in the narratives themselves.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, I see Coleman’s work as both an academic and a historical source, as she marks the beginning of scholarship in this field but also provides information on the colonial and Eurocentric discourse that has dominated this work.

As Coleman’s work shows, this binary reading can be found in both captivity narratives and the critical scholarship about those narratives and the colonial American frontier. Richard Slotkin discusses the recurring elements of captivity narratives and their purpose for British colonial authors and notes that the narratives established binary oppositions and ‘emphasized [the captives’] Englishness by setting their civilization against Indian barbarism’.<sup>9</sup> Slotkin further elaborates that Puritan captivity narratives initiated the ‘first American mythology’, which he understands as ‘a mythology in which the hero was the captive or victim of devilish American savages’.<sup>10</sup> The portrayal of ‘devilish American savages’ can be found in Williamson’s narrative, which highlights the distress he experienced by witnessing various torture scenes, and is also evident in, for example, Norton’s account, when the narrative illustrates cannibalistic rituals. Elizabeth Hanson also establishes the stereotypical image of ‘barbarous’ Native Americans, describing her master’s cruel treatment and insinuating the image of them as ‘uncivilised’ and merciless: ‘two of them came in upon us, and then eleven more, all naked, with their guns and tomahawks, and in a great fury killed one child immediately’.<sup>11</sup> Mary Rowlandson’s narrative, too, builds on the binary image of

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<sup>7</sup> Haefeli, ‘Captivity in North America’; Kathryn Z. Derounian-Stodola and James A. Levernier, for instance, cite Coleman’s book to discuss the number of individuals who were taken captive. (Kathryn Z. Derounian-Stodola and James A. Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative: 1550-1900*, ed. by Pattie Cowell, Twayne’s United States Authors Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), p. 2).

<sup>8</sup> Emma L. Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada*, Vol 1 (Portland: The Southworth Press, 1925), pp. 3, 13, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Hanson, ‘God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Surprising Deliverance of Elizabeth Hanson, Wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh, at Kecheachy, in Dover Township, Who Was Taken Captive with Her Children and Maid-Servant, by the Indians in New England, in the Year 1724’, in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 113-26 (p. 114).

pious captives versus hellish captors, referring to the Native American attackers as 'barbarous creatures' and 'a group of hell-hounds'.<sup>12</sup> Her narrative exemplifies how the binary reading had already been established before the eighteenth century and the chosen time period for this study, underlining the sense of continuity of these representations of the Other and the efforts to establish binary oppositions.

The binary images found in the narratives also transcends into critical work on these narratives and reveals the Eurocentric and colonial discourse that is not only central to the narratives but also part of the scholarly work. While I have already mentioned Coleman's dated work from the early 1920s, racist discourse survived as long as the latter part of the 1900s, for example in the work of Marius Barbeau or Richard van der Beets. In his article 'Indian Captivities' from the 1950s, Barbeau gives a broad outline of various captivity narratives, their success and the recurring elements that are part of the captivity accounts. While the article focuses on typical elements and common themes, it also reveals the scholar's perspective and indicates the Eurocentric and racist discourse when he describes Native Americans as 'a predatory and blood thirsty people'.<sup>13</sup> Similarly to Barbeau, van der Beets's article 'The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual' implies a Eurocentric perspective when he discusses Native American spiritual beliefs and practices, and calls the Native American a 'primitive people', reinforcing the idea of the inferior 'Other'.<sup>14</sup> These scholarly perspectives that portray the Native Americans as 'the Other' underline the need to question and problematise the racist and Eurocentric discourse in order to counteract the binary readings.

A number of studies have examined North American captivity narratives as historical sources and categorised them into historical periods and by literary genre (e.g.

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<sup>12</sup> Mary Rowlandson, 'Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, Wife of the Rev. Joseph Rowlandson, Who Was Taken Prisoner when Lancaster Was Destroyed, in the Year 1676; Written by Herself', in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 20-60 (p. 23).

<sup>13</sup> Marius Barbeau, 'Indian Captivities', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 94 (1950), 522-48 (p. 530). Jane Tompkins's insightful essay "'Indians': Textualism, Morality, and the Problem of History' discusses further the development of research on captivity narratives and points to the biased and racist language and views that can be found in captivity narrative scholarship (Jane Tompkins, "'Indians': Textualism, Morality, and the Problem of History, in *Race, Writing, and Difference*, ed. by Henry L. Gates Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 59-77).

<sup>14</sup> Richard van der Beets, 'The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual', *American Literature* 43 (1972), 548-62 (p. 554).

religious/Puritan narratives or narratives influenced by the sentimental novel).<sup>15</sup> In this thesis I argue, however, that focusing on one distinct feature of captivity narratives (such as religious or autobiographical elements) leads us to overlook other significant elements that cannot be so rigidly categorised. Kathryn Z. Derounian-Stodola and James A. Levernier's *The Indian Captivity Narrative: 1550-1900* (1993) is a key text that informed this introduction as it provides considerable information on the overall characteristics of North American captivity narratives, how these texts developed over time, and the significance of these accounts.<sup>16</sup> My analysis and reading has been influenced by the scholarly work that looks beyond this categorisation, focusing on the new social and cultural spaces that captives experienced with their captors and advocating for the significance of exploring these spaces from a literary perspective. Scholars like Linda Colley, Michelle Burnham, Mary L. Pratt and Pauline T. Strong (whose work I will comment on in more detail in the following) have done significant research on captivity narratives as literary sources and they explore questions of identity, colonialism/imperialism, and nation, among others.<sup>17</sup> Laura M. Stevens's *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (2006) does not explicitly discuss captivity narratives, but offers crucial insights into the emotions that were produced by the colonial discourse based on the interaction between British missionaries and Native Americans.<sup>18</sup> My project contributes to captivity narrative

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<sup>15</sup> For further reading on the development of the genre of captivity narratives see: James D. Hartman, *Providence Tales and the Birth of American Literature* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Vaughan and Clark suggest the potential of studying (Puritan) captivity narratives by looking beyond their religious aspects. While they highlight the anthropological and ethnological significance of these narratives, they do not esteem the narratives as literary texts. ('Cups of Common Calamity: Puritan Captivity Narratives as Literature and History', in *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption 1676-1724*, ed. by Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981), pp. 1-28 (p. 11)).

<sup>16</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative*.

<sup>17</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003); Michelle Burnham, *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997); Mary L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008); Pauline T. Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics And Poetics Of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (New York: Routledge, 1999); The following scholars also explore the North American captivity tradition and discuss its significance, the American frontier, and how captivity narratives changed: Roy H. Pearce, 'The Significances of the Captivity Narrative', *American Literature* 19 (1947), 1-20; Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

scholarship that highlights the cultural encounters between captives and captors through a literary analysis of space.<sup>19</sup>

This project uses the cultural boundaries and ambivalent spaces constructed by the narratives as a starting point for challenging the prevailing binary oppositions of freedom/captivity, civilised/uncivilised, and colonial/native grounded in a Eurocentric colonial discourse. As I investigate the social and cultural spaces captives occupied, my analysis aligns with the approach taken by Linda Colley and Pauline T. Strong, who analyse the captives' encounters with 'the Other' – their captors – by exploring their shared social space.<sup>20</sup> Focusing on the spaces that captives and captors co-created allows me to highlight encounters and relationships that might otherwise be overlooked when solely focusing on the binary oppositions of 'us' and 'them'. Michelle Burnham's work, which analyses captivity literature through a cultural and spatial lens, provides a key foundation for my project. Besides Burnham's argument that one of the main purposes of captivity narratives is to create sympathy in the reader, an angle that is not part of my thesis, her focus on the binary oppositions created by the narratives, which she identifies as 'based on cultural, national, or racial difference', informs my approach to investigate those binary images to explore the impact of the cultural encounter between captives and captors.<sup>21</sup> In her conclusion to *Captivity and Sentiment*, Burnham discusses 'the characteristic transcultural ambivalence that permeates Indian captivity narratives, despite their insistent maintenance of determinable boundaries between cultures'.<sup>22</sup> I extend Burnham's work and employ a spatial perspective to address both the oppositions and the spaces in-between, conducting an analysis of the narratives by both dividing them into distinct stages and discussing the texts as a unity. In this way I particularly focus on the roles captives described themselves to have taken on while

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<sup>19</sup> In her doctoral dissertation *Vulnerable Britons: National Identity in Captivity Narratives, 1770-1830*, Samantha Pitchforth explores quite similar questions to those I seek to investigate in this thesis (Samantha M. Pitchforth, *Vulnerable Britons: National Identity in Captivity Narratives, 1770-1830* (Sheffield Hallam University, 2006), PhD. Thesis <<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/id/eprint/20232>>). However, apart from the different period, my research distinguishes itself from this study in that I put the emphasis of my analysis on spatial theories, and explicitly home in on the cultural encounters that produced different spaces, moving away from a strictly historical perspective towards a literary and cultural approach. Apart from the captivity narrative of James Smith, Pitchforth discusses different narratives to the selected texts for this study.

<sup>20</sup> Colley, *Captives*; Strong, *Captive Selves*.

<sup>21</sup> Burnham, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

occupying these in-between spaces to investigate how they perceived themselves during captivity, further exploring the 'transcultural ambivalence' by showing how captives could occupy multiple roles and multiple spaces.

By pushing beyond a mere analysis of how these oppositions were constructed, by challenging these boundaries, I reach for a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of these in-between spaces. My analysis will show how these spaces were actualised both because and in spite of the depicted cultural differences, and how they impacted the colonials who experienced captivity. In particular, the roles captives described themselves to have taken on while occupying these cultural spaces indicate how they perceived themselves during captivity. Burnham argues for 'sustaining an interculturalism that would engage sites of exchange between and within texts' and further points out the 'intercultural spaces that sometimes go unremarked'.<sup>23</sup> Her efforts to explore these intercultural spaces align with my spatial analysis of the points of intersection that are – even if not always explicitly stated – indicated in the narratives, and which can be detected by building on spatial theories established by, among others, Homi K. Bhabha, Michel de Certeau, Mary L. Pratt and Edward Said.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, my analysis particularly draws from the scholarly work that has been done on social spheres and gender roles in captivity narratives and extends the work of, among others, Christopher Castiglia, June Namias, and Rebecca B. Faery, to show how, for instance, Johnson's gendered experience (Chapter 4) offers insight into the impact of captivity on women and points to the specifically domestic space Johnson occupied that allowed her to negotiate the new cultural and social space differently, problematising the dominant male colonial discourse found in narratives about male captives.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to exploring the above-mentioned binary oppositions, my analysis of the chosen captivity narratives explores the relationship between nationality and identity, investigating how the authors made sense of their captivity experience, how they perceived themselves, and how they negotiated their new roles as captives and/or

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<sup>23</sup> Burnham, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> A more detailed discussion of the spatial theories – including additional scholars and concepts – will be provided in section 3 (Theories of Space) of this introduction.

<sup>25</sup> June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of California Press, 1993); Rebecca B. Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, & Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

family members while maintaining their old role as British colonials. In doing so, I build on Joe Snader's work on British captivity narratives and the literary presentation of the captivity experience. In *Caught between Worlds* (2000), Snader investigates how 'the experience of captivity among an allegedly savage or barbarous people posed a fundamental challenge to British concepts of their own national liberty, character, and civility'.<sup>26</sup> While this thesis does not attempt to reach a definitive answer as to how captives identified themselves during captivity, it does point to particular moments that prompted captives to question their national identity and to negotiate a new sense of their own identity. This is particularly suggested by social spaces that both contributed to an open exchange between captives and captors and provided opportunity for individuals to maintain their old loyalties as British colonials.

## 1. The Scope of the Thesis

The scope of this thesis is necessarily focused on North American captivity narratives from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The North American captivity narrative experienced some developments from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century that reflect the political and social environments of the periods, but there are also common themes that prevail throughout the history of the form. Sixteenth-century narratives depict alien, previously undiscovered lands and people. Later, influenced by the evolution of the novel, captivity narratives incorporated features of fictional narratives in the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> When explaining the development of these captivity narratives, Derounian-Stodola identifies 'three distinct phases: authentic religious accounts in the seventeenth century, propagandist and stylistically embellished texts in the eighteenth century, and outright works of fiction in

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<sup>26</sup> Joe Snader, *Caught Between Worlds: British Captivity Narratives in Fact and Fiction* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), p. 6. Gordon M. Sayre also explores both North American and North African captivity narratives in his anthology of selected narratives, *American Captivity Narratives* (Gordon M. Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives: Selected Narratives with Introduction* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000)); Other anthologies that focus exclusively on captivity narratives that took place in North America and provide comprehensive additional information on these narratives in their introductory sections are: Richard van der Beets, *Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives 1642-1836* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994); Colin G. Calloway (ed.), *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992); James Levernier and Hennig Cohen (eds.), *The Indians and their Captives* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977); Vaughan and Clark, *Puritans Among the Indians*.

<sup>27</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, pp. 15-16.

the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.<sup>28</sup> While Derounian-Stodola describes narratives from the seventeenth century as 'authentic' and narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as 'works of fiction', she also highlights the pitfalls of thinking about the narratives in these strictly binary terms, pointing out 'the presence of both fact and fiction', and suggesting that 'it would seem more apt to designate the texts in between as "factive," meaning tending toward fact, and "fictive," meaning tending toward fiction'.<sup>29</sup> Derounian-Stodola's factive-fictive continuum suggests that focusing on the literary aspect of these narratives does not require determining their historical accuracy, which aligns with my approach to the narratives as literary texts rather than historical documents. Similarly to the question whether the selected captivity narratives are fictive or non-fictive accounts, this thesis also does not focus on the role of the editor(s) in writing and publishing the narratives. While I will mention the editorial influence in the discussion of Johnson's account, as many female narratives were edited and published by men in this period, attempting to answer questions of authorship, authenticity and the role of an editor would exceed the scope of my thesis.

From their first dates of publication, captivity narratives immediately gained popularity among a Puritan audience. According to Vaughan and Clark, they offered a new and personal perspective and story, '[i]n a society without fiction and plays, and almost barren of poetry', highlighting the success and impact of 'real-life dramas'.<sup>30</sup> While the influence of Puritanism is significant in many sixteenth and seventeenth-century captivity narratives, two of my chosen texts by Puritan ministers (John Williams and John Norton) will show the value of looking beyond the dominant religious features of these texts.<sup>31</sup> In *Captured by Texts* (1995), Gary L. Ebersole explores the significance

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<sup>28</sup> Kathryn Z. Derounian-Stodola (ed.), 'Introduction', in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. xi-xxviii (p. xii).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>30</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> John Williams, 'The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion', in *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption 1676-1724*, ed. by Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981), pp. 169-226; John Norton, 'The Redeemed Captive, Being a Narrative of the Taking and Carrying into Captivity the Reverend Mr. John Norton When Fort Massachusetts Surrendered to a Large Body of French & Indians Aug. 20th, 1746', in *Narrative of the Capture and Burning of Fort Massachusetts by the French and Indians, in the Time of the War of 1744-1749, and the Captivity of All those Stationed there, to the Number of Thirty Persons. Written at the Time by One of the Captives, the Rev. Mr. John Norton, Chaplain of the Fort*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Albany: J. Munsell, 1870), pp. 9-51 <<http://www.archive.org/details/narrativeofcaptu00nort>>.



of captivity narratives by solely focusing on their religious, Puritan, elements.<sup>32</sup> My thesis does not focus on distinct features, such as religious elements, alone in order to avoid rigid categorisation and to undertake different readings that add to the reading of these narratives as religious texts. I discuss Williams's and Norton's captivity narratives in my analysis of the first stage of captivity, the attack and capture (Chapter 1), by employing spatial terms like the threshold to show how they provide invaluable insights into the colonials' transformation into captives. Applying spatial theories to the two narratives allows me to add another layer of analysis in addition to a focus on the religious elements found in the texts.

Limiting the selection of narratives to a specific geographic area was also necessary to focus on the selected narratives in more detail. Experiences of captivity and subsequent stories about these experiences emerged throughout the British colonies. In order to give coherence to my discussion, the selected texts for this project are limited to the North-East of North America. This geographical delimitation was chosen as this thesis explores in detail the impact of the close contact and interaction between captives and captors. Compared to the American South, fewer people were taken captive by Native Americans in the North. One of the reasons for this difference is the lower number of English settlers and Native Americans in the region. Because northern captives did not have many fellow captives, as Colin G. Calloway argues, they were able to get to know their captors better.<sup>33</sup> The closer contact between captives and captors is reflected in the selected narratives and is a crucial element of my analysis. Besides the impact of the French and Indian War on the capture of Anglo-Americans, the French cultural influence and the fact that captives had to travel to French Canada contribute to my analysis of the diverse and multicultural spaces that British colonials, Native Americans and French Canadians co-created. Alexander Henry's narrative particularly highlights the presence of French Canadians, describing his home, the fort, as containing both British colonials and French Canadians.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995).

<sup>33</sup> Colin G Calloway (ed.), 'Introduction', in *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992), pp. vii-xiii (p. viii).

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Henry, 'Narrative of the Captivity of Alexander Henry, Esq., Who, in the Time of Pontiak's War, Fell into the Hands of the Huron Indians, Detailing a Faithful Account of the Capture of the

My selection of captivity narratives aims to explore the period between the early 1700s and the Declaration of Independence (1776), a period which saw numerous conflicts between British and French armies (and Native American allies on both sides), which resulted in a large number of captives who then produced their captivity accounts. Investigating captivity experiences before 1776 enables me to explore questions of identity that are limited to a British colonial or colonial American sense of identity, not yet influenced by the efforts to create a post-independence national identity. Robbie Richardson, who has done important research on the image of Native Americans in captivity literature, highlights the value of studying narratives from the mid-eighteenth century – stating that the ‘singular focus on Puritan texts has downplayed or ignored later writings’ (from the 1750s and 1760s) – as they offer new insights into the ‘violence of colonization’ and ‘colonial hegemony’.<sup>35</sup> Apart from John Williams’s captivity, which took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the other seven narratives situate the individuals’ time in captivity during the 1740s, 50s and 60s.<sup>36</sup> While three of the selected narratives were published outside the date range of my thesis, I decided to include them in my analysis because the main focus of my thesis is on the historical context in which the captivity took place as depicted in these narratives, rather than the context in which they were published.<sup>37</sup> Although some of the narratives were published later, they also offer a colonial perspective, which is a central point of my analysis. My reasoning for including these narratives is that all selected accounts describe the lives of characters in a particular colonial context, before a national American identity emerged.

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Garrison of Michilimackinac, and the Massacre of About Ninety People. – Written by Himself’, in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 286-332.

<sup>35</sup> Robbie Richardson, *The Savage and Modern Self: North American Indians in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), pp. 85-86. The work *Captivity, Past and Present*, edited by Benjamin M. Allen, for example, discusses captivity narratives from the seventeenth century by solely focusing on Mary Rowlandson’s narrative and only focuses on the slave and prison narratives from the eighteenth century (Benjamin M. Allen (ed.), *Captivity, Past and Present: A Compendium of Observations and Interpretations* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> The greater number of captivity narratives from the mid-eighteenth century is a result of the conflicts and wars between the British and the French and Native Americans, the French and Indian War (1754-63) in particular, which led to a large number of Anglo-American captives being taken by those Native American groups who were allied with the French (as both the British and French had Native American allies) (Burnham, p. 61; James Levernier and Hennig Cohen (eds.), ‘Introduction’, in *The Indians and their Captives* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), pp. xiii-xxx (p. xiii)).

<sup>37</sup> Pote’s narrative was first published in 1895, Henry’s in 1809, and Johnson’s account in 1796.

## 2. Nationality and Identity

Questions about nationality and identity are central to captivity narratives, precisely because of the apparent clash between different nations (or communities) and cultures that prompts the captives to negotiate their own sense of identity. Approaching the selected narratives as sources that offer new insight into how captives perceived themselves requires a more detailed analysis of particular theories of identity/self-perception and nationality. In order to analyse the ways in which colonials might have questioned and/or consolidated their sense of identity during their time in captivity, this thesis builds on Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the 'process of identification'.<sup>38</sup> Bhabha's claim that 'to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness' is reflected in the various moments when captives distanced themselves from their captors, creating a 'barbaric' or 'savage' image of Native Americans, and feeding into the colonial discourse that built on binary oppositions such as civilised/uncivilised. This separation could be achieved in the form of a physical separation from their captors or a separation in terms of a different social space that captives occupied during the time with their captors. Some captives did not share a common social space with their captors and were thus able to maintain a clear distance, sometimes sharing their spaces with fellow captives. The otherness that Bhabha refers to is created in 'the disturbing distance in-between', which can also be called the 'interstitial space' or 'Third Space of enunciation', as he calls it elsewhere in his discussion of cultural hybridity.<sup>39</sup> Whereas this interstitial space creates a sense of otherness, it is also a space that calls otherness into question, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and initiation, which in turn disrupts the stereotypical image of 'the Other'.

Focusing on interaction allows me to discuss how the spaces captives occupied enabled them to negotiate their sense of identity. Fredrik Fahlander interprets Bhabha's concept of the 'third space' as 'a metaphor for the ambiguous virtual field that emerges when two or more individuals interact'.<sup>40</sup> In the context of my analysis, this 'virtual field' is constituted within the captives' homes, Native American villages, and other spaces

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<sup>38</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge Classics, 2004), p. 63.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 54.

<sup>40</sup> Fredrik Fahlander, 'Third Space Encounters: Hybridity, Mimicry and Interstitial Practice', in *Encounters/Materialities/Confrontations: Archaeologies of Social Space and Interaction*, ed. by Per Cornell, and Fredrik Fahlander (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2007), pp. 15-41 (p. 23).

that captives and captors created through their co-habitation and travels. Moreover, one of the words that Fahlander uses to explain Bhabha's term 'enunciation' is 'performance', which is useful for my discussion because some narratives highlight the performative nature of the different roles they played during captivity (for example the roles of captives, new tribe members, brothers or sisters).

Further developing the idea that captives performed different roles during their time in captivity, I build on Susie Scott's notion of 'identity as a role performance', which she in turn based on Ervin Goffman's 'dramaturgical perspective', to examine the captives' opportunities to assume different temporary identities while maintaining their primary identity as a British colonial.<sup>41</sup> I therefore use the idea that negotiating one's identity involves role performance to discuss the different and often contradictory roles individuals took on during their captivity (e.g. the role of captive and member of the captors' group). These roles were, in accordance with Bhabha's model, a result of the interstitial spaces that captives occupied, which allowed them to negotiate their identities, but ultimately not to replace their British colonial identity. Even in situations when captives changed their physical appearance to blend in (e.g. James Smith, discussed in Chapter 3, or Alexander Henry, discussed in Chapter 4), they merely created an image, which is connected to Goffman's concept of 'self-presentation', because to themselves they remained British colonials while playing the role of a Native American.<sup>42</sup> The assumed roles captives describe are what Goffman calls 'situated roles' because they are 'adopt[ed] only transiently'.<sup>43</sup> The temporariness of these roles is highlighted by the captives' return home or when they left their captors and consolidated through the conscious crafting of a captivity narrative.

Another term that informs my analysis, which Susie Scott discusses in *Negotiating Identity*, is 'identity commitment', which 'indicates the depth of meaning

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<sup>41</sup> Susie Scott, *Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), p. 95. While many examples of captives abandoning their colonial identity would not be documented in captivity narratives, as those people stayed with the Native Americans and did not return, Richardson points out two examples that 'blurred the lines between English and Indian'. The Mohawk leader Hendrick 'was a Bear clan sachem who was an important English ally and who often dressed in the British fashion, while [William] Johnson regularly dressed in full Mohawk regalia and had a Mohawk family, but was also a baronet and important military official for the British empire' (Richardson, p. 76).

<sup>42</sup> Scott, p. 72.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

attached to the role', and helps me to assess the significance of the captives' roles.<sup>44</sup> While at different moments during their captivity they took on different roles, the captives' role as a British colonial was the one they were most committed to, as it was this identity they maintained, whereas they eventually abandoned their other situated roles, especially when they returned home. Michelle Burnham highlights the value of exploring the narratives from a spatial perspective in order to point out the moments of liminality, to better understand the captives' different roles and possible identities. When discussing Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative (1682), Burnham describes Rowlandson as 'occup[ying] a position of cultural liminality rather than one of cultural integrity', further arguing that it was Rowlandson's abandonment of her 'Englishness' that helped her survive captivity.<sup>45</sup> By combining ideas on identity formation and space, I can explore further the captives' experience of the 'contact zones' or liminal spaces that they occupied.<sup>46</sup>

This thesis therefore employs a literary analysis of space to raise questions about re-constructing identity through cultural exposure and interaction. Marcia S. Blaine, who sees identity construction as a product of the 'accumulated layers of encounters, environments and space' in the contact zone or in-between space, points out that this 'fragility' – as Blaine describes life in the contact zone – has only rarely been seen as a crucial part of the construction of American identity.<sup>47</sup> Blaine's notion of identity construction and the contact zone in her discussion of the development of American identity suggests the value of studying how captives reported their experiences of life in the contact zone.

The mechanisms of othering and the practice of identifying similarities and differences when describing cultural encounters are important features that Pratt ascribes to travel narratives when she claims that 'the Other is described collectively as

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<sup>44</sup> Scott, p. 75. Scott's discussion on 'identity commitment' is based on Sheldon Stryker's article 'Identity salience and role performance' (in *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 4 (1968), pp. 558-64).

<sup>45</sup> Burnham, p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8. Pratt's concept of the contact zone will be discussed further in section 3 (Theories of Space) of this introduction.

<sup>47</sup> Marcia S. Blaine, 'The Johnsons' Plight: The Role of Captivity on Anglo-American Identity', *History*, 94 (2009), 53-73 (pp. 53-54).

an inventory of traits and customs'.<sup>48</sup> Although Pratt confines these features to travel narratives, I would argue that captivity narratives are also based on an 'inventory of traits and customs' and employ the same tools to 'other' the captors. Regarding the stereotypical images of Native Americans that are created by captivity narratives, Derounian-Stodola and Levernier claim that there are two distinct images, a positive and a negative one, that dominate these narratives and cultural views of Native Americans in general.<sup>49</sup> The negative image portrays Native Americans as 'foreign, dangerous, and expendable', whereas the positive image implies that they are 'simple and inferior but tractable and useful'.<sup>50</sup> While Derounian-Stodola and Levernier present the two images as strictly separate categories, my analysis shows that these categories can blur, and thus challenges the idea that Native Americans were seen as either 'good' or 'bad'. Yet the selected narratives do confirm Derounian-Stodola and Levernier's claim that these narratives provided an 'experiential, empirical foundation for stereotypes of the American Indian', even if this appears only early in the narrative and is reversed later.<sup>51</sup> Creating an image of barbaric or inferior Native Americans can thus be seen as a pattern that captives followed when describing their Native American captors. However, it is a pattern that these narratives also disrupt or complicate by referring to moments when captives and captors establish a more reciprocal relationship and show mutual respect.

### 3. Theories of Space

The cultural exposure that captivity narratives describe and the subsequent impact that negotiating cultural differences had on the captives can be better understood by exploring the literal and metaphorical spaces that are part of the selected narratives. The following section provides a discussion of the key ideas of space that I employ in my analysis. Scholars like Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault (whose theories and ideas I will discuss in more detail in this section) have significantly

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<sup>48</sup> Mary L. Pratt, 'Travel Narrative and Imperialist Vision', in *Understanding Narrative*, ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), pp. 119-221 (p. 211). Discussing the colonial discourse in travel writing, Sara Mills highlights Michel Foucault's work on knowledge and power in order to explain how the knowledge about colonised countries is used to construct the inhabitants as 'other' in travel writing (Sara Mills, 'Knowledge, Gender, and Empire', in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, ed. by Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (New York: The Guildford Press, 1994), pp. 29-50 (p. 34)).

<sup>49</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, p. 52.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

influenced the literary and philosophical study of space and spatiality, and inform my theoretical framework.<sup>52</sup> Ideas of the threshold, and liminality, are also key aspects of my theoretical framework, enabling me to discuss the binary oppositions that prevail in the selected narratives, but also to move beyond these binaries to explore the liminal spaces that are realised in the texts.

In his article 'Of Other Spaces', Michel Foucault juxtaposes the academic interests of the nineteenth century, calling history its 'great obsession', with those of the twentieth century, which he refers to as 'the epoch of space'.<sup>53</sup> The spatial turn in humanities scholarship can be identified as having started in the middle of the twentieth century, when scholars like Joseph Frank put a greater emphasis on space and spatiality in literary texts. In his article 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature', Frank calls for the consideration of space as a distinct literary element, and discusses work by Gotthold E. Lessing, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce and Marcel Proust to show how spatial form is employed in their poetry and prose. In particular, Frank focuses on 'esthetic' form in modern literature and explains how '[e]sthetic form in modern poetry [...] is based on a space-logic that demands a complete re-orientation in the reader's attitude towards language', moving away from focusing on only temporal aspects.<sup>54</sup> This idea of focusing on spatial perception in literature underpins my approach as I investigate how captives actualised and perceived spaces, allowing me to explore how they negotiated their time in captivity.<sup>55</sup> As some scholars have argued for the connection between time and space, most notably Mikhail M. Bakhtin with his notion of the 'chronotope' (as the 'intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships'), ideas of space and spatial form have increasingly become the focus of scholarship.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> In particular, the works of the mentioned scholars that I draw on in this section are Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, and Michel Foucault's essay 'Of Other Spaces'.

<sup>53</sup> Foucault, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Frank, 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature: An Essay in Two Parts', *The Sewanee Review* 53 (1945), 221-40 (p. 229).

<sup>55</sup> For further reading on space and narratology see Susan S. Friedman, 'Spatial Poetics and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. by James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 192-205.

<sup>56</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, transl. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84-258 (p. 84). The following discussion of scholars is by no means a complete list of critics who worked on theories of space, but rather an overview of key scholarly texts that influenced my research.

In order to analyse how spatial elements are incorporated in the narratives, I focus on the distinct spaces captives occupied, both literally and metaphorically. Building on Michel de Certeau's argument that '*space is a practiced place*', I argue that the physical place the individuals found themselves in, for instance their homes or the Native American village, is also a cultural space because it was the place where the captives, voluntarily or not, interacted with their captors.<sup>57</sup> De Certeau explains how a place is transformed into a space and states that a street, for example, 'is transformed into a space by walkers', and the act of reading, for instance, 'is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text'.<sup>58</sup> These examples highlight that every transformed space requires an act of participation or involvement from the participants. While the physical space of the captors' village is a prime example of a delimited space, the captives' journey with their captors, too, can be seen as a distinct space, depending on the actors who co-created it. The varying effects that close contact with their Native American captors had on the captives can more clearly be seen by analysing the descriptions of space that convey their experiences. While the initial contact between British colonials and Native Americans suggests an abrupt transformation of the captives' former safe space into a hazardous one, the descriptions of the journeys indicate the multiple spaces that were created, depending on location and, more importantly, on the people who interacted within these spaces. Moreover, I suggest that the circumscribed space of the village in particular functions as an incubator of identity and influences the captives' self-perception differently from the spaces created during the first two stages of captivity. The social practices that define the spaces captives occupied influenced their sense of identity, which can be seen in the different roles that the captives assigned to themselves or which were imposed on them, for instance the new role as a captive or as a family member after the adoption. Both the Native American village and the other distinct places before and after the captives' time in the village can be described as places that were transformed by interaction into spaces which influenced them.

Exploring the ways in which the narratives describe the space of captivity provides insight into how captives created and adapted their self-presentation in the

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<sup>57</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 117.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.



new spaces they occupied. I employ de Certeau's spatial concept to show the distinct spaces captives and captors actualised during the different stages of captivity, such as my argument that the first stage shows how the Native American attack violated and transformed the safe space of the home. I draw on Jeremy Hawthorn's notion of the multiplicity of spaces that people occupy, when he argues that 'people do not live in a space, but in spaces', to explore how the spaces indicated in the narratives changed and how they are connected to the individual's changing position.<sup>59</sup> The multiplicity of spaces actualised in the narratives exemplifies the heterogeneous qualities that Michel Foucault ascribes to the space we live in, characterised by the 'set of relations that delineates the[se] site[s]', influenced by the individuals who produce it and impacting their self-perception.<sup>60</sup>

While I analyse the different stages of captivity separately, and thus focus on the different spaces that are produced as a result of these stages, I also identify a multiplicity of spaces within each of the distinct stages. Developing Doreen Massey's argument that space is 'always under construction', I point out the different spaces captives actualised in their narratives to suggest the significance of their involvement in constructing these spaces. Massey's definition of space 'as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions' allows me to identify distinct spaces and, to push the idea of producing social spaces further, explore how the spaces indicated in the texts reflect the new environment that captivity opened up for the individuals, challenging their role as a captive through exposure to their captors.<sup>61</sup> For example, analysing the description of the journey shows how the relationship between captives and captors could become deeper and how their close contact influenced the image captives created of their captors: while some captives point out the Native Americans' cruelty at the beginning of the journey, this clear distinction between savage and civilised blurs with extended contact and exposure to the captors' culture.

As some narratives report that captives had to move with their captors, even after arriving at the village, the space in which they learned about a new culture and were exposed to change was not necessarily a fixed place that can be precisely located

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<sup>59</sup> Jeremy Hawthorn, 'Travel as Incarceration: Jean Rhys's *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie*', in *Literary Landscapes: From Modernism to Postcolonialism*, ed. by Attie de Lange, Gain Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn and Jakob Lothe (London: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 58-74 (p. 63).

<sup>60</sup> Foucault, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), p. 9.

on a map; rather, captives and captors were already producing shared spaces before arriving at the captors' village. That is, these spaces were created by the people who inhabited them: the captives themselves, their captors, and the rest of the Native American group. In keeping with de Certeau's idea that a place always requires some action or practice to be transformed into a space, Henri Lefebvre's notion of space also informs my analysis. In *The Production of Space* (first published 1974) Lefebvre argues that 'space is never empty: it always embodies a meaning' and explains that a space cannot be observed or analysed in isolation.<sup>62</sup> Examining the descriptions of the captives' experiences among the tribe allows me to explore the potential meaning of the spaces that are specifically indicated as metaphorical to identify their impact on the captives' personal and emotional state. As I consider this metaphorical space as being equivalent to the cultural space that is practised through social interaction, Lefebvre's ideas on social space underlie my claim that the spaces captors and captives produced, through their close contact, consequently influenced the captives on a personal level and impacted their self-perception. Lefebvre's suggestion that social space 'subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity' underlines the importance of exchange and relationships that are uncovered through analysing the spatial aspects in the narratives.<sup>63</sup> I apply this definition of social space to all stages of captivity as they all indicate different facets of group interaction, rituals and new norms of behaviour that captives had to adhere to.

The threshold – seen as a specific manifestation of how space is practised – is a key example of how spaces are actualised in the narratives. The moment when the colonials' homes were attacked marks a crucial point in the narratives, the beginning of their transition into captivity. Employing Kathy Smith's definition of a threshold and its contribution 'to the construction of "meaning" through the existence of difference', reflecting the cultural encounters which take place there, in that '[i]t marks a passage from one state to another', my analysis of the first stage is grounded in the idea that the safe space of the home was transformed through the attack and capture.<sup>64</sup> Because of the nature of the material I analyse, which is based on cultural encounters, the threshold

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<sup>62</sup> Lefebvre, pp. 154, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>64</sup> Kathy Smith, 'The Emptiness of Zero: Representations of Loss, Absence, Anxiety and Desire in the Late Twentieth Century', *Critical Quarterly* 46 (2004), 40-59 (p. 49).

is a key concept that informs my thesis. I see the initial point of crisis, the attack and capture by Native Americans (and, in some cases, their French allies), as the first threshold moment(s) explored in the narratives. The difference that the threshold(s) mark(s) in the narratives is the undermining of the binaries of safe home/inside and unsafe wilderness/outside. As depicted in one of the narratives, the efforts to barricade the fort support the construction of meaning in relation to the unsafe outside: the fort surrounded by Native Americans contrasts with the delimited and relatively safe space of John Norton's home.<sup>65</sup> Georges Perec's discussion of the door, which 'breaks space in two, splits it, prevents osmosis, imposes a partition', especially resonates with my reading of the captivity narratives that depict the crossing of multiple thresholds.<sup>66</sup> The point of entrance of the attackers is also central to my analysis as it gives insight into the construction of thresholds and enables me to examine how multiple thresholds can be constructed and crossed during the attack.

Focusing on how thresholds are actualised in the narratives allows me to investigate the construction of the binaries of safe/unsafe and private/public, and to explore the impact the crossing of these thresholds had on the captives' roles. In order to do so, my analysis is informed by Gaston Bachelard's work on the significance of intimate places, such as the house.<sup>67</sup> While Bachelard focuses on the intimacy of familiar spaces, discussing questions about space and the home, and the sense of imagination that influences these spaces, I particularly draw on his notion of 'the center of the house' as 'a major zone of protection', as it reflects the sense of safety that is conveyed through the description of the individual's homes before the attack, and it simultaneously enforces the sense of affliction that the attackers cause by entering the space of the home and thus compromising this zone of protection.<sup>68</sup> The notion of the captives' homes – Marita Wenzel refers to them as 'sites of belonging' – as a safe space is amplified by the sense of danger outside the house or, more broadly, outside the fort

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<sup>65</sup> John Norton's captivity narrative is discussed in Chapter 1, and explores his efforts to defend the fort by analysing the thresholds that are constructed by the narrative.

<sup>66</sup> Georges Perec, *Species of Space and Other Pieces* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 37.

<sup>67</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How we Experience Intimate Places*, transl. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

or village.<sup>69</sup> The stark contrast between safe and unsafe, and the subsequent blurring of these two terms due to the attack, call for an analysis from a spatial perspective to make sense of the impact of the attack. My spatial approach enables me to deconstruct and question the binary oppositions central to these narratives and contrast them with clues in the texts which point to a richer and more complex understanding of the relations between captives and captors and its impact on cultural identities.

The analyses of the different stages will show how binary oppositions (of for instance safe/unsafe or free/unfree) are a crucial element that highlight the complexity of these liminal spaces, realised by the construction and destruction of thresholds. In *Orientalism* (2003), Edward Said discusses mechanisms of othering and explains the creation of 'the Other' to be a deliberate practice of creating a distance and difference between 'us' and 'them':

A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call "the land of the barbarians." In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction.<sup>70</sup>

In this quotation, Said explains the creation of those binary oppositions that I wish to problematise in my thesis. Discussing the literal and metaphorical thresholds actualised in the narratives and the social spaces captives co-produced with their captors enables me to question established binary contradictions to understand how colonials negotiated the new spaces and cultural encounters. The imagined boundaries that are created by the narratives are challenged by focusing on the points of intersection between captives and captors to demonstrate that these shared spaces complicate a straightforward dichotomy of us/them. This is particularly evident in the moments when captives assimilated to their captors and actively participated in producing a shared social space.

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<sup>69</sup> Marita Wenzel, 'Liminal Spaces and Imaginary Places in *The Bone People* by Keri Hulme and *The Folly* by Ivan Vladislavic', in *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature*, ed. by Hein Viljoen and Chris N. van der Merwe (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 43-60 (p. 46).

<sup>70</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 54.

Furthermore, the analysis of the thresholds in these narratives exemplifies how some captives occupy what Terence Cave calls a 'threshold state' during their time in captivity.<sup>71</sup> As this thesis explores the captives' self-perception and their experience of captivity by analysing spatial markers in the narratives, pointing to the captives' liminal position furthers my efforts to move beyond the discussion of binary oppositions. Especially when captives are adopted by their Native American captors, they find themselves in a state that destabilises their sense of identity, as some captives become what Lisa Logan identifies as both 'insider' and 'outsider' of the new environment they live in.<sup>72</sup> In contrast to Logan, however, who claims that some captives eventually give up some part of their personality to come to terms with their new life in captivity, I want to suggest that the new spaces they experienced enabled them to negotiate new roles that did not replace, but added to their former roles. As Keith Davis and Mary Roberts claim that being an insider is closely linked to the knowledge of 'social practice', my analysis explores how social encounters in cultural spaces, and the exposure to new social practices, directly influenced the captives' liminal roles.<sup>73</sup>

The state of simultaneously being a captive and a member of the Native American tribe is explored in the narratives' descriptions of the ambiguous treatment captives received from their captors. The sense of ambiguity that characterises many of the spaces captives occupied is supported by Blaine's notion of the unpredictability of these social encounters. While her claim refers to the possibility of both 'peaceful trading and violent confrontation', I want to suggest that it is also reflected in the ambiguous treatment of captives (unfree individuals versus family members) that could emerge from these encounters.<sup>74</sup> Applying the concept of the threshold to the captives' descriptions of how they were treated will show that some captives found themselves on the verge of becoming a full member of the captors' group, while struggling to embrace their new identity. Especially after the adoption ceremony, the village is

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<sup>71</sup> Terence Cave, 'Unsettling Thresholds: Mignon and her Afterlives', in *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, ed. by Subha Mukherji (London: Anthem Press, 2011), pp. 73-86 (p. 76).

<sup>72</sup> Lisa M. Logan, "'Cross-Cultural Conversations': The Captivity Narrative', in *A Companion to the Literatures of Colonial America*, ed. by Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 464-79 (p. 476).

<sup>73</sup> Keith E. Davis and Mary K. Roberts, 'Relationships in the Real World: The Descriptive Psychology Approach to Personal Relationships', in *The Social Construction of the Person*, ed. by Kenneth J. Gergen and Keith E. Davis (New York: Springer, 1985), pp. 145-63 (p. 149).

<sup>74</sup> Blaine, p. 55.

represented as a space in which the captives were caught between their old loyalties, their identity as a captive, and their new circumstances as a member of the tribe.

If we also apply the concept of the threshold to the stages of the attack and capture and the journey, however, we find that this sense of liminality was not only a feature of the captives' time in the Native American village. Rather, exploring the spaces that captives found themselves in underlines the sense of liminality that begins with the attack, and which is complicated further by the captives' journey. When Vaughan and Clark discuss the scholarly work that has been done on Indian captivity narratives, they explore the interest scholars have taken in the initiation process, while stressing the danger of focusing on this particular stage and letting this overshadow the rest of the captivity experience.<sup>75</sup> Acknowledging the significance of the earlier stages of captivity narratives and raising questions about liminality and transformation is thus a significant component of my analysis. The concept of the threshold adds to my examination of how this state of being on the verge of inheriting a new identity and/or being in-between is created by the spaces the captives occupied. Moreover, it complements other textual clues for this liminality, for instance the moments that describe the interaction between captives and captors and how this gives insight into their shared social space. The idea of transition is also seen in how the journey enables the captives to travel to different places and thus, through encountering new people and a different culture, to occupy new spaces. Building on Viljoen and van der Merwe's definition of thresholds as 'significant in-between zone[s]', and their description of them as 'zones of ambiguity and undecidability', a spatial perspective enables a more critical analysis of the moments when individuals were captured or when they occupied liminal spaces with their captors.<sup>76</sup>

My analysis focuses on the sense of liminality that pervades the captivity narratives to exemplify how captives navigated the new cultural and social space that they occupied together with their captors. This means that although the captives tried to maintain their personal values and, primarily, their identities as colonial subjects, they also became part of a different world they had to fit in and find a way to assimilate to.

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<sup>75</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> Hein Viljoen and Chris N. van der Merwe (eds.), 'Introduction: A Poetics of Liminality and Hybridity', in *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 1-26 (p. 10).

The moral, cultural and/or religious differences between captives and captors are significant because of their direct contact and interaction. These considerations support my focus on the threshold, and build on Burnham's argument that the site of the captive is a liminal site, which 'both separates and joins two collaborators who are at the same time opponents', highlighting the significance of the element of exchange and interaction (personal and cultural) in this in-between state.<sup>77</sup> I show how moments of crisis are central to the narratives, enabling cultural exchange and negotiation, which is supported by Burnham's idea of captivity among Native Americans as 'an occasion for the simultaneous invention and destruction of the self' in colonial America, when 'dominant values, standards, and modes of representation fail, falter, or are brought to crisis'.<sup>78</sup> The ambiguity of the captive's identity can be further investigated by analysing the in-between or liminal spaces captives found themselves in.

Taking into account the liminal quality of the produced spaces, my analysis investigates how captives, even though they might not live with their captors in a fixed place, still experienced different cultural practices and an unfamiliar lifestyle. Building on the idea of encountering 'the Other', Adèle Nel argues that travelling can lead to a 'sense of displacement', which can be found in the narratives' descriptions of the journey: the captives are literally 'displaced' as they are taken from their known and familiar surroundings and find themselves on a journey to an unknown country.<sup>79</sup> Just as Hein Viljoen states that '[t]ravel ultimately always implies literally and figuratively crossing a boundary and entering the space of the Other', the selected narratives emphasise such figurative crossings of boundaries.<sup>80</sup> The unknown lifestyle that captives became familiar with during the journey marks the entering of a new social space, and thus indicates the figurative crossing of the boundary between the captives' and their captors' lives. This figurative crossing is also supported by Mieke Bal's notion that a journey, or movement in general, 'can constitute a transition from one space to another', and thus allows me to see the journey as creating multiple spaces, and in some

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<sup>77</sup> Burnham, p. 20.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 21, 170.

<sup>79</sup> Adèle Nel, 'The Poet in Transit: Travel Poems and Liminality in *Lykdigte* (Elegies) and *Ruggespraak* (Consultation) by Joan Hambidge', in *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature*, ed. by Hein Viljoen and Chris N. van der Merwe (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 223-46 (p. 235).

<sup>80</sup> Viljoen, qtd. in Nel, p. 235.

cases also thresholds, that do not require a physical boundary or frontier.<sup>81</sup> If we understand the initial capture as having already effected a transformation from freedom into captivity, we can see from the narratives how the journey does not initiate a 'process of transformation', as Nel defines the journey in her work on travel poems, but challenges the captives' new roles.<sup>82</sup> Analysing the spaces that were created by the experiences of the journey and the interactions between captives and captors, then, suggests that challenges to the colonial subjects' sense of cultural identity had begun before their time in a Native American village.

To highlight further the significance of liminality or in-betweenness that underlies many captivity narratives, I use Bhabha's definition of 'interstices' as the 'overlap and displacement of domains of difference' as part of the theoretical basis for this thesis.<sup>83</sup> I identify interstitial spaces as those that challenge or displace the 'domains of difference', by questioning or blurring the clear separation between British colonial captives and Native American captors, or between the private or demarcated spaces of the colonials' homes and the outside or wilderness associated with the Native American captors. The binary terms that are prominent in many captivity narratives reflect what Bhabha describes as a distinct 'logic through which identities of difference are often constructed – Black/White, Self/Other'.<sup>84</sup> These binary terms, which are employed by many captivity narratives, were an important means to negotiate and consolidate the captives' British colonial identity. However, my analysis will show how the narratives' treatment of interstitial space also disturbs those binary terms, extending Bhabha's claim regarding the ambivalence of otherness – based on his definition of stereotypes as a 'limited form of otherness' – and Stuart Hall's argument that this otherness, which he also refers to as an initial difference, is ambivalent.<sup>85</sup>

This binary approach precludes the findings that can be drawn by homing in on the space *between* those binary oppositions (related to ideas of liminality and the threshold as discussed previously). The 'domains of difference' that open up through

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<sup>81</sup> Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 140.

<sup>82</sup> Nel, p. 226.

<sup>83</sup> Bhabha, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 111, 117; Stuart Hall (ed.), 'The Spectacle of the 'Other'', in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 223-90 (p. 238).



the interaction between captives and captors can also be referred to as ‘contact zones’, a term coined by Mary L. Pratt. Pratt understands the contact zone as

the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.<sup>86</sup>

Synonymous with the term ‘colonial frontiers’, ‘contact zones’ shifts the perspective away from a Eurocentric discourse and highlights the potential of analysing this in-between space that captives occupied during their time in captivity.<sup>87</sup> Pratt highlights the potential of these zones of cultural encounters when she explains how the perspective of ‘contact zones’ shows ‘how subjects get constituted in and by their relations to each other’, which supports my reading of the narratives as evidence of the ways in which the captives negotiated their experiences of captivity and how they defined their sense of identity in relation to the people they encountered in this liminal space.<sup>88</sup> I use the terms liminal spaces and in-between spaces interchangeably with Pratt’s ‘contact zones’ and Bhabha’s ‘interstices’ or interstitial spaces to discuss how social and cultural spaces are actualised in captivity narratives. Together with the idea of the threshold, these terms related to liminality bring out the diverse and multivalent aspects of these produced spaces as depicted in the narratives. They also enable me to discuss both literal and metaphorical spaces: spaces that captives literally occupy – the physical space of the Native American village, for instance – and metaphorical spaces such as the social spaces created through interaction along the journey.

#### **4. Approach to Narratives and Structure of the Thesis**

In order to analyse spatial elements, this thesis takes a structural approach to the selected captivity narratives, dividing the narratives into different stages and exploring each stage individually as well as discussing two of the narratives in their entirety (the case studies in the last chapter). Identifying distinct stages allows me to focus on the specific spatial elements of each stage. Discussing the different stages separately also enables me to apply different spatial concepts to each of the stages, and to show the

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<sup>86</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Blaine, p. 58; Burnham, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

versatility of the chosen concepts. The critical model that I follow to analyse the captivity narratives is based on a 'narrative formula, built around several key events and characters', which Snader identifies as 'a Native American attack on a frontier settlement, the forced journey and consequent introspection of an isolated captive (most often a female), a faceless mass of alien captors, and a return to Anglo-American civilization'.<sup>89</sup> Breaking up the content of the narratives and the captives' experiences into different stages – the attack by Native Americans and subsequent capture of British colonial subjects (first stage and Chapter 1), the captives' journey with their captors (second stage and Chapter 2), the captives' time in a Native American village or the extended time with their captors in general (third stage and Chapter 3) – allows for a structural analysis similar to Vladimir Propp's work on folktales. In his work *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), Propp claims that the '[f]unctions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled', and further explains that '[t]he sequence of functions is always identical'.<sup>90</sup> Highlighting the narratives' structural characteristics also enables me to point to the spatial insights we get by exploring the accounts in terms of their individual stages (Chapters 1 to 3) as well as seeing the texts as wholes (Chapter 4) to provide an analysis that a purely structural focus might otherwise overlook.

The precise content of the stages depends on the individual narrative, and although there are exceptions, most narratives exhibit these four stages (or at least indicate them) in their accounts, which confirms Propp's claim that the order of functions – in this case the stages of captivity – is always identical.<sup>91</sup> When some exceptional narratives go against this order, this framework serves as a useful tool for approaching narratives that deviate from this structure. My analysis of Williamson's narrative in Chapter 2, for instance, exemplifies how the stage of the journey can

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<sup>89</sup> Snader, p. 2. Contrary to Snader's claim that it was mostly female captives who were in isolation, the selected texts also describe the exposure of male captives to their captors. Colin G. Calloway describes the 'common pattern' of captivity narratives in a similar way: 'the hero or heroine was abducted from his or her home, subjected to the ordeals of a long journey through the wilderness and initiation into Indian society, and eventually returned, by escape or ransom, to civilization' (Calloway, 'An Uncertain Destiny: Indian Captivities on the Upper Connecticut River', *Journal of American Studies* 17 (1983), 189-210 (p. 193)). Vaughan and Clark also refer to the common elements of captivity narratives that were responsible for the narratives' popularity (Vaughan and Clark, *Cups of Common Calamity*, p. 3).

<sup>90</sup> Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, transl. by Laurence Scott, 2nd edn (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), pp. 21-22.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

become a recurrent stage, which the captive was confronted with several times during his time in captivity, for Williamson experienced several journeys with his captors. Exploring each of these stages separately helps us understand the impact that each might have had on the captives' self-perception, their perception of their time in captivity, and on how they coped with their exposure to a new and different culture.

As in my discussion of Williamson's narrative, which shows a recurrent pattern of multiple journeys, my analysis of the other narratives also complicates the simplicity of Snader's definition of the narrative formula, particularly regarding the stage when captives are confronted with 'a faceless mass of alien captors'.<sup>92</sup> While the majority of captivity narratives create an image of alien and savage captors (especially at the beginning), my analysis of spatial indicators in the various stages uncovers moments in which captives were confronted with more than just a 'faceless mass', initiated by the cultural encounter and interaction between captives and captors. In order to identify these encounters, I connect my structural and spatial approach to analyse the narratives. My analysis of the shared space that is often reflected in the narratives shows an extended contact and calls into question the idea of the unknown or alien captor, especially in narratives that explore a close contact, sometimes even a developed relationship, between the British colonials and the Native Americans.

The notion of space as a practised place, as I use it in Chapter 1, highlights the captors' intrusion into the colonials' homes and suggests the violation of their safe space due to their sudden involuntary interaction and confrontation with the Native American attackers. This binary opposition of safe/unsafe, protected/violated, however, is questioned by applying the concept of the threshold to the descriptions of the attack, in order to show how the Native American attackers transformed the private and protected place of the homes into a hazardous space. While the attackers had to cross at least one threshold to attack and take over the individuals' homes or the whole fort, John Norton's text in particular suggests the possibility of a multiplicity of thresholds that were created during the siege (when Norton's fellow inhabitants barricaded the fort), whereas Williams's account foregrounds the different thresholds that the Native Americans crossed (by entering through both the door and windows). Analysing the description of the fort and the inhabitants' actions while trying to defend their homes

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<sup>92</sup> Snader, p. 2.

allows me to depict the ambiguous space – as the fort is under attack but not yet taken over – that is mirrored by Norton’s actions and created by both the inhabitants and the fort’s attackers.

The concept of the threshold, or rather multiple thresholds, is also a key concept in Chapter 2, the analysis of the second stage, the captives’ journeys with their Native American captors as described in the narratives of William Pote and Peter Williamson.<sup>93</sup> Although it greatly varies in terms of duration, destination, and intensity, I argue that the journey needs to be seen as a distinct stage that both separates and connects the first and third stages. Moreover, it includes significant information on how the captives perceived their surroundings, how the journey changed their roles, and the extent to which they were exposed to a different culture. Although the captives arguably faced a greater exposure to their captors’ culture when living in the Native American village, the journey nevertheless forced a certain degree of cultural interaction or exposure, thus providing some insight into the effects of an extended contact between captives and captors. Analysing the different spaces helps to highlight how the journey both complicated and facilitated the captives’ transition from freedom to captivity. This is reflected in the degree of the captives’ freedom and the restrictions that they experienced during the journey: for instance, some captives were able to move freely during the day, but were constrained during the night to prevent their escape, which consolidated their role as captives.

The third stage of captivity, the captives’ time in the Native American village, is the main focus of Chapter 3, which includes James Smith’s and Robert Eastburn’s narratives. The place of the village is understood as a practised cultural and social space and I identify how this space prompted the captives to negotiate their sense of identity(/ies). De Certeau’s notion of ‘space as a practiced place’ is a central spatial concept of my analysis of all stages as it allows me to investigate the social and cultural exposure and interaction between captives and captors. I apply this concept to the third stage to investigate the affect of a shared social space when captives and captors lived together. My analysis identifies the moments in which captives and captors negotiated

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<sup>93</sup> William Pote Jr, *The Journal of Captain William Pote, Jr. During His Captivity in the French and Indian War from May, 1745, to August, 1747* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1896), <<http://www.archive.org/details/journalofcaptain02pote>>; Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty; Exemplified in the Life and various Vicissitudes of Fortune, of Peter Williamson, a Disbanded Soldier* (York: N Nickson, 1757), <<https://archive.org/details/frenchindiancrue00will/page/n113/mode/2up>>.

their cultural differences in a social and cultural space that both exposed them to a different culture and facilitated the creation of a shared space to exchange their beliefs. The in-between or threshold state that many captives occupied while living with their captors (as some were adopted and became members of the Native American tribe) can be better analysed by employing the concept of interstitial spaces in order to show the discrepancy between the captives' old loyalties and the new, different culture they encountered. Following the idea of identity construction as playing different roles, this chapter will show how the captives integrated into their new families and how their new roles, which were in tension with their old roles as captives, might have changed their self-perception.

The fourth and final chapter, which focuses on two distinct case studies in their entirety, allows for a more comprehensive analysis, and complements my analysis of the different stages. In addition to Chapters 1 to 3, which discuss the initial stages of captivity narratives and introduce the spatial concepts that I applied in my analyses, Chapter 4 exemplifies how to apply my proposed template. Combining my structural approach with the various spatial theories shows how Susanna Johnson occupied a domestic space throughout her captivity that provides a unique perspective on captivity. Similarly, using my approach for Alexander Henry's account points to the multicultural space that Henry had occupied before captivity and shows how this space positively influenced his captivity experience. By looking at the two narratives in their entirety, this study can focus on the liminal aspects that might be found between or beyond the distinct stages. In addition to the binary reading – the established binary oppositions found in the narratives – used as a starting point for my analysis, dividing the narratives into stages also helps to focus on particular elements of captivity narratives and apply distinct spatial elements to the analysis. In order to avoid a categorisation that is too rigid and resembles a strict binary reading, however, the final chapter shows how to approach two captivity narratives in their entirety while maintaining the approach of investigating the narratives' different stages and spatial elements. Being aware of not adhering to a rigid structural approach, the role of spatial theories becomes particularly important here as it is through a spatial approach that we can analyse and question the distinct stages of captivity. By maintaining a spatial perspective in my analysis, the case studies help disrupt and problematise further the one-sided colonial perspective, showing how both Johnson and Henry are prompted to rethink their biased attitudes

towards the 'Other' through the heightened period of cultural contact, which can be investigated by analysing the social and cultural spaces the two captives co-produced and experienced.

The captivity narrative of Susanna Johnson is part of this study as it offers a female voice (in contrast to the previously discussed male-authored narratives). This female voice and the gendered elements in Johnson's narrative are analysed by identifying the spaces Johnson co-created and occupied. This study shows how Johnson remained in a domestic sphere, similar to the space she occupied before and after captivity, introducing another perspective on the binary opposition of freedom and captivity. Johnson's text responds to the question of how (and if) captives negotiated their sense of identity by depicting captivity as a way of reconstructing national identity. In Johnson's case, however, rather than the construction of one dominant national identity, the description of her family's fate(s) highlights the possibility of holding multiple identities, recalling the in-between, interstitial spaces that are at the core of captivity narratives.

While the captives' return home is not a separate section in this thesis, it is still a distinct stage and thus further discussed in more detail in the analysis of Johnson's narrative. Many captivity narratives do not expand on the return home, and because my analysis focuses on the spaces that captives occupied with their captors and examines how their self-perception was influenced by their experience in captivity, the description of the return home is less relevant. However, I highlight narratives that discuss the captives' return home where it adds to my analysis. The analysis of Susanna Johnson's narrative, for instance, emphasises the impact of her return home, focusing on her children's fate, too, and this becomes a crucial element for a comprehensive understanding of her account.

The second captivity narrative chosen as a case study is Alexander Henry's account of how he occupied a shared social space with his captors, exemplifying the culturally diverse environment that he experienced before captivity, which in turn informed the multiple roles he took on during his time in captivity. Similarly to my analysis of Johnson's narrative, my discussion of Henry's narrative provides a further perspective on the co-creation of particular spaces between captives and captors and the captives' negotiation of their sense of identity. By identifying the fort (Henry's home) as an interstitial space and by seeing role-playing as an element through which he

negotiated his identity, my analysis of Henry's text shows how the diverse cultural space of the fort informed his multiple roles during captivity. The roles he took on and eventually stepped out of were therefore the result of the fluid spaces Henry occupied. The chapter concludes by bringing the two examples of identity negotiation together to show how the captives navigated the liminal spaces in each of the phases of their captivity, showing the influence of cultural encounters on their competing roles as British colonial subjects, captives, and adopted members of their captors' family.

## Chapter 1: First Stage: The Attack and Capture – Transition into Captivity

### 1. Introduction

As most captivity narratives describe an attack on British colonial forts by Native American and/or French parties, the initial attack can be identified as the first stage of captivity, entailing the capture of the individuals who then wrote their narratives. While the attack obviously happens before the actual time in captivity, I suggest that the moment when British colonials' houses, forts or camps were invaded is a crucial part of captivity narratives as it represents, or rather initiates, the captives' transition from freedom into captivity. I argue that this transformation can be analysed by applying different concepts of space, in particular the concept of the threshold. This chapter calls into question the binary oppositions of safe/unsafe and free/unfree to show how the attack initiated a transformation by turning formerly safe spaces into unsafe and invaded spaces. This idea of the threshold as delimiting distinct spaces and giving meaning to the spaces on either side (for instance the safe space and inside of the house in contrast to the unsafe outside) is supported by Kathy Smith's definition of the threshold as a crucial element in constructing meaning 'through the existence of difference'.<sup>1</sup> I analyse scenes from the narratives of John Williams and John Norton and compare their descriptions of the attack in terms of the literal and metaphorical thresholds the Native Americans and the French had to cross during the attack. Further, I examine the impact these attacks had on the captives' perceptions of the spaces they found themselves in and consequently on their self-perception and new roles as captives.

Analysing the attack as both provoking a threshold experience for the British colonials and transforming the space they occupied offers a different reading of these two narratives, which have primarily been discussed because of their strong Puritan perspective. As a Congregational minister, Williams's religious beliefs are made clear throughout his account and the considerable use of religious terms and biblical metaphors is a recurring element in his narrative. It thus follows the tradition of Puritan captivity narratives that typically include, according to Vaughan and Clark, an

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, 'The Emptiness of Zero', p. 49.



'introspective concentration on God's role in the life of the individual and the collective community'.<sup>2</sup> Namias also highlights Williams's narrative as a template for Puritan captivity narratives, a 'heroic mold [that] turns captivity into a religious trial and holy crusade'.<sup>3</sup> Although Norton's account does not exhibit the same degree of religious reference, despite his role as a Puritan minister, his narrative follows the typical captivity narrative structure of recounting the attack by Native American and French forces, his journey to French Canada, his imprisonment in Quebec and his return home. While both accounts thus include typical representations of captivity – particularly Williams's depiction of himself as a pious man that stresses his Puritan colonial identity – a focus on spatial concepts can offer new insights in addition to the narratives' religious themes. By incorporating ideas of the threshold and liminal spaces in my analysis, my thesis offers a different reading of these texts that problematises the straightforward binary oppositions of safe/unsafe and free/unfree that is otherwise implied by narratives about an attack and capture. Exploring the liminal spaces that the two narratives indicate shows how Williams and Norton negotiated their cultural encounters and how they tried to maintain a distance between themselves and their attackers.

While the attack and capture obviously transformed Williams from a free man into a captive, analysing the different thresholds the Native American attackers crossed and/or violated suggests that they created an ambiguous space that reflects Williams's psychological threshold state. The Native Americans' invasion of his home transformed the seemingly safe space of his house into a hazardous space that resulted in the death of two of his children and the capture of himself and the rest of his family. My analysis employs Bhabha's definition of in-between zones as interstitial spaces to highlight the cultural hybridity that new cultural encounters created. This allows me to focus on the moments of liminality that the captives' exposure to their attackers created and how the invasion of their private spaces not only set in motion the men's transformation into captivity but also gives insight into their first encounter with their attackers and the liminal space the two men occupied before and during the attack.<sup>4</sup> Focusing on the liminality of the space of the attack enables me to question the binary oppositions of

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<sup>2</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Namias, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Bhabha, pp. 64, 54.

inside/outside, safe/unsafe by demonstrating how Bachelard's notion of the home as a 'major zone of protection' is challenged.<sup>5</sup>

The idea that a singular, physical threshold had to be crossed during the attack is complicated further by Norton's account, which does not include a physical invasion of his home, as his attackers stopped in front of the fort and surrounded it. Eventually, Norton and his fellows were taken captive after a one-and-a-half-day-long siege that ended with a negotiation between the two parties. By applying the concept of the threshold to Norton's report, I can investigate the attack's impact on the space around and within the fort, creating a space of ambiguity and danger that compromised Norton's personal space. Seeing the surroundings of the fort influenced by the attackers as well as the inhabitants of the fort allows me to identify how the mutable space around the fort changed during the attack and how this consequently influenced the space that Norton and his fellows occupied in the fort. Analysing Norton's text in terms of how it describes Norton's surroundings and how they changed during the attack allows me to focus on the interstitial space that was created inside and outside the fort. This in-between space was heavily influenced by the imminent threat of his capture, suggesting his already changing state, which the account creates by not only reporting what happened but also addressing probable outcomes and Norton's failed attempts to anticipate his attackers' actions. By exploring the new cultural space Norton depicts after their surrender, I show how he negotiated the new space he was confronted with by drawing on common stereotypes to separate himself and his fellows from his attackers. Both Williams and Norton employed mechanisms of othering to make sense of their exposure to a new and unfamiliar culture and this exposure in turn consolidated their liminal position as captives.

## **2. Content and Publication of the Selected Narratives**

John Williams was a captive from 1704 to 1706 and first published his narrative shortly after his return, in 1707.<sup>6</sup> Living in Deerfield, Massachusetts, during the time of the attack, Williams was the Congregational minister when the town was seized by a French

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<sup>5</sup> Bachelard, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> For this analysis, I use the edition of Williams's account from Vaughan and Clark's edited collection *Puritans Among the Indians: John Williams, 'The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion'*, in *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption 1676-1724*, ed. by Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981), pp. 169-226.

and Native American war party.<sup>7</sup> Williams was taken captive together with his wife and children and they had to travel with their captors to Montreal after the attack. Apart from strong emotive language and several occasions when Williams talks about his feelings, his narrative also includes many Biblical quotes and references to God.<sup>8</sup> The religious focus of Williams's narrative has already been briefly mentioned, and Vaughan and Clark discuss the influence of Cotton Mather on Williams's text in their introduction to the edited narrative, claiming that 'the two clergymen discussed [...] how best to turn it to God's glory', although Williams is seen as the sole author of his narrative.<sup>9</sup> Williams describes how during his journey he had to leave behind the familiarity of his home and refers to the wilderness he encountered on his journey to Montreal. Similarly to other narratives, Williams describes the cultural encounters he experienced along the journey, being exposed to both Native Americans and French Canadians, and he also reports the hardships he had to endure (his physical exhaustion and, more significantly, having to witness his children's and wife's deaths). After eight weeks with his Native American captors, Williams was redeemed by the French governor in Montreal, where he spent the rest of his captivity until his release in 1707.

John Norton was taken captive in what was formerly called Fall Town (and later Bernard's Town) in Massachusetts.<sup>10</sup> Since Norton also refers to this town as Fort Massachusetts, the town can be imagined to be like a fort, especially since it was clearly delineated and only accessible through a gate, according to Norton's narrative and his description of the attack. Norton was captured in 1746 and his narrative was published

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<sup>7</sup> Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark (eds.), 'John Williams', in *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption 1676-1724* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981), pp. 167-68 (p. 167).

<sup>8</sup> Teresa Toulouse compares Williams's text to prominent female captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's and Hannah Swarton's to point out the similar focus on the captive's need 'to be submissive and passive to God's will', and thus demonstrates how Williams employed features of women's narratives (Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 133). As my thesis does not primarily concern itself with analysing Williams's account as a Puritan narrative, see Toulouse's *The Captive's Position* for further reading.

<sup>9</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'John Williams', p. 168.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel G. Drake (ed.), 'Notice of the Rev. Mr. John Norton', in *Narrative of the Capture and Burning of Fort Massachusetts by the French and Indians, in the Time of the War of 1744-1749, and the Captivity of All those Stationed there, to the Number of Thirty Persons. Written at the Time by One of the Captives, the Rev. Mr. John Norton, Chaplain of the Fort* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1870), pp. 3-5 <<http://www.archive.org/details/narrativeofcaptu00nort>> (p. 4).

shortly after his return home, in 1748.<sup>11</sup> While Williams's account emphasises the fact that he was taken together with his wife and children, Norton reports the capture of the whole fort by Native American and French allies. Norton and those inhabitants who survived the attack had to travel to Quebec, where they were imprisoned and released one year later in 1747. Although Norton was a Puritan minister, Levernier and Cohen highlight the fact that his narrative 'has little of the self-scrutiny and moralizing of the earlier Puritan captivity accounts', such as Williams's text.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the moments of cultural encounter in Norton's narrative, which provides a rather detailed account of the journey to French Canada, it also includes an account of Norton's time in imprisonment in Quebec, which is characterised by kind treatment from visitors who came to the prison regularly to bring gifts, and thus suggests his privileged situation in the prison.

### **3. John Williams's 'The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion'**

#### **3.1 '[B]reak[ing] open doors and windows': Multiple Thresholds**

John Williams introduces his description of the Native Americans' attack by foreshadowing its impact: 'On the twenty-ninth of February, 1703/4, not long before break of day, the enemy came in like a flood upon us'.<sup>13</sup> The biblical and natural reference in Williams's comparison of the attackers to a 'flood' suggests the sense of surprise and punishment, and the devastating impact the attack had on the whole fort. Williams further refers to the sense of surprise when he continues the description of the attack on his house, which suggests the various literal thresholds the attackers crossed:

They came to my house in the beginning of the onset and, by their violent endeavors to break open doors and windows with axes and hatchets, awakened me out of sleep; on which I leaped out of bed, and running toward the door,

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<sup>11</sup> For my analysis, I use the version edited by Samuel Drake: John Norton, 'The Redeemed Captive, Being a Narrative of the Taking and Carrying into Captivity the Reverend Mr. John Norton When Fort Massachusetts Surrendered to a Large Body of French & Indians Aug. 20th, 1746', in *Narrative of the Capture and Burning of Fort Massachusetts by the French and Indians, in the Time of the War of 1744-1749, and the Captivity of All those Stationed there, to the Number of Thirty Persons. Written at the Time by One of the Captives, the Rev. Mr. John Norton, Chaplain of the Fort*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Albany: J. Munsell, 1870), pp. 9-51 <<http://www.archive.org/details/narrativeofcaptu00nort>>.

<sup>12</sup> James Levernier and Hennig Cohen (eds.), 'A Puritan Minister Describes French Savagery and Treachery', in *The Indians and their Captives* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), pp. 47-49 (p. 47).

<sup>13</sup> Williams, p. 172. In line with the religious symbolism Williams uses throughout his narrative, this quotation resembles a passage from Isaiah 59.19: 'When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him'.

perceived the enemy making their entrance into the house. I called to awaken two soldiers in the chamber and returned towards my bedside for my arms. The enemy immediately brake into the room, I judge to the number of twenty, with painted faces and hideous acclamations.<sup>14</sup>

While the French and Native Americans crossed the literal threshold of the door as Williams reports that they made ‘their entrance into the house’ after ‘break[ing] open doors’, his description complicates the idea that they crossed a single threshold to get into the house. On the one hand, Williams’s house must have been locked as the attackers not only had to break the windows but also the doors open to enter. Unable to hinder them from entering, the forceful entrance violated Williams’s safe space and suggests his powerlessness over his personal space and property. On the other hand, the attackers’ crossing of the literal threshold of the door is complicated by the reference to multiple doors; while one would expect Williams’s house to have multiple windows that they could break into, the reference to more than one door raises a question about the location of these doors as this could suggest that the house had a front and a rear door. This, consequently, could imply that the French and Native Americans surrounded Williams’s house first, leaving him no possibility to escape.

The idea that the safe space of Williams’s home was transformed by the attack is highlighted by the fact that the attackers punctured the borders of Williams’s house in multiple ways as they made ‘violent endeavors to break open doors and windows with axes and hatchets’.<sup>15</sup> That the attacking party weakened the boundaries of Williams’s house by breaking open the door contradicts Perec’s notion of the door as dividing space and ‘prevent[ing] osmosis’, because the attackers transformed the safe space of the home and Williams’s private space thus merged with the hazardous space outside.<sup>16</sup> However, the French and Native Americans not only crossed the literal threshold of the door but also broke the windows of Williams’s house, which results in his private space becoming porous. The attack transformed fixed borders such as windows into points of entrance, which extends Gillian Beer’s contention that while ‘[d]oors police the threshold, windows relate the outside world to the interior’ as their

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<sup>14</sup> Williams, p. 172.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Perec, p. 37.

normal function was turned upside down by the attack.<sup>17</sup> Although the doors were likely to be the main entrance points, the broken windows suggest that Williams's private space became more vulnerable as boundaries were broken through and windows became both exits and entrances. Further taking up Beer's idea that windows 'seal the passage between outer and inner', the active breaking through the windows, the unsealing of the border between inside and outside, transformed the house into a space that was no longer protected and delineated from the outside as illustrated by the metaphor of the flood.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the boundaries not only weakened but were torn down due to the violence of the attack, leaving Williams's private space vulnerable and open to change.

The lack of stable boundaries between Williams's safe space and the unsafe outside, reflected in the punctured and violated thresholds of his home, shows how the attack produced the in-between space that Williams occupied during the attack. Given that two soldiers were already in Williams's home when the attack happened implies a sense of liminality that had characterised his home even before the attack. The presence of two soldiers inside and the knowledge about the presence of the 'enemy' outside influence Williams's space of the home. Despite the sense of safety the house probably evoked, Williams's home unsettles Bachelard's idea of the home as a 'zone of major protection' because it was not a private space.<sup>19</sup> The sense of uncertainty the presence of soldiers indicates resembles the threshold status Norton's home evoked (which will be discussed further in the analysis of Norton's narrative), and is reinforced when we acknowledge the presence of the Native Americans before the attack, given that, as Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney state, '[t]he region's natives were an integral part of Williams's life'.<sup>20</sup> Williams's state between defending his home and becoming a captive is reflected in his account of how the Native Americans further invaded the space inside

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<sup>17</sup> Gillian Beer, 'Windows: Looking In, Looking Out, Breaking Through', in *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, ed. by Subha Mukherji (London: Anthem Press, 2011), pp. 3-16 (p. 3).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Bachelard, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, 'Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 52 (1995), pp. 3-46 (p. 10). Jules Zanger discusses North American captivity narratives as a type of frontier literature since these narratives 'deal with the trials and temptations of people living very close to a line separating the familiar, the ordinary, and the accepted from the unknown, the terrible, and the forbidden' (Jules Zanger, 'Living on the Edge: Indian Captivity Narrative and Fairy Tale', in *Clio* 13 (1984), 123-32 (p. 125).

his home when they ‘immediately brake into the room’.<sup>21</sup> Although Williams called for help and returned to his room for his weapon, the attackers’ entrance into the bedroom suggests the quick pace of the attack and Williams’s inability to protect the privacy and safety of his bedroom. The description also indicates that they crossed more than one literal threshold during the attack, underlining the multiplicity of thresholds.

My contention that Williams’s home no longer fully protected him from the outside, influencing his personal state and reinforcing his perception of the hazardous space inside and outside his house, is supported by Attie de Lange, Gain Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn and Jakob Lothe’s discussion of Bachelard’s emphasis on the house as ‘mark[ing] a boundary, a transition from something controllable [...] to something [...] potentially dangerous’, which shows the devastating impact of the attack, forcing the boundary of Williams’s home to collapse.<sup>22</sup> The multiple thresholds that were crossed during the attack contribute to the sense of in-betweenness, because Williams’s description no longer upholds the binary oppositions of safe/unsafe, and thus consolidates his fate as a captive.

Thinking of the attack on Williams’s house as the crossing of a threshold helps us understand how the safe space of his home was transformed into a hazardous space as a result of the attack. As Rosita D’Amora argues in ‘Writing Through Osmotic Borders’, ‘a threshold delimits two other contiguous spaces, on each one of its sides, and implicitly defines them in terms of opposition to each other (outside/inside, inclusion/exclusion, mother tongue/foreign language)’.<sup>23</sup> While the threshold of the door(s) marks the delineation of outside and inside before the attack, I suggest that this dichotomy is in itself transformed into the opposition safe/unsafe upon the French and Native Americans’ entrance into the fort, during which Williams’s house was still distinct from the invaded space of the fort. The forceful entrance not only reversed the inside into outside and safe into unsafe but transformed the entire fort into a dangerous space. Indeed, the threshold that the French and Native American party crossed upon their attack on Williams’s house broke down this binary opposition in that the space within

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<sup>21</sup> Williams, p. 172.

<sup>22</sup> Attie de Lange, Gain Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn and Jakob Lothe (eds.), ‘Introduction’, in *Literary Landscapes: From Modernism to Postcolonialism* (London: Palgrave, 2008), pp. xi-xxv (pp. xiv-xv).

<sup>23</sup> Rosita D’Amora, ‘Writing Through Osmotic Borders: Boundaries, Liminality and Language in Mehmet Yashin’s Poetics’, in *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, ed. by Subha Mukherji (London: Anthem Press, 2011), pp. 101-11 (p. 102).

Williams's house could no longer be seen as a space that was inherently different from the rest of the fort as shown by the metaphor of the flood.

### **3.2 The Liminal Space of Williams's Home**

The invasion of Williams's house signifies the new social space that was, in de Certeau's terms, practised in the moments when Williams negotiated the new culture he encountered. Seeing this social space as an interstitial space underlines the cultural differences between the participants who actualised this space. This space exposed Williams to his attackers and gives insight into how he negotiated this encounter, which results in a negative description of this 'other' culture. The repeated use of the word 'enemy' when referring to the Native Americans highlights the fact that Williams perceived them as invaders of his private space. By mentioning the number of attackers who entered his house, which he 'judge[d] to the number of twenty', he takes up the image of the French and Native Americans coming like 'a flood' over his house.<sup>24</sup> The invasion of Williams's familiar space is then further underlined by their 'painted faces and hideous acclamations', which hints at the Native Americans' different cultural habits.<sup>25</sup> This indicates Williams's efforts to establish the differences between him and his attackers, maintaining difference culturally when the physical barriers have been taken down. While Williams's narrative mentions 'the enemy' to refer to both the French and Native Americans, it singles out the Native Americans by describing their physical appearance and specifically mentioning that those who entered his house 'were all of them Indians and Macquas'.<sup>26</sup> His use of the words 'hideous acclamations' in particular draws further attention to his negative perception of the event, and of his attackers. Williams's use of this phrase, without further commenting on their language, allows for different interpretations. While this could be seen as his attempt to describe a language that was unknown to him, it also indicates his negative attitude towards the Native Americans. The vague description accentuates the interstitial space that was created by the cultural tension between Williams and the attackers and underlines

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<sup>24</sup> Williams, p. 172.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 173. Williams makes the distinction between 'Indians', 'Macquas' and 'Eastern Indians' in his narrative. According to Haefeli and Sweeney, Williams most likely uses the term 'Indians' to refer to the St. Francis Abenakis, 'Eastern Indians' referring to the Cowassucks, Pennacooks and Pigwackets and writes about the French Mohawks and Hurons when he mentions the 'Macquas' (Haefeli and Sweeney, p. 10).



Williams's state of alienation. While the invasion destabilised Williams's sense of safety, the alien culture that he found himself exposed to further enhanced the instability of his situation.

Williams's description of what happened after his capture, during the continuing invasion of his house, shows how his transition into a captive was complicated due to the ambiguous space he occupied. The sense of ambiguity the following scene conveys is related to the different treatment he experienced compared to some of the other colonials, reflected in the blurring of the binary opposition of freedom and captivity:

The enemies who entered the house were all of them Indians and Macquas, insulted over me awhile, holding up hatchets over my head threatening to burn all I had. But yet God beyond expectation made us in a great measure to be pitied, for though some were so cruel and barbarous as to take and carry to the door two of my children and murder them, as also a Negro woman, yet they gave me liberty to put on my clothes, keeping me bound with a cord on one arm, till I put on my clothes to the other, and then changing my cord, they let me dress myself and then pinioned me again. [They] gave liberty to my dear wife to dress herself and our children.<sup>27</sup>

Williams's account of how he was allowed to dress himself while simultaneously reporting the murder of other members of his household creates a sense of uncertainty, enhanced by the fact that the narrative does not provide any explanation for the different fates. Moreover, Williams's use of the word 'liberty' to refer to his wife's and his own permission to dress before they had to leave their house contrasts with his role as a captive. The word 'liberty' not only fails here to indicate the opposite of captivity but its broader meaning is compromised further when Williams explains that while he was able to dress himself, he was still tied to his captors at all times. It shows that the opposition of liberty (or freedom) and captivity was obscured and that the binary is not absolute. This situation, in which Williams had to dress while being held, marks, besides his inability to defend and protect his family, another example of how his personal space was intruded upon, consolidating his role as a captive.

The mention of two of Williams's children being murdered further confirms the sense of ambiguity the description of the attack creates in that it underlines how he

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<sup>27</sup> Williams, p. 173. Vaughan and Clark give additional information in their annotated version of Williams's narrative, stating that the 'Negro woman' Williams refers to is 'Parthena, a slave woman' (Williams, p. 173). Williams also mentions Parthena's husband, who was killed by the Native Americans on their journey, when Williams reports that '[the Indians] killed my Negro man'. According to Vaughan and Clark, this man was Frank, Parthena's husband (Ibid., p. 174).

perceived the invaders whom he describes as ‘cruel and barbarous’.<sup>28</sup> This description ties in with the unfamiliar cultural space Williams was confronted with, and simultaneously indicates his efforts to dissociate himself and his fellows from ‘the enemy’. Additionally, the concise description of the death of Williams’s children includes a reference to another literal threshold as his children were brought ‘to the door’.<sup>29</sup> The account does not provide enough information to tell whether Williams’s children were carried outside or killed in front of the door, or even in the doorway. Although the description of this particular scene is rather incomplete and does not enable a comprehensive analysis of what exactly happened, the repeated reference to the door of Williams’s house indicates that he was conscious of the ‘borders’ of his home. Building on Viljoen and van der Merwe’s claim that borders function as filters and are places ‘where you can cross into a different zone – in literature often into different worlds or states of being’, I read Williams’s focus on the door as underlining the different fates of himself and his family.<sup>30</sup> While the entrance of Native Americans consolidated his new state as a captive, the door was also the place where two of his children lost their lives, entering, in other words, a new world and state of being.

Williams’s account of the murder of his children raises further questions about the significance of the door in his narrative. By analysing the position of the Native American who murdered Williams’s children I want to expand on Bachelard’s idea of the door as a place that reflects (or enables) daydreams. Developing Bachelard’s definition of the door as ‘an entire cosmos of the Half-open’ allows me to push my reading of the passage about the children’s murder further, investigating the imagined or interstitial space that is actualised in this doorway.<sup>31</sup> The attack enabled Williams to highlight the differences between him and his attackers by othering them and creating a negative image. The space suggested by the scene at the door, then, contributes to this savage – or rather monstrous – image of the attackers. This scene may even evoke mystical elements that point to the figure of Moloch, a ‘Canaanite god to whom children were sacrificed’.<sup>32</sup> While the Biblical narrative of Moloch involves the sacrifice of children by

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<sup>28</sup> Williams, p. 173.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Viljoen and van der Merwe, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Bachelard, p. 222.

<sup>32</sup> David L. Jeffrey (ed.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Michigan: Erdmans, 1992), p. 516.

burning them, the fact that Williams had to witness the murder of his children shows some resemblance to this Biblical myth if we see the murder of the children as a sacrifice which enabled the other captives to survive. As we do not know what exactly happened to Williams's children, Bachelard's idea of the door as instigating daydreams connects to the idea of an imagined space created through the events that take place there.

Although Williams's reference to his children's murder might bear mystical and symbolic significance, he does not mention his children's death again in his narrative. By contrast, Williams does mention the death of his wife, who was killed at the beginning of their journey, later in his narrative, when he reports receiving a letter that informed him that his wife was 'decently buried'.<sup>33</sup> When Vaughan and Clark discuss Williams's narrative in their introduction to *Puritans among the Indians*, they only mention the death of his wife, and point out that the tragic depiction of her death helps create a more fascinating captivity narrative.<sup>34</sup> Vaughan and Clark rightly point to the role of the description of his wife's death in creating sympathy among the readers. However, the fact that they do not mention the children's death further suggests the dreamlike quality of the murder in the doorway. Moreover, the spatial positioning of this murder in the doorway of his house puts Williams's description into perspective: while the reference to the doorway highlights the delimited space of his house, it simultaneously suggests how the hazardous space of the surroundings blends with the formerly safe space of the house and underlines the transformation of the home into a dangerous space created by intercultural violence.

### **3.3 Leaving Home**

While Williams had already effectively become a captive, the leaving of his house marks the crossing of another literal threshold at the end of the attack, and ascribes a certain finality to his role as a free man: 'About sun an hour high we were all carried out of the house for a march and saw many of the houses of my neighbors in flames, perceiving the whole fort, one house excepted, to be taken'.<sup>35</sup> Being 'carried out of the house' and having to cross the literal threshold of the door reflects a further transformation of the space in and around Williams's house. While the Native Americans crossed the

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<sup>33</sup> Williams, pp. 176, 196.

<sup>34</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, p. 173.

threshold(s) of the house and invaded Williams's safe space, his crossing of the threshold marks his entry into the unfamiliar space outside of his home. Williams not only mentions the fates of his neighbours but also reports that the attackers set their houses on fire and thus destroyed their property.<sup>36</sup> While the destroying of property after the capture is a common element mentioned in many captivity narratives, and provides another insight into the strategies of warfare of his attackers, this reference simultaneously suggests that there was no way back to his old home and life. His description implies that once the fiction of the safety of his home had been (literally) punctured, there was no going back; while Williams survived captivity and was able to return to where he came from, a return to the house that formerly constituted his home was rendered impossible. This sense of finality also compromised Williams's idea of 'home' in a metaphorical sense: while the literal invasion of his personal space resulted in his captivity, the attack destroyed Williams's concept of 'having a home'. The home lost its symbolic value as the space of the house no longer entailed familiar qualities, such as safety, which 'being at home' would otherwise imply. The destruction of his house confirmed Williams's new role as a captive in that it made clear that not only his old role as a free man but also his property had been destroyed, making it impossible to return to his old life.

Williams's narrative continuously exhibits his religious beliefs through numerous references to God, but it is the moment when he had to leave his home that particularly highlights the impact of Williams's capture, and the consolidation of his new role as a captive. It indicates how his experience is closely connected to his religion, suggesting that captivity is a trial by God:

Who can tell what sorrows pierced our souls when we saw ourselves carried away from God's sanctuary to go into a strange land exposed to so many trials, the journey being at least three hundred miles we were to travel, the snow up to the knees, and we never inured to such hardships and fatigues, the place we were to be carried to a popish country.<sup>37</sup>

While the description of the events of the attack generally follows a consecutive order, the narrative here foreshadows the hardship Williams and his fellows will have to endure on their journey. The reference to the fort as 'God's sanctuary' suggests the state

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<sup>36</sup> Williams, p. 173.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

of distress Williams was in when leaving his home. The opposition between the fort as a sanctuary and the strenuous journey reinforces his new role as a captive, a role that Williams associates with physical and emotional hardship. As Williams's home had already been invaded, this passage confirms Said's description of the 'imaginative or figurative value' of the house, which is, in Williams's case, the safe and familiar space that his home evoked in contrast with the unfamiliar outside.<sup>38</sup> However, his perception of the fort as 'God's sanctuary' contrasts with the invaded space that the narration of the attack describes. By highlighting that he had to travel to 'a popish country', Williams's narrative connects spatial markers with religious imagery, drawing a difference between the metaphorically safe and familiar space of his home, reflecting his Puritan beliefs, and the unfamiliar space, suggesting the religion he will be exposed to during his captivity. The allusion to the Biblical phrase 'stranger in a strange land' emphasises the theme of alienation and otherness.<sup>39</sup> The sense of distress his narrative evokes supports the claim by de Lange and others that '[p]lace is linked to identity, and [...], under given circumstances, to a sense of threatened identity'.<sup>40</sup> This idea contrasts with Bachelard's notion of the house as a secure and intimate place and exemplifies how Williams's house was transformed into a space that could threaten his sense of identity – through his capture, but also through the anticipation of the unknown outside the borders of his home.<sup>41</sup> Without denying the strong Puritan perspective of this narrative, the spatial focus of my analysis homes in on the direct confrontation between captives and captors and offers the opportunity to explore the impact of this encounter, which is, in Williams's case, his need to distance himself from 'the Other', which he achieves by focusing on the different religious beliefs.

My analysis of Williams's narrative has demonstrated the multiple thresholds his attackers crossed and how the attack transformed his private space, thus initiating his transformation into a captive. Building on the idea of the multiplicity of thresholds and the attackers' ability to invade and transform the colonials' homes and therefore confront them with a new cultural space, my analysis of Norton's captivity narrative will raise further questions on the significance of literal versus metaphorical thresholds and

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<sup>38</sup> Said, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Exodus 2.22, King James Version.

<sup>40</sup> De Lange, Fincham, Hawthorn and Lothe, p. xiii.

<sup>41</sup> Bhabha, p. 31.

add to my efforts to challenge the binary oppositions of inside/outside, safe/unsafe, and freedom/captivity.

#### **4. John Norton's 'The Redeemed Captive, Being a Narrative of the Taking and Carrying into Captivity the Reverend Mr. John Norton'**

##### **4.1 The Initial Attack: Creating a Threshold Space**

In contrast to Williams's description of the Native Americans invading his private space when they attacked the fort, Norton does not report the literal crossing of any 'border' when he describes the initial attack on the fort:

Tuesday, 19th. Between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, when, through the good providence of God, we were all in the fort, twenty-two men, three women, and five children, there appeared an army of French and Indians, eight or nine hundred in number, commanded by Monsieur Regand de Vaudrulle, who, having surrounded the fort on every side, began with hideous acclamations to rush forward upon the fort, firing incessantly upon us on every side.<sup>42</sup>

The attack on the fort as described in Norton's narrative differs from Williams's account in that the French and Native Americans did not actually fully enter and invade the fort but stopped in front of its gates. While the attack by Native Americans and Williams's subsequent capture is depicted as happening over a short period of time in his narrative, the initial moment of the attack is prolonged in Norton's account, consisting of several shorter attacks. The attackers occupied the surroundings of the fort for one and a half days, during which Norton and his fellows tried to defend themselves. Although the attackers did not cross the gates, the constant firing clearly marked an invasion of the fort: the space that surrounded it but also the space within the borders of the fort. As in Williams's description, the attack changed the nature of the formerly safe and guarded space of Norton's home. Consequently, this space was transformed by the bullets that entered the fort's space, even though the threshold between safety and hazard was not literally crossed by the French and Native Americans.

Since the literal threshold had not yet been crossed by the attackers, I suggest that the distance of the attackers from the inhabitants of the fort can be seen as creating a threshold space. This threshold space was produced by both the presence of the threshold, or border, itself and the people on either side of it. The account reports that the French and Native American forces not only surrounded them 'on every side' but

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<sup>42</sup> Norton, p. 10.

fired at them 'on every side' as well, suggesting a sense of entrapment.<sup>43</sup> This was accentuated when the attackers started firing at the fort, implying that, even if Norton or one of his fellows had attempted it, an escape would have been almost impossible. The threshold space thus reflects Norton's status as his fate of becoming a captive seems inevitable. Although the attackers had not physically entered the fort yet, Norton's state is similar to the sense of entrapment that Williams describes in his narrative when his attackers entered through windows and doors, making an escape impossible. This, in turn, supports the idea of a metaphorical intrusion into Norton's personal space because he was no longer free.

By seeing the distance between the attackers and the fort as creating a threshold space or in-between zone, we can understand how it evokes a specific meaning and has a multifaceted significance. For the attacking army, it signified the distance they still had to cover in order to cross the literal border of the fort, which allowed them to plan their next moves while putting pressure on the fort by firing at it. For the inhabitants of the fort, however, the space suggested a safe distance from their attackers, which meant that they had not been defeated yet, while also creating a sense of tension as Norton reports that they needed to wait for the attackers to come closer so 'that we might have a good prospect of doing execution'.<sup>44</sup> This discrepancy in meaning ties in with the sense of ambiguity this in-between zone creates, which is actualised by Norton's description of the conflict between the colonists' need to defend the fort and their lack of ammunition to fully engage in battle.

The topographical space between the French and Native Americans and the people in the fort, however, is not a fixed space but rather is open to change during the attack. As Norton describes in his account, they only returned fire 'when we had a very good opportunity and fair prospect of doing execution'.<sup>45</sup> This suggests that the French and Native Americans moved and re-grouped while surrounding the fort. Employing de Certeau's concept of space, it is because of the attackers and their movements around the fort that the surroundings of the fort were transformed into a hazardous space that was determined by the attackers' closeness or distance.<sup>46</sup> Because of the changing

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<sup>43</sup> Norton, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> De Certeau, p. 117.

distance between the invaders and the fort, the space surrounding the fort seems unstable: 'some taking opportunity to run from one tree and stump to another, and so drew nearer to the fort. This they did in a very subtle manner, running so rooked [*sic*] that it was very difficult to shoot at them'.<sup>47</sup> Norton's sense of passivity and his inability to anticipate but only to react to the attackers' movements underline the sense of uncertainty and instability that the space surrounding the fort created. The space became relatively safe when the attackers distanced themselves from the fort. However, while the immediate proximity of the French and Native American men simultaneously endangered Norton and his fellows, their chances of fighting their invaders were higher when the attackers were closer to the fort, 'for we dare not spend our ammunition upon them that were at such a distance'.<sup>48</sup> The sense of instability and uncertainty that Norton experienced during the attack mirrored the instability of the space surrounding the fort, which paradoxically both protected the British colonials and the attackers.

#### **4.2 Transforming Space**

By focusing on the threshold space around the fort we can see that Norton's description is dominated by the cultural differences he detected during the attack, reflecting the interstitial qualities of this space. One example that implies a changed perception of Norton's environment is found in his report of how the French and Native Americans attacked and fired at the fort. Using the same phrase as John Williams, Norton reports that the attackers rushed towards the fort 'with hideous acclamations'.<sup>49</sup> The formerly familiar space Norton experienced has been transformed into an alien space created by the attackers, which Norton attempts to describe by pointing to an unknown language and behaviour. Bhabha's term 'Third Space of Enunciation' underlines the interstitial qualities of the space Norton occupied as it confronted him with a different language and unfamiliar behaviour.<sup>50</sup> The description of his attackers' behaviour not only suggests a transformation of the threshold space that marked the surroundings of the fort but also of the space inside the fort, as the inhabitants could hear the attackers shouting.

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<sup>47</sup> Norton, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Bhabha, p. 54.



While the use of the phrase ‘hideous acclamations’ might suggest Norton’s negative attitude towards his attackers due to the rather pejorative reference to their language and behaviour, it underlines, as in Williams’s text, the state of alienation Norton occupied because of the attack. The alienating cultural encounter is manifested in his repeated use of the word ‘hideous’, as when he reports that ‘the enemy frequently raised us by their hideous outcries’ during the night or when he describes the French and Native Americans surrounding the fort who ‘shouted, or rather yelled, with the most hideous outcries’.<sup>51</sup> Although Williams’s description of his attackers’ behaviour as ‘hideous’ implies a negative image of Native Americans, the reference to both Native Americans and French in Norton’s text suggests that this phrase does not necessarily point to a negative or biased image of Native Americans alone; it rather hints at the cross-cultural quality of the attack in regard to the French and Native American alliance, pointing to the joined warfare of the attackers, and consolidates the captive’s sense of unfamiliarity with these practices.<sup>52</sup> I suggest that this sense of unfamiliarity was heightened by the aggressive spirit of the attack as Norton points out that the attackers not only shouted, but rather ‘yelled’ at them. This act of yelling, then, is underlined by Norton’s description of his attackers’ ‘hideous outcries’ and suggests their strong presence around the fort as they were not only visible but also audible due to their ‘outcries’ and yelling.

Just as the space surrounding the fort was open to change during the attack, the physical space within the fort was open to change, too. In accordance with Lefebvre’s contention that ‘every spatial envelope implies a barrier between inside and out, [and] that this barrier is always relative [...], always permeable’, both the inside and outside space of the fort were changed by its attackers and its inhabitants.<sup>53</sup> The following passage shows how the attack influenced the physical shape of the fort and thus literally changed the space Norton and the others found themselves in, exemplifying the ‘permeable’ barriers within the fort:

When the evening came on the sergeant gave orders that all the tubs, pails, and vessels of every sort, in every room, should be filled with water, and went himself

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<sup>51</sup> Norton, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> The idea that cross-cultural qualities of the shared spaces that captives occupied with their captors is more common in captivity narratives than the binary opposition of us/them would suggest will be further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>53</sup> Lefebvre, p. 176.

to see it done; he also looked to the doors, that they were made as fast as possible. He likewise cut a passage from one room to another, that he might put the fort into as good a posture for defense as might be, in case they should attempt to storm it.<sup>54</sup>

Besides the locked gate that protects the entrance, the sergeant now also ordered them to lock and/or barricade the doors inside the fort and cut a passage between two rooms. While this measure was part of the overall strategy to barricade the fort, the inhabitants were no longer able to move freely within the fort (as certain doors had been locked) and were confronted with a new layout of their home (as they also created a new passage between rooms). The changed interior and compromised mobility thus reflect the inhabitants' loss of freedom. Adjusting the layout of the fort signifies the literal transformation of Norton's home and adds to the metaphorical change the space of the fort had already been exposed to as the siege had violated the safe space of the fort. The sergeant's aim to make the doors 'as fast as possible' also suggests the creation of additional borders. In this way, Bachelard's view of the house as a 'major zone of protection' underlines the fort's significance as Norton's protective barrier against his attackers.<sup>55</sup> The doors that formerly might have signified several thresholds opening onto the interior space of the fort were now transformed into clear and fixed borders. In contrast to the doors that were barricaded, some formerly separate rooms were connected. This measure to 'cut a passage from one room to another' implies a reconfiguration of the physical space that the inhabitants now occupied. The limited mobility, the reorganisation of the fort, and therefore the change of the inhabitants' living space add to the idea that the attackers transformed the fort into a liminal space, which reflected the in-between state of Norton and his fellows between free and captive.

### **4.3 Imagined Spaces**

While the descriptions of the spaces Norton occupied imply the sense of uncertainty and danger that the attack induced, and mirror the ambiguous state he found himself in, his attempts to make sense of his experience can be better understood by exploring the moments when he creates imagined spaces in his narrative. He employs these spaces to interpret and make sense of what was happening during the siege and to

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<sup>54</sup> Norton, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Bhabha, p. 31.

project his fears onto. The narrative highlights Norton's and his fellows' need to be vigilant at all times as they were not always able to clearly track their attackers' movements:

The enemy kept a constant fire upon us, and, as I thought, approached nearer and in greater numbers than they had in the daytime. We had but little encouragement to fire upon the enemy, having but the light of their fire to direct us, yet we dared not wholly omit it, lest they should be emboldened to storm the fort.<sup>56</sup>

While this passage gives insight into the inhabitants' strategy of defending the fort, it also highlights the importance of time, or rather the time of day. The inability to clearly see their enemy during the night adds to the uncertainty of the situation as Norton states that he 'thought' the enemy would approach nearer. Whether or not they actually did is not clear from the account as it only describes Norton's assumption, suggesting that he could not see enough to verify it. His attempt to interpret the situation with 'having but the light of their fire to direct us' implies that the space he perceives is (partly) imaginary. While Bachelard's definition of the door as enabling daydreams is used in Williams's analysis to point to the imagined space that was produced through the murder of his children at the door, the fort's space in Norton's narrative can be identified as a 'cosmos of the Half-open' in itself because it is based on Norton's assumptions.<sup>57</sup> This imagined space does not reflect Norton's actual situation but rather suggests his unstable position and shows his attempts to imagine the precise locations of the invaders, which indicates the liminal qualities of Norton's state.

The example of Norton's inability to anticipate his attackers' strategy and tell whether the British colonials' defence was successful reflects his fear of the enemy approaching in the dark. His in-between state prompted him to draw on alternative realities in order to make sense of his experience. For instance, Norton reports shooting at their enemies and concludes that 'this we did probably with success', which enhances his state of uncertainty.<sup>58</sup> Norton's failed attempts to anticipate the attackers' actions create another form of imagined space that gives insight into how he makes sense of the attack as in this example: 'Towards evening the enemy began to use their axes and

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<sup>56</sup> Norton, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Bachelard, p. 222.

<sup>58</sup> Norton, p. 11.

hatchets. Some were thoughtful that they were preparing ladders in order to storm the fort in the night; but afterward we found our mistake, for they were preparing faggots in order to burn it'.<sup>59</sup> While Norton immediately gives away that their interpretation was false and provides us with the actual reason for the attackers' actions, the creation of this imagined scenario conveys Norton's need for an explanation. Norton's ability to clarify his initial misconception of the situation, however, does not lessen his sense of uncertainty at the time of the event, but reinforces the sense of danger and threat. In contrast to Williams, who reports a direct confrontation with his captors during the attack, Norton's account lacks this direct exposure and a sense of 'direct' confrontation (as the French and Native Americans shot at the fort but did not storm it). This, in turn, leads to an imagined production of spaces in Norton's narrative that reflect his projected fears and uncertainty.

#### **4.4 Negotiating Space and Cultural Encounters**

The account of the eventual negotiation between the British colonials and the attackers shows an alternative form of the threshold in that Norton and some of his fellows had to leave the barricaded fort – their comparatively safe space – in order to negotiate. After the lengthy description of the siege, Norton reports that '[a]bout twelve o'clock [of the second day], the enemy desired to parley'.<sup>60</sup> This new development in the narrative indicates that Norton crossed the literal threshold of the fort in order to meet with his attackers in an open field. Additionally, since Norton only mentions meeting the general of the French army, we could infer that they met in a space remote from the rest of the French and Native American forces. I further suggest that their negotiation transformed the surroundings of the fort from a hazardous space defined by uncertainty into a space that is, at least for the time of the negotiation, marked by ceasefire, and which thus allowed Norton and his fellows to safely cross the threshold of the fort. This scene emphasises how space is reconfigured according to the actions and intentions of Norton, his fellows, and the French general. The transformation of the space outside the fort supports Massey's definition of space as 'always under construction', as the negotiation enabled Norton and the others to occupy a more neutral space that was

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<sup>59</sup> Norton, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Norton, p. 14.

different to the hazardous space of the fort.<sup>61</sup> Crossing the threshold, leaving the fort, and thus exposing himself to the attackers allowed Norton to co-practise, in de Certeau's terms, a relatively safe space that enabled them to negotiate the terms of surrender.

After the 'parley' and their decision to surrender, Norton and his fellows 'admitted the general and a number of his officers into the fort', which marks the crossing of the literal threshold of the fort by a small group of the attackers.<sup>62</sup> Whereas the British had to take on a rather passive role while defending the fort, the narrative highlights a difference between that sense of passivity and their active role in 'admitt[ing]' the attackers into their fort. Although there was no other option but surrender, Norton's reference to their conscious decision to let the invaders enter the fort and to surrender slightly changes their position, highlighting their active decision to open the gates. The fact that they agreed on certain terms of surrender with their attackers also suggests a more active role, as they do not just give in, but negotiate with the French general. This can also be seen in his references to their demands, such as 'our petition that the dead corpse might not be abused, but buried'.<sup>63</sup> The negotiations between the French and the inhabitants suggest that the space was open to change and required both sides to interact. The concept of negotiating their surrender reflects the idea of a threshold space that Norton and the others occupied, and which they were able to influence. These references tie in with Norton's repeated claims about his fellows' determination to engage in a more active defence had they had enough ammunition and weapons. Norton's need to highlight their willingness to be active, for instance when he reports their attempts to anticipate their attackers' moves, indicates his longing for self-determination while occupying the space of the fort that was dominated by a sense of uncertainty. The negotiations with the French general allowed him to regain a partial sense of agency by taking up space to voice their demands and monitor the French admittance into the fort and thus taking back some level of control, even if the ultimate result was his capture.

Although the space of the fort was transformed by the admission of the French, it is important to highlight that only the French general and some of his officers were allowed to enter it. This selective admission creates a significant distinction between the

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<sup>61</sup> Massey, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> Norton, p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

French and Native Americans and implies the power relations among the attackers, suggesting the French general to be in charge. The space of the fort, which was now occupied by both the British colonial subjects and a small group of their attackers, was still not drastically transformed into a hazardous space. While the French had clearly invaded the inhabitants' private space by crossing the literal threshold of the fort, Norton does not ascribe negative qualities to this experience, and reports that '[t]he [French] gentlemen spake comfortably to our people'.<sup>64</sup> This considerably differs from Williams's description of the attack, which equates the entrance of the attackers with the violation of his private and safe space.<sup>65</sup> Although Norton's report of how the French party entered the fort does not imply a violation of his private space, I suggest that the space the French officers and Norton (and the rest of the British) occupied in this scene had already been violated by the initial attack and siege. Therefore, in these two narratives, the moment when the attackers entered the individuals' homes differed in their significance. In Williams's narrative, the attackers' crossing of the thresholds to enter his home signifies the start of his transformation into a captive. In Norton's case, however, the literal threshold that the French officers crossed to enter the fort does not have the same symbolic significance, as Norton's position had already been influenced negatively by the siege. In Lefebvre's terms, the violated space of the fort already had a different meaning, as their surrender had been agreed and the capture was inevitable.<sup>66</sup> In Norton's case, therefore, the crossing of this literal threshold conveys – if anything – the consolidation (rather than initiation) of his role as a captive.

Further, the moment of direct encounter prompted Norton to distinguish between his attackers, separating the French and Native American parties, which shows that not only the barriers between inside and outside were permeable but that Norton's representation of the Other and the preestablished dichotomies were permeable, too. Despite the fateful incident which will lead to their capture, Norton points out the conciliatory atmosphere created by the French gentlemen, who spoke 'comfortably'. Distinguishing within different representations of the Other can also be seen in literary precedents such as Daniel Defoe's French priest, who is described as being 'of the most

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<sup>64</sup> Norton, p. 16.

<sup>65</sup> Williams, p. 172.

<sup>66</sup> Lefebvre, p. 154.

obliging, gentleman-like Behaviour' by Robinson Crusoe.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to the rational and mannerly behaviour that Norton ascribes to the French, he creates an image of the Native American war party as uncivilised:

But the Indians seeing that they were shut out, soon fell to pulling out the underpinning of the fort, and crept into it, opened the gates, so that the parade was quickly full. They shouted as soon as they saw the blood of the dead corpse under the watch-box; but the French kept them down for some time, and did not suffer them to meddle with it. After some time the Indians seemed to be in a ruffle; and presently rushed up into the watch-box, brought down the dead corpse, carried it out of the fort, scalped it, and cut off the head and arms.<sup>68</sup>

Norton's word choice when describing the Native Americans' invasion of the fort suggests their inferior position, as they 'pull[ed] out the underpinning of the fort, and crept into it'. In contrast to the French officers who were admitted to the fort, the Native Americans' 'creeping' in not only indicates the lack of permission but points out the difference in behaviour compared to the 'comfortable' speech of the French. In accordance with the earlier reference to the attackers' 'hideous acclamations', Norton creates an alien and inferior image by describing the Native Americans' 'shout[ing]' when seeing 'the blood of the dead corpse'. Here, the narrative takes a significant turn when Norton reports that it was the French officers who 'kept [the Native Americans] down', hindering them from entering the watch-box. This scene challenges the seemingly straightforward binary image of 'civilised' colonials and 'uncivilised' attackers. The differentiation the narrative now makes between the French and Native Americans was a result of Norton's exposure to the French officers and thus suggests that the social space they actualised prompted Norton to (partly) rethink his negative attitude towards the French. It further contradicts Snader's image of the attackers as a 'faceless mass', because the attack already creates a space that confronts the British with their attackers and thus makes the initial separation more difficult for the captives.<sup>69</sup> This reference creates a spatial hierarchy as the French took on a more 'civilised' or humane role by protecting the corpses, and are thus in a superior position contrasted with the Native

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<sup>67</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, &c.* (Dublin : Printed for J. Gill, J. Hyde, G. Grierson and R. Gunne, R. Owen, E. Dobson Junior, and G. Risk, 1719), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, <[link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0129684172/ECCO?u=jrycal5&sid=ECCO&xid=1cc026d3&pg=34](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0129684172/ECCO?u=jrycal5&sid=ECCO&xid=1cc026d3&pg=34)> [accessed 3 December 2020], p. 106.

<sup>68</sup> Norton, p. 16.

<sup>69</sup> Snader, p. 2.

Americans' physically lower position when they crept into the fort, as their creeping implies their non-human behaviour, figuring them as animals.

In contrast to Norton's depiction of the surrender to the French as anti-climactic (due to the French speaking 'comfortably'), the Native Americans' dismantling of the fort suggests a further violation of the fort's space. In line with the inferior position the Native Americans' 'creeping' implies, literally breaking down the borders of the fort to open the gates themselves indicates the violent nature of their actions. It resembles Williams's description of his 'barbarous' invaders in that it suggests a lack of spatial order and organisation in their entrance to the fort in contrast to the 'civilised' French, who entered the fort through the gate. Norton's narrative enhances the Native Americans' cruelty by explicitly stating that, as the Native Americans finally managed to get to the corpse, they 'scalped it, and cut off the head and arms'.<sup>70</sup> It utilises a familiar feature used to characterise the brutality of Native American groups, the scalping of their opponents, which is found in many other captivity narratives, to underline the Native Americans' brutal and, from Norton's perspective, alien behaviour.<sup>71</sup> The place of the fort provides a delineated environment that produces a space of encounter, which reflects these cultural differences.

The description of the surrender shows how Norton experienced the impact of this new interstitial space created by the encounter between Native Americans, the French, and British colonials, and confirms the cultural hybridity Bhabha ascribes to interstitial spaces.<sup>72</sup> While Norton's account initially differentiates between the civilised behaviour of the French and the uncivilised Native Americans, who 'shouted as soon as they saw the blood of the dead corpse', it now mentions a French soldier who makes use of a 'habit' that was stereotypically ascribed to the Native Americans: 'A young

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<sup>70</sup> Norton, p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Coleman discusses the practice of scalping their enemies by highlighting the monetary aspect of it as she claims that Native American groups received money for the scalps they brought back to their French or British allies (Coleman, p. 52). Derounina-Stodola and Levernier also name the scalping of prisoners as a common trope in captivity narratives, identifying it as a feature to highlight the Native Americans' brutality, or foster an anti-French perspective, as some French parties paid for the scalps (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, pp. 26-33). Henry Grace's narrative combines the Native Americans' brutality of scalping their prisoners and their violent treatment of captives by including a scene in which Grace's captors took a scalp and hit him in the face with it (Henry Grace, *The History of the Life and Sufferings of Henry Grace, of Basingstoke in the County of Southampton, Being a Narrative of the Hardships he Underwent During Several Years Captivity Among the Savages in North America, and of the Cruelties They Practise to Their Unhappy Prisoners* (Reading: 1764), Toronto Public Library < <https://static.torontopubliclibrary.ca/da/pdfs/37131055380190d.pdf> > p. 15).

<sup>72</sup> Bhabha, p. 2.



Frenchman took one of the arms [of the corpse that they had brought down from the watch-box] and flayed it, roasted the flesh [...]. The Frenchman dressed the skin of the arm (as we afterwards heard) and made a tobacco pouch of it'.<sup>73</sup> The stereotype of Native Americans eating their opponents and making pouches out of their skin is reversed in this scene, highlighting the impact of cultural encounter between the French and Native Americans, and indicating the blurred lines of the seemingly fixed cultural differences.<sup>74</sup> The reciprocal influence between the French and Native Americans points to what Fernando Ortiz identifies as 'trans-culturation', the two-way relationship of discovery and influence between the early settlers in North America and the Native American population.<sup>75</sup> These moments of trans-culturation run through all stages of captivity narratives and will be discussed further in the following chapters by investigating the shared social, interstitial spaces that captives occupied during their time with their captors. While Norton's description indicates the mutual influence between French and Native American parties, my next chapters will highlight moments in which British colonial captives, too, refer to situations that indicate trans-culturation.<sup>76</sup>

The scene with the 'young Frenchman' creates a sense of ambiguity in that Norton's own differentiation between 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' is confounded. The new social and cultural space Norton now occupied meant that he could no longer uphold familiar binary oppositions. The formerly strict separation between civilised and uncivilised, marginalising the Native Americans as 'the Other', is now challenged by the French soldiers who took on a practice that was otherwise attributed to the Native Americans. We can thus see the interstitial space that the French and Native American party had co-produced in that this scene suggests the Native Americans' influence on the soldier's behaviour. Similarly, the scene when the attackers surrounded the fort earlier in the narrative suggests the French influence on the Native Americans as they did not storm the fort immediately, which is reported by most narratives who mention

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<sup>73</sup> Norton, p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> Pauline T. Strong addresses the 'overriding theme of French complicity in Indian atrocities' in Norton's narrative and adds that this image is particularly highlighted in the description of the first stage (Strong, p. 227).

<sup>75</sup> Fernando Ortiz, 'El mutuo descubrimiento de dos mundos', qtd. in Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p. 41.

<sup>76</sup> Smith's captivity narrative (Chapter 3), in particular, shows the impact of his captors on his own behaviour, but also suggests the influence Smith had on his captors.

the attack of a Native American party, and this could indicate the Native Americans' adoption of a colonial/Western war strategy. That Norton does not see himself (or his fellow inhabitants) as part of this social space becomes apparent when he reports that the French soldier offered some of the human flesh to one of the inhabitants, who refused to eat it. Slotkin describes the Native Americans' practice of cutting off the limbs of their enemies and forcing those who survived the attack to eat them as a 'common Indian torture' and points to the 'Puritan fears' that this would happen to Puritan captives.<sup>77</sup> Simultaneously, this scene demonises the Catholic French, implying an analogy with the sacrament of the host, which Protestants ridiculed as the eating of Christ's body. The torture scene that Norton includes in his narrative, and the fact that the captive refused to eat the human flesh, suggests a sense of superiority, or at least willpower, as Norton's fellow did not give in and participate in this ritual.

The first stage of Norton's narrative ends with the burning of the fort before the captives were brought to the captors' camp. As in Williams's account, the destruction of Norton's home reflects the sense of finality of his experience and consolidated Norton's role as a captive.<sup>78</sup> Williams's description of how they left the fort includes strong religious references and conveys a sense of distress, whereas Norton's report of how they left only comprises one sentence noting that the captors plundered the fort and set fire to it. While we do not learn about Norton's emotions when leaving his home, the fact that the French and Native Americans led them to their camp nevertheless signifies a new stage of his life and the start of his time in captivity, which involved a greater exposure to his captors.

## **5. Conclusion**

The attack on British colonials by Native American (and French) parties signifies the transition into captivity in the narratives under discussion. As my analysis has suggested, the attack often entailed the literal and/or metaphorical crossing of a threshold, or multiple thresholds, which initiated the transformation of the inhabitants of the colonial settlements into captives. In John Williams's account, his attackers crossed multiple literal thresholds, and this influenced both the space Williams occupied and his self-

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<sup>77</sup> Slotkin, p. 124.

<sup>78</sup> Norton, p. 16.

perception as he was no longer a free man. While the Native Americans literally crossed the threshold to Williams's house, violating the borders of his home, their invasion also signified the transformation of the safe and private space of Williams's house into a hazardous space. Williams literally crossed a threshold when he was taken out of his house and had to leave his home and fort. My analysis has demonstrated, however, that the idea of the threshold is more complex than a strict binary of literal and metaphorical thresholds might suggest. Although the idea of the threshold is prominent in Williams's account and is a crucial tool to analyse the description of the attack, in that it exemplifies the starting point of Williams's time in captivity, the divide between literal and metaphorical is complicated in his narrative. Upon closer investigation, the attack cannot only be described as the literal crossing of a threshold that resulted in his capture. Rather, the attackers' initial crossing into Williams's house needs to be seen as the starting point of the transformation in his personal state, reflected in, and constituted by, the space he occupied.

In contrast to Williams's description of the Native Americans invading his private space, John Norton does not report the literal crossing of any 'border'. Since the French and Native American forces stopped in front of the fort, the distance between the attackers and the fort created a distinct space, which I identify as a threshold or in-between zone, which demarcated the fort from its attackers. While Norton implied the crossing of a metaphorical threshold through his description of the siege, it is the imagined space that he creates in his account that is perhaps the most salient part of his narrative, for it implies his changing emotional and personal state. Simultaneously, the sense of ambiguity inside the fort, dominated by the constant threat from their attackers and the colonials' lack of ammunition to defend the fort, is connected to the sense of uncertainty Norton's narrative depicts. The uncertainty of both Norton's mind and the space he occupied are connected by the imagined space that Norton evokes in his description of the attack, through which he explores different scenarios and alternative realities.

As this chapter has demonstrated, we need to look at the spaces that the captives occupied and actualised in their accounts, the imagined and interstitial spaces in particular, which changed and influenced how they perceived their transition into captivity. The place of the attack has to be seen as a distinct space in which the transition from freedom into captivity takes place and which is influenced both by the attackers

and those under attack. Threshold concepts are central to the analysis of the capture of Williams and Norton as it is in this first stage that their sense of identity is initially challenged. While the journey – the second stage – will highlight both how captives experienced alienation and their encounter with the ‘wilderness’ outside their home, the invasion of their personal space during the attack already indicates the captives’ struggle to maintain their role as British colonials as this role is overshadowed by their new role as captives. The description of a liminal space that both narratives provide thus allows us to understand the impact the capture had on the captives’ sense of self-perception during the rest of their captivity.

The study of space draws attention to the complex ways in which captives and captors interacted and negotiated their cultural identities and differences. The first stage gives insight into the captives’ initial attempts to negotiate cultural differences. The analysis of the descriptions of the attack reveals how the captives dissociated themselves from their attackers, by creating an image of the Native Americans as uncivilised and cruel. While the third stage – the captives’ time in confinement – gives a greater insight into how the captives interacted with their captors and the extent to which they were exposed to an alien culture, the description of the first stage marks the beginning of this process. Williams’s and Norton’s narratives thus provide significant insights in addition to their religious elements as they not only uphold the binary images of us/them and self/other, but also exemplify the captives’ initial cultural exposure and exchange through the application of spatial concepts to their descriptions of the attack and capture. How the captives’ self-perception and their new roles were challenged further by the journey with their captors is the focus of the next chapter, which investigates how the journey both challenged and consolidated those new roles.

## Chapter 2: Second Stage: The Journey

### 1. Introduction

After the initial attack, the captives had to travel with their captors, either to Canada, where they were taken prisoners of the French, or to the Native American captors' village. In this chapter, I discuss the journey that captives describe as a distinct stage of the captivity narrative, which both separates and connects the stages of the attack and confinement. This enables me to investigate how the captives perceived their surroundings, their changing role and their exposure to a different culture. While the attack resulted in a passage from freedom to captivity, the journey further challenged their efforts to maintain their sense of identity as British colonial subjects, which is reflected in their efforts to maintain a connection to 'home'. By analysing the spatial strategies of the narratives of William Pote and Peter Williamson in describing their journeys (connection to home, confinement, liminality) this chapter will reveal British colonial subjects' efforts to maintain their identities even in cases where they do not explicitly refer to this.<sup>1</sup> Together with the subsequent descriptions of the sense of confinement and liminality of the third stage, which further challenges the captives' sense of identity (due to the close contact with their captors), the description of the journey gives insight into the effects of extended contact with Native Americans (and the French) and indicates how the captives were first exposed to different cultural practices as they were forced to integrate themselves into the group of travellers.

The narratives of Pote and Williamson have been chosen because their authors integrated differently into their captors' group: the narratives depict the men's social encounters, suggesting that Pote eventually participated in the new social space he now occupied whereas Williamson maintained a distance from his captors. Williamson's is the more popular of the two narratives, underlined by Pearce's reference to it as an 'out-and-out sensational piece', which suggests that his narrative employed common features – furthering the prejudiced image of Native Americans and distancing himself as a colonial from 'the Other' – that made his account widely read.<sup>2</sup> While this thesis

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<sup>1</sup> Pote, *The Journal of Captain William Pote*; Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty*.

<sup>2</sup> Pearce, p. 7.

does not seek to identify the authenticity or accuracy of the selected captivity narratives, the fact that scholars have recognised Williamson's account as purely fictive reflects the idea that the narrative utilises features that adhere to the prevailing colonial discourse that made the account more popular.<sup>3</sup> The narrative follows the common structure of how the captives' journey is described in terms of their exposure to their cruel and 'barbaric' captors, their forced journey through the wilderness outside the safe space of their homes and their efforts to escape. While Pote's narrative also exhibits several of these features – particularly the initial depiction of his 'savage' captors and his constant planning of an escape – his account shows how the journey prompted him to rethink his attitude towards his captors. That Pote understood French and met some of his acquaintances along the journey made his journey more comfortable and helped him maintain a sense of familiarity. My analysis will pay closest attention to Pote's journey as it offers different insights in terms of the moments of cultural exchange and negotiation that were influenced by his prior knowledge about his captors. Bringing out the particularities of Pote's narrative allows me to challenge the binary image of 'civilised' colonials and 'savage' Native Americans – a binary opposition that appears to be more stable in Williamson's account – and further investigate the oppositions Pote's narratives establishes between 'good' and 'bad' French people to highlight the multicultural and diverse social space he occupied.

The first and third stages of captivity narratives – the attack and capture and the captives' confinement in a prison or village – might initially appear to be more distinct and fixed compared to the second stage, the journey. The journeys bridge these stages: having been taken captive at or near their homes, captives then travelled to what is now Canada, where they were imprisoned and waited to be ransomed. Seeing the journey as only a connecting device to tell a comprehensive chronological story about the time in captivity, however, overlooks the transformative impact the journey had on the captives. While the third stage particularly influenced individual captives and their self-perception, since some of them were adopted into the tribe of their captors or had to adapt to the new lifestyle in general (discussed further in Chapter 3), the close contact they experienced with their captors during the journey already forced Pote and

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<sup>3</sup> Timothy J. Shannon, *Indian Captive, Indian King: Peter Williamson in America and Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), p. 57; Pearce, p. 7.

Williamson to position themselves and either integrate with or distance themselves from their captors.

Compared to the first and third stages, which largely take place in a fixed location (thus creating a sense of a distinct space which the captives occupy), the journey both complicated and facilitated the transition from freedom into captivity. On the one hand, captives were not immediately locked away or required to integrate themselves into a new family. On the other hand, it allowed them to maintain a sense of closeness to home and a sense of (partial) freedom as they were in motion. Despite their perceived closeness to home, however, many captives were already treated like prisoners; the description of the journey thus highlights the ambiguity of their roles as prisoners who were not yet confined in one place, confirming the idea that they remained in a threshold state. While my analysis of the first stage has shown that the initial attack by Native Americans was not always a straightforward event that immediately resulted in the capture, thus challenging a simple binary of freedom and captivity, the different descriptions of the journeys further complicate the idea of captivity (and the binary opposition of freedom/captivity). Despite being constrained during the night, both Williamson and Pote were able to move relatively freely during the day. This, however, did not produce a sense of autonomy, since they had to follow their captors and could not decide for themselves where to go.

The idea that the straightforward opposition of captivity/freedom is challenged in captivity narratives is reinforced by the fact that the descriptions of the journey can be seen as a subspecies of travel narratives, even though this challenges the usual pattern of these narratives as accounts of independent journeys. James Clifford argues that a traveller is 'someone who enjoys the security and the privilege of moving in relatively unrestrained and spontaneous ways', but this does not apply when the traveller is also a captive.<sup>4</sup> This chapter highlights the complicated relationship between captivity and freedom in the selected narratives and suggests the ambiguities that arise from the journey by using Clifford's definition of a traveller. The two narratives show different examples of how the journey created a liminal experience for the captives: Williamson had to witness the attack on other colonials' homes and experienced the sense of danger that resulted from his role as a captive. And so while the journey forced

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<sup>4</sup> James Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures', in *Cultural Studies*, ed. by Lawrence Grossberg and others (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 96-112 (p. 107), qtd. in Nel, p. 226.

him to move, the sense of distress made him 'motionless'.<sup>5</sup> Pote, on the other hand, remained in a more complex in-between state as he enjoyed a greater degree of freedom, but still experienced a sense of danger and had to ask his captors for protection during the journey. The fact that Pote was able to ask for help, in turn, implies a greater sense of security than Williamson's narrative exhibits.

The extended contact between captives and captors while travelling, which goes beyond the initial cultural encounter seen in the descriptions of the attack and capture (Chapter 1), exposed the captives to an unfamiliar environment that prompted them to negotiate these cultural encounters differently. Drawing on de Certeau's notion of space as a 'practiced place', my analysis in this chapter demonstrates how Pote and Williamson co-created social spaces with their captors, focusing on moments of interaction and cultural negotiation.<sup>6</sup> My analysis homes in on how they negotiated their (cultural) differences with their captors and thus actively participated in practising new social spaces in the different environment that the journey exposed them to outside their homes. Williamson's focus on aspects that differentiated him from his captors implies that he did not fully occupy a shared social space exemplified by his efforts to create a barbaric image of his captors by drawing on their cultural differences. By contrast, analysing the space Pote occupied at the beginning of his journey, evoked by his interaction and conversations with his French acquaintances, who allowed Pote to situate himself in a space that was still familiar to him, allows me to complicate the idea of the journey as leading the captives into the unknown. In keeping with Lefebvre's contention that social space is a product of interrelationships, this chapter discusses Pote's description of the journey to show how he and his captors produced a social space that was constantly open to change.<sup>7</sup> The social space at the beginning and in the first part of the journey, when Pote travelled with his Native American captors and the French war party, differed to the time when Pote travelled only with his Native American captors in that close contact changed their relationship and his former perception of the Native Americans as cruel. Identifying the new shared space Pote was able to co-produce with his captors enables me to demonstrate the impact this social space had

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<sup>5</sup> Williamson, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> De Certeau, p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> Lefebvre, p. 73.



on him, to the extent that it prompted him to reverse his former negative opinion of his captors.

This chapter further identifies how the spaces captives occupied changed throughout their journey under the influence of the different people they encountered and travelled with. My analysis is supported by Hawthorn's contention that people can occupy a multiplicity of spaces as it allows me to clarify the different spaces captives actualised in their narratives.<sup>8</sup> While Hawthorn differentiates between 'private and public spaces' or 'closed rooms and open areas', I do not apply the binary distinction of private/public spaces but focus on the different social spaces captives shared with their captors, and on the moments in the narratives that prompted some degree of social exchange.<sup>9</sup> As I want to highlight the variety of different spaces captives navigated, I follow Bal's concept of a journey as enabling a transition between different spaces.<sup>10</sup> The journey has to be seen as a valuable element in captivity narratives that prompted a greater degree of exposure to the captors, compared to the first stage, and enabled captives to traverse multiple spaces that they would not have encountered if they had immediately been confined in a delimited place. Since the journey led the captives to different places, they also encountered new people and different cultures, exposing them to different social spaces. This idea of a multiplicity of spaces further helps me to highlight the influence these spaces had on the captives' self-perception, reflecting their sense of identity and giving insight into their changing roles during captivity.

Given that the initial attack already effected a transformation from freedom into captivity, the journey did not initiate a process of transformation but furthered and challenged the new roles of the British colonial subjects. While the attack and capture evoked a threshold that captives literally and/or metaphorically crossed before they had to travel with their captors, the attack also initiated a process of transformation and forced the captives to occupy a threshold state. In this chapter, my analysis provides a conceptual comparison of the two descriptions of the journey to demonstrate how the spaces Pote and Williamson occupied on their journeys provide a different sense of liminality that is unique to the second stage and that extends the threshold state that Williams and Norton assumed during the attack and capture. The sense of liminality that

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<sup>8</sup> Hawthorn, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Bal, p. 140.

the second stage evokes exemplifies how the journey provided the captives with a transitional and unfamiliar space. While this unfamiliarity led Williamson to consolidate his negative image of the Native Americans and reinforce the difference between him and his captors, the liminal space provided Pote with opportunities to establish relationships with his captors, prompted by the uncertain nature of the space they occupied that forced them to work together.

## **2. Content and Publication of the Selected Narratives**

William Pote was working as a shipmaster and deployed to deliver stores at fort Annapolis Royal (Nova Scotia) when he and his crew were taken captive by Native American and French forces in 1745.<sup>11</sup> After his capture, Pote and his fellow captives had to stay in a guard-house before they started the journey to Louisbourg with their captors. From fort Annapolis Royal they travelled to Minas and then had to cross a lake (Minas Basin) to get to Cobequid and then Tatamagouche, where Pote's captors built canoes for their journey to Louisbourg. When the French and Native Americans were attacked by an English vessel and had to return to Tatamagouche, Pote's captors decided to change their route and travel to Quebec instead and thus separated from the rest of the French and Native Americans. On their journey to Quebec, Pote travelled through Green Bay, Beaubassin (or what Pote refers to as 'Secconnectau'), which was, according to the editor of Pote's narrative, John F. Hurst, a settlement 'at the head of Chignecto Bay', and then embarked on a schooner.<sup>12</sup> While they were sailing on some smaller rivers, they also stopped at various Native American villages and then continued their journey on the St John River. After travelling by land again they reached the St Lawrence River ('River of Canada' in Pote's text) which led them to Quebec, the final destination of their journey. Pote was imprisoned in Quebec until his release, and his narrative ends with his arrival in Louisbourg in 1747.

Peter Williamson's account of his captivity comprises the years 1754-55 and details his capture in 1754 and the subsequent travel from his home on the frontier of

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<sup>11</sup> For my analysis, I use the version of Pote's narrative published by John F. Hurst in 1896, which can be accessed through an online archive <<http://www.archive.org/details/journalofcaptain02pote>>. Hurst claims to have found the manuscript in Switzerland, which he reports in his introductory note to the narrative, and which suggests that Pote's narrative had been in circulation earlier, but I was not able to obtain any exact publication details and therefore work with the first wider known publication by Hurst.

<sup>12</sup> Pote, p. 49.

Pennsylvania to a Native American village which he describes to be ‘about 200 Miles farther from any Plantations or Inhabitants’.<sup>13</sup> In comparison to Pote’s description of his journey, Williamson’s account is less geographically detailed, partly because of his stronger focus on specific events that happened on the journey but also because his journey was significantly shorter.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Williamson and his captors did not directly travel to the Native American village; rather, they went along the Susquehanna River to a place near the ‘Apalatian Mountains, or Blue Hills’, and then went back to another settlement where Williamson had to witness additional attacks on colonial houses.<sup>15</sup> He also reports that their journey was interrupted several times before they reached the Native Americans’ winter quarters. Williamson eventually managed to escape his captors when they resumed their travel as he got closer to familiar surroundings and so found his way back home. Williamson’s focus on the barbarity of his captors and the horrific depictions of what he experienced during captivity make his narrative, as Snader claims, a ‘domestic best-seller of American captivity’ in Britain.<sup>16</sup>

### **3. Distance versus Closeness to Home**

The journey with their captors complicated the captives’ transition into captivity in that they were not immediately imprisoned or confined in one place but rather had to travel to their eventual place of confinement. Since the forced journey delayed a straightforward transition from freedom into captivity, its descriptions give insight into how the captives made sense of their situation and how they described and perceived the close contact with their captors. The gradual movement away from the place of attack, which was in most cases the captives’ home, signifies, on the one hand, the gradual transition into captivity. On the other hand, the descriptions of the first part of the journey in particular, when the captives were still close to what they perceived as familiar surroundings, indicate the impact that closeness or distance had on the captives: while proximity to home entailed a sense of comfort for Pote, for Williamson it signified distress.

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<sup>13</sup> Williamson, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> For my analysis of Williamson’s narrative, I use the originally published version from 1757, found in an online archive <<https://archive.org/details/frenchindiancrue00will/page/n113/mode/2up>>.

<sup>15</sup> Williamson, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Snader, p. 25. Williamson’s narrative was re-published in forty-one editions (Van der Beets, *Held Captive by Indians*, p. xix).

Pote's report about how he met other prisoners at a Native American village before undertaking the main part of the journey suggests his desire to establish a sense of familiarity and comfort. Furthermore, the conversation he had with one of the prisoners indicates the wider anxiety Pote was likely to experience about the imminent close contact with the Native Americans. One of the captives was already an acquaintance and 'Gave [Pote] an account how Long he had been Taken. [*sic*] and after what manner, and what Treatment they had meet with amongst y<sup>e</sup> Indians, and Seemed to be verely well Satisfied with his Condition'.<sup>17</sup> The opportunity to interact with each other enabled the captives to produce a shared space that, due to the positive account of his acquaintance, provided Pote with a sense of comfort (even if he only stayed at the camp for one night). The comforting effect of this interaction also provides a glimpse into Pote's perception of his Native American captors. The fact that his fellow captive seemed 'satisfied' must have contradicted Pote's expectations of 'barbaric' Native Americans. Although I will return to Pote's attitude towards his captors later in this chapter, this phrase already indicates that he must have expected to suffer in captivity. The image Pote creates of his captors was thus a combined product of his own experiences during his time in captivity, and his predisposition and bias.

In contrast to Pote's ability to find a sense of comfort and maintain an emotional connection to home at the beginning of his journey, Williamson's description of the beginning of his journey, when he passed several British colonists' houses, is dominated by terror and fear, as he had to witness the attack on these houses. The places Williamson's captors visited at the beginning of his journey turned into places of death as he reports that the Native Americans murdered most of the inhabitants they attacked. The relative closeness to home did not create a sense of familiarity and comfort but rather a sense of distress. These experiences consolidated Williamson's role as a captive, emphasising his passivity in that he could do nothing but witness the murder of fellow colonists. Although Williamson also states that he was psychologically tortured by his captors when they made a fire and indicated their intention to burn him (which did not happen), he relates that 'yet what I underwent, was but trifling, in Comparison to the Torments and Miseries which I was afterwards an Eye Witness of

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<sup>17</sup> Pote, p. 15. The spelling, grammar and punctuation in Pote's captivity narrative is irregular and sometimes incorrect. In the following, I reproduce the quotes as written in Pote's narrative.

being inflicted on others of my unhappy fellow Creatures'.<sup>18</sup> What follows is a very dramatic and vivid depiction of the attacked inhabitants being brutally killed by the Native Americans, which underlines the sense of danger and affliction Williamson's narrative portrays, referring to the attack as a 'horrid Massacre'.<sup>19</sup> Foreshadowing what he would encounter along the journey, Williamson's depiction of the attacks evokes an imagined space that reflects the traumatising impact of his captivity.

Similar to Norton's depiction of imagined spaces in his description of the attack discussed in Chapter 1, Williamson creates an imagined space by projecting his emotions onto his descriptions of the events he witnessed and thus sheds light on how he perceived his distressing experiences. The distinct places Williamson visited, and the alienating and tragic attacks he had to witness, produced spaces that reflected his personal and emotional state, indicating the devastating impact the attack had on him. Comparing Pote's and Williamson's descriptions of their journey past familiar houses suggests the very different qualities these journeys could assume for the captives: maintaining their connection to home, or a sense of familiarity, could also produce a greater sense of affliction. In Williamson's account, maintaining an emotional closeness to fellow British colonials did not alleviate his emotional state but revealed the possible fate he could face, thus enhancing the sense of uncertainty and danger which the experiences of his journey evoked.

Although Williamson's narrative is predominantly about his distressing and cruel experiences, he briefly mentions that he was, like Pote, able to converse with a fellow captive, suggesting that he did not have to endure captivity alone. Williamson, however, focuses on the negative aspects of their experiences and reports that 'he and I were sitting together, condoling each other at the Misfortunes and Miseries we daily suffered'.<sup>20</sup> Williamson and his fellow were allowed to share their feelings. This 'freedom' to talk to fellow prisoners is underlined later when Williamson reports the arrival of new captives who 'gave us some shocking Accounts of the Murders and Devastations committed in their Parts'.<sup>21</sup> Unlike Pote, who ascribes a sense of comfort

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<sup>18</sup> Williamson, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 16. Because of the 'appalling situations' in Williamson's narrative, Richard van der Beets points to elements of the Gothic novel in Williamson's account (Van der Beets, *Held Captive by Indians*, p. xxx).

<sup>20</sup> Williamson, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

to receiving news from home, Williamson's account again solely focuses on the distress the Native Americans had caused when capturing new prisoners. Similar to the impact of passing familiar houses under attack, the news Williamson received from home or about fellow colonials created a sense of alienation and suffering. And although the news exacerbated Williamson's emotional state, the degree of interaction he was allowed with his fellow captives indicates that they were able to actualise a social space that excluded their captors. The social spaces captives produced – or in de Certeau's terms 'practiced' – was made possible through their shared experiences.<sup>22</sup> The connection they established excluded their captors and allowed Williamson to distance himself further from the Native Americans.

Presenting language as a crucial tool to produce a shared social space, Pote's narrative indicates how the common language that he shared with both his fellow captives and his captors helped him to maintain a sense of familiarity. That his captors 'Could all talk Exceeding Good french' suggests that he did not experience a sense of alienation, as he could speak French as well and was thus able to communicate with them.<sup>23</sup> The common language enhanced Pote's ability to interact with his captors and assured him a certain degree of independence. Pote occupied a unique position in that most of his fellow captives did not speak French, and so Pote functioned as a translator on various occasions.<sup>24</sup> Language thus functioned as a shelter and empowered Pote, as he was able to actively participate in creating the space he occupied with his fellow captives and captors.<sup>25</sup> If we see the participants in an interstitial space as negotiating cultural differences through 'performance', as Fahlander suggests, Pote's knowledge about the shared common language in this culturally hybrid space suggests that he occupied an advantageous position as a captive, as he could perform a more active role in co-producing this shared space.<sup>26</sup> This ability gave him the opportunity to establish closer relationships with both his fellow captives and captors.

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<sup>22</sup> De Certeau, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> Pote, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 47, 65, 70.

<sup>25</sup> My analysis of Alexander Henry's narrative (Chapter 4) will discuss the significance of a shared language further, and show how Henry's efforts (and need) to acquire his captors' language can be seen as a result of the shared social space that Henry was required to participate in.

<sup>26</sup> Fahlander, p. 23.

Pote's efforts to maintain a connection to home is implied further by his focus on news from the British colonial settlements and about the situation of the British army during the war. Even after Pote had moved away from familiar villages, he was still able to receive news about home and the British army, which suggests his aim to stay connected and minimise the sense of alienation that the unknown path of the journey and an unfamiliar environment would have otherwise created. Obtaining news was complicated by Pote's masters, who isolated him from certain people who could deliver news, for instance a fellow British colonial who deserted from Fort Annapolis: 'I Desired Liberty to Speak with him which they would not Consent to by any means, nor Let me Come So Near him as to See who he was'.<sup>27</sup> This passage shows the Native Americans' efforts to maintain a distance between Pote and people he might have known. In this case, the distance between Pote and the deserter symbolises the distance between himself and home. Not being allowed to interact with the deserter, which denied Pote the ability to share the same space with him, implies a lost opportunity to actualise a familiar space through talking about the situation at home.

The effort to maintain a metaphorical closeness to home can also be read as exemplifying Pote's need for a sense of safety and stability, and visiting French houses during his journey also gave him opportunities to discuss a potential ransom. For instance, he reports that he and his captors 'marched through Several Small Villages of y<sup>e</sup> Neutrel french' and also 'Stoped at a french house where I had been Severel times before'.<sup>28</sup> At this house Pote encountered a compassionate French acquaintance who 'took me by y<sup>e</sup> hand & told me he wished with all his heart it was in his power by any means to Release me from y<sup>e</sup> hands of y<sup>e</sup> Sauvages'.<sup>29</sup> Although Pote's acquaintance was not able to help him, the man's house can be seen as a place that is, following de Certeau's idea of the production of space, produced into a familiar space by the social practice and interaction between Pote and the Frenchman. In this case, the fixed space co-produced by Pote and the French reflects the sense of stability. The Frenchman's house as a 'practiced place' evokes a sense of comfort and safety in that Pote is protected from the unfamiliar outside. And although his Native American masters did

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<sup>27</sup> Pote, p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Pote probably refers to those Acadians as 'neutral French' who were descendants of French settlers and lived, among other Canadian settlements, in Nova Scotia and remained neutral during the French and Indian War; *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

not allow Pote to be ransomed, the intention alone must have created a sense of comfort for Pote as he did not abandon this thought throughout the whole journey.

Since Pote's ability to visit French acquaintances along the journey allowed him to maintain an emotional closeness to what he perceived as familiar, I infer that his physical closeness to these French houses positively influenced his personal state as the conversations allowed for expressions of empathy as well as ransom attempts. Pote focuses on his closeness to French houses in his narrative when he states that 'we marched By Several french houses by y<sup>e</sup> Side of y<sup>e</sup> River. and stopped at a mans house [who] Treated me, with much Cevility [...] and acquainted me that his house, was y<sup>e</sup> Last french house I Should meet with, Till I arrived to y<sup>e</sup> River of Saint Johns'.<sup>30</sup> Besides the kind treatment Pote received, he also points out that this house will be the last before arriving at the St. John river, which was the last river they had to cross to get to Quebec. We have to see this reference in connection with a later scene in Pote's narrative when 'the thoughts of arriving to Caneda River y<sup>t</sup> Day, So Incouraged me, that I left y<sup>e</sup> Greater part of y<sup>e</sup> Indians behind me, and out of my Sight before Noon'.<sup>31</sup> Despite the heavy load he had to carry, the closeness to Quebec made him overcome his physical exhaustion and travel faster than his captors. Connecting the two above-quoted passages, I argue that the closeness to Quebec echoes Pote's earlier physical closeness to French houses, enhancing his chances of being ransomed.

The sense of relief Pote is described to have experienced due to his closeness to Quebec points to the ambiguous nature of Pote's relationship with his captors and with the French in general. That Quebec enhances his chances for ransom is confirmed by the description of the captives' distribution among different Native American tribes at the beginning of the narrative, when Pote claims that he was satisfied with his captors as they lived near Quebec: 'I Seemed Tollerably well Satisfied with my Lot, with y<sup>e</sup> Consideration y<sup>t</sup> I should live verey near y<sup>e</sup> french'.<sup>32</sup> If we considered Pote's wish to be close to French settlements as the reason for his urge to arrive at Quebec, his efforts to maintain a sense of closeness were not just limited to a closeness to 'home' but closeness to what he perceived as familiar and possibly comforting. The idea of Quebec as a more secure or familiar place confirms Martha L. Finch's examination of

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<sup>30</sup> Pote, p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 14.



'regiocultural metaphors' in Puritan New England. Finch observes the dichotomies of 'nature and culture, wild and civilized' and the idea of transforming 'untamed, chaotic, raw environment into civilized, ordered, productive farms and villages', which highlights Pote's perception of Quebec as more secure and familiar than unknown nature, linking the city to civilisation and perceiving nature as uncivilised and 'untamed'.<sup>33</sup> In this way, Pote's differentiation between the civilised city and the uncivilised nature upholds the dichotomy of civilised/uncivilised more strictly compared to Norton, whose narrative also suggested that his French attackers displayed uncivilised behaviour as well.

Pote's efforts to get to Quebec as soon as possible imply a need to leave behind the uncertainty (or unfamiliarity) of the 'wilderness' that he had to travel through and suggest that his physical closeness to familiar spaces creates a sense of stability. Pote's closeness to the French and their culture, being able to speak French and distinguish between different groups of French, strongly contrasts with other captivity narratives. While John Norton's account, for instance, others the French by highlighting the Native Americans' influence on the French soldiers (Chapter 1), Pote's narrative suggests that he must have occupied a more diverse cultural space before his capture, exemplified by his cultural knowledge, compared to other captives who had been isolated from non-British colonial groups outside the secure borders of their homes. The impact that experiencing a diverse cultural space can have on captives is discussed further in the analysis of Alexander Henry's narrative (Chapter 4) as he had lived with French Canadians and was acquainted with Native Americans before his capture.

#### **4. Sense of Confinement**

While the journey as a distinct stage of captivity contrasts with the image of an individual confined in one specific place, the freedom Pote enjoyed when conversing with French acquaintances and the distance both Pote and Williamson covered do not mean they were not in captivity. Despite the partial freedom necessary to travel, the descriptions of the journeys still incorporate a sense of confinement, as is evident in the way they report, for instance, how the captives were closely monitored or had to carry a heavy load that impeded movement.

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<sup>33</sup> Martha L. Finch, "'Civilized' Bodies and the 'Savage' Environment of Early New Plymouth", in *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America*, ed. by Janet M. Lindman and Michele L. Tarter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 43–60 (p. 45).

Williamson's account suggests this sense of confinement through his partial constraint during the journey and the distress he felt that made him 'motionless'.<sup>34</sup> Similarly to Pote, Williamson evoked a sense of physical constraint even though he covered a considerable distance each day.<sup>35</sup> The narrative also suggests that he was shackled when he did not carry the load, as Williamson reports that '[u]pon this they untied me, and gave me a great Load to carry on my Back, under which I travelled all that Night with them [...] At Day-break, my infernal Masters ordered me to lie down my Load, when tying my Hands again round a Tree with a small Cord'.<sup>36</sup> The journey thus created an explicit sense of physical constraint, since his captors controlled his movements. This passage also indicates that Williamson perceived his captors as 'infernal', a term which I will come back to when I discuss his attempts to distance himself from the Native Americans.

Williamson's compulsion to travel contrasts with his 'motionless' state when he witnessed the murder of his fellow captive, who was 'complaining bitterly' during the journey and who was then murdered by one of their captors, who perceived the fellow captive's 'Moans and Tears'.<sup>37</sup>

The Suddenness of this Murder, shock'd me to that Degree, that I was in a Manner like a Statue, being quite motionless, expecting my Fate would soon be the same [...] such was the Terror I was under, that for some Time, I scarce knew the Days of the Week, or what I did; so that at this Period, Life did, indeed, become a Burthen to me.<sup>38</sup>

Williamson's motionlessness reinforces the confining character of his journey. The fact that he describes himself as no longer able to move or to tell what time or day it was also suggests his inability to situate and orientate himself on the journey.<sup>39</sup> The space Williamson occupied thus became blurry, indicating the overall alienating and distressing effect of the journey and his captivity. And although we do not know whether

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<sup>34</sup> Williamson, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Pote, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Williamson, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>39</sup> I will come back to the idea that the inability to tell the time meant a lack of orientation and therefore a sense of being lost in Chapter 3, when I analyse James Smith's description of his time with his Native American captors. Although the third stage, the stage of relative confinement and extended contact with their captors, exposed the captives to a different lifestyle, Smith still held on to the need to tell the time.

his captors gave him any information about their journey, the passage conveys his loss of orientation and further underlines his state of passivity. It implies that Williamson was in a trance-like state that hindered him from fully perceiving what happened during this part of the journey.

Whereas Williamson's description emphasises his role as a captive, Pote reports how his experiences both consolidated and challenged his new role. The experiences of his journey – and the people and new culture he encountered – forced him to occupy a threshold state, which underlines his liminal experience. Pote's role as a captive was consolidated in that he was closely surveilled by his captors and always constrained during the night. Pote had to sleep between two Native Americans to prevent him from escaping: 'I had my hands bound Securly behind me and a String fastned round my middle, and placed between two Indians'.<sup>40</sup> This depiction highlights his restricted movement and evokes a sense of entrapment as he was literally trapped between two of his captors. While the journey indicates Pote's ability to move more freely during the day, his movements were still constricted due to the close surveillance and the heavy load he had to carry.<sup>41</sup> Pote thus occupied a 'liminal site', which Burnham describes as 'both separat[ing] and join[ing] two collaborators who are at the same time opponents'.<sup>42</sup> The account of Pote's experiences not only shows his efforts to distance himself from his captors and the mutual distrust between him and the Native Americans, but also the gradual relationship that they were able to establish due to their close contact. While I will come back to these moments of liminality or in-betweenness, the second stage of captivity in itself is a liminal stage that forced captives to remain in-between their old and new roles and in-between the initial stage of their capture and the stage of (relatively static) confinement.

The close surveillance Pote experienced is underlined by the spatial information his narrative provides, reporting that: 'y<sup>e</sup> Indians was Exceeding Carefull of me and would not by any means trust me to Go 5 yards from y<sup>m</sup> without a Guard'.<sup>43</sup> His masters made sure to keep Pote close, which can also be seen when he states that they 'would not Confide in me So far as to trust me to Go to y<sup>e</sup> fountain alone, which was but about

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<sup>40</sup> Pote, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Minas, Nova Scotia; *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Burnham, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Pote, p. 22.

a pistol Shot from our quarters'.<sup>44</sup> This second indication of how Pote's movements were restricted depicts a specific space in which Pote could move independently. Indicating the short distance between their lodgings and the fountain by referring to it as the distance of a pistol shot suggests a sense of entrapment and threat, and complicates the image of a restricted space in that Pote adds a violent quality to the demarcation of the space in which he could move freely. That the close surveillance Pote was exposed to consolidated his role as a captive confirms Colley's contention that captives 'became [...] the passive object of their [captors'] gaze', which she contrasts with the idea that usually Anglo-American colonials were able to 'gaz[e] speculatively at non-Europeans from a position of detachment and strength'.<sup>45</sup> While Colley uses the North African slave markets as a prime example of how captives were exposed to this gaze, I suggest that Pote's example also shows a shift in power relations, thus enforcing his role as a captive, which indicates what Pratt identifies as 'radically asymmetrical' power relations.<sup>46</sup> That his captors did not 'trust [Pote] to Go 5 yards from y<sup>m</sup> without a Guard' implies his close surveillance and knowing that he could only move 'a pistol Shot' away from the Native Americans suggests their power over Pote. Although we can interpret captivity narratives as a form of how captives took back a sense of power and reversed the gaze by scrutinising the Native Americans' habits and rituals, the position of dependence Pote was in consolidated his new role as a captive.

The description of the journey, especially in Pote's account, is influenced by a sense of directionlessness, as he did not always have a clear idea of where he had to travel (although his masters informed him about the route on several occasions). Pote's and Williamson's ability to name some of the places they encountered can be seen as a result of their opportunities to write their narratives in retrospect, giving them the chance to look up places that were on their route and include the information they received from their captors. At the time, however, they lacked the opportunity to orient themselves. The confining character of the journey can be analysed by using Bal's notion of an aimless journey as itself confining. While Bal argues that the journey can be 'a goal in itself', the captives did not have any aim or direction themselves as it was their

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<sup>44</sup> Pote, p. 30.

<sup>45</sup> Linda Colley, 'Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire', *Past and Present* 168 (2000), 170-93 (p. 177).

<sup>46</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

captors' goal to bring them to a specific place. Given the captives' passive and forced role during the journey and their lack of an 'experiential aim', as Bal puts it, the space of the journey 'is presented [...] as unsafety, as confinement'.<sup>47</sup> The sense of directionlessness and lack of personal intention thus contributed to the journey's confining character. Indeed, that Pote had to rely on his captors' information about where they travelled suggests his unfamiliarity with his surroundings. The sense of unsafety and lack of direction underline Bal's argument of the confining character of an aimless journey, since the places Pote and Williamson encountered lacked an 'experiential aim' of their own.

Apart from the rather broad description of their route, as Pote's narrative mostly focuses on how he experienced the journey, the account provides a more experiential and dynamic description that evokes (similarly to Williamson's) a sense of directionlessness and alienation. Pote reports that 'we travelled over high mountains, and Low Valleys' or 'we Travelled, Chiefly along Shore over Clefts of Rocks, Sands &c', and mentions that he had to travel 'over hills and mountains through y<sup>e</sup> woods where there was no path'.<sup>48</sup> This passage particularly highlights Pote's lack of a sense of direction. The fact that Pote mentions that he had to travel 'where there was no path' draws on the cultural image of the space outside colonial settlements as unknown wilderness. The pathless wilderness Pote's narrative evokes contrasts with the ordered space of cities and connects this space with the Native Americans, as they were familiar with this space and able to navigate it. It supports the dichotomy of civilised/uncivilised that I mentioned earlier in this chapter when Pote refers to Quebec as providing him with a sense of security. The description also points to the efforts of colonialist literature, as Abdul R. JanMohamed asserts, to present 'a world at the boundaries of "civilization" [...] perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately evil'.<sup>49</sup> The pathless wilderness Pote travelled through further confirms Finch's analysis of the 'chaotic' metaphor of the wilderness, and simultaneously evokes a biblical reference to when Jesus was led into the wilderness, 'to be tempted of the devil'.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bal, p. 140.

<sup>48</sup> Pote, pp. 48, 53.

<sup>49</sup> Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', in *Race, Writing, and Difference*, ed. by Henry L. Gates Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 78-106 (p. 83).

<sup>50</sup> Finch, p. 45; Matthew 4.1, King James Version.

When Alexander Henry tried to hide from his captors during the attack (further discussed in Chapter 4), he contemplated his escape and decided against it because of the 'Indian countries' outside the fort, which he saw as 'countries of an enemy in arms'.<sup>51</sup> The unknown territory Pote experienced and his need to rely on his captors to guide him suggests his lack of independence. Pote's inability to fully locate himself consolidates his role as a captive as his lack of direction implies a sense of entrapment.

## 6. Multiplicity of Spaces

With their descriptions of the journeys, Pote's and Williamson's narratives challenge the binary opposition of freedom and captivity by incorporating elements of a story about captivity, in terms of its constraining character, as well as of an independent travel narrative.<sup>52</sup> The complicated mixture of diverse spaces – as the journey prompted longer periods of travelling and moments when captives and captors stopped to rest – reflects the ambiguous relationship between freedom and captivity that captives experienced. My analysis gives insight into how Pote and Williamson negotiated their experiences through the fluid spaces of the journey, and suggests that captives were confronted with shared social spaces even while travelling. While my analysis of the third stage of captivity (Chapter 3) shows the social and cultural spaces captives negotiated in a more stable space, a Native American village for instance, investigating the second stage demonstrates how the captives navigated the fluid and open space of the journey, which is in line with Lefebvre's argument that social space is 'an ambiguous continuity', regardless of 'visible boundaries'.<sup>53</sup> As the journey does not provide such visible boundaries as those that were violated in the attack on the captives' homes (discussed in Chapter 1), for instance, it requires a closer investigation of how captives and captors co-produced shared spaces in order to question the binary opposition of freedom and

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<sup>51</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 292.

<sup>52</sup> For my analysis, I use Kai Mikkonen's definition of travel literature as a person's or group's engagement 'in an act of movement and perception'. Mikkonen further notes that '[t]he traversed spaces are unified in the traveler's experience and recounting, which is punctuated by episodes, names of places and local descriptions' (Kai Mikkonen, 'The "Narrative is Travel" Metaphor: Between Spatial Sequence and Open Consequence', *Narrative* 15 (2007), 286-305 (p. 299)). Focusing on the various spaces captives traversed is a useful approach to the analysis of the selected narratives as I am primarily concerned with the spaces captives described and negotiated during their journeys.

<sup>53</sup> Lefebvre, pp. 86-87.

captivity. This will show how the fluid nature of the journey poses questions about the connection between fixed/fluid spaces and danger/security.

Pote's need for a sense of safety was a result of the unfamiliar environment he experienced on his journey, created by his exposure to an alien culture and unknown territory. Sheila Hones's definition of space 'as [a] process, as something mobile and unstable', supports my claim that Pote's forced journey through unknown territory produced a multiplicity of spaces he had to negotiate.<sup>54</sup> His struggle to navigate these new spaces is exemplified by the partial information he includes about the travel route, underlining his lack of orientation. The unstable nature of the journey suggests that Pote's experience was connected to some degree of danger and uncertainty. Further, his report implies a sense of alienation at the start of their journey when they 'marched in a Verrey Irriguler manner'.<sup>55</sup> Although there is no straightforward reason for this phrase, it evokes a sense of confusion, which could have arisen either because Pote's captors took a route that he did not know, or because he was used to a more uniform and organised form of marching, especially when thinking of military marches. John F. Hurst, whose edition of Pote's account I use for this analysis, points in his introduction to the narrative's significance in providing the detailed information on the war between the British and the French.<sup>56</sup> Pote's focus on the specificities of the British and French warfare supports the idea that he compared his captors' movements to colonial military practices and found them 'Irriguler'.

The porousness of the binary opposition between fixed and fluid spaces further suggests a multiplicity of spaces, as both captives occupied diverse spaces during their journey. Although Pote and Williamson experienced a close contact with their captors as they travelled together for a considerable time, the narratives provide us with instances that show how captives and captors did not always occupy the same space(s). Apart from Pote's efforts to maintain a connection to the familiar space he used to occupy, I argue that the journey made Pote re-think the relationship to his captors and to his own British colonial identity. The social spaces which were produced along the

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<sup>54</sup> Sheila Hones, 'Literary Geography: Setting and Narrative Space', *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (2011), 685-99 (p. 685).

<sup>55</sup> Pote, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> John F. Hurst, 'Account of the Pote Journal', in *The Journal of Captain William Pote, Jr. During His Captivity in the French and Indian War from May, 1745, to August, 1747* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1896) <<http://www.archive.org/details/journalofcaptain02pote>> pp. xi-xix (p. xiv).

journey evoke Pote's changing relation to his captors and how he negotiated their cultural differences, resulting in a deeper understanding of his captors' culture and a consequently deeper relationship to them.

To make this changing relationship visible, we first have to look at how Pote initially described his captors and their practices. After the captives had been distributed among the groups of Native Americans, Pote clearly distanced himself from his captors and stated that he 'found I must Endeavour to Serve two masters and please them both. though I must Confess I Lov<sup>d</sup> Neither of y<sup>m</sup>', indicating the forced character of the journey and the (emotional) distance between him and his captors.<sup>57</sup> Besides Pote's efforts to distance himself from his Native American masters, the narrative describes the cultural difference he witnessed in order to make a more explicit distinction between him and 'them', underlining their 'uncivilised' and inhuman behaviour. When referring to the Native Americans' eating habits, for example, Pote contends that they ate and behaved 'without any manner of Regard wither to Decency or Neatness'.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Pote describes an encounter with Native American women at one of the villages, stating that they 'Danc[ed] and Behav[ed] themselves, in y<sup>e</sup> most Brutish and Indecent manner y<sup>t</sup> is possible for humain kind'.<sup>59</sup> The standards by which Pote measured his captors' behaviour were those that he was familiar with from his own British colonial culture. The shared interstitial space he occupied with his captors confronted Pote with cultural differences, prompting him to distance himself from the group and 'other' his captors.<sup>60</sup>

Twice in the narrative, Pote refers to the 'savage' behaviour of his captors, putting them on the border of inhumanity: they 'make y<sup>e</sup> most hellish Noise that is possible to proceed from humain Creatures'.<sup>61</sup> Pote further distanced himself from his captors by implying that their behaviour was almost inhuman, suggesting that he did not recognise a common humanity with his captors, but instead saw them as 'hellish' and inhuman 'creatures'. When Pote describes his captors' behaviour during an attack

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<sup>57</sup> Pote states that he understood the two Native Americans who guarded him during the night, as he had to sleep between them, to be his two masters (Pote, p. 28).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> Bhabha, pp. 64, 54.

<sup>61</sup> Pote, p. 43. Pote uses this phrase earlier in his narrative when he describes Native American women making the 'most hellish Noise, that is possible to proceed from humaine Creatures' (Ibid., p. 25).



by a British vessel on their way to Louisbourg, he suggests their uncivilised behaviour when he uses the word 'crawl' to report that they 'would Somtimes Crawl from behind y<sup>e</sup> Sea wall', their hiding place, in order to defend themselves.<sup>62</sup> Pote employs a similar strategy to distance himself from his Native American captors as John Norton does in his account of the attack (Chapter 1) by portraying them as animals. Pote uses the verb 'crawled' to describe their actions, creating an animalistic image. The crawling creates a spatial hierarchy in Pote's narrative and suggests that he sees himself as above his captors, which ties in with the inhuman image he creates to distance himself from 'the Other'.

However, as the narrative proceeds, Pote's journey, and especially what he experienced together with his captors, forced him to re-think his relationship with the Native Americans. The closeness that Pote had to maintain to his captors, which is initially linked to a close surveillance, changed over the course of the journey: he gradually started to trust his captors, especially when he became dependent on their protection. This is clear in the contrast he begins to draw between his captors and the members of other Native American groups they encountered. As they visited several villages on their way to Quebec, Pote describes alienating scenes as the women received the captives with a dance during which they reportedly physically abused them.<sup>63</sup> I have already mentioned the brutal depiction of the women's behaviour when discussing the 'savage' and inhuman image Pote creates, demonising the women by referring to the 'hellish Noise' they made, but he mentions later that he was able to ask his captors for help and thus received protection at the next village: 'my master told me when we arrived to y<sup>e</sup> Indian Village I must mind to keep Clost by him'.<sup>64</sup> Pote further describes how his master protected him from the women, implying his master's reliability, so that their closeness could be transformed into something positive and reassuring: 'as Soon as y<sup>e</sup> Squaws approached Near me, my master Spoke Something In Indian, In a Verey harsh manner, y<sup>t</sup> Caused y<sup>m</sup> to Stop in their persuit'.<sup>65</sup> Up until these incidents, Pote tried to distance or even isolate himself from his captors. The degree of safety the closeness to his captors entailed, however, made him re-think his attitude towards the distance

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<sup>62</sup> Pote, p. 43.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 25, 61.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

he created between them. Similar to the changed perception depicted in Norton's account, when it complicates the binary image of 'civilised' Europeans versus 'uncivilised' Native Americans (Chapter 1), Pote's predispositions and bias against his captors were mitigated through their shared social space.

The role that the journey itself played in the changing relationship is evident in the challenges that Pote and his captors faced, bringing them closer together. Having separated from the French army, who continued their journey to Louisbourg, the Native Americans and their captives travelled to Quebec alone. The travel route created some challenges for them which, as Pote argues, were only manageable because captives and captors worked together: for example, he reports that 'we was that day abliged Several Times, to help one another out of y<sup>e</sup> mud'.<sup>66</sup> The shared difficulties suggest that they had to rely on and help each other, which shows that Pote began to put aside his prejudices and negative attitude towards his masters and trust them, becoming closer to them and creating a deeper relationship that went beyond the relationship of captives to captors.

One particular place that foregrounded cultural difference was a church Pote and his captors visited towards the beginning of the journey (when they had not yet parted from the French group). The church allowed Pote to learn about his captors' religion and negotiate their cultural differences. Pote describes the first (and only) time he had to go to mass and points out how he displeased them:

I whent with y<sup>e</sup> Indians. to y<sup>e</sup> mass house. but they was not pleased with my Behaviour. Viz I made no Use of y<sup>e</sup> holy water in Entring y<sup>e</sup> Church. and Likewise Refused to accept of y<sup>e</sup> Consecrated bread when it was offered me. and did not Cross my Self as they did. Therefore I was Intierly Excommunicated. and they would not Suffer me to Enter their Church afterwards.<sup>67</sup>

The church is an important place which gave Pote the opportunity to learn about his captors' values, but it also created tension as he did not follow their religious practices.<sup>68</sup> The tension indicates the different emotional spaces that Pote and his captors occupied and reflects the cultural encounters that the Native Americans had already experienced.

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<sup>66</sup> Pote, p. 49.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> How the church becomes a site of tension is discussed further in the analysis of Robert Eastburn's narrative (Chapter 3), where I investigate the role of religion in Eastburn's efforts to distance himself from his captors.

The fact that this is a Catholic church points to the French Catholic influence. The Native Americans not only influenced their captives in terms of cultural practices but had also been influenced themselves and consequently altered their practices (at least partly) due to their interaction with French allies, underlining the reciprocal cultural influence as a result from the 'contact zone'.<sup>69</sup>

Just as Williams's account of the attack (Chapter 1), which highlights his sense of distress when leaving his home to move through 'a popish country', Pote's refusal to actively participate during the mass and his efforts to distance himself go beyond his rejection of the Native Americans' practices by including the negative attitude towards French Catholics and their influence on the Native Americans.<sup>70</sup> Pote's unwillingness to participate in the religious practice does not stem from an unfamiliarity with the religion but his alienation because his Native American captors were Roman Catholics. This suggests that the differences are more complex than the binary opposition of civilised/uncivilised and colonial/Native American implies. The moments when Pote connected with those French acquaintances whom he calls 'neutral' French imply his unstable relation to the French. The fact that some of Pote's allies were French, in turn, creates an additional binary image between 'good' and 'bad' French and thus suggests the permeability of preestablished dichotomies. This permeability within representations of the Other is also reflected in Robinson Crusoe's relationship with the Portuguese captain who protected Crusoe's plantation.<sup>71</sup> Geoffrey Sill discusses how the captain's integrity is portrayed in *Robinson Crusoe* through an 'extraordinary act of charity' despite being 'a person of a mixed, and thus supposedly inferior, race'.<sup>72</sup>

The moments when Pote talked to French acquaintances show the relative freedom he experienced, complicating the image of an isolated captive who was constantly monitored by his captors. The fluid space of the road as a space of encounter, or rather multiple encounters, made it possible for Pote to meet with acquaintances. Identifying the meeting as 'one of the most ancient devices for structuring a plot in the

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<sup>69</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8. This cultural influence that is operating in both directions will be discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>70</sup> Williams, p. 173.

<sup>71</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe Written by Himself* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> Geoffrey Sill, 'Robinson Crusoe, "Sudden Joy," and the Portuguese Captain' in *Digital Defoe: Studies in Defoe & His Contemporaries* 10 (2018), 1-14 (p. 5).

epic', Bakhtin highlights the 'close link between the motif of meeting and the chronotope ['the unity of time and space markers'] of the road ("the open road")', supporting my analysis of the road as a space of encounter.<sup>73</sup> Bakhtin further argues that, in literature, encounters often take place 'on the road' and explains how '[p]eople who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet' on the road.<sup>74</sup> The social distance that was overcome in Pote's narrative – the fact that people talked to him despite his role as a captive – suggests that social distance collapsed: 'there overtook us Several of y<sup>e</sup> Neutrel french y<sup>t</sup> I knew. Some of y<sup>m</sup> Pityed me and asked my master if he would Sel me'.<sup>75</sup> The road allows for occasions on which Pote can connect to acquaintances and thus to the familiar. In contrast to the otherwise monitored journey, Pote still had the freedom to talk to people who were not part of his captors' group. And although Pote was ultimately not ransomed during the journey, the mere attempt to ransom him indicates a possible escape from captivity and could have helped him endure the journey better.

Despite Pote's refusal to participate in his captors' religious practices at the beginning of his journey, their changing relationship and the cultural exposure to his captors becomes evident in his report of how he behaved upon meeting a priest later in the narrative. The encounter shows his changed attitude and willingness to interact within the cultural space that his captors created through their shared religion. Pote made a conscious effort to respect his masters' values by not disagreeing with the priest: 'y<sup>e</sup> Priest Gave me an account of him, and told me to Content my Self In y<sup>e</sup> Condition y<sup>t</sup> I was then In, for I was in y<sup>e</sup> hands of a Christian Nation, and it might prove verey Beneficial, both to my Body & Soul'.<sup>76</sup> Although what the priest told Pote was likely to contradict his viewpoint, Pote states that 'I was abliged [to] Concur with his Sentiments, for fear of Displeasing my masters'.<sup>77</sup> While Pote still mentions that he feared his masters, I suggest that this fear was connected to his efforts to respect them, rather than a fear of an actual punishment, as his narrative does not mention any punishment for his behaviour in church. Another scene later in his narrative further underlines Pote's

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<sup>73</sup> Bakhtin, p. 98.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>75</sup> Pote, p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

efforts to show his masters that he respected them, when he says that 'I Gained y<sup>e</sup> Good will of my masters at this time So much y<sup>t</sup> they Called me their Good Comrade, and told me I Should make as Good a heron as any in their Tribe in a Verey Short Time'.<sup>78</sup> By analysing these examples of how Pote reacted to the new cultural space he occupied, we can see his changing relationship with his captors and their changing view of him. The fact that his captors explained some of their practices to Pote and openly communicated that they saw him as a member of their tribe suggests the creation of a cultural space they shared with Pote when he learned how to behave respectfully towards them. I argue that the isolated personal space Pote occupied at the beginning of the journey, when he distanced himself from his masters, was merged with the social space that the Native Americans actualised, giving Pote the opportunity to learn about his captors and integrate into their community.

In contrast to Pote's changing relationship to his captors, the distanced relationship between Williamson and the Native Americans remained unchanged throughout their journey. The opportunities to create a shared space by negotiating cultural differences, which can be seen in Pote's text, are not apparent in Williamson's narrative. Rather, Williamson consolidates the negative image he had of his captors at the start. His efforts at 'othering', the distance Williamson constantly created between himself and his captors, suggests that they occupied different subjective spaces throughout the journey, even though they spent a considerable time together. Williamson neither mentions cultural exchange nor expresses any interest in his captors' cultural practices, but rather focuses on their 'cruelty' and 'barbarity'. In order to distance himself and underline his colonial identity, Williamson's narrative repeatedly uses adjectives such as 'hellish', 'brutal' or 'diabolical' and refers to his captors as 'the barbarians', 'barbarous Wretches' or 'infernal Crew'.<sup>79</sup> He seems to be aware of the negative and distinct image he evokes, identifying his description of the events he experienced as 'shocking as it may seem to the humane *English* Heart'.<sup>80</sup> The dismissive and racist language Williamson uses creates a clear distinction between him and the Native Americans. The reinforced binary opposition of Williamson's 'humane English Heart' and his inhuman, 'hellish' captors indicates the different spaces they occupied

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<sup>78</sup> 'Heron' is the name of the tribe to which Pote's captors belonged; *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>79</sup> Williamson, pp. 15, 18, 23.

<sup>80</sup> Word 'English' is italicised in the original; *Ibid.*, p. 15.

and a lacking common ground to build a relationship on, which impeded the production of a shared social space. That Williamson was ‘shock[ed]’ by the Native Americans’ brutality shows his effort not to be equated or associated with the Native Americans’ values or practices, following what David T. Haberly calls ‘the powerful captivity tradition of horrendous barbarities committed on the western frontier by Indians unspeakably vile’.<sup>81</sup> A famous novel that also follows this ‘tradition’, and was later made into a film, is James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans* (first published in 1826), which also draws on the barbarous depiction of Native Americans by focusing on the fates of two female captives.<sup>82</sup>

Williamson would later – upon his return from captivity – take on the public persona of ‘Indian Peter’, which I see as a result of the interstitial spaces captivity produced. Richardson points to ‘the remarkable contradiction between [Williamson’s] anti-Indian narrative and his public appropriation of an Indian identity’, because he not only became a popular public figure but also ran an ‘Indian-themed’ coffeehouse in Edinburgh.<sup>83</sup> While the authenticity of his narrative is contested due to its sensationalistic elements, the colonial perspective Williamson’s account creates in regard to the ‘barbaric’ and uncivilised image of the Native Americans reflects the underlying colonial Eurocentric discourse. His efforts to maintain this clear separation and the colonial perspective that characterises Williamson’s narrative is problematised when he monetarises his persona of ‘Indian Peter’, reflecting a sense of ambiguity between Williamson’s role as a (fictional) character and Williamson as the author and his role as ‘Indian Peter’. Although Williamson’s account does not suggest that his captivity forced him to rethink his relationship to his captors, as Pote’s narrative does, his efforts to distinguish himself from his captors and his later appropriation of their cultural practices still indicate the impact the shared space with his captors could have on Williamson.

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<sup>81</sup> David T. Haberly, ‘Women and Indians: The Last of the Mohicans and the Captivity Tradition’, in *American Quarterly* 28 (1976), 431-44 (p. 434).

<sup>82</sup> James F. Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York, Penguin: 1986).

<sup>83</sup> Richardson, pp. 60, 68.

## 7. Conclusion

The two narratives show significant differences in their descriptions of the journeys, both in terms of the actual journey and the degree of detail with which the captives describe it. Analysing the spatial information these descriptions include and the ways in which the captives created distinct spaces in their narratives has allowed me to identify the different effects the journey had on Pote and Williamson in terms of the extent to which their sense of identity was impacted. Their transformation into captives was not completed at the start of the journey. Rather, Pote and Williamson remained in a threshold state because the journey both consolidated their role as captives and challenged the very idea of being a captive, together with their sense of identity: the distance from their familiar environment caused a crisis in their identity and the captives' experiences along the journey led Pote to re-think his relationship with his captors and influenced Williamson's later persona as 'Indian Peter'. Both narratives highlight how the compulsion to travel, an activity that could otherwise indicate a sense of freedom and autonomy, is a crucial part of the colonials' sense of captivity and gives insight into how their sense of identity and their efforts to stay connected to 'home' are influenced by the cultural encounters they experienced. The changed perception of their captors (in Pote's case) and the strong efforts to distinguish themselves from the 'Other' (as in Williamson's text) exemplify the impact of these cultural encounters.

Analysing the two different descriptions also shows the extent to which captives and captors occupied the same or different spaces. Subjectively speaking, both individuals clearly occupied spaces that were different from those of their captors, highlighting the cultural differences, and Pote's and Williamson's efforts to distance themselves from their Native American masters. Pote's description of the latter part of the journey sheds light on how close he became to his captors. Contrarily, Williamson uses his description of the journey to intensify the sense of difference and distance between him and his captors. The next chapter, which will focus on the captives' extended time with their captors, discusses the impact of James Smith's and Robert Eastburn's exposure to a different culture. It raises further questions about confinement and liminality in order to investigate how the captives negotiated the new cultural and social spaces they encountered.

## Chapter 3: Third Stage: Confinement and Liminal Spaces

### 1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the captives' greater exposure to their captors' lives in the third stage of captivity and investigates the impact this exposure had on the captives' self-presentation. This stage includes the captives' prolonged time together with their captors, which did not always encompass living in the captors' village but could also mean travelling with them (and going on hunting trips with them), or relocating to a different village. For my analysis, I incorporate any extended contact between captives and Native Americans after the initial journey to the captors' village or any other encampment/village from where they resumed their travels – but now as members of the captors' group. This shows how the seemingly straightforward period of confinement could take on different forms and did not exclusively involve the captives' forced stay in one particular place. In this respect, it is unlike other forms of confinement, for example a prison cell. In this chapter I explore the extent to which the two captives James Smith and Robert Eastburn integrated into their captors' lives, raising questions of belonging and self-perception and further challenging the idea of a straightforward transition from freedom into captivity. My analysis will show how this transition is particularly challenged by the captives' initiation and adoption into their captors' families, by investigating the shared spaces captives and captors co-produced and lived in. I suggest that while both captives remain in a threshold state between their old roles as British colonials and their new roles as family members of their Native American captors, they exhibit varying degrees of assimilation that are reflected in their ability to co-produce social spaces with their captors. Applying de Certeau's notion of 'space as a practiced place' in this chapter allows me to investigate the captives' roles in producing shared social spaces, as I see their participation in the co-production of these spaces as a determining factor that gives insight into their position within the new family.<sup>1</sup> While this resembles the analysis of how captives produced social spaces during the second stage of captivity (Chapter 2), the spaces captives occupied during the third stage differ from those of the journey because the captives found themselves in a more delineated place when staying at the village and, more importantly, experienced

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<sup>1</sup> De Certeau, p. 117.



adoption into their captors' group which, as I argue, changed their role in producing a shared social space. My analysis will contrast Smith's active role and Eastburn's passivity in actualising their captors' social space(s) to illustrate the extent to which they integrated into their new environment.

In order to analyse the impact exposure to their captors' lives had on the captives, this section explores a common event described in many captivity narratives: the initiation ritual. I will analyse how Smith's and Eastburn's narratives describe their experiences of the ritual to suggest its significance for how captives perceived their time in the village, and discuss ideas of liminality that are insinuated by this ritual. I see the initiation ritual as another threshold that the captives had to cross (in addition to the thresholds analysed in Chapter 1), which further changed their role as captives. Moreover, the two captives were adopted into their captors' families, which challenges ideas of confinement as lack of freedom because their roles were, again, transformed, blurring the limits of confinement and further problematising the binary opposition of freedom/captivity. While both narratives exhibit similarities in terms of the rituals Smith and Eastburn experienced, I chose these texts because of their differences in terms of the impact the rituals had on them.

The social and cultural spaces both captives occupied in their captors' village (and on subsequent journeys and hunting trips) are drastically different from one another, because of the role both captives had in creating them. The ways Smith's and Eastburn's narratives incorporate spatial elements will show how Smith was better able to integrate into his new family, since he actively co-produced the social space he found himself in, whereas Eastburn was reluctant to fully immerse himself in his new role as a family member and thus did not participate in producing a shared social space, which is already apparent in their very different descriptions of the initiation and adoption rituals. Eastburn's refusal to co-produce social spaces with his captors also ties to ideas of identity and belonging. Both captives found themselves in a new social space that confronted them with a new culture, which forced them to occupy – in Bhabha's terms – interstitial spaces that are characterised by the clash of different cultures and the cultural hybridity that both narratives indicate.<sup>2</sup> While Smith's account indicates his immersion in the interstitial space he found himself in and its impact on the social space

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<sup>2</sup> Bhabha, pp. 64, 54.

he actively produced, Eastburn's narrative highlights his efforts to maintain a sense of familiarity by occupying a shared space with his fellow captives and distancing himself from the new culture he encountered within the interstitial space that the exposure to his Native American captors created. This stage shows how this binary contradiction of safe/unsafe – which has been discussed in the analysis of the first stage (Chapter 1) – is realised differently, particularly in terms of the degree of violence inflicted during the initiation ritual.

While some kind of interaction between captives and captors is most likely depicted in every captivity or prison narrative, it is the circumscribed nature of the village that created a distinct space that influenced the captives' self-perception. I apply Michel Foucault's concept of 'heterotopias' to show the unique elements that the space of the village provides in terms of the captives' self-perception. In 'Of Other Spaces', Foucault describes the nature of heterotopias by presenting several principles that these sites embody, which are useful when characterising the spaces captives occupied. Heterotopias 'are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted'.<sup>3</sup> Although Foucault further argues that a heterotopia is fully actualised by 'a sort of absolute break with their [in this context the captives'] traditional time', which contrasts with the idea of liminality, Smith's account in particular suggests that he lost track of time, which in turn indicates some sort of break from the sense of familiarity he had experienced before the capture.<sup>4</sup> Another principle that Foucault ascribes to a heterotopia is that it 'is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications'.<sup>5</sup> While Foucault defines heterotopias as being either a form of prison or as sites that require certain rituals in order to enter, I combine these two aspects and argue that the Native American village exemplifies both principles. Pushing the idea of heterotopias beyond the confines of a circumscribed place further enables me to explore aspects of both confinement and liminality – two concepts that are foregrounded in the descriptions of captivity and which exemplify the captives' in-between state during their

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<sup>3</sup> Foucault, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

time with the Native Americans. The captives' descriptions suggest that the village is the place where they encountered a new culture, got to know a new lifestyle and, most importantly, where their self-perception as British colonial individuals was tested. Describing the village as a variant form of a heterotopic site helps to identify its potential to influence the captives' self-perception, as their sense of identity was challenged by new roles and some captives struggled to maintain their identity as British colonials. Since most captives had to endure some kind of initiation ritual at their arrival at the village, the ritual marks the 'absolute break with their traditional time' as the captives were accepted to the village after enduring the ritual.

After a brief outline of the content and publication of the two narratives, this chapter first discusses Smith's narrative to show how the initiation and adoption rituals that his account describes complicate his threshold state between being a captive and an adopted member of the Native American tribe. Moreover, his participation in a second initiation ritual later in the narrative will be analysed to support the idea that Smith still occupied a liminal position when he took part in the ritual on the side of the captors, his new family. This chapter focuses on the social spaces that Smith co-produced, by analysing the moments of interaction and exchange between him and his captors. My analysis will then link his active role as a new member of the Native American group back to the idea that Smith maintained a threshold state during his captivity, by highlighting the moments that imply a sense of uncertainty and ambivalence, for instance when he expresses his fears about being killed as he tried to anticipate his captors' actions.

While Eastburn's narrative recounts seemingly similar experiences – he, too, had to participate in an initiation ritual and was adopted – analysing his account shows how the same rituals could impact the captives differently and influence the spaces Eastburn found himself in, as he did not actively co-create the space he shared with his captors. Despite the fact that he had to endure the initiation ritual twice, which would imply the consolidation of his new role as a member of his captors' group, this in fact resulted in a greater distance from his captors. Contrary to Smith, who actively participated in actualising a shared social space, Eastburn's narrative describes the social spaces he occupied to suggest his unwillingness or inability to integrate. For instance, the moment when Eastburn was sent across the river as a punishment is discussed to highlight the strict separation of the spaces Eastburn and his captors lived in. Eastburn's account can

thus be seen as the more typical narrative in that it upholds the binary images of us/them more strictly compared to Smith's narrative. Nevertheless, Eastburn's text offers valuable insight into the cultural diversity and influence he experienced by examining the social spaces he occupied and how his efforts to distance himself from the Native Americans highlight his cultural exposure, suggesting that he was not able to completely isolate himself from his captors.

## **2. Content and Publication of the Selected Narratives**

The captivity narrative of James Smith was originally published in 1799.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to many narratives that describe the attack on captives' homes, Smith was taken on the road when he was eighteen years old, while he was doing some road-cutting works near Alleghany Mountain in May 1755. After his capture, Smith was brought to a nearby fort that had already been attacked by Native American and French parties, where the captives were distributed to different Native American groups. From there Smith travelled to his captors' village, where he stayed for a longer period of time. Smith's time in captivity comprised about four years (from 1755-59), during which he stayed at Native American villages and moved around with his captors because of hunting trips and to travel to their winter lodgings. Smith left the Native Americans in 1759 and arrived at home in 1760. Apart from some additional information on the situation at home when he returned, for instance that his partner had married a few years before his return, Smith also reports that he taught people in his town about Native American warfare. The last part of the narrative comprises some additional information on Native American culture, which he titled 'Indian Customs'. Recounting what he had learned during his time with his Native American captors, Smith discusses specific topics such as religious beliefs, traditions, politics, and warfare.

Robert Eastburn was on his way to Oswego, New York, in 1756 when he was captured by Native Americans. His narrative was first published in 1758, after he had spent a little over a year in captivity (from March 1756 until November 1757).<sup>7</sup> Together with his captors, Eastburn had to move to Montreal. On their way, they stopped at several villages, sometimes for a longer period of time, on other occasions just to stock

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<sup>6</sup> For my analysis, I use the version from Samuel Drake's 1839 anthology of North American captivity narratives, *Indian Captivities*.

<sup>7</sup> Like Smith's narrative, I took the version of Eastburn's account from Drake's *Indian Captivities*.

up their provisions. After their arrival at Montreal, Eastburn had the chance to either stay there or return to his captors' village, and because he had been planning an escape attempt with a fellow captive, he returned to the village. When he confided in another captive, who then disclosed the plan to their captors, Eastburn was briefly imprisoned. Besides his fellow captives, new groups of captives continuously arrived (among one of those groups was his son). Eventually, Eastburn was able to escape from the Native Americans and go to Quebec together with his son, from where they were first sent to England and then back to North America, where the narrative ends with their arrival at Philadelphia.

### **3. James Smith's 'An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith'**

#### **3.1 Initiation Ritual: Running the Gauntlet**

The 'running the gauntlet' is a ritual that many captives had to undergo at the beginning of their captivity, and which can be seen as another threshold that they had to cross, which in turn complicated their new roles as captives.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to Eastburn, who had to endure the ritual upon his arrival at the Native American village, Smith had to run the gauntlet when he arrived at a fort, shortly after his capture, which was his first stop before travelling to his captors' village. The narrative shows how the ritual functioned as a threshold that Smith had to overcome in order to be admitted to the fort:

As [the Native Americans] approached, they formed themselves into two long ranks, about two or three rods apart. I was told by an Indian that could speak English, that I must run betwixt these ranks, and that they would flog me all the way as I ran; and if I ran quick, it would be so much the better, as they would quit when I got to the end of the ranks. There appeared to be a general rejoicing around me, yet I could find nothing like joy in my breast; but I started to the race with all the resolution and vigor I was capable of exerting, and found that it was as I had been told, for I was flogged the whole way.<sup>9</sup>

As Smith describes the procedure of the ritual, he indicates that it would end with his successful crossing of the gauntlet: 'as they would quit when I got to the end of the ranks'. The gauntlet thus symbolises the physical obstacle that separated him from the

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<sup>8</sup> Richard van der Beets notes the widespread presence of the ritual across North America and refers to it as a common feature that 'pervade[d] captivity accounts from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century' (Van der Beets, 'The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual', p. 554).

<sup>9</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 201.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

fort, and simultaneously functioned as a connecting corridor between the outside and the fort. It was Smith's aim to reach the end of the gauntlet in order to enter the supposedly safe space of the fort that marks the end of the violence caused during the ritual. However, Smith was not able to finish the ritual as he was beaten unconscious before he could reach the end of the gauntlet. The sense of violence the narrative depicts, when Smith reports that '[t]hey continued beating me most intolerably, until I was at length insensible', contributes to Blaine's definition of the frontier zone as a 'zone of violence', further arguing that 'identity was shaped by vulnerability' and the captives' need to adapt to a new culture.<sup>10</sup> Although Smith did not consciously experience the end of the ritual, and only recovered his senses later when he was treated by a French doctor, this moment in the narrative still symbolises his entrance into the fort and consolidates his new role as a captive.<sup>11</sup>

The narrative suggests the liminal character of the ritual, as Smith was in-between two roles while running the gauntlet and while he recovered his senses. This concurs with Burnham's notion that the captive's liminal site provides a space that 'both separates and joins two collaborators', because the gauntlet has to be seen as a liminal space that confronted Smith with his captors.<sup>12</sup> If we investigate how these two collaborators – Smith and his Native American captors – engaged with each other, following Burnham's contention that this in-between state includes elements of interaction, we can see how Smith's performance during the initiation ritual somewhat complicated this liminal space as he did not actively participate until the end of the ritual. Despite his inability to complete the ritual, Smith's role as a captive was still consolidated, which connects Blaine's argument about the violence captives experienced in this contact zone and Burnham's idea of the captive being a liminal site in itself, reinforcing the in-between zone the initiation ritual created.

Smith's powerless and passive role during the ritual underlines his transformation from freedom into captivity, reinforced by fact that he did not have a choice in whether he would participate in the ritual. Besides the capture, this scene is one of the first moments in the narrative that indicates the power relations that underlie

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 182; Blaine, p. 72.

<sup>11</sup> The fort was a meeting place for the Native Americans and their French allies. It was the place where the Native Americans brought the Anglo-Americans after the capture and where they distributed the captives between the various Native American groups.

<sup>12</sup> Burnham, p. 20.

the relationship between captive and captors, affirming the Native Americans' power over Smith. While the analysis of the social space that Smith's narrative describes (which is discussed later in this chapter) identifies moments when Smith could be seen as an equal and active member of the group, his role in the initiation ritual reflects the unequal power relations and his inferior position. Another passage that suggests Smith's loss of autonomy is when he reports that when he recovered from the ritual, he was told that 'I must not only go with the Indians, but must be made an Indian myself'.<sup>13</sup> Although Smith was informed about what would happen next, which reduced the sense of suspense, his role as a captive no longer included the ability to make decisions independently, as he was now told what he had to do. The sense of passivity reflects Smith's lack of self-autonomy and thus consolidated his role as a captive.

Since my analysis of the first initiation ritual Smith had to go through showed the liminal character of the procedure and demonstrated the threshold the ritual created and how this influenced Smith's perception of his position as a captive, I further suggest that we can use Smith's behaviour in this liminal space as a benchmark to understand how his role during captivity changed. While Smith's first run through the gauntlet suggests his transformation into a captive, the shared social space indicates that this transformation was not completed by the initiation ritual. The second running the gauntlet, then, gives insight into the extent his position changed. Smith's participation in the second ritual shows his role as a captive (and then adopted member of the Native Americans' group) and implies that he still occupied a threshold state between his new role as a family member and his role as a captive and British colonial:

There was a number of prisoners brought in by these parties, and when they were to run the gauntlet I went and told them how they were to act. One John Savage was brought in, a middle-aged man, or [*sic*] about forty years old. He was to run the gauntlet. I told him what he had to do; and after this I fell into one of the ranks with the Indians, shouting and yelling like them; and as they were not very severe on him, as he passed me, I hit him with a piece of pumpkin, which pleased the Indians much, but hurt my feelings.<sup>14</sup>

Smith's participation in the ritual mirrors his liminal state. While the narrative has not mentioned this kind of struggle before, Smith uses the description of the ritual to report his position as a captive. On the one hand, the passage describes how Smith had

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<sup>13</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

successfully adapted to his captors' customs and tradition as he actively took part in the ritual, 'shouting and yelling like them'. While Smith's first initiation ritual confirms the space of the fort as a heterotopic site that was not 'freely accessible', as Foucault suggests, his behaviour during this second ritual gives insight into how he assimilated.<sup>15</sup> His adoption and changed behaviour confirms Lefebvre's idea of a person's entrance to a new (social) space as prompting them to 'either recognize [...] or lose themselves'.<sup>16</sup> Lefebvre's distinction between either recognising or losing oneself, however, is combined in Smith's narrative, as the scene shows his awareness of his own behaviour and customs and how he changed, as Smith acknowledges that he was now behaving 'like them'. This indicates the difference between his former behaviour and the behaviour of his captors, which Smith now shared, providing another moment of trans-culturation (mentioned in Chapter 1).<sup>17</sup> While Norton's narrative depicts the moment of trans-culturation when referring to the reciprocal cultural influence between his attackers, the French and Native Americans, Smith's account provides a different perspective as it was now he who showed the Native American influence through his behaviour. Smith's knowledge of the ritual and how he had to participate reinforces the idea that he successfully assimilated to the group.

Yet Smith's description simultaneously indicates that he had not fully integrated as he tried to help his fellow British captives by giving them advice. It can even be argued that his position as an insider allowed him to help his fellow captives, which would have not been possible if he were not a member of the tribe and not accustomed to the Native American practices. Smith's unique position in the ritual thus confirms Logan's claim that captives occupied the liminal roles of being both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the new social spaces they occupied.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Smith's knowledge about how to participate in the ritual on the side of the Native Americans further highlights Davis and Roberts's claim that an insider knows about a group's 'social practice', which is true in Smith's case if we see the initiation ritual as a social event.<sup>19</sup> The literal and metaphorical space that was created by the gauntlet confronted Smith with his two different roles as

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<sup>15</sup> Foucault, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Lefebvre, p. 35.

<sup>17</sup> Burke, p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> Logan, p. 476.

<sup>19</sup> Davis and Roberts, p. 149.



it is during the ritual that he mentions seeing his fellow captives. How Smith acted in this ritual, then, gives insight into his threshold state of belonging both to his fellow captives and his new family members of the Native American group. While Smith does not comment on his emotional state when seeing the other captives, this encounter can be described as creating a familiar space in which Smith was confronted with his home, in contrast to the space of the village that had isolated and separated him from his familiar environment.

Further focusing on Smith's different roles within a new society, the ritual highlights the village's qualities of a heterotopic site and is, to use Foucault's terminology, the captive's experienced 'counter-site'.<sup>20</sup> Smith's second participation in 'running the gauntlet' suggests that his role as a British colonial was challenged during his time with the Native Americans. Given that this was Smith's first encounter with British colonials since he was captured, or at least the first worth mentioning in his account, the space that the gauntlet creates combines qualities of the old and familiar world of his home and the new environment of the village. It is a space in which Smith literally had to take sides; while he explained the procedure to his fellow captive, he also took part in the ritual on the side of the Native Americans. If we approach role performance as a way of analysing construction of identity, Smith's active participation and the extent to which he was able to perform the role of a Native American suggests that he no longer solely inhabited his British colonial identity but had also adopted, even if not fully, the role of the new member of the Native American group.<sup>21</sup> Scott's idea of 'identity commitment' points to the way in which Smith's high level of commitment to his new role – the fact that he not only joined the ritual but also hurt the captive – exemplifies how his new role contrasted with his old loyalties as a colonial subject (and his loyalties to his fellow captive).<sup>22</sup> The village as a heterotopic site challenges Smith's personal state in that he struggled with his competing roles when taking part in the ritual.

Smith's account offers a new perspective on his roles as British colonial and member of the Native American group, and how the shared social space forced him to occupy a threshold state that tested these different roles. In this way my analysis offers

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<sup>20</sup> Foucault, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Scott, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

a more nuanced insight into the captives' assimilation strategies and the moments of trans-culturation that differ from Levernier and Cohen's binary image of either becoming a full member of the Native American group and staying with them, or returning home. This can be seen in their definition of captives who chose to stay with their captors: '[t]ribalized, they discarded their white identity and with it the white man's language and the desire to communicate with whites'.<sup>23</sup> While Levernier and Cohen rightly state that most captives returned home when given the opportunity, the captives' return does not necessarily mean that they depict their encounters with the Native Americans only in a negative way, which can be seen when focusing, for example, on the social and cultural spaces Smith co-created during his time with his captors (which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter).

### **3.2 Adoption Ritual**

The adoption ritual Smith's narrative describes adds another threshold experience to his captivity and enhances his transition from captive to member of his captors' family. Analysing the adoption ritual shows how Smith's liminal state was complicated further in that he was confronted with a new role and problematises the binary image of freedom/captivity. Taking on the role of a family member collided with his role as a captive and British colonial. Upon his arrival at the first Native American village to which they travelled (and where they stayed for a longer period of time) Smith had to change his physical appearance. The narrative provides a detailed account of his gradual transformation, which not only included a change of clothes but also meant that the Native Americans 'began to pull the hair out of my head'.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, they 'bored my nose and ears [for] earrings and nose jewels; then [...] ordered me to strip off my clothes and put on a breech-clout [...] painted my head, face, and body, in various colors'.<sup>25</sup> While the description of his transformation is more detailed in the narrative, I want to home in on this passage in particular as Smith reports that 'a number of Indians collected about me' and helped him with his transformation.<sup>26</sup> The Native Americans who contributed to changing Smith's appearance were producing a distinct social space

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<sup>23</sup> Levernier and Cohen (eds.), 'Introduction', p. xxiii.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 185.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

that Smith now occupied with them. Seeing this as an interstitial space evokes Smith's cultural exposure that prompted him to negotiate cultural differences due to the very different appearance he assumed.

That the hybrid cultural space actualised in Smith's narrative reflects how the Native Americans expressed their cultural practices within this shared space by changing their captive's physical appearance to blend in with the rest of the group concurs with Bhabha's definition of an interstitial space as the 'Third Space of enunciation'.<sup>27</sup> Focusing on how Smith's captors interacted with him gives insight into the way they enunciated his entrance into the social and cultural space of their group. While Smith's transformation suggests his acceptance into the group, it still implies the forced and violent nature of the procedure when Smith compares the removal of his hair to 'plucking a turkey'.<sup>28</sup> Following Fahlander in his discussion of Bhabha's theory of interstitial spaces, exchanging the word 'enunciation' with 'performance' indicates the importance for Smith to perform his new role as a member of his captors' group, which is reinforced by his physical transformation to strengthen this new role.<sup>29</sup> Smith's transformation into a member of the group was consolidated by an adoption ritual that further highlights the complicated binary image of freedom/captivity and safe/unsafe. Seeing the threshold that was created by the initiation ritual as a 'zone of ambiguity' – based on Viljoen and van der Merwe's definition of thresholds – helps understand Smith's ambiguous state of not knowing at the beginning of the ceremony combined with the suddenness of the ritual.<sup>30</sup> That 'at that time [Smith] knew nothing of their mode of adoption', and the fast pace and abruptness of the start of the ritual, as 'all that were in the town came running and stood round the old chief, who held me by the hand in the midst', reflect both the sense of distress the forced ritual must have caused and Smith's acceptance into a new social space.<sup>31</sup>

Analysing the description of Smith's adoption ceremony shows the liminal space it produced. The following passage suggests the importance of the river in creating another threshold for Smith, reinforcing his new role as a member of the group:

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<sup>27</sup> Bhabha, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 185.

<sup>29</sup> Fahlander, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Viljoen and van der Merwe, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 185.

The old chief holding me by the hand, made a long speech, very loud, and when he had done, he handed me to three young squaws, who led me by the hand down the bank, into the river, until the water was up to our middle. The squaws then made signs to me to plunge myself into the water, but I did not understand them; I thought that the result of the council was that I should be drowned, and that these young ladies were to be the executioners. They all three laid violent hold of me, and I for some time opposed them with all my might, which occasioned loud laughter by the multitude that were on the bank of the river. At length one of the squaws made out to speak a little English, (for I believe they began to be afraid of me,) and said *no hurt you*. On this I gave myself up to their ladyships, who were as good as their word; for though they plunged me under water, and washed and rubbed me severely, yet I could not say they hurt me much.<sup>32</sup>

This scene shows the literal manifestation of a threshold as Smith had to ‘plunge’ himself into the water in order to pass the ceremony. Due to Smith’s reflection on his thoughts and behaviour during the ceremony, this threshold symbolises another break as he became a member of the Native American tribe. Whether this is intended or not, Smith’s description of the ceremony and his adoption is highly symbolic. He plunged into the water as a British captive and reached the surface again as a member of the Native Americans. The break Smith experienced during the ceremony also suggests his entrance into a new and unfamiliar world, as Smith’s not knowing caused a sense of distress as he expected to drown during the ritual. The river and its symbolic meaning for Smith’s captors supports the idea of the adoption ritual producing an interstitial space that is liminal in multiple ways; it suggests the influence the French allies had on the Native Americans. As the adoption resembles a Christian baptism, the new environment Smith found himself in demonstrates how different cultural spaces can intersect, merging the cultural practices of the Native Americans – when they adopt captives into their families – with a French Catholic practice. In addition to the cultural liminality and influence, this space also indicates Smith’s liminal position in the ritual. Smith was now part of this interstitial space that he would actively co-create during his time with his new family.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, ‘An Account’, pp. 185-86.

<sup>33</sup> One example that particularly stands out in terms of the cultural and religious exchange that the shared interstitial space made possible (and which I will come back to later in this chapter) is the moment when Smith entered a discussion with his Native American brother about their religious beliefs. I ascribe this opportunity to Smith’s role as an active member of the group which allowed him to contribute to the shared social space.

The fact that Smith did not know about the procedure indicates a sense of uncertainty and sheds light on the image he had of his Native American captors and simultaneously puts his prior knowledge or prejudice about Native Americans into perspective. Smith's state of not knowing creates feelings of uncertainty and fear during the ritual, as he 'made no doubt but they were about putting me to death in some cruel manner'.<sup>34</sup> Using his previous perception of the Native Americans' cruelty and savagery, Smith assumed that he would face the same fate as many of his countrymen before. Although his account states that 'all three [women] laid violent hold of me' when he refused to dive into the water, and calls them the 'executioners', Smith reverses his opinion at the end of the description by claiming that he 'could not say they hurt me much'.<sup>35</sup> It is therefore the direct exposure to 'the Other', the Native Americans, that this liminal space created that forced Smith to qualify the violent image he had of the Native American women. The gendered roles the narrative refers to – exemplified by the Native American women who carry out the orders of their male superior – are further discussed in my analysis of Susanna Johnson's narrative (Chapter 4) when I focus on the female, domestic space she occupied during her captivity. Analysing the perceived differences between Native Americans and colonials (the distribution of roles, for instance) helps call into question the colonial Eurocentric perspective that creates the moments of othering in the narrative, as these roles show great similarities to Western gender roles.

The adoption ceremony also has to be seen as a social and communal event, reflected in the Native Americans' laughter at Smith's resistance, and indicates that it was a form of entertainment for them that strengthened the social bonds between the members through this shared experience. That Smith did not understand the speech, since it was not translated for him in any way, suggests that the chief of the tribe did not direct his speech to Smith but rather to the Native Americans. This reinforces Smith's in-between state as he was forced to exist both inside and outside of the community: although he was part of the ritual and adopted into the group, Smith could not understand his captors and was thus unable to participate or even understand the significance of the ceremony.

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<sup>34</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 185.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

After the adoption ceremony, Smith's role as a member of his captors' group was reinforced when he had to change his appearance a second time, indicating the consolidation of his new role. Smith received new clothes, including 'garters dressed with beads, porcupine quills, and red hair', and his face was painted again.<sup>36</sup> Seeing his change in appearance as the last part of the adoption process, the different steps of the ceremony challenge the idea that the adoption only created one distinct threshold that captives crossed to become members of the Native Americans' family. Smith's narrative contrasts this idea and indicates the possibility of multiple thresholds that were actualised during the adoption process. While Smith's second transformation suggests that his new role as a member of the tribe was consolidated, what is even more important at this point in the narrative is the ritual's significance for the space Smith occupied in the village. After the transformation, he was brought to the council house, where he waited until 'the Indians came in dressed and painted in their grandest manner'.<sup>37</sup> This image of a room filled with dressed and painted Native Americans, including their new member Smith, conveys the idea of a newly created social space that is produced by the participants of the gathering, to which Smith now had access.

### **3.3 Social Space**

Smith's experience at the council house and his acceptance into the Native American community is consolidated by the speech one of the chiefs gave to welcome him. This, in turn, signifies Smith's opportunity to actively negotiate his presence in this new social space:

My son, you are now flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. By the ceremony which was performed this day every drop of white blood was washed out of your veins; you are taken into the Caughnewago nation, and initiated into a warlike tribe; you are adopted into a great family, and now received with great seriousness and solemnity in the room and place of a great man. After what has passed this day, you are now one of us by an old strong law and custom. My son, you have now nothing to fear – we are now under the same obligations to love, support, and defend you that we are to love and to defend one another; therefore, you are to consider yourself as one of our people.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 186.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Smith does not clarify whether it was only male Native Americans who were present for this gathering. The fact that Smith was at the council house and reports that 'one of the chiefs' made a speech suggests that it was only male Native American chiefs who participated.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

The speech suggests Smith's rather secure role, underlined by the chief's promise that Smith would 'have nothing to fear'. Besides the support and acceptance that Smith was supposed to receive now that he had become a member of their family, this passage provides some good insight into the cultural and social values of the Native American group. While the speaker refers to the group as a 'warlike tribe', he also mentions the 'strong law and custom', which I will further discuss when analysing how the Native Americans taught Smith their rules and customs later in this chapter. The reason behind Smith taking 'the room and place of a great man' is explained in Namias's work *White Captives*, when she explains that Native Americans adopted their captives '[t]o assuage their loss of a brother, husband, or son'.<sup>39</sup> From the perspective of his captors, then, the adoption means that 'every drop of white blood was washed out of [Smith's] veins' as he replaced one of their family members. This image of symbolically removing Smith's white blood suggests his complete transformation into a Native American. The idea that they attempted to erase Smith's former identity by removing his white blood contradicts Calloway's claim that Native Americans 'seem to have had no racial prejudice'.<sup>40</sup> While my reading concurs with Calloway's contention that initiation rituals and the education of captives are key elements that captives were exposed to, the above quoted passage links ideas of race and blood and how Smith had to remove his whiteness first before joining their 'nation'. This is enhanced by the new colours that were applied to Smith's face when he was painted before and after the adoption process. Seeing his physical transformation as a useful tool for Smith to integrate into his new family, I want to highlight the significance of this new space which this transformation enabled him to occupy. That the Native Americans tried to remove Smith's whiteness and change the colour of his face ties in with ideas of self-fashioning as identity construction, which confronted Smith with his new role as a member of the Native American group.

Although Smith expresses his doubts about the part of the speech that concerns the washing out of his white blood, he also admits that 'from that day, I never knew them to make any distinction between me and themselves in any respect whatever until I left them', underlining the idea of his successful entrance into the new social space.<sup>41</sup> The equal treatment Smith received, which is especially apparent in the way the Native

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<sup>39</sup> Namias, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Calloway, 'An Uncertain Destiny', p. 104.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 186.

Americans tried to educate him (which I will discuss in more detail in the following), is an important factor that facilitated his participation in the social space, as his new role enabled him to establish a different relationship with his now family members. Pushing the idea of the equal treatment facilitating Smith's participation even further, I would suggest that the welcoming attitude of the Native American chief somewhat lowers the threshold of becoming a new member of the group for Smith as he was, according to the chief's speech, already seen as a Native American. This therefore entitled Smith to a place in the shared social space, underlined by his place in the gathering of the Native American chiefs.

A significant factor that positively impacted the colonials' time in captivity was their understanding of their captors' language, facilitating interaction and exchange and thus enabling them to produce a shared social space. Smith's narrative reports his efforts to learn the indigenous language as his new brother cannot speak English. In line with the idea that Smith had to negotiate a new cultural space that was complicated by his lack of knowledge about his captors' language is Vaughan and Clark's definition of the captives' extended time with their captors as 'the actual captivity' and 'liminal phase', evoking the idea that the captive 'was relatively free from the social strictures and cultural values of his previous life', and was thus forced to adapt to this new way of life without their 'normal guideposts of language and social relationships'.<sup>42</sup> Considering that Smith started to learn his captors' language during captivity, I extend Vaughan and Clark's claim by pointing to the significance of the presence of fellow captives. Smith's account highlights the fact that he was not surrounded by other captives who spoke English, which in turn expedited his language learning.<sup>43</sup> The lack of fellow captives enabled Smith's total exposure to his captors' social space, and his new family were the only people he could interact with during his time in captivity. Smith's knowledge of the indigenous language and his integration into his captors' group is exemplified through the scene when the Native Americans 'called me by my Indian name, which was Scoouwa'.<sup>44</sup> Having an 'Indian name' consolidated Smith's role as a Native American and conforms with the Native Americans' idea of having removed his whiteness through the ritual. In this sense, giving Smith a new name can be seen as an attempt to further strip

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<sup>42</sup> Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 191.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.



him of his former identity, such as when the captors stripped him of his clothes and dressed him differently.

The fact that Smith encountered different Native American groups helps to call into question further the us/them binary opposition through the cultural insights Smith was able to gain. Besides acquiring his captors' language, Smith also encountered other Native American languages, which the narrative shows when describing his improved language skills, '[a]s [he] could then speak some Indian, especially Caughnewaga', adding that 'both that [language] and the Wyandot tongue were spoken in this camp'.<sup>45</sup> This information on multiple indigenous languages helps to underline the diverse qualities of the shared space in the camp, supporting Snyder's notion of Native American villages as 'truly multi-ethnic'.<sup>46</sup> That Smith and his captors went on hunting trips and stayed at various villages and camps facilitated Smith's exposure to different Native American groups and the different languages they spoke.<sup>47</sup> Getting to know different groups and languages, which indicates that Smith actively engaged with these groups and produced new social spaces, challenges the negative and overgeneralising image of 'the enemy' that is indicated by other captivity narratives and which is also somewhat suggested by Smith's doubts and prejudice against his captors (which I will come back to later in this analysis). In line with Pratt's understanding of the colonial frontier as a 'contact zone' that can be characterised as a 'space of imperial encounters', focusing on the diversity of the social spaces Smith occupied offers a more nuanced perspective on the cultural exchange between him and his captors.<sup>48</sup> By broadening his cultural knowledge, Smith's narrative challenges the idea of one big group of 'savage' enemies that British colonials encountered during captivity by highlighting the individuality and differences among the various Native American groups.

The narrative further exemplifies the diverse and open space Smith occupied by depicting his autonomy as a family member of the Native Americans. Following his request to travel to a different part of the country, Smith was allowed to join another Native American group for a hunting expedition. The fact that he was able to choose

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 199.

<sup>46</sup> Snyder, p. 109.

<sup>47</sup> The variety of languages reported in Smith's narrative is also a significant factor that contributed to the multicultural space of the fort where Alexander Henry lived, which is further discussed in Henry's case study in Chapter 4.

<sup>48</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

freely, underlined by his statement that his Native American family ‘always used me as a free man, and gave me the liberty of choosing’, suggests the consolidation of Smith’s role as a free member of the family rather than a captive.<sup>49</sup> It further calls into question the idea of captivity as confinement by highlighting the opportunities to actively participate in the shared social space that resulted from the sense of autonomy and acceptance Smith experienced. The degree of freedom and autonomy Smith gained through his adoption suggests his successful integration into the group, which contrasts with the descriptions of the journey analysed in Chapter 2. As Pote and Williamson lacked an ‘experiential aim’, which for Bal signifies the confining character of a journey, Smith’s ability to explore his new environment relatively freely suggests that his role as a member of the tribe must have positively influenced his travel in that it now implied a sense of safety or stability.<sup>50</sup> This moment in the narrative also indicates the diverse qualities of the social space Smith occupied as he was not only able to meet different groups and encounter different languages/dialects, but could also travel with them and thus produce a social space with a Native American group other than the family who adopted him.

Smith’s acceptance and gradual assimilation into his captors’ group is demonstrated in moments which portray him being educated by his new family members, which enhance the idea of a shared social space that required Smith’s active participation. One scene, in which Smith did not follow his captors’ etiquette and was thus corrected by his new brother, shows how the shared social space allowed Smith to learn about his captors’ values and behaviour. It supports my claim that both the initiation ritual and adoption facilitated the creation of shared spaces that Smith occupied as a new member of the Native Americans. The following passage describes a Native American’s reaction to Smith’s impolite behaviour towards a visitor that came to the village:

Do you not know that when strangers come to our camp we ought always to give them the best that we have? I acknowledged that I was wrong. He said that he could excuse this, as I was but young.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Smith, ‘An Account’, p. 205.

<sup>50</sup> Bal, p. 140.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, ‘An Account’, p. 201.

Although this scene suggests that Smith had not yet managed to fully assimilate, it still shows his ability to adhere to his captors' etiquette by acknowledging his mistake. Whether or not Smith actually believed that his behaviour was wrong does not diminish his openness towards the Native Americans' values. The passage also conveys the educational element of their interaction when the Native American mentioned Smith's young age as the reason why he could excuse his behaviour, implying that his captor taught him a lesson by pointing out his wrong behaviour. This notion of the Native Americans' effort to integrate captives into their families supports the idea that Smith was educated in order to become a full member of the group, further confirming Namias's claim that captives were adopted due to the loss of a family member.<sup>52</sup>

The social space that was constituted by the deepened contact and interaction between Smith and his new brothers is exemplified further in a scene that describes Smith displeasing one of the Native Americans who thought that he was laughing about his religious practices. The following quotation gives insight into the etiquette of his captors in terms of what they considered to be disrespectful and, more importantly, indicates a sense of openness and honesty between Smith and his captors, which I suggest is only possible through their shared social space:

During the whole of this scene I sat by Tecaughretanego, and as he went through it with the greatest solemnity, I was seriously affected with his prayers. I remained duly composed until he came to the burning of the tobacco; and as I knew that he was a great lover of it, and saw him cast the last of it into the fire, it excited in me a kind of merriment, and I insensibly smiled. Tecaughretanego observed me laughing, which displeased him, and occasioned him to address me in the following manner. 'Brother: I have somewhat to say to you, and I hope you will not be offended when I tell you of your faults. You know that when you were reading your books in town I would not let the boys or any one disturb you; but now, when I was praying, I saw you laughing. I do not think that you look upon praying as a foolish thing; I believe you pray yourself. But perhaps you may think my mode or manner of praying foolish; if so, you ought in a friendly manner to instruct me, and not make sport of sacred things'.<sup>53</sup>

The fact that the Native American openly expressed his disappointment and did not just punish Smith for what the former considered as disrespectful behaviour suggests the close relationship they had established and further highlights the opportunity which the produced social space provided for them as they were able to negotiate their cultural

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<sup>52</sup> Namias, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 230.

differences in terms of their values and social behaviour. The relatively honest discussion about what the Native American considered offensive or upsetting, Smith's ready acknowledgement of his mistake (which he mentions in his narrative afterwards), and his effort to value his captors' customs indicates a sense of mutual respect and openness towards each other.<sup>54</sup>

Related to this scene in which Smith offended the Native American by laughing during his prayers is the description of their discussion about religion, which was initiated through their close contact and the same space they occupied:

I told him something of the method of reconciliation with an offended God, as revealed in my Bible, which I had then in possession. He said that he liked my story better than that of the French priests, but he thought that he was now too old to begin to learn a new religion.<sup>55</sup>

Although the Native American told him that he was too old to learn about a new religion, this scene can still be read as a moment when the shared space that allowed for cultural interaction influenced – or at least affected – Smith's captor too. While Smith primarily mentions instances in which he learnt about new customs and was forced to integrate himself into the tribe, this moment in the narrative hints at the possibility that Smith, too, influenced his captors. This mutual influence, then, can be seen as a result of the interstitial space that captive and captors created and that was not only determined by the captors' actions but by the interaction and negotiation between Smith and his captors.

How the shared space Smith occupied with the Native Americans impacted his perception is not only exemplified by how he behaved towards his new family but also by how he acquired considerable knowledge about his new surroundings. The various hunting trips that they undertook taught Smith about what used to be described as the wilderness by most captives: 'From the head waters of Canesadooharie to this place, the land is generally good; chiefly first or second rate, and, comparatively, little or no third rate'.<sup>56</sup> This shows how Smith was able to rate the land through which he travelled, leading him to perceive the land differently as a result of his captivity. His ability to differentiate between good and bad hunting territory, which shifted from his idea of an

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<sup>54</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 230.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

undifferentiated 'wilderness', engages with questions of civilisation and barbarity. Through occupying this new space, Smith's perspective was changed, providing him with the opportunity to differentiate and challenge the pre-existing Eurocentric perspective of an unknown land that many British colonial captives associated with danger and the presence of 'barbaric' Native Americans. Closely connected to Smith's new perception of the space he occupied is the fact that he lost track of time: '[a]t this time I did not know either the day of the week or the month; but I supposed it to be about the first of April'.<sup>57</sup> Besides a lack of orientation that is indicated by this passage, it also insinuates Smith's detachment from his former life before captivity as he now occupied a different social space that did not include habits typical of colonial Western life such as tracking time and dates. This new space exemplifies Foucault's idea of a heterotopia, as it signifies a form of break for Smith: his break with the familiar habit of tracking time.<sup>58</sup>

While Smith's time with his captors allowed him to produce social spaces that broadened his knowledge about a different culture, his interactions with his new family members still reflect a sense of ambiguity, particularly expressed in those moments that suggest that Smith did not fully trust them. His doubts are reflected in a scene when he tried to anticipate the Native Americans' actions and was afraid that he might be killed: 'I thought that I had displeased them by reading my books, and that they were about putting me to death'.<sup>59</sup> Preceding this passage are Smith's thoughts about a possible punishment that eventually did not happen. This passage is not preceded by any unkind treatment or conflict, and it is only Smith's state of not knowing the reasons for the wooden construction that his captors were building that fuelled his worries. What Smith believed to be a gallows turned out to be a structure to shelter during the night. His paranoid interpretation of this incident suggests the uncertainty of his captivity and a remaining sense of distrust towards his captors. This shows that Smith's active participation in the shared social space did not always lessen his feelings of uncertainty and lack of safety during his time at the village, reinforcing the idea that Smith did not fully assimilate and remained in a liminal position between a captive and a family member.

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<sup>57</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 199.

<sup>58</sup> Foucault, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 193.

Smith's liminal position is exemplified by a moment in the narrative when he had the chance to escape. After a long period of not getting enough food, Smith's contemplation of an escape attempt (when he left some of his captors to look for food) indicates that he still occupied the role of a captive:

[i]t was now that I concluded I would run off to Pennsylvania, my native country. As the snow was on the ground, and Indian hunters almost the whole of the way before me, I had but a poor prospect of making my escape, but my case appeared desperate.<sup>60</sup>

Despite Smith's seemingly successful integration into his new family, the passage implies that he had not stopped thinking about returning to his old life, calling the idea of running away his escape. And although Smith immediately discarded the idea by stating that a successful escape might be impossible, his narrative also mentions that running away would only show his 'hard-heartedness and ingratitude' towards his captors.<sup>61</sup> This suggests that Smith maintained a certain connection to home and that he had never dismissed his role as a British colonial who would eventually return to his native country. My analysis highlights Smith's sense of an internalised confinement, as he was held back by his newly acquired sense of gratitude towards his new family, which confirms Richardson's idea that one of the reasons why adopted captives did not escape was that 'presumably the hold of Indian society is so great that one cannot simply walk away'.<sup>62</sup> The passage thus consolidates the liminal space Smith occupied, characterised by the tension it created regarding the idea of confinement, and suggests that his role as a family member of the Native American group was reinforced by a sense of loyalty to the new society he was now part of, pointing to his competing roles as British colonial and member of his captors' tribe.

A scene that further complicated Smith's successful transformation into a family member occurred when he was punished for not adhering to his captors' orders. When Smith was allowed to go hunting on his own – which he was not at the beginning of his time in the village – provided that he return in the evening, he did not realise the implications of his status as a family member and had to experience the harsh

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<sup>60</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 227.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>62</sup> Richardson, p. 48.

consequences of his misbehaviour when he did not return to the camp in the evening:<sup>63</sup> 'On my return to the camp they took my gun from me, and for this rash step I was reduced to a bow and arrows, for near two years'.<sup>64</sup> While Smith's narrative does not comment on this incident or report whether he changed his behaviour afterwards, losing his gun and the ability to move freely suggests a sense of struggle with his new role. As Smith's narrative reports a kind and respectful treatment otherwise, this scene could imply that the Native Americans punished him in order to educate their new member. Since the Native Americans saw Smith as part of their group, removing his gun could be seen as a disciplinary measure that would be applied when raising a younger family member, rather than punishing a captive, particularly if we consider the fact that Smith was still allowed to carry a weapon (bow and arrows).

Smith's temporary loss of his gun also meant that he experienced a different social space, as he was no longer allowed to join the Native American men on their hunting trips and had to stay with the women and children instead: '[w]hile the hunters were all out, [...] the squaws and boys (in which class I was) were scattered out in the bottoms, hunting red haws, black haws and hickory nuts'.<sup>65</sup> This passage provides valuable insight into the gendered roles that underlay the social structure of his new family: the men were out hunting while the women stayed in the village gathering food. That Smith's new role was seen as a punishment becomes apparent when we look at a scene earlier in the narrative when Smith helped some of the Native American women with their work in the field. The narrative reports that the men, 'hearing of what I had done, chid me, and said that I was adopted in the place of a great man, and must not hoe corn like a squaw', indicating the hierarchical order of men and women and the gendered roles that were in place.<sup>66</sup> Earlier in the narrative, when Smith was scolded for not behaving generously enough towards a visitor who came to the village, his brother told him that he 'must learn to behave like a warrior, and do great things, and never be found in any such little actions'.<sup>67</sup> The narrative implies Smith's need to negotiate his captors' values and social structures in order to assimilate better, which concurs with

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 190.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

Namias's contention that '[a]dapt[ing] demanded a reassessment of all aspects of [the male captive's] life: male behaviour, family relations, and gender relations'.<sup>68</sup> The two passages from Smith's narrative explicitly show the expectations the Native Americans had of Smith and simultaneously reveal the gendered roles that were central to their social structure.

My analysis of Smith's narrative shows the lack of confinement he experienced during the time with his captors, suggesting that he remained in a threshold state as a result of the liminal space he co-produced with his new family members. The tension between confinement and acceptance into the Native Americans' family, including a significant degree of independence, allowed Smith to co-produce a shared social space, as he was actively involved in his family's life. The following analysis of Eastburn's narrative will also address ideas of confinement and liminality, and discuss how he, too, remained in a threshold state during his captivity. The aspect of co-producing social spaces, however, is lacking in Eastburn's account and consequently provides an insight into how his threshold state between British colonial and captive was less balanced than Smith's.

#### **4. Robert Eastburn's 'A Faithful Narrative of the Many Dangers and Sufferings, as well as Wonderful and Surprising Deliverances, of Robert Eastburn'**

##### **4.1 Initiation and Adoption Rituals**

Eastburn's narrative reports a similar experience to Smith's 'running the gauntlet', which can also be described as an initiation ritual. The following passage shows how the ritual functioned as a threshold that Eastburn had to cross to be admitted into the village:

As soon as we landed at Conasadauga a large body of Indians came and encompassed us round and ordered the prisoners to dance and sing the prisoner's song [...]. At the conclusion they gave a shout, and opened the ring to let us run, and then fell on us with their fists, and knocked several down. In the mean time, one ran before to direct us to an Indian house which was open, and as soon as we got in we were safe from beating. My head was sore with bruises, and pained me several days.<sup>69</sup>

Eastburn's effort to pass through the ritual by seeking refuge in a Native American house suggests the sense of entrapment the ritual caused. By identifying the ritual as a

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<sup>68</sup> Namias, p. 79.

<sup>69</sup> Eastburn, p. 272.



threshold I focus on the sense of crisis Eastburn experienced during the trial that initiated his transformation into a captive. The circumscribed space the Native Americans produced through the ritual, and which Eastburn tried to escape from, reflects his state of being entrapped and suggests a negative threshold experience. Besides the metaphorical threshold that the initiation ritual constituted, Eastburn's description also points to the literal threshold he passed: 'one ran before to direct us to an Indian house which was open, and as soon as we got in we were safe from beating'. Eastburn's entry into the Native American house marked the end of the ritual and his entrance into the village. This, however, did not result in the completion of his literal transformation into a captive. The idea that his new role had not been consolidated is exemplified by the second initiation ritual he had to endure, implying that Eastburn's experience impeded a straightforward transition and thus caused a sense of uncertainty.

The sense of safety that Eastburn gained by entering the house was complicated by his later travel to and arrival at a different village, challenging the idea of a singular threshold initiating his transformation once and for all into a captive. As Eastburn's captivity is characterised by his travels to different towns along the St. Lawrence River, which would eventually lead him to Montreal, his arrival at another village (Cohnewago) included another initiation ritual:

As soon as I got ashore the Indians gathered round me. [...] I only stamped to prepare for my race, and was encompassed with about five hundred Indians, who danced and sung, and at last gave a shout and opened the circle. About one hundred and fifty Indian lads made ready to pelt me with dirt and gravel-stones, and on my starting off gave me a smart volley, but from which I did not suffer much hurt. An Indian seeing me running, met me, seized and held me fast, till the boys had stored themselves again with small stones, and then let me go. Now I fared much worse than before, for a small stone among the mud hit my right eye, and my head and face were so covered with the dirt that I could scarce see my way; but discovering the door of an Indian house standing open, I ran in. [...] From this retreat I was soon dragged to be pelted more, but the Indian women, being more merciful, interposed, took me into a house, brought me water to wash, and gave me boiled corn and beans to eat.<sup>70</sup>

Eastburn's knowledge of the ritual and his familiarity with the procedure is illustrated when he reports that he 'only stamped to prepare for my race'. Similarly to the first ritual, the description conveys the image that the Native Americans, by opening the circle, formed two rows, or at least a kind of passage, through which Eastburn had to

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<sup>70</sup> Eastburn, p. 272.

run, signifying ideas of openness, transition, and connection. As in the description of the first initiation ritual, houses are, again, identified as places of safety, indicated by Eastburn's decision to run into one of the houses that is referred to as a 'retreat' in the narrative.<sup>71</sup> Here, the image of the open house as a sanctuary reflects a shift in the binary contradiction of safe/unsafe compared to the first stage of captivity (Chapter 1). As Williams's narrative refers to his home and the familiar surroundings as 'God's sanctuary' and contrasts it with the 'strange land' outside his home, Eastburn's account reveals how the binary image of safe/unsafe changed within the liminal space of the initiation ritual, indicating the opportunity for captives to find places of safety even during captivity.<sup>72</sup> While Native American women cared for Eastburn after the ritual, as they had done after the first initiation ritual at the other village, their role was more significant this time because the women who, 'being more merciful, interposed [and] took me into a house' and rescued him. Again, the need to be rescued implies Eastburn's own vulnerability and his dependence on his captors' mercy. Similarly to the gendered space Susanna Johnson's narrative depicts (discussed in Chapter 4), Eastburn's description underlines the gendered space of the home and highlights the caring role of the Native American women. The idea of women as caring depicted in Eastburn's and Johnson's narratives, which creates some sort of connection across both Native American and colonial cultures, contrasts with the demoniac image of Native American women in Smith's account.<sup>73</sup>

Compared to Smith's experience and the description of his concerns during his adoption ceremony, Eastburn's report of his adoption is significantly less emotional. The fact that the narrative does not mention a special ceremony adds to a sense of ambiguity and does not evoke the same ritualistic or symbolical procedure as Smith's account does:

Here [at a town called Oswegatchy] I was to be adopted. My father and mother, whom I had never seen before, were waiting, and ordered me into an Indian house, where we were directed to sit down silent for a considerable time. The Indians appeared very sad, and my mother began to cry, and continued to cry

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<sup>71</sup> In contrast to the sense of safety the house signified for Eastburn, Hanson describes the Native Americans' sleeping places, in this case tents, as dangerous since being in the tent that was allocated to her did not protect her from her captor who had full access to her private space (Hanson, p. 119).

<sup>72</sup> Williams, p. 173.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 217.

aloud for some time, and then dried up her tears and received me for her son, and took me over the river to the Indian town.<sup>74</sup>

In contrast to the detailed description of how Smith had to undergo the adoption ritual, including the various steps the ritual required (from Smith's change in appearance to the speech of the Native American chief), Eastburn's narrative implies that there was no specific ritual for his adoption into his captors' family. However, the few details added to his description, having to 'sit in silence', witnessing how his 'mother began to cry', and the fact that she eventually 'dried up her tears and received me for her son' do suggest a somewhat ritualistic procedure. Eastburn's passive role in the ritual, in contrast to Smith's need to actively participate, already indicates Eastburn's inability to produce a shared social space. The central role of the woman in Eastburn's description of the adoption accords with Namias's contention that it was the Native American women who chose which colonials would be adopted. Namias also supports the idea that the crying of the Native American woman was part of the adoption ritual as she explains that, given that Native Americans adopted their captives in place of family members they had lost, '[t]he ritual mourning could then be transformed into new life with the adoption of a captive'.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the fact that Eastburn's mother cried can be understood as her way of mourning, implying that his adoption represents the transformation of loss into new life.

#### **4.2 Social Space**

The description of Eastburn's new environment and the social space he was now part of provides some insight into how he negotiated his cultural differences with his captors, but it is different from Smith's account in that his narrative depicts an even greater distance between him and his captors. In contrast to the moment in Smith's narrative when he and his Native American brother openly discussed their different religious beliefs, Eastburn's account reports that he did not go to a Catholic mass with his new family, instead providing a very different view of how captives perceived their captors'

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<sup>74</sup> Eastburn, p. 274.

<sup>75</sup> Namias, p. 4.

beliefs and practices.<sup>76</sup> Eastburn's refusal resulted in a punishment that created distance between him and his new family, and impeded the co-production of a social space:

Seeing they [his Native American family] could not prevail with me, they seemed much displeased with their new son. I was then sent over the river to be employed in hard labor, as a punishment for not going to mass, and not allowed a sight of or any conversation with my fellow-prisoners.<sup>77</sup>

Besides the reported hard labour, the new distance between Eastburn and his captors meant that he was separated from his fellow prisoners. The passage indicates that he was not only punished with manual labour but that he also perceived the prohibited contact with the other prisoners as a form of punishment. Eastburn was therefore excluded from the familiar space on the other side of the river, suggesting that the river itself functioned as a barrier between the now familiar space of his captors' village and the new and unknown space across the river. That the narrative highlights the lack of contact with his fellow prisoners indicates that Eastburn was usually able to talk to them, which implies that he was able to find some comfort in his fellow prisoners' company. While Eastburn mentions that the family whom he had to work with treated him kindly, the lack of company compounded the hard labour, increasing the severity of his punishment.

That Eastburn's narrative depicts his refusal to go to church with his captors suggests his rejection of his captors' beliefs due to his different religion. The portrayal of the captives' loyalty towards their values and beliefs as British colonials is a common element in pre-Revolutionary captivity narratives, which Richardson supports by noting the narratives' consistency 'in their portrayals of Britons resisting the influence of Indian cultures'.<sup>78</sup> While it is true that Eastburn resisted this new culture, underlined by the distance he maintained between himself and his captors, my contention that the binary images of us/them and European/Native American are contested in the selected narratives extends Richardson's argument by acknowledging the French Catholic influence on the Native Americans' beliefs. The scholarly attention Eastburn's narrative received because of its 'overtly anti-French and anti-Catholic' sentiment further

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<sup>76</sup> Eastburn, p. 274. Similarly to Smith's narrative, in which he discusses the French Catholic influence on some Native American groups, Eastburn's captors were likely to be French Catholic, too, which contrasted with his Protestant beliefs.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>78</sup> Richardson, p. 90.

supports my claim that his account not only resisted his captors' beliefs but also rejected the French cultural influence they had experienced.<sup>79</sup>

Apart from the punishment across the river, the various journeys Eastburn had to undertake before arriving at the village where he was adopted must have impeded his integration into his captors' group, explaining Eastburn's inability to participate in producing a shared space with his new family. There are some other moments in the narrative that exemplify Eastburn's position as an outsider among his captors' group. As Davis and Roberts differentiate between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in relation to a person's knowledge about a group's social practices, Eastburn's refusal to go to church suggests that he was aware of his captors' religious beliefs, but maintaining of his own values. Eastburn's cultural knowledge and his decision not to engage with his captors illustrate his liminal position.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, the escape plans that he kept making exemplify his unwillingness to fully immerse himself in the new spaces he encountered.<sup>81</sup> His behaviour contradicts Zanger's notion of the protagonist of captivity narratives as a 'passive figure' because Eastburn continued to actively look for an escape throughout his time in captivity.<sup>82</sup> While Eastburn's narrative does not suggest that he and his captors created any significant shared social spaces, the moment when Eastburn refers to his 'mother' nevertheless implies that he adhered to (or at least abided by) the new social structures.<sup>83</sup> Compared to Smith, who was able to acquire the Native Americans' language to a degree which enabled him to differentiate between the different indigenous dialects – which was, as I argue, possible through the shared space with and cultural exposure to his new family – Eastburn's failed integration and lack of knowledge about his captors is exemplified when he reports that his 'mother came to me with an interpreter'. Their need for an interpreter implies that they did not share a common language, which must have further impeded social exchange and interaction, but could also signify a desire to communicate.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Van der Beets, *Held Captive by Indians*, p. xxvi; Pearce also claims that the French and those Native Americans influenced by the French were 'the objects of [...] hatred' in Eastburn's account (Pearce, p. 7).

<sup>80</sup> Davis and Roberts, p. 149.

<sup>81</sup> For instance, when Eastburn had the opportunity to either stay in Montreal or come with his Native American family, he decided to stay with his family because one of his fellow prisoners told him that it would be easier to plan their escape if they stayed together (Eastburn, p. 275).

<sup>82</sup> Zanger, p. 127.

<sup>83</sup> Eastburn, p. 275.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

Since Eastburn's punishment was a direct consequence of his refusal to go to church, pointing to the influence that the French allies had on the Native Americans, this information shifts our understanding of the cultural space Eastburn occupied. Contrary to what one might assume, Eastburn was not exposed to a contained Native American culture. Rather, the space he occupied in the village can be seen as a mixture of cultural influences that transformed the village into a complex environment that resembles the culturally hybrid space depicted in Smith's narrative. The fact that a Native American couple were the only people Eastburn was exposed to during his punishment facilitated the creation of a shared space away from his captors. The narrative reports that Eastburn was still not able to speak the indigenous language, which becomes apparent in the scene when he had to work in the woods with the Native American man who, in giving him instructions, 'made signs for me to chop'.<sup>85</sup> Despite the lack of a shared language – an aspect that facilitated Smith's integration and reflected his willingness to participate actively in a shared social space (as he learned their language) – Eastburn must have been able to establish some sort of connection through non-verbal communication as his narrative highlights the moment when the Native Americans started treating him more kindly. The woman gave Eastburn something to eat 'out of real kindness' and the narrative depicts their changing behaviour, stating that '[t]he old man began to appear kind', and the woman, too, 'behaved lovingly'.<sup>86</sup> Seeing the space Eastburn occupied during his punishment as a different enclosed social space, I suggest that his separation from his fellow captives and his captors enabled him to create a different, and paradoxically more open, space. That Eastburn could not interact with the other captives facilitated the production of a social space with the two Native Americans, as they were the only people Eastburn could interact with during his time away from his captors. Like Smith's role in the new social spaces that he produced with his new family, Eastburn's exposure to these two Native Americans and his separation from the other captives created a new opportunity for exchange and interaction.

My analysis of Eastburn's narrative suggests that he never successfully occupied a shared social space with his captors, at least to the extent that Smith did. While Smith managed to assimilate to his new environment and integrate himself – even if not fully

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<sup>85</sup> Eastburn, p. 274.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

– into his new family, Eastburn’s narrative implies that he maintained a certain distance from his captors that inhibited them from co-producing a social space. In addition to the various discussions with fellow captives about a possible escape, Eastburn’s account also mentions a moment when he met other captives who were not part of his captors’ group. This means that Eastburn encountered fellow captives and was not as isolated from his familiar environment as Smith was. After Eastburn had left his captors, he reports meeting Susanna Johnson (whose narrative I discuss in Chapter 4) and her family in Quebec.<sup>87</sup> Meeting other captives along the way suggests that Eastburn was reminded of his old role as a British colonial more frequently, which is also indicated by the fact that his narrative focuses on the encounters with his fellow captives more than on his interactions with his captors. This shared space Eastburn occupied with his fellow captives reduced his ability to actualise a social space with his captors. Richardson refers to the distance the narrative creates between Eastburn and his captors as mirroring his ‘internal resistance’ against his captors’ culture, but simultaneously highlights how successful his performance of being satisfied with their new life was so that he managed to be adopted into the Native Americans’ family.<sup>88</sup> This idea offers a different perspective on Eastburn’s position within his captors’ group and suggests that while his performance as a family member might not have been successful – as I implied earlier – his performance as a captive was. Taking up this perspective does not contradict my claim about Eastburn’s inability or unwillingness to assimilate to his captors’ tribe but rather offers an additional insight into the complex binary image of freedom/captivity and his roles as captive and family member, reinforcing the idea that Eastburn’s role as a captive and thus his loyalties as a British colonial clearly outweighed his new role as a member of the Native Americans’ group.

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the initiation ritual not only marked the entrance into the Native American village, but significantly influenced the transformation from free men into captives. Both Smith’s and Eastburn’s narratives describe their cultural encounters in terms of literal as well as metaphorical thresholds that were created by the initiation

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<sup>87</sup> Eastburn, p. 281.

<sup>88</sup> Richardson, p. 93.

and adoption rituals, and the analysis of these rituals has allowed me to question the singularity of a distinct threshold that had to be crossed in order to enter the Native Americans' life. This also supports my contention that the captives' extended time with the Native Americans complicated their new roles as members of the tribe and revealed their efforts to maintain their roles as British colonials.

The in-between state that Smith occupied during his captivity, exemplified by my analysis of moments in the narrative that imply both his efforts to assimilate and the distance that remained between him and his new family, is consolidated by his description of his return home. The way Smith was perceived by his family, who 'received me with great joy, but were surprised to see me so much like an Indian, both in my gait and gesture', reflects the impact of his time with the Native Americans and shows how the space he shared with his captors influenced his physical appearance and behaviour.<sup>89</sup> Although Smith did not decide to stay with his captors, the degree to which he changed is evident enough to be recognised by his family, which underlines my initial argument that the village provided a space that functioned as an incubator for Smith's identity; he learned about his captors' manners and behaviour and assimilated – even if not completely – to his life among the Native Americans. On the other hand, Smith's discussion of Native American customs and the fact that he employed his knowledge about the Native Americans to help American colonials, reinforces the idea that Smith never fully assimilated or abandoned his role as a British colonial. Applying Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry' to captivity narratives, Richardson points to the captives' efforts to mimic their captors in order to survive, which supports my reading of Smith's performance as a Native American as the basis of his successful interaction and assimilation.<sup>90</sup>

While one of the main differences between Smith's and Eastburn's narratives is how they describe the extent to which the captives integrated and co-produced the new social spaces they shared with their captors, the descriptions of their return home are very similar, confirming that both Eastburn and Smith never fully abandoned their roles as British colonials. Eastburn's narrative is full of moments when he thought about his escape plans, and his eventual escape was one such plan, which he was able to

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<sup>89</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 235.

<sup>90</sup> Richardson, p. 92.



successfully execute with the help of his son.<sup>91</sup> Smith's return home also has to be classified as an escape, even though Smith reports it in a more subtle way: when he heard of a French ship with English prisoners that were to be exchanged, he 'went privately off from the Indians, and got also on board'.<sup>92</sup> Both escapes thus suggest that the new roles Smith and Eastburn were confronted with at the beginning of their captivity – the role as captives and then as new members of the Native American tribe – significantly impacted their self-perception during captivity, but also had to be seen as temporary roles. Leaving their Native American captors involved leaving the social space they co-produced, and because their roles were a product of the social space they occupied during captivity, they abandoned their roles as tribe members when they left the shared space with their Native American captors.

The extent to which both captives participated in producing shared social spaces not only offers important clues about the success of their assimilation into their new social groups but also indicates the extent to which they embraced their new roles as family members. The analysis of Smith's narrative has shown how the perception of his new role as a family member was constantly negotiated and open to change, prompting him to remain in a state between successfully assimilating and maintaining a sense of doubt and uncertainty. The interstitial space Smith describes by illustrating the different Native American groups, the different languages, and the reciprocal influence between Native Americans and colonial Americans highlights the sense of diversity Smith experienced, which is further exemplified by the contradictory roles (captive and family member) he took on. The way Eastburn indicates the space he occupied with his captors, on the other hand, gives insight into the extent to which he remained in his role as a captive. While the narrative acknowledges the new social structure that Eastburn was now part of, as Eastburn calls one of the Native American women his mother, the threshold state he maintained throughout his captivity was more unbalanced than Smith's, in that Eastburn's role as a captive and British colonial overshadowed his position as a family member of the Native American group.

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<sup>91</sup> Eastburn, pp. 280-81.

<sup>92</sup> Smith, 'An Account', p. 234.

## Chapter 4: Case Studies

### 1. Introduction

In this fourth and final chapter I discuss the narratives of Susanna Johnson and Alexander Henry in their entirety because they offer unique insights on their captivity experience: Johnson's narrative exemplifies a specifically female gendered narrative and the implications of her role as a woman and mother during captivity, whereas Henry's account indicates his different position during captivity due to the diverse cultural space he had occupied before captivity.<sup>1</sup> Exploring the narratives in their entirety allows me to raise questions of identity and cultural exchange that go beyond the separate stages, to investigate how the spaces created before and during the attack, for instance, had reciprocal effects on the later stages of captivity. While the distinct stages facilitate a more focused discussion of the spatial elements in each stage, these case studies will show that the various stages are not necessarily self-contained but can overlap. The analysis of Johnson's and Henry's narratives demonstrates how one stage can influence later moments in captivity. Analysing the spaces the attack created in Johnson's account, for instance, enables us to understand her role in captivity better as the ambivalent and distressing space of the attack underlined her rather passive and gendered position, which she maintained during captivity. While the attack and capture remains a distinct stage in Johnson's narrative, it did not prompt her role to change in the way it did in the two narratives discussed in Chapter 1. Similarly, Henry's ability to take on different roles can be contextualised by his experiences of the multicultural space he had co-produced in the fort and thus shows how his experience of his home before the attack (when he had established a relationship with his later Native American master) was more influential on his roles during captivity than the attack itself. My spatial analysis of the two accounts gives insight into the connection between self-perception and role-performance to investigate how the captives (re-)negotiate different identities.

My analysis of Johnson's narrative investigates the female voice in her account and discusses the gendered domestic space in which she remained, both to challenge a simplistic binary between freedom and captivity and to raise questions that complicate the predominantly Eurocentric perspective found in many male-authored captivity

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, pp. 45-85; Henry, 'Narrative', pp. 286-332.

narratives.<sup>2</sup> Henry's narrative allows me to explore the multifaceted and culturally diverse social space that he occupied before his captivity and thereby to highlight his unique position as a captive. The relationship Henry had established with the Native American who would later become his master and then father and brother raises questions about identity formation and role performance that are prompted by the analysis of the social spaces Henry co-produced. The conclusion to this chapter will address the narratives' differences in how they actualised the spaces captives occupied in order to demonstrate that the ways captives negotiated their sense of identity and self-perception are a result of the cultural exposure and exchange they experienced during captivity.

## **2. Susanna Johnson's 'A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson'**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Susanna Johnson's captivity narrative is one example of how the female voice could be employed to create and enforce what Brenda M. Boyle identifies as the 'gendered trope of captivity and rescue': '(feminine) women being rescued by (masculine) men'.<sup>3</sup> Johnson's narrative emphasises her role as a nurturing and caring mother, which she maintained during captivity. The narrative sheds light on how female captives perceived captivity and offers a different perspective from those found in captivity narratives about men. By analysing the spaces that were produced by Johnson and her captors, we can see that these were different from those of her fellow male captives by virtue of her gender. As the narrative focuses on her role as a wife and mother, this analysis will discuss the gendered experiences that it depicts and that lead to a different perspective, as Johnson remained in a domestic space throughout her captivity. The question of authorship is particularly complex in narratives with a female protagonist: many women dictated their stories to men who wrote down the narratives, while others had male editors, complicating our ability to determine the relative contributions of the author and editor.<sup>4</sup> This case study, however, will primarily focus on what is distinctive about

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term male-authored narratives in this context to refer to all the narratives that have been discussed so far and that feature a male captive as the protagonist of the account.

<sup>3</sup> Brenda M. Boyle, 'Rescuing Masculinity: Captivity, Rescue and Gender in American War Narratives', *The Journal of American Culture* 34 (2011), 149-60 (p. 152).

<sup>4</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, p. 114.

the portrayal of Johnson's experiences in terms of her gender, and does not attempt to investigate questions of authorship specifically.

Focusing on spatial aspects of Johnson's narrative allows us to see how the spaces she literally and emotionally occupied influenced her experience of captivity and her perception of her captors. The spaces the account indicates reveal how Johnson actively participated in a new and to her unfamiliar social and cultural space, which was possible because of the domestic role she maintained during captivity. Her role in co-producing these new social spaces also reveals how she autonomously engaged with 'the Other', providing an image that was different to those in many male-authored narratives, and which thus challenges the dominant (male) colonial discourse. The wilderness and sense of threat that Johnson's narrative describes before the attack are contrasted to her own experiences with her captors. The preconceived notion of Native Americans that she had been exposed to before her capture was challenged and (on some occasions) reversed by her experiences in the shared social space with the Native Americans. While the domestic role that Johnson had been in before captivity exposed her to the stereotypical image of Native Americans, which she presents in her text without ever having had an actual encounter with them, the fact that she remained in a domestic role later helped Johnson to integrate into her Native American family and become an active member.

This different role and consequently different perspective that Johnson's narrative provides calls into question the binary between freedom and captivity. In contrast to most male-authored narratives that equate the attack and capture with a loss of freedom and autonomy, I argue that Johnson's narrative shows how she occupied a domestic role both before and during her time in captivity. Because of her gendered role as a mother and caretaker, Johnson's narrative does not focus on the same consequences of captivity that male captives describe: having occupied a very limited or circumscribed space within her home before the attack and capture, Johnson's role did not materially change with the attack as she found herself in a similar space among her captors. Analysing her experiences with her captors sheds light on how gender determined which emotional and physical spaces were available to Johnson. Her social role in her captors' community allowed her to create her own image of Native Americans (whereas her image before captivity had been created by what she heard or was told). By investigating how Johnson's narrative portrays the spaces she found herself in during

the different stages of her captivity, we can understand how her role in captivity and the space she thus occupied reversed the binaries of freedom and captivity as described by male captives. Before captivity, Johnson experienced a smaller degree of autonomy and independence because she occupied a strictly domestic sphere. In captivity, however, Johnson enjoyed more freedom than many male captives, predominantly because of her domestic role in her captors' social space and because she was probably perceived as less of a threat as a woman.

Using de Certeau's notion of space as 'a practiced place' allows me to show how Johnson's role as a captive enabled her to occupy and produce specific spaces with her captors that were distinct from those of her fellow male captives.<sup>5</sup> While Johnson's narrative employs various mechanisms of othering to underline the uncivilised behaviour of her captors, her time in their village and the support she received during the journey challenge the clear separation between 'civilised captives' and 'uncivilised Indians'. The domestic and social spaces Johnson occupied due to her adoption into her captor's tribe shed light on how her narrative challenges a 'male' colonial discourse. Castiglia addresses the opportunity for female captivity narratives to challenge the 'white discourses of race' in that they were 'adopted into Indian families'.<sup>6</sup> The 'culture-crossing' that Castiglia describes becomes evident in Johnson's narrative by analysing the social spaces she shared with her captors, which allowed her to form her own opinion while being separated from her husband and the other men. In a literal spatial sense they had different masters and lived in other parts of the village, but metaphorically speaking, Johnson was part of a different social space too.

Johnson's narrative is a good example of how white women captives renegotiated preconceived notions and stereotypes about Native Americans through the different cultural spaces they encountered, which supports Castiglia's claim that 'different sets of languages, rituals, and institutions' mark 'identities as discursive practices, not as the products of biology'.<sup>7</sup> My analysis demonstrates the impact captivity had on Johnson's self-perception and her notion of identity, exemplified by how she perceived her family as a 'mixture of nations', and shows the value of linking ideas of culture-crossing and de Certeau's notion of space to highlight the significance

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<sup>5</sup> De Certeau, p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> Castiglia, pp. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

of the shared social spaces for Johnson's self-perception. Focusing on the distinct spaces Johnson occupied that separated her from her fellow male captives adds to Castiglia's notion of racial discourse by combining ideas of cultural negotiation and gender roles, broadening the ways we think of identity.

As my analysis focuses on the way gender determined the specific spaces and roles Johnson occupied, a distinct contrast to male-authored narratives is the way in which Johnson interacts with other people within her domestic space. During the attack Johnson is portrayed as taking on an active role in trying to defend her home that was specifically gendered: while the men tried to physically defend the house, Johnson tried to negotiate with her attackers. The process of negotiation is a central element in Johnson's narrative, for instance when she convinced her captors to allow her to visit her husband in hospital. Johnson's narrative defies the features of a 'Frail Flower narrative', a classification that Namias constructs for female captivity narratives that characterise distressed and helpless, and thus frail, female captives.<sup>8</sup> Although Johnson is portrayed as feminine and vulnerable during the attack, reporting that she almost fainted and depicting the humiliating scene she had to experience, the gendered space she occupied during the attack (and later during captivity) provided her with opportunities to negotiate with her captors, allowing her a greater sense of agency compared to male captives.

The following analysis also discusses the moments in Johnson's narrative that provide a different perspective on the dominant ethnocentric discourse. These moments are incidents that Johnson experienced in the new shared social spaces and show how her different role and social position as a woman allowed her to see her captors differently: she received support during the journey and was integrated into her captor's tribe as a family member, taking on the same tasks as the Native American women did. There are situations in the narrative when Johnson and the Native Americans kept their eyes on each other, observed each other's behaviour and learned about each other. These moments of wordless exchange are particularly important in challenging the binary between self and other as they undermine the mechanisms of othering, showing a mutual exposure and revealing how Johnson and her captors tried to understand each other.

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<sup>8</sup> Namias, p. 37.

The impact of captivity on Johnson's life and her attitude towards her captors can also be seen in the descriptions of transculturation, when she reports the changing identities of two of her children who were changed and socialised by their new families: her son lived with his Native American captors, while her daughter stayed with a French family. Moreover, the narrative indicates that Johnson kept her ties with her Native American family when she mentions that she saw her Native American brother after she had returned home from captivity. Calling her family a 'mixture of nations' and referring to her former captor as her brother implies her unique perspective or understanding of the concept of 'nation' because the experiences of her captivity led her to see her family as consisting of different nations, suggesting that she was not preoccupied with maintaining a singular British colonial identity.<sup>9</sup> To contextualise further the idea that Johnson's family inherited different identities, the conclusion to this case study will discuss the captivity narrative of Frances Noble, who was taken captive as a child.<sup>10</sup> Noble's struggle to return from captivity offers insight into how the impact of captivity and cultural exchange was greater if people were taken as children, which in turn problematises the binary contradiction of familiar colonial settlement versus unfamiliar wilderness or foreign nation. The narrative connects to Johnson's account of how her children's sense of identity changed during captivity, as they had been socialised by the French Canadian and Native American families they lived with.

After providing a brief summary of the captivity narrative, this chapter will look at specific passages to underline Johnson's distinct perspective, her changing attitude towards her Native American captors and the ways in which her narrative challenges and reverses dominant ideas found in male-authored narratives regarding the binary between freedom and captivity.

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<sup>9</sup> Johnson, p. 81.

<sup>10</sup> John Kelly, 'Narrative of the Captivity of Frances Noble, who was, among others, taken by the Indians from Sawn Island, in Maine, About the Year 1755; Compiled by John Kelly, Esq. of Concord, New Hampshire, from the Minutes and Memoranda of Phinehas Merrill, Esq. of Stratham, in the same State; and by the former Gentleman Communicated for Publication to the Editors of the Historical Collections of New Hampshire', in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 165-72.

## 2.2 Content and Publication

Johnson lived in Charlestown, New Hampshire, when she, her husband James, her three children and her sister were taken captive in 1754.<sup>11</sup> After the Native Americans captured the family and two other men who helped defend their home, the captives had to leave Charlestown and travel to the Abenaki village of St. Francis (today's Odanak, a village in Quebec).<sup>12</sup> While her son had to stay with their captors, Johnson and the rest of her family were brought to Quebec. There they were imprisoned in a 'criminal jail' and later managed to transfer to a 'civil jail', where they enjoyed a greater degree of freedom.<sup>13</sup> In 1757, Johnson, her two daughters and her sister were able to go to England, to be exchanged for French prisoners, and afterwards they returned to America, where Johnson was reunited with her husband, who was eventually released as well. Johnson's narrative was first published in 1796, almost 40 years after her captivity. The account is divided into different parts that focus on the different stages of Johnson's captivity as well as providing some background information and historical context. For instance, Johnson talks about the 'Situation of the Country in 1744', including contextual information on her first visit to Charlestown and how Native Americans and British colonials had lived together peacefully before the war started, when the Native American tribe who lived next to Charlestown – the Abenaki tribe – allied with the French.

## 2.3 Analysis

### 2.3.1 Attack and Capture

Johnson's account of the attack and of the violation of her private spaces differs from those of many male-authored narratives, as it shows a different gendered experience and, more importantly, suggests that Johnson occupied an emotional and subjective space that was distinct from that of the men. While the attack and capture initiated a transformation for male captives as discussed in Chapter 1, for Johnson the attack did not necessarily transform her role because she remained in a domestic space. The

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<sup>11</sup> 'In the year 1740 the first settlement was made in the town of Charlestown, then known by the name No. 4 [...] that part of New Hampshire west of Merrimack River' (Johnson, p. 48).

<sup>12</sup> '[...] the Abenaki systematically called the site Odanak which, in their traditional language, means 'in the village'. The village has thus been called Odanak since the beginning of 20th century' ('Fort Odanak', *Musée des Abénakis 1704-1759* [online], <<http://www.fort-odanak.ca/familles-families-eng>> [accessed 21 March 2019]).

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, p. 72.



narrative reinforces Johnson's image as a mother by highlighting her concerns for her children and husband, rather than focusing on her own fate. However, the proto-cinematic depiction of the attack, the quick succession of images to show what happened combined with the movements of the victims to different places, emphasises the violation of her private domestic space and shows how the safe space of Johnson's home was transformed into a violated and hazardous space, marking the beginning of her captivity:

But by opening the door he [Johnson's husband] opened a scene terrible to describe, 'Indians! Indians!' were the first words I heard. He sprang to his guns; but Labarree [a neighbour], heedless of danger, instead of closing the door to keep them out, began to rally our hired men up stairs for not rising earlier. But in an instant a crowd of savages, fixed horribly for war, rushed furiously in. I screamed and begged my friends to ask for quarter. By this time they were all over the house – some up stairs, some hauling my sister out of bed; another had hold of me; and one was approaching Mr. Johnson, who stood in the middle of the floor to deliver himself up. But the Indian, supposing that he would make resistance and be more than his match, went to the door and brought three of his comrades, and the four bound him. I was led to the door, fainting and trembling. There stood my friend Labarree bound. Ebenezer Farnsworth, whom they found up chamber, they were putting in the same situation; and, to complete the shocking scene, my three little children were driven naked to the place where I stood. On viewing myself I found that I, too, was naked. An Indian had plundered three gowns, who, on seeing my situation, gave me the whole. I asked another for a petticoat; but he refused it.<sup>14</sup>

Comparing the initial attack to the opening of a theatrical scene, by reporting that her husband 'opened a scene terrible to describe', the narrative immediately creates a dramatic tone, further underlined by referring to the 'shocking scene' again towards the end of the above quoted passage. The cinematic elements of this description highlight the rapidity of movement during the attack and the speed at which events unfolded. The moment the attackers 'rushed furiously in', while Johnson 'screamed and begged my friends to ask for quarter', apparently happened very fast, since Johnson then reports that '[b]y this time they were all over the house'. The description of where the attackers went and how Johnson and her family were moved around the house reinforces the disruptive and threatening qualities of the attack, as 'some [of the Native Americans were] up stairs, some hauling my sister out of bed; another had hold of me; and one was approaching Mr. Johnson'. The information on the attackers' positions

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<sup>14</sup> Johnson, p. 56.

further indicates how the Native Americans invaded the entire house and implies the multiple thresholds they had crossed (as they not only entered the house but went upstairs and entered Johnson's sister's bedroom too).

The narrative directs us as readers through the house so we can follow the Native Americans' movements and we can thus find out what happened to the people living in the house. The spatial markers are vital for the description of the rapid movement through the house: we understand the full invasion of Johnson's home by reading about the attackers going upstairs and entering the private space of the bedrooms in order to capture her family. The cinematic and theatrical depiction of the invasion helps to build tension since we as readers have to be guided through the description and only gradually understand the impact of the attack that transformed the formerly safe and private into hazardous spaces. Similarly to Williams's description of the invasion of his home (Chapter 1), and in line with D'Amora's notion of the threshold upholding the binary opposition of inside/outside, the attackers intruded on her safe and delineated private space.<sup>15</sup>

The inclusion of the exclamation 'Indians, Indians!' at the beginning of the description creates a speaking role within this passage and confirms the theatricality of the narrative. It adds a liveliness to the description and enhances the elements of rushed movement that are distinct in this passage. However, there remains an element of suspense and uncertainty regarding the actual events. How the narrative directs us through the house gives us an idea about how the scene evolved, but omits more specific information regarding the (re-)actions of the inhabitants of the house. Johnson, for instance, is described to have 'screamed and begged my friends to ask for quarter'.<sup>16</sup> What we as readers do not know, however, is whether Johnson was screaming while begging and asking her friends or whether she only screamed once, then composed herself and begged her friends afterwards. If we see Johnson's behaviour through the lens of her gendered role as a woman and mother, the possibility that she was simultaneously screaming and begging would support the sense of theatricality and drama. Furthermore, this would imply a very emotional, perhaps even hysterical, reaction, which in turn could point to a very gendered portrayal of Johnson as hysterical

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<sup>15</sup> D'Amora, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, p. 56.

or too emotional, highlighting the extent to which she adhered to a stereotypical depiction of a woman.

This is reinforced when Johnson writes that she ‘almost expired’ and felt ‘severe pangs to [her] heart’ and asks the audience to feel with her: ‘Here the compassionate reader will drop a fresh tear for my inexpressible distress’.<sup>17</sup> Although the narrative usually addresses ‘the reader’ in general, this passage enhances Johnson’s image as a caring mother by specifically addressing female readers who have children themselves, stating that ‘[n]one but mothers can figure to themselves my unhappy fortune’.<sup>18</sup> This scene clearly divides the audience and thus excludes readers who are not mothers. Johnson’s role as a mother, and the distress her worries about her children caused her, confirm Laurel T. Ulrich’s claim that ‘Indian captivity amplified the trials of motherhood’.<sup>19</sup> The gendered portrayal of Johnson’s experience highlights her distinct emotional space that primarily focuses on her family rather than on her captivity. Her reaction when the Native Americans took hold of her, when Johnson was ‘fainting and trembling’, is an example of what Derounian-Stodola refers to as the ‘physical frailty and emotional nature’ that female captivity narratives present, reflecting the ways ‘women were socially constructed as passive objects’.<sup>20</sup> The narrative problematises Johnson’s image as a ‘passive object’, however, when she shows an act of resistance during the attack. Although Johnson ‘screamed and begged my friends to ask for quarter’, suggesting her inability to directly confront her attackers, the narrative indicates a clear form of active verbal resistance. It points to Johnson’s ‘physical frailty’ and highlights her distinct emotional space, but her verbal resistance suggests a more active role than Derounian-Stodola ascribes to female captives. Johnson’s two different reactions, her resistance and her fainting, thus create a tension in the otherwise stereotypically feminine depiction of her role.

In contrast to narratives about male captives, which either describe a forceful entrance (such as when Williams wrote that the Native Americans broke in through the doors and windows) or narrate how the inhabitants barricaded themselves and tried to

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<sup>17</sup> Johnson, p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Laurel T. Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Derounian-Stodola, pp. xx-xxi.

protect their fort (as seen in Norton's narrative), Johnson's account reveals the vulnerability she felt when her home was exposed to the attackers.<sup>21</sup> The description of the attack starts by reporting that her husband opened the door, which means that the Native Americans did not have to make a violent intrusion into the house. Labarree went upstairs to get the other men 'instead of closing the door', which reinforces the idea that their private space was open and vulnerable to the attack. By noting that he failed to close the door, the narrative suggests a crucial moment in which they might have had the chance to place a barrier before their attackers. The sense of exposure that is suggested by the open door is further underlined when Johnson narrates the moment when she realised that she was naked. She and her home were both directly exposed to the attackers.

How her gendered experience of the attack is narrated reinforces the vulnerability of Johnson's home, configuring it as female/feminine. Calling the house 'an arena of female authority', Robert B. St. George supports this idea of Johnson's home as a feminine space when he explains that 'early New England houses metaphorically extended a woman's heart, womb, and soul to the hearth and fire'.<sup>22</sup> He further states that while the house was seen as 'an arena of female authority', the work domain for women was limited to the kitchen, which suggests 'a new form of gender enclosure and segregation'.<sup>23</sup> This form of spatial control that limited women to a particular part of the house is reinforced by Janet M. Lindman and Michele L. Tarter's argument that 'a renewed ideology of domesticity' emerged in the eighteenth century 'that celebrated women's marital and maternal state'.<sup>24</sup> Seeing Johnson's home as a metonym for the female body, and applying Gail K. Paster's explanation of how Renaissance literature describes the female body in maturity as to be "'opened" by sexual experience and

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<sup>21</sup> Williams, p. 172; Norton, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Robert B. St. George, 'Witchcraft, Bodily Affliction, and Domestic Space in Seventeenth-Century New England', in *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America*, ed. by Janet M. Lindman and Michele L. Tarter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 13–28 (p. 18).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Janet M. Lindman and Michele L. Tarter (eds.), 'The Earthly Frame, a Minute Fabrick, a Centre of Wonders': An Introduction to Bodies in Early America', in *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 1–10 (p. 4). When explaining 'the need for feminists to consider geography', Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose point to the 'feminine' and 'masculine' spaces constructed by the patriarchy, 'allocat[ing] certain kinds of (gendered) activities to certain (gendered) places' (Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (eds.), 'Introduction: Women's Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies', in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1994), pp. 1–25 (p. 1)).

swollen by pregnancy', we could say that Johnson's body had already been 'opened' and 'swollen by pregnancy' before the attack.<sup>25</sup> That her husband initially opened (or left open) the door for the attackers to enter further feeds into the gendered discourse in the description of the attack and supports the parallel that I am drawing between Johnson's femininity and her home, highlighting her exposure and vulnerability. In the context of the attack, Mr Johnson has control over the feminised space of their home, emphasising his wife's domestic role in a patriarchal structure through her lack of independence and control over her private sphere.

Johnson and her children were victimised during the attack, being gathered in one place while not wearing any clothes, which offers a good example of the element of 'physical victimization' that Derounian-Stodola and Levernier ascribe to many female captivity narratives, and highlights the 'woman-as-mother' image that is central to many of those narratives. The scene in which Johnson and her children were captured is significant in that it demonstrates her feminine and maternal role, which is in line with Derounian-Stodola and Levernier's claim that many female captivity narratives focus on 'the woman's increased physical and emotional vulnerability'.<sup>26</sup> Besides Johnson's portrayal as vulnerable, I want to extend Derounian-Stodola and Levernier's notion of the feminised woman captive by showing how this scene indicates the distinction her attackers made between Johnson and the men. Ideas of femininity are paralleled with those of childhood, since both Johnson and her children occupied the same vulnerable and exposed spaces when they were brought to the door. Highlighting her maternal role, Johnson looked at her children first and observed their condition before she 'view[ed] herself' and realised that she was naked. We do not know what exactly Johnson meant by nakedness here, since she could have been wearing a nightgown but could still consider her lack of sufficient clothing to fully cover herself as leaving her naked. Whether or not Johnson was naked or partially dressed does not lessen the effect this wording has on readers since her own perception of herself as naked adds a sense of humiliation to the already traumatic depiction of the experience.

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<sup>25</sup> Gail K. Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 268.

<sup>26</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, p. 146. Burnham reports that 'at least one-fifth of the women taken captive from New England were either pregnant or had just given birth' (Burnham, p. 50).

While male captives tend to focus on the sudden loss of individual freedom and self-determination that was caused by the attack, Johnson's narrative does not primarily focus on her individual fate, but rather reports what happened to her family. Without lessening the traumatic impact that the attack must have had on her, the narrative neither mentions nor ascribes any importance to her individual loss of freedom or transition into captivity. The caring and maternal tone of Johnson's description is further underlined if we contrast it to Williams's account of his attack (which I discussed in a previous chapter). Although Williams's family was also affected by the attack, his narrative primarily focuses on his personal transition into captivity and his subsequent loss of freedom. Williams's focus on himself rather than his family is particularly striking when he only briefly mentions that two of his children were killed during the attack, because he neither provides any additional information nor comments on this tragic scene at all.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the traumatic scenes that Johnson's narrative describes, it also reports moments when Johnson attempted to negotiate, for instance when she asked the Native American for a petticoat. Her account thus contrasts the image of her waiting naked and in a state of paralysis by the door (which suggests her passivity and inability to defend or protect herself) with her attempts to engage actively with and verbally resist her attackers. Asking for an additional layer of clothing can be understood as an active attempt to protect herself with another layer that would cover her. The focus on her petticoat can also be read as an attempt to keep her wardrobe together, which could have perhaps given her a feeling of security when everything else was taken away from her. Holding on to her clothes plays on a potential underlying fear of 'going native', which Colley addresses when she points out that '[b]eing stripped of western dress could seem a metaphor for the danger that one might indeed go native'.<sup>28</sup> Later in the narrative, when Johnson and her husband were imprisoned in Quebec, she was again able to negotiate and voice her concerns when she petitioned for help. The narrative reports her active role in this petition as she 'had the liberty of presenting it myself', highlighting her efforts to improve her situation in prison, even if the fact that Johnson had to acquire permission first reminds us of her essential passivity.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Williams, p. 173.

<sup>28</sup> Colley, 'Going Native', p. 178.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, p. 69.

Johnson's gendered position during the attack and the description of gender stereotypes are apparent when we look at how the narrative reports the attackers' different behaviour towards her and her husband. It does not say whether Johnson's screaming and begging was noticed by the attackers. Instead, the narrative reports the different treatment Johnson received based on her gender. This difference is reinforced spatially: she was brought 'to the door' by one of the attackers, while her husband 'stood in the middle of the floor'.<sup>30</sup> This scene suggests that her husband was both literally and symbolically central, compared to her marginal position at the door. While both of them are described as rather passive in this scene, since Johnson's husband was just standing there to surrender himself, the attackers' actions indicate how they perceived the couple: the Native Americans apparently did not see her as a threat, as they did not shackle her. In contrast to her vulnerable and unthreatening position, however, the narrative indicates that the Native Americans were concerned about the strength of her husband in that they did not dare tackle him individually and it took four of them to eventually bind him.<sup>31</sup>

The emotive language of the account and the focus on Johnson's worries about her family rather than a potential loss of freedom confirm the idea that she remained in a domestic space:

When the time came for us to prepare to march I almost expired at the thought of leaving my aged parents, brothers, sisters, and friends, and travel with savages through a dismal forest to unknown regions, in the alarming situation I then was in, with three small children. [...] With all these misfortunes lying heavily upon me, the reader can imagine my situation.<sup>32</sup>

Johnson's portrayal as a caring mother becomes even more apparent in the way the narrative describes how she prioritised her family's wellbeing over her own: 'My wearied husband, naked children, and helpless infant formed a scene that conveyed severer pangs to my heart than all the sufferings I endured myself'.<sup>33</sup> Further enhancing the distress that being a mother caused Johnson, the narrative depicts the situation when she was separated from her son, stating that 'my pangs almost obliged me to wish

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<sup>30</sup> Johnson, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

that I had never been a mother'.<sup>34</sup> The way the account highlights Johnson's maternal role in this scene reinforces the idea that she remained in a domestic space that was, for her as a woman, primarily concerned with her family and that forced her to examine and even question her position as a mother.

### **2.3.2 Co-producing a Shared Social Space: Vulnerability and Exposure**

Johnson's vulnerability and exposure to her attackers greatly influenced the social space that she occupied in that her situation created moments of wordless exchange that happened because Johnson and the Native Americans observed each other. While other narratives also describe the captives' attempts to interpret their captors' behaviour, Johnson's narrative underlines the significance of those moments when she and her captors saw each other. That Johnson actively observed her captors as well suggests a reciprocal gaze. This gaze is different to the one-directional gaze that is particularly evident in Pote's narrative (Chapter 2), where I discuss his exposure to his captors' gaze and, in line with Pratt's notion of the 'radically asymmetrical' power relations between captives and captors, his dependent role as a captive.<sup>35</sup> Johnson's observation indicates a more active role in the social space she occupied with her captors and suggests a sense of agency that resembles her attempt to negotiate with the Native Americans during the attack. Yet Johnson found herself in a liminal space during captivity due to her exposure to the Native Americans. The moment when one of the attackers gave her a gown, 'on seeing my situation', during the attack already indicates her exposure.<sup>36</sup> This incident is a moment of wordless exchange since the narrative does not indicate that Johnson asked for the gown or actually talked to the Native American. Rather, she had been observed by the man and therefore received some clothes, without having to ask for them. The narrative includes another scene when Johnson was supported by her captors only because they observed her: 'When we had got a mile and a half my faintness obliged me to sit. This being observed by an Indian, he drew his knife, as I supposed, to put an end to my existence. But he only cut some band with which my gown was tied, and then pushed me on'.<sup>37</sup> This passage shows Johnson's awareness of her exposure to

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<sup>34</sup> Johnson, pp. 68-69.

<sup>35</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Johnson, p. 56.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.



her captors' close surveillance. The Native American saw her weakening and tried to enhance her situation by what could be read as making her gown looser so that she could breathe better. Simultaneously, however, Johnson's attempt to interpret the Native American's action implies her underlying fears about her direct exposure to her captors. While Johnson's journey is described as exhausting and threatening at times, Jean Lowry's narrative presents an even more brutal behaviour of her captors, stating that her 'barbarous Masters suffered some young *Indians* to whip and push us along'.<sup>38</sup>

The inclusion of imagined scenarios – Johnson's supposition that the Native American means to kill her – to indicate a sense of affliction, or the need to make sense of what happened can also be found in other narratives. In particular, Norton's narrative (Chapter 1) incorporates imagined scenarios in the description of the attack, and thereby suggests the afflicting impact of his exposure to his captors. While the imagined spaces in Norton's narrative point to his sense of passivity and uncertainty, Williamson's account actualises a form of imagined spaces in order to foreshadow the horrible scenes that he had yet to experience (Chapter 2). I see the imagined scenario in Johnson's narrative as a mixture of these two examples, in that the passage exhibits a sense of ambiguity in the difference between the Native American's helping gesture (in that he loosened her dress) and the sense of violence that persists when he 'pushed [her] on', and as a first indication of the distance between her expectations and prejudice against her captors and reality.

While such moments of wordless exchange are a consequence of their inability to speak each other's languages, which Johnson reports towards the beginning of their journey, it also indicates Johnson's and her captors' openness towards each other and their willingness to interact and communicate.<sup>39</sup> Thus, their mutual observation undermines the self/other binary, showing that neither Johnson nor her captors tried to isolate or distance themselves from each other. On the other hand, this scene puts the Native Americans' kindness into perspective when Johnson claims that the kind gesture could simply be because of her master's fear of losing the ransom money for her new

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<sup>38</sup> Jean Lowry, *A Journal of the Captivity of Jean Lowry and Her Children, Giving an Account of Her Being Taken by the Indians, the 1st of April 1756, from William Mc. Cord's, in Roc[...]y-spring Settlement in Pennsylvania, with an Account of the Hardships She Suffered, &c.* (Philadelphia, William Bradford: 1760), University of Oxford Text Archive <<http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/N06/N06816.html>> [accessed 7 December 2020], p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Johnson, p. 58.

born child. The moments of non-verbal communication, when Johnson was able to receive support and simultaneously had the opportunity to learn about her captors, show the dynamics that were created by their close interaction, which created a shared social space. Johnson's and her captors' ability to understand each other, or rather the Native Americans' ability to know when she needed support, might indicate the positive and harmonious social space that they shared. However, these descriptions also indicate the extent to which Johnson remained cautious towards the Native Americans. Johnson's suspicion is exemplified by the scene when she had to choose between riding the horse and being left behind: her assumption is that her master only supported her because of his desire to ransom her child.<sup>40</sup> Johnson's cautious reaction to her captor's kind gesture, questioning his true motive, evokes her suspicions regarding the Native Americans.

### **2.3.3 Domestic Space of Captivity**

Analysing the portrayal of Johnson's experiences in the Native American village shows how she gradually assimilated to her captors' life and indicates the domestic role she still occupied: 'My new sisters and brothers treated me with the same attention that they did their natural kindred; but it was an unnatural situation to me. I was a novice at making canoes, bunks, and tumplines, which was the only occupation of the squaws'.<sup>41</sup> Being integrated into her new family and fulfilling the same tasks as her new 'sisters' produces a role that resembles that of a family member rather than a captive. She started referring to the Native Americans as brothers and sisters once she arrived in the village and was adopted into one of the families. In this way Johnson's account further complicates the binary of freedom and captivity that is prominent in most male-authored narratives as she successfully integrated into her new family despite stating that the new situation was 'unnatural' to her. That Johnson perceived her situation as 'unnatural' likely stemmed from the activities that she was expected to do, such as making canoes, perhaps contrasting with her expectations of the feminine workspace to be the home.

The description of Johnson's time in the village provides various examples of how she either learned about her captors' culture or tried to integrate and incorporate their

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<sup>40</sup> Johnson, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

practices. I see these experiences as a result of the domestic space that Johnson remained in, as her gendered role did not essentially change with her capture. For instance, the narrative describes how Native American women sit, and Johnson's efforts to imitate their practices:

The squaws first fall upon their knees, and then sit back upon their heels. This was a posture that I could not imitate. To sit in any other was thought by them indelicate and unpolite. But I advanced to my pudding with the best grace I could; not, however, escaping some of their funny remarks.<sup>42</sup>

This quote shows Johnson's willingness to assimilate by copying the women's behaviour, and further exemplifies the moments of non-verbal communication between her and her captors. It also suggests the knowledge she gained about the Native Americans' group. Since Johnson had not encountered any Native Americans before her capture, the fact that she learned about what they considered to be impolite is a result of their close contact. Her knowledge about these practices and norms was made possible by the social space they shared. That she 'advanced to [her] pudding' suggests that Johnson was allowed to eat with her captors, which enhances the idea of a shared social space. Doing so 'with the best grace [she] could' further supports the idea that she actively participated in this new space by adhering to her captors' practices. Yet her engagement in this new cultural space makes her vulnerable to her captors' comments. The word choice in this passage, referring to the Native Americans' 'funny remarks', resembles Pote's description of his captors' movements as 'Verrey Irriguler' (discussed in Chapter 2), and indicates the new and unfamiliar space Johnson found herself in.<sup>43</sup> It also underlines her gendered role within the captors' group, reflected in how she imitated the Native American women.

Further evidence of Johnson remaining in a distinctly domestic space can even be found in the descriptions of her time in the Canadian prison, where she was able to pursue her domestic duties, as she 'was permitted to go once a week into the city to purchase necessaries, and a washerwoman was provided for my use'.<sup>44</sup> The narrative reports that Johnson 'derived some amusement from the cultivation of a small garden

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<sup>42</sup> Johnson, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Pote, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> Johnson, p. 71.

within the jail yard'.<sup>45</sup> The fact that a washerwoman was provided for her also suggests that she was responsible for completing the chores, even in prison. Occupying a domestic space in the prison gave Johnson more freedom compared to, for instance, her husband. Her ability to leave the prison to do errands is a direct result of her role as a housewife, so her domestic duties allowed her to enjoy a greater degree of freedom. Johnson's opportunities to leave the prison contradict Blunt and Rose's claim that gendered spaces 'serve to reconstitute the power relations of gendered identity', as Johnson seemed to enjoy more liberties than her husband, indicating that the power relations were reversed rather than reconstituted. This supposedly greater degree of freedom, however, is put into perspective when we see how Johnson's husband will return from captivity and resume his old life and the gendered role that included freedom and independence, while Johnson's role will not drastically change.<sup>46</sup>

#### **2.3.4 Impact of Social and Cultural Space: Reversing Colonial Discourse and the Possibility of Multiple Identities**

Johnson never fully reversed the initial depiction of her captors as 'savage' and barbaric; however, her account indicates her changing attitude towards them. She came to question the dominant colonial discourse, for example, when the narrative states that '[t]o use the term politeness, in the management of this repast, may be thought a burlesque; yet their offering the prisoners the best parts of the horse certainly bordered on civility'.<sup>47</sup> By referring to the Native Americans' behaviour as having 'bordered on civility' the account upholds, but nevertheless problematises, the binary of civilised British colonials versus uncivilised Native Americans. On another occasion, the narrative reports the kindness Johnson received from her captors, who looked after her during their journey from her home to the Native American village: 'the Indians, with more humanity than I supposed them possessed of, busied themselves in making a fire to warm me into life'.<sup>48</sup> This indicates that the boundaries between herself and the 'uncivilised' Native Americans, when she maintains a certain distance from them by claiming that their behaviour was not civilised, were redefined within the shared social

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<sup>45</sup> Johnson, p. 71.

<sup>46</sup> Blunt and Rose, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Johnson, p. 61.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

space.<sup>49</sup> In her discussion of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, Faery highlights the impact captivity could have on the captives' sense of identity and self-perception. She highlights the 'destabilizing effects of captivity on [Rowlandson's] subjectivity' and explains how the narrative 'constructs a threshold or intercultural space from which [Rowlandson] comes to view both cultures, as well as her own self, differently'.<sup>50</sup> My analysis of Johnson's narrative adds to this discussion by providing an additional insight into the effect of the shared intercultural space that she occupied. In addition to Faery's claim that the captive sees herself differently, Johnson's narrative shows how she renegotiated her cultural differences and bias, and indicates how this led her to see her family differently, acknowledging the different cultural influences that contributed to her children's subjectivity when they returned from captivity.<sup>51</sup>

While their signs of compassion might have prompted her to question certain stereotypes, the Native Americans also had other motives that are not related to being kind or compassionate. In fact, keeping captives alive allowed them, in many cases, to collect a ransom or reward once they reached Canada and handed the captives over to the French. However, as Derounian-Stodola and Levernier point out, and as previous chapters have shown, some Native American groups adopted their captives in order to replace family members who had died in the war.<sup>52</sup> These practices suggest that the Native Americans had their own motives for showing compassion, which have to be taken into consideration when trying to analyse the growing relationship between Johnson and her captors. The descriptions of Johnson giving birth during the journey and her master's reaction to the newborn indicate the Native Americans' efforts to collect as much ransom money as possible when the Native American exclaims "[t]wo

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<sup>49</sup> In line with my observation of the blurred boundaries between Johnson and her captors is Castiglia's contention that white female captives 'deny the binary opposition of white and Indian societies'. While this is partly evident from Johnson's narrative, the text also portrays her efforts to maintain a certain binary opposition, which points to a more ambivalent relationship between Johnson and her captors (Castiglia, p. 7).

<sup>50</sup> Faery, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Namias points out the need to accept or understand the captors' behaviour in order to survive captivity (Namias, p. 11).

<sup>52</sup> Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, p. 5. Derounian-Stodola and Levernier give a more comprehensive discussion of the different reasons that Native American groups had to take captives. I only mention ransom and replacing family members here because I discuss the Native Americans' compassionate behaviour. As Derounian-Stodola and Levernier argue, however, another crucial reason for them to take captives was revenge (Ibid., pp. 2-8).

moneys for me! two moneys for me!”<sup>53</sup> The financial value of Johnson’s pregnancy is clearly very important to her master and so her captors’ efforts to keep her safe are put into perspective as not necessarily the result of unconditional kindness. The Native American’s focus on the money he would receive for Johnson, the exaggerated exclamation that I quoted in particular, could lead us to question the editorial involvement in Johnson’s narrative as it confirms the stereotypical and inhuman image of Native Americans and rejects the idea of the captors acting kindly.

The sense of tension that these motives create invites us to question the close relationship that Johnson and her captors reportedly built. The narrative’s reference to her image of the French reveals that she never completely reversed her superior attitude towards the Native Americans. What might initially seem as an observation favouring the Native Americans over the French is a good example of how the separation between British colonial captives and Native Americans was maintained throughout the narrative: ‘I could pardon the Indians for their vindictive spirit, because they had no claim to the benefits of civilization. But the French, who give lessons of politeness to the rest of the world, can derive no advantage from the plea of ignorance’.<sup>54</sup> While this statement openly criticises the French, it associates the Native Americans with a form of uncivilised savagery. Moreover, even in a moment when Johnson reports a kind gesture, the Native Americans are characterised in a negative light. The narrative refers to her captors as ‘our sable masters’ when describing a scene in which they held a council and eventually decided to support Johnson by letting her ride on a horse.<sup>55</sup> Using the word ‘sable’ to describe the Native Americans exemplifies her practice of othering. As the word ‘sable’, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, refers to the verb to darken or blacken, or could mean the fur of a sable, the use of the word as an adjective to describe the image of her captors suggests their dark features, which contrasts with Johnson’s whiteness.<sup>56</sup> Whether or not this description refers to the Native Americans’ dark clothes or their perhaps slightly darker skin colour, it fits in with a more subtle

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<sup>53</sup> Johnson, p. 59.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Sable’, in *OED* [online], <[https://www-oed-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/search?searchType=dictionary&q=sable&\\_searchBtn=Search](https://www-oed-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/search?searchType=dictionary&q=sable&_searchBtn=Search)> [accessed 12 March 2019].

strategy to maintain a binary opposition between her identity as a British colonial captive and the Native Americans.

Despite this sense of superiority, Johnson's attitude was certainly influenced by her exposure to the Native Americans and the French, which can best be seen towards the end of her narrative, when her children return home. The fact that the narrative does not end with the description of Johnson's return home is another example of how her story focuses on her entire family, rather than on her as an individual. While the text includes additional information on what Johnson did while waiting for her family to return, it is the moments when her two children return and when she meets one of her former Native American captors that indicate how her attitude towards her identity might have changed, in that she embraced the idea of multiple identities. Johnson's son is depicted as having completely abandoned his British colonial identity due to his time in captivity:

During his absence he had entirely forgotten the English language, spoke a little broken French, but was perfect in Indian. He had been with the savages three years, and one year with the French; but his habits were somewhat Indian. He had been with them in their hunting excursions and suffered numerous hardships; he could brandish a tomahawk or bend the bow; but these habits wore off by degrees.<sup>57</sup>

The elements that are used to describe her son's identity are closely connected to the shared social space that he had occupied during his time with the Native Americans and the French. The narrative mentions the exposure to different languages, resulting in the loss of his mother tongue. Moreover, his habits are referred to as 'somewhat Indian' and the skills that he learned are a result of his time with his captors.<sup>58</sup> The return of Johnson's daughter is even more dramatic in that Johnson explains that the daughter did not know her mother at all. While this was probably a result of the daughter's young age when she was taken away from her mother, it nevertheless suggests the broken bond. Since Johnson's narrative is dominated by her image as a caring mother, the fact that her own daughter did not recognise her could be seen as symbolic of the emotional

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<sup>57</sup> Johnson, pp. 79-80.

<sup>58</sup> Namias confirms the possibility of children taking on their captors' identity or behaviour when she states that Native Americans 'favored children for adoption' as they knew children 'could more readily learn and accept a new language and culture' (Namias, p. 4).

damage captivity caused Johnson, and it simultaneously implies that her daughter, whether involuntarily or not, had completely abandoned her old identity.

Although the descriptions of the children's return might suggest a sense of alienation, Johnson's reaction is somewhat surprising, especially if we think about the fact that she never completely abandoned a certain distance from her Native American captors. Johnson's narrative summarises the fate of her children by stating that '[m]y daughter did not know me at her return, and spoke nothing but French: my son spoke Indian; so that my family was a mixture of nations'.<sup>59</sup> The way the children's return and their changed identity are described enables the narrative to introduce a different idea of the concept of 'nation'. In contrast to the family's identity before the attack, which had been based on their shared identity as British colonials, the narrative tells us that the family no longer shared one distinct identity. Calling her family 'a mixture of nations' implies the possibility of occupying more than one identity. While Johnson's daughter was likely to have abandoned her identity as a British colonial altogether, Johnson must have experienced multiple identities, which can be seen in the description of the moment she met her Indian brother after her return: 'the moment he saw me he cried, my God, my God, here is my sister; it was my little brother Sabatis, who formerly used to bring the cows for me, when I lived at my Indian masters'.<sup>60</sup> The fact that she refers to the man as her 'little brother' suggests that her self-perception not only included her role as a British colonial, but also as a Native American sister. The relationship Johnson established with her Native American brother contradicts Faery's claim that female captives were required to 'repudiate the resemblances between herself and her captors that she had learned at home'.<sup>61</sup> While Johnson does not entirely abandon her colonial identity, her narrative suggests that exposed contact with her captors and their shared social space impacted her preconceived notions about them.

Johnson's attitude towards the concept of nation as described in the narrative is different from the idea of 'nation' in a colonial discourse. Castiglia notes that '[c]rossing

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<sup>59</sup> Johnson, p. 81. Blaine notes that Johnson's daughter lived with the French family who adopted her for six years and her son lived with the Native Americans for three years and with the French for one year (Blaine, p. 71).

<sup>60</sup> Johnson, p. 80.

<sup>61</sup> Faery, p. 32. Faery states that both women and Native Americans had 'a more intimate connection with the forces of "nature" (rather than "culture")', by referring to the Native Americans' 'supposedly "uncivilized" or "precivilized" way of life' and women's 'cyclic rhythms, reproductive function, and bodily experiences of childbirth, lactation, and nurturance' (Faery, p. 32).



cultures forced white women to question the constitutive binaries of civilized and savage, free and captured, [...] race and nation, in which their identities were based', which supports my reading of Johnson's account as revealing how her time in captivity prompted her to rethink her ideas of nation and family.<sup>62</sup> Her concept of nation is connected to a shared social space, a close interaction and the opportunity to learn about a new culture and to live together with a different group of people. Her adoption into the Native American tribe and the time she spent with her captors, who apparently became her family, remain part of her family, even after she had returned from captivity. The portrayal of Johnson's self-perception and her attempts of othering show that her captivity narrative functions as a vehicle to consolidate her British colonial identity while also exploring the possibility of possessing multiple identities.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This case study has investigated the different perspective that Johnson's narrative offers on the experience of captivity. Focusing on the wellbeing of Johnson's family, the story constructs a specifically feminine perspective. I argue that this perspective has two main functions: firstly, the performative description of the attack reinforces Johnson's role as a mother and points out the traumatic quality of her experience. The fact that Johnson's role did not significantly change after the attack, however, somewhat lessened the impact of the capture, and raises questions about her reasons to include a detailed description of the attack. Secondly, I suggest that it is because of Johnson's gendered role – within a domestic space – that she was better able to socialise and integrate into her captors' tribe. I see this, in turn, as opening up the possibilities of getting to know a different perspective and of being able to challenge and question the masculine colonial perspective that is found in male-authored narratives. The portrayal of how Johnson was integrated into her captors' family highlights the impact that occupying a domestic space had in leading her to question and re-think the stereotypical image of 'uncivilised' Native Americans who, after all, became brothers and sisters to her.

The impact captivity had on Johnson's two children who stayed with either a Native American or French Canadian family further raises questions of belonging and shows how Johnson accepted the different identities her children experienced (or took on). That captivity – particularly for children – could result in the erasure of their

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<sup>62</sup> Castiglia, p. 6.

previous identity and sense of belonging is exemplified by the captivity narrative of Frances Noble, who was taken captive when she was thirteen months old. Her return home is significantly different from those in other captivity narratives as her release from captivity meant, from a spatial perspective, her transition from a familiar to an unfamiliar space. Her captivity narrative also tells the story of her older brother Joseph; unlike Frances who was taken captive by Native Americans but then lived with French Canadians, her brother stayed with his Native American captors. How the two siblings became estranged during their time in captivity is evident when her brother Joseph visited Frances and brought her gifts. The narrative reports that Frances 'was much frightened by the appearance of Joseph, and would receive nothing from his hands till, at the suggestion of her friends, he had washed the paint from his face and made some alteration in his dress'.<sup>63</sup> The idea that Frances's brother belonged to a Native American group now and the fact that she also did not know English very well resembles the portrayal of Johnson's family as a 'mixture of nations', but also hints at a possible underlying fear of 'going native' due to his different appearance.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Frances's reaction when she had to leave Montreal and return to her Anglo-American family suggests her reservations about leaving her familiar environment: 'the idea of leaving forever those whom she loved and going with a company of armed men she knew not whither, was too overwhelming, and she sunk upon the ground'.<sup>65</sup> Apart from the unfamiliar image of Native Americans that the scene of the encounter between the two siblings depicts, the moment when Joseph washed off the paint from his face in order for Frances to feel more comfortable resembles Alexander Henry's disguises and his attempts to take on multiple roles during captivity, which will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>63</sup> Kelly, p. 170.

<sup>64</sup> Ebersole confirms the challenges for captives to return home, particularly when they had been taken as children, as he claims that many took on 'an Indian identity' (Ebersole, p. 5).

<sup>65</sup> Kelly, p. 171.

### 3. Alexander Henry's 'Narrative of the Captivity of Alexander Henry'

#### 3.1 Introduction

Alexander Henry was captured in 1763, during Pontiac's War, in Michilimackinac (today's Michigan).<sup>66</sup> Henry spent a little over one year in captivity before he was eventually released and was able to go to Fort Niagara. Analysing Henry's home, Fort Michilimackinac, as a distinct social space that enabled cultural encounters between British and Native Americans even before the attack allows me to examine the nature of Henry's relationship with the Native Americans and to explore the impact this close interaction had on his transition into captivity. This space of the fort exhibits unique qualities since Henry's account shows that British colonials and French Canadians lived in the fort together and Native Americans were allowed to enter both for trading purposes and to socialise with the inhabitants. The fort was transformed into a distinct space by the interactions between the several groups. While Johnson's narrative challenges the binary between freedom and captivity due to its focus on the domestic space in which Johnson remained both before and during her captivity, it was the shared social space that Henry occupied before his capture that modified his role as a captive afterwards, blurring the categories of captive and free person. Although Henry changed masters three times at the beginning of his captivity, he was eventually claimed by one of his Native American friends, Wawatam, who before his captivity had asked him to be his brother, and Henry continued his time in captivity as a family member of this friend.

Henry's role as a family member, however, did not protect him from other Native American groups whom he and his new family encountered on their journey or in their villages. As the narrative explains, these groups were mostly Native Americans who had either lost family members and wanted to take revenge or were simply not well disposed towards British colonials.<sup>67</sup> The shared social and cultural space Henry occupied before and during captivity influenced the ways in which he tried to protect himself, which can be seen in his descriptions of his efforts to change his physical appearance in order to look more like the Native Americans. In contrast to Eastburn (see Chapter 3), however,

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<sup>66</sup> 'After the conclusion of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Chief Pontiac (Ottawa) led a loosely united group of American Indian tribes against the British in a series of attacks, referred to as Pontiac's Rebellion (1763-1766) or Pontiac's War' ('Pontiac's Rebellion', in *Ohio History Central* [online], <[http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Pontiac%27s\\_Rebellion](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Pontiac%27s_Rebellion)> [accessed 30 March 2019].

<sup>67</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 304.

who was able to seek shelter in his captor's house when he had to run the gauntlet, Henry's new family was not always able to protect him in their home. In fact, his new brother sent him away from the village and told him to hide in the mountains to be safe when other Native American groups came to the village. Although Henry's account suggests that he mostly occupied the same space as his new family members, he never became a full member and legitimate occupant of this shared space, nor did he abandon his British identity.

In my analysis, I treat Henry's home as the place that initiated the relationships he was able to establish with his captors and which consequently modified his experience of captivity: the diverse environment of the fort enabled Henry to take on different roles during his captivity, which allowed him to (partially) belong to his captor's family and protect himself from other Native American groups. I identify the distinct space of the fort as an interstitial space to highlight the impact it had on Henry's experiences during and after his capture, especially the fact that he took on different identities during captivity. Using Bhabha's definition of 'interstices', the 'domains of difference' – the clear separation between British colonials and Native Americans and the spaces they initially occupied, the private or demarcated space of British colonial forts, villages or houses and the outside or wilderness ascribed to the Native American attackers – are displaced or challenged in the fort.<sup>68</sup> The fort in Henry's narrative created an interstitial space since it was the place where the participants broke down barriers between 'us and them', indicated by the co-habitation of British colonial and French Canadian individuals and the fort's openness, which allowed Native Americans to enter it for trading as well as social purposes.

An analysis of the interstitial spaces that Henry occupied (both within the fort and also during his captivity) indicates the impact of these multicultural spaces on how Henry negotiated his identity. By analysing the different roles Henry took on during his time in captivity, I wish to demonstrate how he experienced moments that could have prompted him to modify his self-perception. Henry took on roles (which he stepped out of later) rather than fully embracing his new identities, however, and he never abandoned his British colonial identity. In order to show how he maintained that identity, I build on Bhabha's concept of the 'process of identification' and address the

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<sup>68</sup> Bhabha, p. 2.

moments when Henry physically distanced himself from his captors or, more significantly, when his Native American family created a clear distinction between themselves and the 'Englishman'.<sup>69</sup>

While Bhabha's notion of identities created through occupying interstitial spaces allows me to identify the moments when Henry had the opportunity to assume a new identity, he never explicitly reports that his sense of identity shifted or that he perceived himself as a Native American. I therefore use the idea of negotiating one's identity as, in Scott's terms, a 'role performance' to discuss the different roles Henry took on during his captivity.<sup>70</sup> These roles were, in accordance with Bhabha's theory, a result of the interstitial spaces Henry occupied, which allowed him to negotiate his identity, but not, ultimately, to replace his British colonial identity. When Henry dressed like a Native American in order to blend in, he merely created an image, which is connected to Goffman's concept of 'self-presentation', because to himself he remained his British colonial self while playing the role of a Native American.<sup>71</sup> The temporariness of Henry's assumed roles, as a Native American and a Canadian – his 'situated roles' – was confirmed by his behaviour when he left his Native American family, returning the armbands they gave him and thereby stepping out of role.<sup>72</sup>

The different roles Henry took on during his captivity have to be seen as a result of the fluid spaces that he occupied, depending on the participants that interacted with him or the people he was with in the particular space. These different encounters and interactions created a sense of tension between Henry's safety when he was among his family and the threat he was exposed to when they were joined by other Native American groups. In Henry's account, the spaces he occupied determined his roles, influencing his behaviour and physical appearance. The impact these diverse spaces had on Henry might further suggest the importance of seeing them more generally as a crucial factor in how British colonials negotiated their identities in their captivity narratives.

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<sup>69</sup> Bhabha, p. 63; Henry, 'Narrative', p. 331

<sup>70</sup> Scott, p. 95.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 74; Henry, 'Narrative', p. 324.

### 3.2 Content and Publication

The account of Alexander Henry's time in captivity was originally published as part of his more extensive work, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, Between the Years 1760 and 1776*, in 1809 (the captivity comprises chapters 8-22).<sup>73</sup> Henry's captivity narrative is very dense in terms of the number of incidents that he mentions: for example, he had to change masters several times, and during his captivity he was forced to interact with several different groups of Native Americans.<sup>74</sup> Henry was a trader and had lived at Fort Michilimackinac (near Detroit) for about a year before the attack and capture. The fort contained both British colonial and French Canadian inhabitants. Although Henry only refers to them as 'Canadian', the fact that they spoke French with him suggests that they were French Canadians, especially because they were not attacked and captured along with him, which indicates that they must have been allies of the Native American group.<sup>75</sup> During the attack, Henry managed to hide in the garret of a French Canadian's house. Native Americans searched the Canadian houses in order to find all British colonials, and although the first group of Native Americans that searched the garret could not detect him, Henry was eventually captured by a second search party the following day. Among the search party was one of his Native American acquaintances, Wenniway, who claimed him and assured him that he would not harm him. With the help of the French Canadian, Henry was allowed to stay in his house rather than come with Wenniway, since Henry feared the drunken, and thus dangerous and aggressive, Native Americans at their encampment. Shortly after, however, another Native American came to the Canadian house to get him. Henry reports that he knew this Native American and, because he had done business with him and the Native American owed him money, he suspected that he would harm him because of his debts. Indeed, when Henry hesitantly came with the Native American, the latter waited until they left the fort and then tried to kill Henry, who managed to run

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<sup>73</sup> Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories, Between the Years 1760 and 1776* (New York: Riley, 1809). The edition that I use for this case study is part of Samuel Drake's 1839 anthology *Indian Captivities* and has the lengthy title 'Narrative of the Captivity of Alexander Henry, Esq., who, in the time of Pontiac's War, fell into the hands of the Huron Indians. Detailing a faithful account of the capture of the garrison of Michilimackinac, and the massacre of about ninety people. – Written by himself'.

<sup>74</sup> Burnham notes that the exchange of captives within tribes and between tribes was a common practice (Burnham, p. 19).

<sup>75</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 290.

back to the fort and seek protection from Wenniway. He was then brought back to the Canadian house, where Henry stayed with other prisoners, and then was taken to a small house from which he eventually had to travel to Lake Michigan.

The narrative also provides some additional information on the relationship between the different Native American groups: the chiefs of the Ottawas told Henry that ‘they were our friends, and [that] the Chippeways had insulted [the Ottawas] by destroying the English without consulting with them on the affair. They added that what they had done was for the purpose of saving our lives’.<sup>76</sup> After Henry and the others had returned to the fort, the two Native American groups held a council in which they discussed their situation and concluded that the captives should be returned to the Chippeway. Wenniway was thus able to claim Henry back, and brought him to his village, where he was also reunited with Wawatam, the Native American who had asked Henry to become his brother before the attack. Another council was held among the Chippeways in which Wawatam gave a speech to claim Henry, since they had been brothers. Henry was able to live with Wawatam and his family until he had the chance to leave them and return home.

In contrast to Henry’s account of his experience as a family member among the Chippeways, his narrative also includes notable scenes that make it clear that Henry was not a full member of the group. For instance, at one point he had to leave the village in order to protect himself from drunken Native Americans (including his brother Wawatam), and another scene reports that he needed to ‘dress like an Indian’ to protect himself when another group of Native Americans arrived.<sup>77</sup> Henry and the Native Americans kept moving around until Wawatam decided to move to their wintering-ground, where only his family went, which meant that Henry was not exposed to any immediate danger from other Native Americans while they stayed there. After their stay at Wawatam’s wintering ground (which Henry never specifically locates), they returned to Fort Michilimackinac, where Henry met a Native American woman who took him with her to Sault de Saint-Marie, from where Henry was able to go to Toronto and then Fort Niagara with another group of Native Americans. Henry’s arrival at Fort Niagara marks the end of his captivity narrative.

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<sup>76</sup> Henry, ‘Narrative’, p. 297.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

### 3.3 Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Diverse, Multicultural Space of the Fort

One aspect of Henry's narrative that clearly distinguishes his text from other accounts is the description of the fort from which he was taken captive, suggesting a hybrid and culturally diverse environment. In contrast to other narratives that describe a clear separation between British colonial inhabitants and Native Americans, Henry's narrative shows British colonial subjects and French Canadians inhabiting the same space. This already multi-national, hybrid space was further influenced by regular interaction with Native Americans. On one occasion, for instance, Henry mentions that Native Americans came to the fort in order to purchase tomahawks, which suggests that commercial interests seemed to have outweighed anxiety about cultural mixing.<sup>78</sup> However, the opportunities to form new relationships that the social space provided are evident from the description of how Henry became part of his Native American friend's family:

Shortly after my first arrival at Michilimackinac, in the preceding year, a Chippeway, named Wawatam, began to come often to my house, betraying in his demeanor strong marks of personal regard. After this had continued some time, he came on a certain day, bringing with him his whole family, and at the same time a large present, consisting of skins, sugar and dried meat. Having laid these in a heap, he commenced a speech, [in which he said that] he had dreamed of adopting an Englishman as his son, brother and friend; that from the moment in which he first beheld me he had recognised me as the person whom the Great Spirit had been pleased to point out to him for a brother; that he hoped that I would not refuse his present; and that he should forever regard me as one of his family. I could do no otherwise than accept the present, and declare my willingness to have so good a man as this appeared to be for my friend and brother. I offered a present in return for that which I had received, which Wawatam accepted, and then, thanking me for the favor which he said that I had rendered him, he left me, and soon after set out on his winter's hunt.<sup>79</sup>

The description of how Wawatam asked Henry to be his brother presents a form of ritual that can be compared to the adoption rituals found in other captivity narratives. The exchange of presents to consolidate their relationship as friends and brothers, however, differs from other descriptions of initiation rituals in that Henry played an equal role in this context. Although the narrative does not pursue the question of why Wawatam 'dream[t] of adopting an Englishman as his son, brother and friend', this section raises

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<sup>78</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 289.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 287-88.



questions about Native American concepts of identity. While being a son and brother would have been separate family roles in Western societies, this passage already indicates the multiplicity of (overlapping) roles Henry would adopt during captivity. That he accepted these roles is evident from a passage later in Henry's narrative, when he refers to Wawatam and calls him 'my father and brother (for he was alternately each of these)'.<sup>80</sup> The moments of belonging that Henry describes in his narrative, which exemplify the different roles he took on during captivity, will be discussed later in this chapter.

While other narratives describe a forced or abrupt adoption, Henry had an active role and was required, or chose, to contribute to the ritual with a present. Similarly to the compulsion we see in other descriptions of adoption ceremonies, Henry's statement that he 'could not do otherwise than accept' could lead us to question his desire to participate in this ritual: his reported inability to decline Wawatam's offer could suggest that he felt compelled to participate but did not actually want to. On the other hand, the statement that he could not do otherwise could indicate his knowledge about Native American customs, implying that it would have been impolite to decline his offer. Either way, this scene exemplifies the opportunities provided by this interstitial space, bringing together these two individuals. It suggests the mutual affection between Henry and Wawatam and describes their close contact due to their regular meetings in the fort.

Henry's narrative illustrates the fort's diverse character by referring to his house as a meeting point, which contrasts with other narratives that describe the captives' homes as a distinct and separated space that the Native Americans only entered to attack. Moreover, the French Canadian house where Henry had his hiding place also exhibits this diversity; when Henry asked the French Canadian for a hiding place, we find out that a Native American woman was living in the fort:

I addressed myself immediately to M. Langlade, begging that he would put me into some place of safety [...] M. Langlade, who had looked for a moment at me, turned again to the window, shrugging his shoulders, and intimating that he could do nothing for me: - "Que voudriez-vous que j'en ferais?"<sup>81</sup> This was a moment for despair; but the next, a Pani woman [it is explained in the footnote of the edition that "[t]he Panies are an Indian nation of the south.'], a slave of M. Langlade's, beckoned to me to follow her. She brought me to a door, which

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<sup>80</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 324.

<sup>81</sup> English translation: What do you expect me to do about it?

she opened, desiring me to enter, and telling me that it led to the garret, where I must go and conceal myself.<sup>82</sup>

The household of the French Canadian family is a good example of how the fort's space was created by participants with different identities and backgrounds: an interstitial space in which these identities overlapped and were confronted with each other. The fact that the Native American woman helped Henry suggests that a person of one identity (the Native American slave) could work against the interests of another identity group (the Canadian) although they lived in the same space. That the woman is referred to as a slave contrasts with her agency and power to help Henry and show him to his hiding place, without the French Canadian's intervention. Alternatively, it could simply reflect her role as a servant, dealing with a sensitive issue that her Canadian master did not want to be involved with. I will come back to the importance of language variety within the fort, but it is worth noting here that Henry includes French in this scene to report the French Canadian's reaction, suggesting that the fort's space is both multicultural and multilingual.

Going back to the connection Henry and Wawatam established in the fort, the portrayal of their interactions gives some insight into their relationship. Before the attack, Henry failed to act on Wawatam's warning to leave the fort, although the Native American warned him about the potential threat not just once but twice. Wawatam 'expressed a second time his apprehensions, from the numerous Native Americans who were round the fort, and earnestly pressed me to consent to an immediate departure for the Sault'.<sup>83</sup> This suggests a certain degree of urgency to the threat outside the fort and raises the question as to whether Henry did not believe his friend or did not fully grasp the danger. An earlier description of the fort as 'strong' and the Native Americans surrounding it as not dangerous since they 'had not weapons but small arms' could explain Henry's reaction, or lack thereof.<sup>84</sup>

Another reason for Henry's false sense of security, however, is revealed a few lines after this scene when he notes his lack of knowledge of the Native Americans' language:

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<sup>82</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 290.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288. Later in the narrative Henry mentions the full name: Sault de Saint-Marie, which is in today's Michigan (*Ibid.*, p. 322).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

I had made [...] so much progress in the language in which Wawatam addressed me, as to be able to hold an ordinary conversation in it; but the Indian manner of speech is so extravagantly figurative that it is only for a perfect master to follow and comprehend it entirely.<sup>85</sup>

This passage tells us a great deal about the language they shared and Henry's efforts to communicate with the Native Americans. That he was able to hold an 'ordinary conversation' in Wawatam's language indicates Henry's motive to acquire the language, given his occupation as a trader and thus his need to communicate with the Native Americans who visited the fort. The characterisation of the 'Indian manner of speech' as 'extravagantly figurative' suggests Henry's general knowledge about the language and underlines the difficulty of learning it, which could have been the reason why he did not fully master the language. Henry's limited abilities to communicate with Wawatam must have hindered him from fully assimilating and, in turn, from learning the language properly. His awareness of the vicious circle in which Henry found himself might already indicate the difficulty, perhaps even impossibility, of taking on the role of a Native American that is referred to later in the narrative.

Furthermore, this passage gives insight into the social production of the fort's space, which depended on a common language to communicate and establish connections. Given that the Native Americans visited the French Canadian/British colonial fort, it is worth noting that Henry and Wawatam had the Native American's language as their common means of communication, contrasting with the otherwise Eurocentric perspective found in many captivity narratives. Apart from the passage that indicates Henry's awareness of his limited language ability, the narrative does not state whether they also had English as a common language. Besides Henry's basic knowledge of Wawatam's language, he also includes some phrases in French (when he refers to the conversations he had with the French Canadian whose house he hid in), which further supports the idea of a plurality of languages rather than one fixed common language. It is not clear from the text, however, whether Henry actually asked the man in French or whether he spoke English and the Canadian replied in French. Either way, both the language variety (of English, French and an indigenous language) and Henry's and Wawatam's shared language can be seen as a result of the shared social and cultural space that Henry and others occupied. The fort as an interstitial space or 'third space of

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<sup>85</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 288.

enunciation' implies the importance of a shared means of communication to articulate and negotiate each other's differences and similarities.

Pratt's concept of 'contact zones', which she uses to describe 'the space of imperial encounters', further supports the importance of a shared language or common means of communication. Pratt 'borrow[ed] the term "contact" here from linguistics, where the term contact language refers to an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongues'.<sup>86</sup> This idea is particularly interesting in the case of Henry's narrative since Pratt highlights trading as the usual context in which the need for a common language arose. Henry's occupation as a trader must have provided him with numerous opportunities to interact with Native Americans, which is also reflected in his awareness of their language. Whereas Henry's travels as a trader might have enriched his cultural awareness, the fort played a crucial part in that it was a distinct place where Henry could meet with both Native Americans and French Canadians, developing a relationship that went beyond mere business interactions and the cultural encounters that resulted from his job as a trader. Whereas Burnham refers to the 'hybrid colonial economy', which Henry was likely part of, as including extensive trade 'despite the lack of a shared language or culture', my analysis of Henry's description from an interstitial perspective suggests the extent of language variety that characterises the space of the fort.<sup>87</sup> While it is not clear from the narrative whether Henry and the others actually created some kind of contact language, the fort's space could nevertheless suggest a certain degree of language mixing, reflecting the different languages that were spoken within the fort.

As in Norton's description of the attack, when the Native Americans surrounded the fort for a couple of days before actually entering it, Henry was also able to delay his capture by hiding in a Canadian's house. In Henry's narrative, however, he seems to be one of the only British colonials who was able to escape the initial attack, which is described as brutal in the beginning of the narrative. When he was hiding from the attackers, Henry's perspective on the events taking place outside his hiding place is described in violent terms: 'Through an aperture, which afforded me a view of the area of the fort, I beheld, in shapes the foulest and most terrible, the ferocious triumphs of

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<sup>86</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Burnham, p. 18.

barbarian conquerors'.<sup>88</sup> And while Henry states that '[t]he sufferings I witnessed, I seemed on the point of experiencing', the narrative creates a clear separation between Henry's safe hiding space and the attacked and violent space that he saw outside.<sup>89</sup> The statement that Henry was 'on the point of experiencing' his fellow countrymen's fate evokes a sense of closeness to the happenings outside the garret even though he was not yet in danger.

Many narratives describe the literal or metaphorical crossing of a threshold or barrier that separated the captives from their Native American attackers and as resulting in their eventual capture (as we have seen in Williams's and Norton's narratives, analysed in Chapter 1). Henry's account, however, describes an additional threshold that he managed to create in order to prolong his freedom and delay the moment when he was captured. His description of the door of the garret as the 'barrier between me and my fate' reveals a sense of uncertainty, as Henry did not know if or when the attackers would come looking for him.<sup>90</sup> Having the door of the garret as a barrier meant that Henry was not yet fully exposed to the danger that dominated the rest of the fort. While he managed to create another barrier to protect him from his attackers, the hiding place was not a solution to his situation and could not help him permanently. Although it was the only place where he could hide to delay his capture, we can understand the liminality of this space, through which the narrative creates a sense of entrapment.

The garret as a liminal space functions as both Henry's safe space and his first place of confinement, confirmed by the description of his lack of options to flee:

As night was now advancing, I continued to lie on the bed, ruminating on my condition, but unable to discover a resource from which I could hope for life. A flight to Detroit had no probable chance of success. The distance from Michilimackinac was four hundred miles; I was without provisions; and the whole length of the road lay through Indian countries, countries of an enemy in arms, where the first man whom I should meet would kill me. To stay where I was threatened nearly the same issue.<sup>91</sup>

Naming Detroit as his only potential place of refuge, mentioning the long distance between himself and Detroit, and highlighting the danger that would await him in the

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<sup>88</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 291.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

'countries of an enemy in arms', reinforces the idea that Henry was trapped in the garret. While other narratives describe the wilderness as dangerous due to the unknown land outside their home, Henry perceived the area outside the fort as life-threatening because of his knowledge about his surroundings, referring to it as 'Indian countries', and connecting a sense of threat to the outside. This further challenges the binary between inside/outside and known/unknown that other narratives construct. Henry's awareness of the threat outside the fort reflects his occupation as a trader. While other captives suggest their knowledge about the area immediately surrounding the fort and describe their uneasiness about moving further away from their homes, Henry implies that he knew the 'Indian countries'. His time in the garret was his first period of confinement and one of the only periods when Henry was actually confined in a circumscribed place.<sup>92</sup>

### **3.3.2 Henry's Role as a Native American – Moments of Belonging**

Henry's transition from freedom into captivity is not as abrupt as in other narratives, because of his pre-established connections with two Native Americans who claimed him as their captive. He thus enjoyed a relatively greater degree of protection. This is especially evident in the scene when some of the captives were brutally murdered in the prison house while Henry was able to stay with his 'brother' Wawatam. The fact that Henry had become Wawatam's brother before the attack helps us challenge the binary between freedom and captivity that is an important feature in other captivity narratives that focus on the captives' loss of freedom and self-determination. Henry's transition into captivity was not as straightforward since it was somewhat delayed by his (initially successful) attempts to hide and the protection offered by his friends. That Henry was treated as a family member raises further questions about his role as a captive, which was not as limited as in other narratives that focus on restrictions of the captives' freedom.

The interstitial space of the fort that allowed Henry to encounter a different culture and connect with his friend Wawatam is reflected in Henry's depiction of the Native American as kind and humane. Many captivity narratives focus on creating an uncivilised and barbaric image of the Native Americans, especially before and during the

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<sup>92</sup> Henry also had to briefly stay in a prison at the beginning of his captivity, before he was claimed by Wawatam (Henry, 'Narrative', p. 298).

attack, when the captives did not yet know their captors. Henry, too, mentions the ‘barbarian conquerors’, who entered the fort and killed his countrymen.<sup>93</sup> The initial portrayal of Wawatam, however, contradicts this pattern, highlighting his good character and creating a positive image: ‘about forty-five years of age, of an excellent character among his nation, and a chief’.<sup>94</sup> We can see that these feelings of respect or affection were mutual from Wawatam’s reaction when he asked Henry to leave the fort with him before the attack: both the Native American and his wife ‘let fall some tears’ before parting with Henry.<sup>95</sup> It is interesting that Wawatam’s wife is mentioned as well, also showing her affection for Henry, which suggests how he was accepted – if not as a full family member, at least as a friend.

Although the narrative mostly focuses on the relationship between Henry and Wawatam, the scene when Wawatam left Henry provides an important insight into the involvement of Wawatam’s family. When Henry was allowed to stay with them after his capture by another Native American group, his encounter with Wawatam’s family was friendly and welcoming: ‘My entrance appeared to give joy to the whole family’.<sup>96</sup> The description of Wawatam’s and his wife’s attachment to Henry and their welcoming and joyful attitude when he could finally stay with them can be traced back to their shared social space in the fort that had prompted their relationship: Henry had already been a part of the Native American family and seeing them again is described as returning to his family rather than a captive having to enter a new social space. The fact that the Native American is described as being capable of showing emotions and caring for others contrasts with the common depiction of Native Americans as uncivilised, especially when the individuals had not been captured nor lived with their captors yet.

The speech that Wawatam gave during a council to convince the Chippeway chief to let Henry stay with him shows the relationship that they had established and his efforts to take Henry in: “‘See there (*pointing to myself*) my friend and brother among slaves, himself a slave! You all well know that long before the war began I adopted him as my brother. From that moment he became one of my family, so that no change of

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<sup>93</sup> Henry, ‘Narrative’, p. 291.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

circumstance could break the cord which fastened us together”<sup>97</sup>. Wawatam’s speech and the decision of the council, which allowed Henry to stay with Wawatam, complicates Henry’s different roles. Wawatam refers to Henry’s role as a slave, rather than a captive, and although he points out their relation, calling him a brother, the image of a ‘cord’ that ‘fastened [them] together’ still mirrors Henry’s role as a captive and his lack of freedom. Due to Wawatam’s convincing speech outlining why Henry was his brother and why Henry could not remain a captive, the question arises of whether Henry was still a captive while a member of Wawatam’s family or whether he fully embraced his new role as the Native American’s brother and did not perceive it as captivity.

One aspect that differentiated Henry’s position from that of his fellow captives was the physical separation between the captives. The diverse space of the fort that initiated the relationship between Wawatam and Henry now benefited Henry in that he, as a brother in Wawatam’s family, was allowed to live in his house.<sup>98</sup> Being able to share the same space as his captor and new brother supports Henry’s role as a member of the group in that he was separated from the other captives who had to stay in a prison lodge. The significance of this spatial separation is accentuated by Henry’s report of the killing of seven of his fellow captives in the prison lodge by a Native American chief, suggesting the prison’s high degree of danger and lack of protection.<sup>99</sup> Occupying a different space from that of his fellow captives thus helped Henry to stay safe and might have reinforced his role within the group as something other than a vulnerable captive.

Many captivity narratives describe a close surveillance of the captives and a lack of freedom, which is usually exemplified by a certain degree of constraint and an inability to move freely. The portrayal of Henry’s time with Wawatam, however, is characterised by his freedom to move and make independent decisions: ‘While the women were busy in erecting and preparing the lodges, I took my gun and strolled away, telling Wawatam that I intended to look out for some fresh meat for supper’.<sup>100</sup> This sense of independence was a crucial aspect of Henry’s position as a family member and shows how he behaved in his role. He used the opportunity to move freely to go hunting, depicting himself as a member who actively contributed to the group. His new role is

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<sup>97</sup> Henry, ‘Narrative’, p. 299.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.



further supported by his ability to carry a gun, a privilege that would seem to contradict his status as a captive. Treating Henry as a member of the family, and allowing him the sense of independence that comes with it accords with Snyder's claim that Native Americans believed that Anglo-American individuals could be 'groomed into kin' if they adhered to their social and cultural practices.<sup>101</sup> Henry's independence also confirms the consolidation of his social role in his new family, as Goffman defines a social role as 'the enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status'.<sup>102</sup> James Smith, for instance, was also allowed to carry a gun, but it was taken away from him when he did not follow his master's orders (see Chapter 3). This suggests that Henry would have needed to comply with the rules or norms of his new family.

Henry's role as a Native American is reinforced by scenes that depict his efforts to assimilate and learn about his new family's lifestyle, indicating the process of transculturation that Henry experienced. His personal freedom due to his role as a family member contrasts with the anonymity and dependency that many captives portray in their narratives: 'While we thus hunted along our way, I enjoyed a personal freedom of which I had been long deprived, and became as expert in the Indian pursuits as the Indians themselves'.<sup>103</sup> Linking his freedom to the opportunity to learn from the Native Americans points to Henry's willingness to adapt to his family, and suggests his active engagement in consolidating his role as a family member. Henry's ability to negotiate his new role as a family member ties in with Burke's notion of (cultural) negotiation as 'an awareness of the multiplicity and fluidity of identity' as Henry experienced the new social space as an opportunity (or even necessity) to assume a new role.<sup>104</sup> The success of his assimilation is illustrated by a scene when Henry got lost while hunting, which accords with Scott's notion of 'role-making' as it required Henry to show 'agency, creativity and skilful identity work'.<sup>105</sup> Besides Henry's worries about not finding his way back, the narrative clearly highlights the impact his experience with his new family had on surviving in the wilderness until he found his way back to their encampment: 'I could never, as I now thought, have suffered so long, without calling to mind the lessons which

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<sup>101</sup> Snyder, pp. 102-03.

<sup>102</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 310.

<sup>104</sup> Burke, p. 45.

<sup>105</sup> Scott, p. 74.

I had received from my Indian friend, for the very purpose of being useful to me in difficulties of this kind'.<sup>106</sup> Henry's application of the lessons he learned during the time with the Native Americans consolidated his role as a member of their tribe since he upheld his role while away from the group by imitating the group's behaviour.

After Wawatam had successfully reclaimed him, Henry travelled with his new family. Besides information about his surroundings, which he learned through their hunting trips, Henry's narrative also indicates his successful assimilation, for instance when it demonstrates the knowledge he gained of Native American customs, values and upbringing:

I now supposed that a feast was in preparation. I supposed so only, for it would have been indecorous to inquire into the meaning of what I saw. No person, among the Indians themselves, would use this freedom. Good breeding requires that the spectator should patiently wait the result.<sup>107</sup>

This scene suggests both his cultural awareness and his assimilated behaviour in that he reflected on his behaviour, consciously chose not to ask about the happenings and thus recognised the social norms of his new family. That Henry was successful in playing the role of a family member is further revealed in his description of the ability to wait patiently and not ask as '[g]ood breeding'. This comparison could imply that Henry managed to behave as appropriately as any other legitimate family members who had been raised by the group.

Becoming a member of Wawatam's family clearly required some identity work since Henry had no previous experience of such a role. Scott elaborates that 'actors navigate a careful path between the demands of the occasion and their own personal agendas of self-presentation'.<sup>108</sup> Henry's occupation as a trader could have helped him with the successful performance of his role as a Native American since he had already encountered different cultures (and presumably different Native American groups) as part of his job before his capture. Since his role as a trader had been an important part of his life before captivity, the opportunities to trade and earn his own money must have facilitated his compliance with the demands that his role as a family member entailed.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 315.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>108</sup> Scott, p. 74.

<sup>109</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 321.

Despite the social norms Henry had to adhere to in his new role as a member of the group, he kept a sense of personal freedom and was able to uphold a certain degree of independence, since he earned money and was able to provide for himself.

The narrative does not include many moments when Henry explicitly states whether or not he actually saw himself as a member of the Native American group. But the scenes that depict how Henry behaved suggest that he assimilated, at least partially, to his new family. One of the rare moments in the narrative that implies Henry's awareness of his role is when he refers to one of the Native American women as his 'old mother' and adds that this is what 'I was wont to call her'.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, he refers to Wawatam as 'my father and brother (for he was alternately of these)' towards the end of his narrative, when he reports that he was able to leave the Native Americans.<sup>111</sup> These two passages show Henry's awareness of the social constructs that were part of his role as a Native American. Since he would have never used the roles of father and brother interchangeably in a British colonial setting, the reference to his father/brother Wawatam gives insight into what Henry learned about his Native American family. Yet Henry merely reports the Native Americans' and his own customs and routines – being accustomed to call the woman his mother and knowing about the particular social constructs of father- and brotherhood – rather than stating whether he fully embraced this different identity. This, in turn, supports the idea that Henry occupied multiple roles during his captivity, which contributed to his cultural knowledge and experiences but did not erase his British colonial identity.

While Henry's role as a Native American was only temporary, ending with his time in captivity (which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter), the extensive contact with his Native American family resulted in their close relationship. The portrayal of the farewell scene demonstrates mutual respect and affection: 'We now exchanged farewells with an emotion entirely reciprocal. I did not quit the lodge without the most grateful sense of the many acts of goodness which I had experienced in it, nor without the sincerest respect for the virtues which I had witnessed among its members'.<sup>112</sup> This passage shows how successful Henry was in playing his role as a family member since he was able to establish a connection (which seems genuine) with his

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<sup>110</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 317.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

family, highlighted by the fact that the emotion was 'entirely reciprocal'. Although Henry changed to look less like a Native American when he left the family (including giving back the ornaments he received from the Native Americans), indicating his readiness to step out of role, the scene implies the affection Henry experienced, especially since he highlighted his gratitude and respect for them.

### **3.3.3 Moments When Henry Did Not Belong**

Although Henry's role within the Native American family allowed him some privileges and a certain degree of freedom, his position did not protect him from other Native American groups who did not acknowledge his new role/identity. This sense of danger was already indicated when Henry was rescued from his former master by Wawatam: 'I found myself one of the family; and but that I had still my fears, as to the other Indians, I felt as happy as the situation could allow'.<sup>113</sup> Henry's assessment of his situation indicates his awareness of the threat that other Native American groups posed and implies that he did not fully belong to the Native Americans. The performance of his new role might have sufficed for his position within Wawatam's family, but did not completely convince other groups. The following section will discuss the moments when Henry was in danger or experienced some sense of threat, reflecting his inability or unwillingness to fully belong. The scenes that suggest that Henry did not fully belong reinforce his liminal position in that they highlight his otherness, his British colonial identity. Thus, Henry remained in an in-between state between his roles as a captive and legitimate member of the group.

While Henry was usually safe because of his status as a family member, an imminent threat the narrative continuously highlights are those moments when the Native Americans got drunk.<sup>114</sup> Feeding into the stereotypical image of drunken Native Americans, who were described by many colonial authors to be aggressive and dangerous, the narrative includes a scene when even Wawatam felt unable to protect Henry from himself and the others and thus sent him away to a hiding place.<sup>115</sup> Having

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<sup>113</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 300.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 295, 303, 304.

<sup>115</sup> Nehemiah How's narrative also utilises this image and states that he had to be protected by sober Native Americans. In a scene that describes drunken Native Americans celebrating, the narrative adds a sense of violence by stating that How's captors 'had a great dance that night, and hung up David Rugg's [another captive] scalp on a pole, dancing round it' (Nehemiah How, 'A Narrative of the Captivity of

to leave the supposedly safe space of Wawatam's home puts Henry's safety into perspective and underlines the constant danger to which he was nevertheless exposed:

Wawatam, always watchful of my safety, no sooner heard the noise of drunkenness, which in the evening did not fail to begin, than he represented to me the danger of remaining in the village, and owned that he could not himself resist the temptation of joining his comrades in the debauch. That I might escape all mischief, he therefore requested that I would accompany him to the mountain, where I was to remain hidden till the liquor should be drunk.<sup>116</sup>

The fact that Wawatam brought Henry to the mountain, separating himself from his brother in order to protect him, suggests that his home, although usually a safe space for Henry, was transformed into a dangerous space when he (and the other Native Americans) started drinking. Focusing on the process of othering – the stereotypical depiction of uncontrollable drunk Native Americans – that we can see in this passage, the text only makes a small distinction between Wawatam and the rest of the Native Americans in that it ascribes a greater degree of self-awareness to him. That the passages in the narrative contribute to a stereotypical image of his Native American captors and indicate Henry's efforts to distance himself from them has to be highlighted to point out the binary contradiction of civilised/uncivilised that underlies this scene. Challenging this binary image becomes particularly valuable when we see how entrenched this image is in scholarship. Barbeau made the observation that 'the Indians were a considerate and gentle folk, becoming irresponsible only when under the influence of liquor', which underlines the necessity to continue the discussion about and problematise these binary images.<sup>117</sup>

As Wawatam is described as not being able to control himself once he started drinking, Henry had to be protected not only from other Native American groups but also from his Native American brother. The fact that Henry had to leave the camp at such moments suggests that although he was to some extent an insider, he was not truly regarded as a legitimate member of the group. Moreover, that Henry was not allowed to join the Native Americans' celebrations already excluded him in that he was not part of this particular social space when the different groups came together to celebrate.

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Nehemiah How, Who Was Taken by the Indians at the Great Meadow Fort Above Fort Dummer, Where He Was an Inhabitant, October 11th, 1745, in *Indian Captivities*, ed. by Samuel G. Drake (Boston: Antiquarian Bookstore and Institute, 1839), pp. 127-38 (p. 130)).

<sup>116</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 303.

<sup>117</sup> Barbeau, p. 530.

This distance between Henry and his brother suggests a sense of ambiguity in his role as a family member and his limited permission to share the same space as the other Native Americans.

Henry's need to withdraw to the mountain symbolises the sense of confinement that his role entailed, despite his privilege and liberties as a family member. The village can be seen as another example of an interstitial space, reflecting the various participants of this space and its changeable quality in terms of Henry's safety there. It also implies the uncertainty of this particular space and might suggest its fluidity, depending on the participants and producers of this space. Since the village mirrors the encounter and confrontation between Henry, his family and other Native American groups, it demonstrates that Henry's safety heavily depended on a stable social space, occupied by people who were well-disposed towards him.

The changing qualities of the space Henry shared with the Native Americans indicate that he remained in a vulnerable position, which corresponded to his role as a captive rather than a full member of the tribe. Henry was especially vulnerable to other Native American groups who had lost family members in the war and wanted revenge: 'Indians were now daily arriving from Detroit, some of whom had lost relations or friends in the war, and who would certainly retaliate on any Englishman they found'.<sup>118</sup> In this case, Henry's position as a family member of a Native American group became of marginal importance, which shows that he did not lose his British colonial identity by becoming a member of Wawatam's family. Rather, Henry played different roles, which reflected the spaces that he occupied; Henry was a member of Wawatam's family when they were on their own, whereas his role as a captive dominated his position when he was exposed to other groups who did not tolerate him.

The potential threat Henry was exposed to creates a sense of ambiguity in that it not only highlights his role as a captive but also suggests his need to perform his new role more emphatically. Although Henry refers to some kind of adoption ritual at the beginning of his narrative, when he exchanged presents with Wawatam, the recurrent threat by other Native Americans forced him to 'be dressed like an Indian' in order to stay safe. Henry therefore took the performance of his new role as family member one step further and changed his physical appearance to create what Scott calls 'a particular

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<sup>118</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 304.

image' in order to 'adapt the public display', which thus allowed him to fit in more easily.<sup>119</sup>

I could not but consent to the proposal [to change his appearance], and the chief was so kind as to assist my friend and his family in effecting that very day the desired metamorphosis. My hair was cut off, and my head shaved, with the exception of a spot on the crown, of about twice the diameter of a crown-piece. My face was painted with three or four different colors; some parts of it red, and others black. [...] Both my arms were decorated with large bands of silver above the elbow, besides several smaller ones on the wrists; and my legs were covered with *mitases*, a kind of hose, made, as is the favorite fashion, of scarlet cloth. Over all, I was to wear a scarlet blanket, or mantle, and on my head a large bunch of feathers.<sup>120</sup>

The use of the word 'metamorphosis' to refer to Henry's change in appearance points to a transformative process.<sup>121</sup> Although the transformation was unlikely to abruptly change Henry's character, it clearly changed his condition, since he was safer when looking like a Native American. The success of his physical transformation is evident from the women's reactions reported in the narrative: 'the ladies of the family, and of the village in general, appeared to think my person improved, and now condescended to call me handsome, even among Indians'.<sup>122</sup> The reported approval of the women implies that Henry was better able to integrate into the social life of his family and that he was closer to being a full member as his 'person improved'.

While his successful transformation into a Native American might suggest Henry's own acceptance of his new position, his comment on the positive impact of his altered appearance supports the idea that he merely played the role of a Native American rather than fully embracing it as part of his identity: '[p]rotected, in a great measure, by this disguise, I felt myself more at liberty than before'.<sup>123</sup> When Richardson discusses the story of Brampfyld-Moore Carew, whom he describes as 'the notorious rogue' and 'a pretender in his own right to the title of the "King of the Beggars"', he

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<sup>119</sup> Scott draws from Goffman's notion of self-presentation and impression management when discussing concepts of creating particular images and altering physical appearances and public displays (Scott, p. 72).

<sup>120</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 305.

<sup>121</sup> The *OED* defines the word 'metamorphosis' as a 'complete change in the appearance, circumstance, condition, or character of a person' ('Metamorphosis', in *OED* [online], <<https://www-oed-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/117313?redirectedFrom=metamorphosis#eid>>[5 June 2019]).

<sup>122</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 305.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

notes the different identities Carew took on and how he was 'able to switch identities simply by changing his clothes'.<sup>124</sup> While Richardson highlights the connection between identity and physical appearance, the fact that Henry calls his new clothes a disguise suggests that he did not actually abandon his identity as a British colonial. And while his need to change his physical appearance stemmed from that identity, the disguise he tried to assume indicates his unwillingness to let go of that identity, since he saw his Native American appearance as merely a temporary measure. The description of his transformation further supports the idea that Henry's new role was a mere disguise, underlining the performative function of his change in appearance. Henry describes even his face as changed, since it was 'painted with three or four different colors, some parts of it red, and others black', which can be linked to the idea of Henry wearing different masks, depending on the roles he assumed.<sup>125</sup> This example of how Henry actualised and performed his new role concurs with Goffman's idea that role performance is connected to wearing different masks, and that '[b]ehind many masks and many characters, each performer tends to wear a single look', which is, in Henry's case, his role as a colonial.<sup>126</sup>

Henry's unsuccessful assimilation and the maintenance of his British colonial identity underneath his disguise is also evident in the moments when he distanced himself from his Native American family and their customs. Whereas the narrative reports the sense of respect and appreciation Henry had for his new family, it also includes passages in which Henry 'othered' his captors, primarily by using the stereotype of savage and barbaric Native Americans. Towards the beginning of his captivity, when they were travelling to Lake Michigan, Henry reports that he and the other captives were offered bread, which his captors 'cut with the same knives that they had employed in the massacre – knives still covered with blood. The blood they moistened with spittle, and rubbing it on the bread, offered this for food to their prisoners, telling them to eat the blood of their countrymen'.<sup>127</sup> The very graphic description of this scene suggests the cannibalistic behaviour of the Native Americans and is a crucial element in creating a barbaric image. The trope of the mercilessness of the Native Americans is further

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<sup>124</sup> Richardson, pp. 43, 47.

<sup>125</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 305.

<sup>126</sup> Goffman, p. 228.

<sup>127</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', pp. 298-99.



supported by Henry's report on how the captives who stayed in the prison lodge (which I mentioned earlier in this chapter) at the beginning of their captivity were killed: a Native American, 'having been absent when the war begun, and being now desirous of manifesting to the Indians at large his hearty concurrence in what they had done, had gone into the prison lodge, and there with his knife put the seven men whose bodies I had seen to death'.<sup>128</sup> The Native American's deep desire to kill, as he had missed the war, reinforces the savage stereotype. This scene also adds a greater degree of cruelty and mercilessness to the man's behaviour as the killing did not happen during the war but targeted defenceless captives.

The narrative also maintains the cannibalistic image of Henry's captors later in his narrative, when he was already living with Wawatam's family: 'After an absence of about half an hour, [Wawatam] returned [from the feast], bringing in his dish a human hand, and a large piece of flesh'.<sup>129</sup> Although this scene describes Wawatam as a cannibal, it also gives some insight into the Native Americans' rituals. As van der Beets notes, '[i]n most tribes, eating of human flesh was acceptable only as a ritual', which is supported by Wawatam's reaction when Henry reports that he 'did not appear to relish the repast, but told me that it was then, [...] when returning from war, or on overcoming their enemies, to make a war-feast from among the slain'.<sup>130</sup> The image of cannibalistic Native Americans slightly shifts here in that the additional context and information we receive about Wawatam's reasons to eat human flesh explains its ritualistic character and somewhat moderates the merciless, barbaric image that Henry creates in the previous passage. While Henry highlights the fact that Wawatam did not enjoy eating human flesh, therefore putting the cannibalistic nature of the Native American into perspective, he still uses this scene to separate himself from his captor. Since Henry was able to partially integrate into his new family, the moments when he tried to distance himself from the Native Americans are the result of the knowledge he gained about them, which in turn allowed him to point out their different, 'other', values and beliefs that contrast with his religious beliefs.

Along with various passages that describe the Native Americans' belief system and illustrate certain rituals and practices (such as a report of medical practices, their

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<sup>128</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 301.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Van der Beets, 'The Indian Captivity Narrative as Ritual', p. 551; Henry, 'Narrative', p. 301.

spiritual belief regarding a life after death or their practice of 'consulting the GREAT TURTLE'), Henry also mentions his own religious beliefs, which suggests that he held on to the belief system he knew before his captivity rather than embracing the Native Americans' spiritual beliefs.<sup>131</sup> When Henry got lost in the woods after leaving the camp to go hunting, for example, he explains his disorientation by reporting that he 'was in a strange country', resembling Williams's reference to the 'strange land' in Chapter 1. To further highlight his sense of alienation, Henry 'soon resigned myself into the hand of that Providence, whose arm had so often saved me'.<sup>132</sup> This is the first scene in which Henry comments on religious faith. While he was able to find his way back by remembering what he had learned from his Native American family, in this moment of distress, when Henry did not know what to do, he returned to the belief system that he must have been most familiar with. Despite a selective use of his religion in his narrative, Henry seemed to remember his religious beliefs when he was in need, suggesting that his religion still had a strong presence even though he had been exposed to a new lifestyle and new belief system.

Henry's attempts to disguise his colonial identity and dress like a Native American might have helped him to protect himself, but they did not mean that he was accepted by every member of his new family, for they still saw him in certain contexts as a British colonial. Despite Henry's adoption, and the welcoming and trusting behaviour of his new family, a certain distance remained, which they were unable or unwilling to overcome. Matching Henry's inability and/or unwillingness to abandon his British colonial identity, the Native Americans were also unable to overlook Henry's other identity, which is evident in the moments when they called him an 'Englishman'. There is one scene in Henry's narrative when his Native American family members created a clear distinction between themselves and Henry because he offended their beliefs: Henry killed a bear to defend himself, which his family saw as an insult to the spirits they worshipped, consequently trying to appease the bear by distancing themselves from him. Henry's 'old mother, (as I was wont to call her,) [...] request[ed]

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<sup>131</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', pp. 306-09, 320, 326-29. Henry describes the consultation of the 'GREAT TURTLE' as a spiritual ceremony that the whole village took part in. They set up a tent specifically for the ritual and asked the priest questions who then consulted the spirit of the turtle. The questions asked were, for instance, about the war and whether the Native Americans would be attacked by British soldiers (Ibid., pp. 326-29).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 316.

her [the bear] not to lay the fault upon them, since it was truly an Englishman that had put her to death'.<sup>133</sup> By drawing on Snyder's explanation of the Native Americans' spiritual beliefs we can see the negative impact Henry's action had on his new family: Snyder states that '[i]n the Native view, [...] the opposite of slavery was kinship' and while Snyder refers to 'Southern Indian history', the sense that members of a clan were believed to have descended 'from an ancient, mythic ancestor, such as Wind, Bear, Panther, or Wolf', highlights the extent to which Henry must have offended his new family.<sup>134</sup> This in turn explains their efforts to distance themselves from Henry and stress his English identity. The situation Henry and his new family encountered suggests that, willingly or not, Henry did not fully manage to become a family member, despite his physical transformation, as he would have known not to harm a sacred animal.

The family's efforts to distance themselves from Henry raise questions of hierarchy and power relations between them. Contrary to the majority of narratives that focus on othering the Native Americans, Henry's account offers a new perspective on the mechanisms of othering by showing moments when Henry became 'the Other'. Despite the savage and barbaric stereotype that Henry's narrative employs, the scenes in which he offended the Native Americans' beliefs highlight the Native Americans' authority over Henry. Regardless of his efforts to assimilate, the moments when his new family othered him suggests his own passivity and the Native Americans' power to determine Henry's status as a family member.

On a different occasion, after Henry had already left his captors' family, he almost killed a rattlesnake, another animal that was sacred to the Native Americans. This led to a Native American chief's apology to the snake in which Henry's English identity was highlighted: the chief 'assured the snake that I was absolutely an Englishman, and of kin neither to him nor to them'.<sup>135</sup> Henry occupied a reversed position in these scenes compared to scenes in other captivity narratives that focus on the captives' efforts to distance themselves from their captors. Here, Henry is depicted as 'the Other', showing his failure to be regarded as a Native American. This reinforces the idea that his transformation was only superficial, that Henry played the role of a Native American rather than changing his identity, especially when we look at the ease

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<sup>133</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 317.

<sup>134</sup> Snyder, p. 5.

<sup>135</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 331.

with which he changed back into his original appearance when he left the Native Americans. Henry's 'identity', or rather role, as a Native American was only temporary and depended on the space that he occupied, in response to his need to blend in and protect himself. The snake scene happened after Henry had stepped out of character as a Native American family member and into the role of a Canadian, which highlights the temporariness of his roles and the degree to which they were merely a product of the environment he found himself in.

That Henry's status as a Native American was a role he played rather than an identity he fully took on is supported by the scene when he left his family and travelled to fort Niagara in order to be free. Although Henry reports his gratitude at his departure, leaving the Native Americans with 'the most grateful sense of the many acts of goodness which I had experienced', his departure was also the moment when he stepped out of role, leaving his character as a Native American behind.<sup>136</sup> Henry 'returned the silver arm-bands with which the family had decorated me the year before', discarding a crucial element of his disguise.<sup>137</sup> The return of the ornaments and decorations Henry received could be interpreted as reflecting his awareness of the value of these ornaments, portraying this as the reason he did not take them but instead left them with the Native Americans. However, his first action when embarking the boat and leaving his Native American family reinforces the idea that Henry simply abandoned his role as he switched from looking like a Native American to a Canadian.

When Henry initially changed his appearance to look more like his Native American family members, he did so in order to be safer and better able to blend in with the rest of the group. Leaving the Native Americans and travelling with Canadians now prompted him to change into a different role, that of a Canadian: '[b]eing no longer in the society of the Indians, I laid aside the dress, putting on that of a Canadian: a molton or blanket coat, over my shirt; and a handkerchief about my head, hats being very little worn in this country'.<sup>138</sup> Henry's readiness to change his physical appearance and take on a different role reinforces the temporariness of his roles.

Henry had already gained experience in disguising himself as a Canadian before his captivity due to his occupation as a trader, which he reports in his book *Travels and*

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<sup>136</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 324.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

*Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories*. He even uses a similar description of his transformation before his captivity when he recounts that 'I laid aside my English clothes, and covered myself only with a cloth, passed about the middle; a shirt, hanging loose; a molton, or blanket coat; and a large, red, milled worsted cap'.<sup>139</sup> Although this description is from a scene that happened before his capture, Henry already called his transformation into a Canadian a disguise when he refers to the relative safety he experienced by looking like a Canadian: 'my disguise enabled me to pass several canoes, without attracting the smallest notice'.<sup>140</sup> His role as a trader therefore enabled an easier transition between the roles he performed before, during and after captivity, as he had already experienced slipping into roles different from that of a British colonial.

Despite Henry's experience in disguising as a Canadian, however, his journey to fort Niagara after leaving his Native American family indicates his inability to fully disguise his identity as a British colonial: 'an Indian challenged me for an Englishman, and his companions supported him, by declaring that I looked very like one'.<sup>141</sup> This further reinforces Henry's predominant identity as a British colonial, which impeded a full transformation into a Canadian. Similarly to his role as a Native American, his new role did not become a new (or additional) identity, but was rather used as a means of protection and thus a necessity on his way into freedom. That Henry had not reached freedom and safety yet is illustrated in this scene when a Native American challenged his identity, because he depended on Madame Cadotte (the woman who allowed him to travel to fort Niagara with her) to vouch for him, 'assur[ing] them that I was a Canadian'.<sup>142</sup> Although Henry had left the Native Americans, his departure did not mean that he regained his independence.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this case study I have highlighted the unique elements of Henry's captivity narrative – his pre-existing relationship with his attackers in particular – and investigated how the diverse and multicultural space of the fort, his home, impacted his experience of captivity. While other captivity narratives point to the space of the captives' homes as a

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<sup>139</sup> Henry, *Travels*, p. 35.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 325.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

symbol of their privacy, the fort in Henry's narrative shaped his experience of encountering different cultures, making the rest of his narrative less about the stark differences between him and the Native Americans and more about the cultural exchange and lessons he learnt when integrating into the Native American family.

Henry's unique status as a brother of one of the Native Americans complicated his experience of captivity compared to that of other captives who had not been acquainted with their Native American masters. On the one hand, Henry enjoyed a greater freedom when living with his family, and his special relationship also protected him during the attack since he was captured by one of his acquaintances. On the other hand, there were moments when his distinct position within the family did not protect him from the aggression he faced from other Native Americans. My analysis showed that Henry's ambiguous roles are exemplified by the alternation between safety and danger, mirrored by the description of his transition into captivity, which is characterised by moments of security and threat.

#### **4. Conclusion to Chapter 4**

This chapter brings together the key ideas produced in my analysis of the different stages to deepen the discussion of how captives negotiated cultural differences (and similarities) and how this affected their sense of identity as British colonials. To investigate questions of identity and self-perception, the question here is how captives took on different roles or assumed disguises, particularly in Henry's case. Analysing his need to change his physical appearance and taking into consideration his behaviour when he left his Native American family – when he left behind the armbands they gave him – suggests that Henry never completely abandoned his British colonial identity. Rather, he superficially changed his identity by changing his physical appearance temporarily, taking on different roles that did not necessarily change his identity or erase his self-perception as a British colonial. This is reinforced in the scene when he changed his appearance to look like a Canadian in order to be safe on his journey through Canada.<sup>143</sup> Henry's readiness to change his physical appearance again in order to be safe indicates the multiple roles he took on during his time in captivity and then on his return to freedom. Although looking like a Canadian or Native American does not

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<sup>143</sup> Henry, 'Narrative', p. 324.

necessarily mean that Henry saw himself as one of them, I suggest that the different identities, or rather images, he created for himself are a result of the spaces he occupied.

The fluid spaces Henry experienced during captivity, both safe and dangerous, reflect the fluid construction of his roles. While Johnson refers to a multiplicity of nations and identities in regard to her family members, Henry describes himself as having taken on more than one identity. His ability to employ different identities might be linked to his status as a trader, having encountered different cultures and having travelled through the country and seen different places. Henry's ability to communicate and integrate into new situations, skills that he must have acquired as a trader, support the idea of the fluid construction of identities since he must have had to assimilate to various situations as part of his occupation, which then enabled him to better deal with the challenges of taking on different roles.

My analysis has further shown that Johnson's sense of identity was closely connected to her nurturing role as a mother and wife. My reading of her captivity experience as marking her transition from one domestic sphere to another echoes Castiglia's claim that '[c]aptivity is almost synonymous with the circulation of women between groups of men'.<sup>144</sup> To push this idea further, I argue that Johnson's account is not just 'almost synonymous' but reflects this circulation in the description of her return home. Johnson's journey to England and back to North America somewhat resembles her journey into captivity, as she was not able to make the journey alone and had to rely on strangers to go back home.<sup>145</sup> From her life in a patriarchal society before her capture by male Native Americans, through her journey home guided by men and her return home to the same patriarchal society, these stages reflect her circular movement between different groups of men. In contrast to Henry's narrative, Johnson is not portrayed as taking on significantly different roles, but rather remained in her domestic and gendered roles as a mother, carer and wife. The social space Johnson co-produced with her captors resembled the domestic space she had been familiar with before her capture and the efforts to highlight her role as a mother and wife are reinforced when we see that her captivity did not end with her return home.

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<sup>144</sup> Castiglia, p. 8.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, pp. 75-79.

The diverse space Henry co-produced required him to take on different roles in order to stay safe during captivity and upon his return home. Johnson's gendered role in her captors' group also results from the domestic space in which she remained, which is reinforced when she is able to have a garden in the Canadian prison and thus still occupies a domestic space. The different roles Henry assumed during his time in captivity as well as Johnson's rather fixed and stable roles as a mother and wife result directly from the spaces the two captives experienced and realised.



## Conclusion

This thesis has explored questions of identity and cultural exchange, and has shown how the British colonials made sense of their experiences of captivity by negotiating cultural similarities and differences. Conducting a literary analysis of space, I have investigated how cultural and social spaces are actualised and constructed in the captivity narratives, which sheds light on how individuals perceived captivity and how these experiences in turn influenced their concepts of identity. By analysing descriptions of space, my thesis demonstrates the captives' efforts to consolidate and/or question their own cultural identity and negotiate their encounters with a different culture. It thus contributes to the understanding of literature about the colonial American frontier by introducing new ways of thinking about North American captivity narratives.

The aim of my analysis was to find out how individuals experienced and negotiated the new spaces they found themselves in during captivity. Drawing on key literature about space and colonial encounters, seeing the captives' cultural exchange as a result of their co-existence in an interstitial space (in Homi Bhabha's terms), or as part of life in the contact zone (following Pratt's concept of the liminal space that colonial Americans lived in), I undertook a structural analysis of the selected narratives – in Chapters 1 to 3 – in order to apply the literary analysis of space to the different depictions of captivity. In this way, my thesis contributes to the wider body of scholarship on captivity narratives, the frontier and colonial discourses, which challenges the racist stereotypes present in scholarship up to the twentieth century. My work aligns with this field's new focus, which can be found in the works of, among others, Mary L. Pratt, Linda Colley, Michelle Burnham, June Namias, Rebecca B. Faery, and Robbie Richardson. Namias points to the incomplete linkages in existing scholarship between the topics of society, culture and gender in the history of white captives, and identifies these missing links as the main focus of *White Captives*, highlighting the value of understanding the frontier in order to investigate the development of American society.<sup>1</sup> My thesis builds on this approach to articulate new linkages, but develops Namias's perspective further through my application of spatial concepts – in particular, exploring spaces in-between – to analyse questions of history, society, culture, and

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<sup>1</sup> Namias refers to Frederick Jackson Turner's notion of 'the frontier [as] a key to understanding American society' (Namias, p. 17).

(particularly in my case study of Susanna Johnson's narrative) gender. Employing different concepts of space, and thus seeing the frontier as making possible a liminal space that helps both invent and challenge or deconstruct binary oppositions such as us/them, allows me to examine those links further and arrive at different understandings and readings of captivity narratives. My analysis of the captives' descriptions of their journey, for instance, shows the value of homing in on the cultural encounters the journey made possible. I have highlighted the impact of the journey in challenging the captives' self-perception and demonstrated how the binary opposition of freedom/captivity was disrupted in this stage by investigating the shared social and cultural spaces captives were exposed to on their journeys.

My analysis of two captivity narratives in their entirety in Chapter 4 pushes my deconstruction of binary oppositions further and offers a new understanding of how a pre-established relationship between captives and captors was possible (in Henry's case) and how this influenced the captives' experiences. This chapter also demonstrates that captivity did not necessarily have to be entirely different to what individuals had experienced before their capture, as highlighted in my discussion of the narrative of Johnson who remained in a domestic and confining space before, during, and after her captivity. The case studies are a significant element of my thesis because it is through investigating the portrayal of how Alexander Henry, Susanna Johnson, and Frances Noble perceived captivity over the whole course of their experience, rather than just during one stage, that I can question a fixed colonial identity and develop further the practice of reading captivity narratives as more than narratives about 'the Other'. While I use the binary oppositions as a starting point to explore the mechanisms of othering employed in the captivity narratives, my focus on the shared social space that captives and captors occupied highlights the various moments when these cultural boundaries started to blur, even if they were not fully destroyed.

My argument that the selected narratives allow for a renegotiation and analysis of the shared cultural spaces that were produced between captives and captors supports Kathleen G. Roberts's notion that 'narratives about "the Other" [...] draw artificial boundaries around our own "culture" and are at the same time culturally

constructed'.<sup>2</sup> By highlighting the multicultural space Henry had experienced before his capture and Johnson's notion of her family as a 'mixture of nations', I show that captivity narratives prompt us to question the artificial cultural boundaries to which Roberts refers in order to arrive at new insights about the possibility of identifying with multiple (cultural) identities – here closely connected to different cultural practices. In this way, my thesis helps rethink the colonial perspective of captivity narratives by highlighting reciprocal influence and mutual cultural exchange as a recurring element, and contributing to conceptual discussions about cultural liminality, responding to Seyla Benhabib's efforts to recognise 'the radical hybridity and polyvocality of all cultures'.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Smith's gradual assimilation to his captors' behaviour or Norton's acknowledgement of the reciprocal cultural influence between his French and Native American captors reveal this polyvocality.

My structural approach to analysing the narratives by dividing my chapters according to the different stages of captivity is consistent with the prevalent scholarly categorisation of captivity narratives in relation to four stages: attack and capture, the individuals' journey with their captors, an extended period of time with the Native Americans, and the captives' escape/release and return home.<sup>4</sup> Analysing the distinct stages separately allows me to focus on specific spatial concepts in more detail, and combine these in the two case studies to bring together different concepts of space. My focus on the spatial aspects of the descriptions of captivity, developed through this structural approach, is the main contribution of my thesis, as it allows me to challenge the pre-categorisation based on topographical elements in the captives' accounts, to offer new insights into the selected texts, and to contribute to establishing a new template to analyse captivity narratives by combining spatial concepts with a structural approach. In this way I add to existing scholarship that highlights the value of analysing the liminal spaces of the colonial frontier (Burnham, Colley, Pratt, and Strong) by

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<sup>2</sup> Kathleen G. Roberts, *Alterity and Narrative: Stories and the Negotiation of Western Identities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 7. Roberts also notes Seyla Benhabib's analysis of the dual role of narratives in culture formation as narratives not only depict people's actions but also indicate their values (*Ibid.*, p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Snader, p. 2; Calloway, 'An Uncertain Destiny', p. 193; Vaughan and Clark, 'Cups of Common Calamity', p. 3.

offering a new way of approaching these narratives and by introducing a set of spatial concepts that can be used to (re-)read captivity narratives.

The undeniably Eurocentric and colonial perspective of the selected captivity narratives is a significant feature that limits the scope of this research, but also opens up possibilities to challenge that perspective through analysis of the shared and co-produced spaces captives experienced. This in turn problematises the dominant discourse and offers new ways to look beyond the binary opposition of 'us versus them'. Ebersole rightly claims that '[v]irtually all of the authorial voices we will hear are white voices'.<sup>5</sup> Calloway, too, underlines the 'one-sided view of Indian life and its appeal to white people', and both critics emphasise the fact that captivity narratives were only written by people who actually returned from captivity, omitting those who died in captivity and those who chose to (or had to) stay with the Native Americans or French Canadians.<sup>6</sup> Exploring spatial elements in the narratives provides opportunities to challenge the white Eurocentric colonial discourse and my analysis thus goes some way towards disrupting this one-sided view by investigating how the cultural and social spaces were co-produced by both the captives and their captors. This one-sided, colonial perspective functioned as the starting point for my analysis, as it was through exploring the actualised binary oppositions first that I was able to look beyond what seemed like a clear-cut dichotomy. My efforts to challenge the binary oppositions of freedom/captivity, safe/unsafe, civilised/uncivilised show how captives constructed these oppositions in their narratives to make sense of their experiences, but also demonstrates how looking beyond these binaries and focusing on the liminality of the cultural encounters described in the narratives can provide new insights into the multifaceted and multicultural environment captives found themselves in. My analysis of the attack and capture (Chapter 1), for instance, started by exploring the thresholds between safe and unsafe and free and captured to point to the negative impact of the attack on the self-perception and the start of their transformation from free people into captives. Using the concept of the threshold to explore the distinct spaces created during the attack (i.e. the invasion of the attackers transforming the safe space into a hazardous space) further allow me to point out the colonials' exposure to a new culture:

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<sup>5</sup> Ebersole, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; Calloway, 'An Uncertain Destiny', p. 207.

apart from the intrusion into their private space, both John Williams's and John Norton's descriptions of the attack note their exposure to a new and to them different, 'other', culture, which they highlight by employing mechanisms of othering in their accounts, depicting their 'barbaric' attackers.

It is by investigating how captives negotiated and depicted their similarities to and differences from their Native American captors that my analysis of shared social and cultural spaces contributes to scholarly work about the liminal sites of colonial literature about the North American frontier and captivity. Colley highlights the valuable insights captivity accounts provide about cross-cultural encounters and distinguishes captivity narratives from other 'encounter texts (travel journals, exploration narratives, [...])' as they 'address situations in which Britons and other Europeans were rendered, if only for a time, subordinate and highly vulnerable'.<sup>7</sup> The colonial perspective that captivity narratives provide is highlighted by Richardson, who sees them as 'a nationalist project to re-write the durability of British selves in the face of brutal cultures', pointing to the dominant efforts of othering by colonial British subjects.<sup>8</sup> As North American captivity narratives perpetuate a colonial discourse, my thesis offers new insights into the impact of the construction of the binary oppositions of good and bad, or civilised and uncivilised. My analysis of the extended exposure of captives to their captors, and my discussion of how this heightened period of contact led to the construction of shared social spaces, shows how some captives were prompted to rethink their biased attitudes towards their captors. For instance, despite his efforts to other his captors, Smith's narrative (Chapter 3) offers insights into how he negotiated shared social spaces with the Native Americans. Homing in on the social and cultural spaces that are actualised in the narratives, and demonstrating how these shared spaces forced Smith to remain in a threshold state between being a captive and a member of the Native American family, allow me to look beyond the initial binary constructions of Smith the colonial subject and his Native American captors as two separate entities that do not overlap. My efforts to challenge these binary oppositions problematise what Richardson calls 'the darker side of the colonial project' by offering a new way to reevaluate mechanisms of othering and its implication for how we read North American captivity narratives.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Colley, 'Going Native', pp. 187-88.

<sup>8</sup> Richardson, p. 60.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

As my analysis highlights the variable degrees of the captives' commitments to their old and new roles as British colonials, captives, and/or family members of the Native American group, the idea of an imagined community emerges that could transcend individual groups of captives. Adopting Benedict Anderson's term, Burnham discusses how the concept of the imagined community is employed by Samuel Richardson in his novel *Pamela* (1740) as 'a community constructed and held together on the basis of resemblance or likeness'.<sup>10</sup> And while the imagined community in *Pamela* is quite different to the community that British colonials established during their captivity, my analysis focuses on moments in the narratives that refer to the differences between captives and captors, to show how the colonials attempted to construct such an imagined community by distancing themselves from their Native American captors and keeping their closeness to their fellow captives.<sup>11</sup>

With the template that I use for my analysis, which connects the different stages of captivity narratives with spatial concepts, I contribute to the wider field of captivity narrative scholarship in that my approach does not have to be limited to narratives from the first half of the eighteenth century or to one specific geographical area and could therefore be used, for instance, to revisit narratives about captivity during the Revolutionary War in North America (to expand the time frame of analysis) or Barbary captivity narratives (to open up the discourse geographically). Investigating how captives actualised shared spaces in narratives set during or after the Revolutionary War could help us understand how their perspective changed, in that captives no longer identified as colonial, Anglo-American or English, but as American, which is in accordance with Colley's approach of reading captivity narratives as 'an index of imperial and national power – and powerlessness – over time, and of changing British perceptions of these things'.<sup>12</sup> This could reveal how North American captivity narratives in particular highlight the disappearing British colonial power.

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<sup>10</sup> Burnham, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> While Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities' serves as a definition of the nation, which, as a concept, is not yet relevant or present in eighteenth-century captivity narratives, his concept is still useful for my analysis as captives still belonged to a bigger community of Anglo-American captives that shared the same fate or were affected by the wars between the British and the French, and their respective Native American allies. Thus, the sense of a shared Anglo-American identity could be seen as a precursor of what Anderson would later identify as an 'imagined community'. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso: 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Colley, 'Going Native', p. 191.

At the beginning of his post-Revolutionary War captivity narrative, for example, Zadock Steele notes that '[i]t is not [his] intention to speak of any nation with less respect than is due to their character and conduct', but he also highlights 'the necessity of noticing many cruelties [...] by men who enjoyed the advantages of civilization'. The civilised men Steele refers to were British, although he only mentions the 'advantages of civilization' to point out how his British captors 'put the rudest savage to blush'.<sup>13</sup> Steele's narrative is an example of how representations of 'the Other' changed in captivity narratives after 1776 due to the captives' new American perspective, which led them to see the British as the new 'enemy'. While many captivity narratives from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were republished later in order to consolidate a new American identity, these later narratives that depict the capture of American subjects by Native American and British groups – in contrast to the former alliance between Native Americans and the French – could also be analysed in terms of the binary oppositions that are employed and of how social and cultural spaces are actualised in the narratives.<sup>14</sup> This could in turn provide additional insights into how this new national American identity was consolidated, whilst simultaneously offering new opportunities to investigate its implications for the representation of Native Americans, which continues to be an urgent and relevant question today. This would enable us to challenge further binary oppositions such as civilised/uncivilised and reveal how even those whom captives recognise as 'civilised' could, within their narratives, be constructed as 'Other'.

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<sup>13</sup> Zadock Steele, 'Captivity of Zadock Steele', in *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire*, ed. by Colin G. Calloway (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992), pp. 100-49 (p. 102). Zadock Steele's narrative exemplifies a common feature of post-Independence narratives that Robert J. Denn defines as depicting 'British heartlessness and American nobility' and thus contributes to creating a national American identity (Robert J. Denn, 'Captivity Narratives of the American Revolution', *Journal of American Culture* (1980), 575-82 (p. 576)). Arguing for the recognition of captivity narratives as a literary source, Phillips D. Carleton also attributes the significance of captivity narratives as having been employed to enforce a new American identity after the Declaration of Independence (Phillips D. Carleton, 'The Indian Captivity', *American Literature* 15 (1943), 169-80 (p. 180)).

<sup>14</sup> Greg Sieminski explains the common practice of republishing and imitating Puritan narratives after 1776 to define 'the American character' and notes these texts' impact on a shared national culture (Greg Sieminski, 'The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution', *American Quarterly* 42 (1990), 35-56 (p. 36)).

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